



## QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE HERMANUS RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION December 2022



*Each quarter as I sit down to write the Quarterly Reports I am conflicted as to what to include and what to exclude, as well as how much detail to provide. In the final analysis I try to write about issues which are aligned with our constitution and to report on those things which are both important and useful to our members. The acid test is to ask whether what one is writing is useful and helpful and true.*

*This quarter, like most others, has had its share of dramas and intrigues and people have conducted themselves in new and creative ways. Let me begin then to “rummage through my vocabulary” to find ways of describing some of this in a way which I hope will be both informative and entertaining.*

*The Annual Report will accompany the Financial Statements in anticipation of the AGM.*

### **WARD COMMITTEES**

This has been the hottest button we have had to push over the last number of months and reference has been made to it in earlier reports. The situation has now been “resolved” following council’s adoption of a revision of the rules as they apply to the frequency and sequence of meetings. Requests up the chain of command both within the Provincial Administration and the ruling party didn’t have the desired effect and we had a Stalingrad style standoff between Ward Committee members and the other two components of the municipality.

You may ask why this is important and the answer is easy. The democratic imperative of consultation and abiding by the will of the people was being ignored. This year it has been Ward Committee rules. What lies in prospect for 2023?

## **COMMUNICATION WITH YOU**

One of the most important things we learned this year was that social media has revolutionised communication. We can no longer simply rely on sending our members an email to get our message across. In some ways email is even becoming passé as a mainstream medium. Most of us have smartphones and these devices have become the primary means of information gathering and sharing. With the assistance of Anna Weideman and others we are able to send you all our reports in phone friendly format. Anna has also done a wonderful job of making our website more user friendly and interactive. New members are encouraged to [join online](#).

## **FERNKLOOF NATURE RESERVE**

Fernkloof Nature Reserve is recognised as one of the jewels in Hermanus's crown and its preservation is one of the main goals of the HRA. It is of growing concern that there have been acts of violence against visitors in recent months coupled with a lukewarm response from the authorities to the danger that this represents. A request by members of the Ward 3 committee for a meeting with the Mayor to discuss and seek solutions to the problem has been ignored and this is most disheartening.

Coupled with this is the fact that there is little or no maintenance of the pathways and other infrastructure. Nowhere is there evidence of the commitment to place the environment front and centre of the new Council's agenda.

None of the above is surprising in the absence of an approved Protected Area Management Plan. It really is time to take Fernkloof more seriously.

## **THE BYPASS**

As mentioned in the September report the BYPASS is not off the table, not currently on the menu but merely simmering on the back burner. We will continue to be vigilant and keep you informed of any new developments.

## **BABOONS**

The following is an excerpt from the Hermanus Baboon Action Group newsletter. A huge thank you to Pat Redford and her team for the effort they make in keeping Baboon matters top of mind.

1. The agreement with current service provider (HWS) to manage the Baboon Programme in the Overstrand, will lapse at end of **June 2023**.

2. The assignment of the function for baboon management from the Provincial Government to Overstrand Municipality will expire end of **June 2024**.
3. A **tender process** is required to appoint a service provider for period between **July 2023 and June 2024**.
4. Baboon management is heavily dependent on consistency, we cannot afford any gaps in the daily monitoring procedures, therefore HBAG continues to motivate for a speedy and transparent process.
5. HBAG have followed all required channels to ensure our proposals for changes to the Baboon Management Plan and the comments received from the community are delivered to the relevant authorities.
6. Hermanus Baboon Action Group encourages all Hermanus residents affected by baboons on our urban edge to seriously consider the current status, make a note of concerns, consider alternatives and make their comments known, in writing, to [info@hermanusbaboons.co.za](mailto:info@hermanusbaboons.co.za).
7. It really does matter going forward.
8. Hermanus Baboon Action Group has maintained a consistent approach throughout its existence, of collaborating with the Environmental Services Department and Waste Department, and will continue to do so irrespective of any changes to service provider.

## **THE CLIFF PATH**

The Cliff Path along the seafront of Hermanus is one of the scenic wonders of South Africa and is enjoyed by locals and tourists alike. It deserves to be protected and preserved as well as being maintained in a state which is in keeping with its value to the wider community.

It is this appreciation of what the Cliff Path represents that has, over the last few years, motivated the Cliff Path Action Group to seek to join the two sections into one by traversing the Poole's Bay area.

The desire to do this is however not shared by all who use it, and this has become a rather divisive issue.

On the one hand is the historical situation where their title deeds guarantee Poole's Bay property owners exclusivity down to the High Water Mark (HWM) and on the other the constitutional rights of all citizens to access the entire coastline without undue hindrance.

A really important consideration is that this is a rugged piece of the coastline and making it navigable below the HWM by regular users of the Cliff Path will be costly, potentially environmentally damaging and not without the prospect of serious injury. This isn't a simple and straightforward proposal. An unanswered question is the cost of ongoing

maintenance after completion of the proposed construction. The municipality is unlikely to have the money.

Our hope is that Practicality and Principle will enter into a union which will stand the test of time. As is always the case the choices we make have inevitable consequences and we hope that we can face these without regret.

## **THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Last year I made a plea for members to put up their hands to serve on the EXCO but the silence has been deafening. Happily, help has arrived from new members and the mix of people and skills is more in keeping with the demands of the job. Thank you Catherine Wright and Anne Stern for the valuable role you play.

Owing to pressure from his existing commitments Michael Bourne, our Treasurer, will not be available for re-election at the AGM. Michael has assisted in formalising our Tax and Financial reporting regimes and we are grateful for his valuable contribution in initiating a review of our constitution. Michael's calm presence and insightful questioning of issues will be sorely missed.

At last year's AGM I made reference to having been in the chair since 2018 and that I didn't want to become an obstacle to change and to a new and fresh approach to running the association. I have decided that I am available for only one more year in the role and will dedicate my efforts in the new year to ensure a smooth transition to a new chairperson. Please assist me in finding him or her.

## **THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

As was the case last year our AGM will be held virtually. Holding the meeting on the virtual platform enables more members to attend without leaving the comfort of their homes as well as including those who are not permanently resident in Hermanus. Given that our financial year runs from January to December the meeting is likely to take place after the middle of February once the financial statements have been prepared. Closer to the time we will engage you with more relevant details.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

We trust that you have had a safe and blessed festive season in the company of loved ones.

Brian Wridgway and the EXCO