

DECEMBER 2018



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## WINDING DOWN 2018

As we circulate this final newsletter of 2018 from the Board of Trustees we look back on what has been an eventful year for the various portfolios.

While to the casual observer some of the achievements may seem small, each has been a step forward whether it involved maintaining existing infrastructure or tackling new projects.

Running this estate efficiently cannot be compared to an estate in an urban area for various obvious reasons such as lack of municipal services where most problems can be solved by a phone call or two to the local authority, and also the distance to necessary support businesses based in cities.

Knowing what the challenges are enables the team to be pro-active in addressing many of the maintenance requirements, but every now and then storms or breakdowns create unforeseen challenges and the need for an urgent response.

Under Butch Forrester's report he has introduced some of the more concerning matters hovering in the background and on which the Board will need to keep a close watch.

We have been talking about the need for a workshop since year one and for various reasons, not least the cost, this was postponed. These plans have now been approved and materials have been ordered. Work will commence in January. Plans have also been approved for two carports adjacent to the office, to house the estate's two vehicles.

In terms of communications there is to be a significant change. With immediate effect we are launching a new informal communication to keep you informed on life on the estate.....wildlife, bird life, fish life, plant life, night life (no, not clubbing and parties) and leisure activities; with input from anyone on the estate with a sighting, picture or experience to share. Contact me with your input.

We will also invite you to participate in projects.

The name of the new newsletter is

### What's Up

and the first edition will be circulated a few days after this newsletter

We wish you all a wonderful holiday season!

Denise

## 2019 AGM DATE

**25 May 2019 at Cathkin  
Estates office.**

**Time to be confirmed.**

**Please mark in your  
new diary!**

# GETTING IT RIGHT

Butch Forrester



It's hard to believe that this is the December Newsletter and that the year 2018 is almost over!

It has been a very busy year for your committee who have put in hours of work sorting out all the documentation and processes required to run Cathkin Estates efficiently. Sale Agreements, Conduct Rules, Architectural Guidelines, Policies, Procedures and Operations Manual and many more have been updated and corrected where necessary – all in accordance with the MOI and the rules of the Estate. These are living documents and will necessitate changes and updates from time to time. As the Estate grows, so too is it necessary to tighten up on certain issues or relax certain rules and guidelines. However this must always be done in accordance with our constitution and MOI.

I also need to bring to your attention some of the challenges and issues the Board is dealing with on Cathkin Estates at present.

The first is the Land Claim issue which was published in the press recently. Although specific areas were mentioned – Cathkin Estates being one of them - there is no clear strategy on land re-distribution in the country. It would be foolish to speculate and it is therefore difficult to plan or take any action at the moment. The original land claim of some years ago for this area was rejected by the courts. The Trustees are monitoring the situation, but until we receive specific information, no action is being taken.

The second issue which has come to our notice via the press is the proposed fracking survey to be carried out in the area, which also affects our Estate. Again the information is vague but there has been a huge outcry by farmers and other land owners who are affected. **There is a scheduled meeting in the Bergville Farmers Hall on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December at 10 am to explain what this fracking survey is all about. We will be attending this meeting and I suggest that as many homeowners of Cathkin Estates as possible make the effort to attend.** Feedback from this meeting will be communicated to you.

The Agenda for the meeting is:

Welcome and Introduction

Purpose of meeting

Background and exploration project scope

Enviro-legal context

Questions and Discussions

Way forward.

The last disturbing issue is the increase in animal poaching and attempted poaching of the Estate's wildlife. In the past we have experienced an increase in poaching activity around this time of the year, but the scale seems to be on the increase this year.

We have had one zebra and one eland killed and two attempts where no animals were taken or injured.

Our security staff, game guards and armed response guys have been excellent in detecting these poachers and giving chase, but because of the size of the estate and the nature of the terrain it is near impossible to apprehend them. The Trustees have come up with some options which we will be introducing to try to deter these poachers and protect our animals. BUT, we cannot put our staff at risk and any deterrent must take this into account.



**That is all the bad news – the good news is that Cathkin Estates is still the most wonderful place in the Drakensberg, if not the country, and we are privileged to live and holiday here.**

We note a special welcome to the owners of the 5 new homes being built at present.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families all the best for the festive season and may 2019 be a great year for you!

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## MONEY MATTERS

### John Cummins

In September the Board of Trustees sent you a letter regarding the new Conduct Rules and drawing your attention to the payment of levies and outstanding debt. It was pleasing to see the positive response from many homeowners who signed debit orders to facilitate the timeous payment of their levies. This will assist in reducing the effort put in by our managing agents GEMS, and also the Finance Committee, in monitoring and chasing outstanding debt.

The Finance Committee has been busy reviewing the first draft of the budget for the financial year commencing 1 March 2019. A strong emphasis in next year's budget will be expenditure on infrastructure to ensure the Estate can continue to function in an effective way.

Last financial year R380 000 was spent on resurfacing most of the main tarred road, Cathkin Drive, through the estate and next year it is planned on completing this project. Other projects planned are :

- the completion of the workshop/staff facilities located on the dirt road below the Estate office,
- a carport to protect estate vehicles from bad weather and
- upgrading of the water plant to include a second reservoir.

Sufficient provisions and cash currently exist to proceed with these projects, subject to approval from homeowners at the AGM for items where the Capital Development Levy Reserve will be used. After dealing with these the cash reserves will be depleted and the necessity for prompt payment of levies will be important.

For those homeowners who have not signed debit orders we earnestly request you complete one, so the Estate can maintain the cash flow necessary for its operating costs and the provision of infrastructure. Please contact GEMS at [sandra@emsprop.co.za](mailto:sandra@emsprop.co.za) to obtain a debit order form.

At the conclusion of the budget review the draft budget will be circulated to everyone and final approval / ratification will be sought at the AGM on 25 May 2019.

# ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



## Tinus Bam

With Christmas just around the corner all the builders on the estate are sorting out the last bits and pieces they have to do before their holidays start on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December.

Building on the estate picked up quite well during the last quarter of 2018 and currently five new dwellings are in different stages of development. Village three still seem to be the prime target for new builds with four of these builds in this village.

Spring in the Berg was relatively dry which gave the builders a good opportunity to make progress before the summer rains. While rainy days cause delays for the builders we trust that the summer season will come with better rains as it is currently very dry in the valley.



Good progress has been made on the Kaikoura build on site 101.

At present they are doing interior finishes.

Painting of the exterior is still to be done.

Kaikoura also started their new build on site 120 during the last two weeks of November. The site has been leveled and the builders hope to cast the foundations before shut down. This house will also be a timber frame structure. Although the build will be done by the same builders as for site 101 the house was designed by a different architect. We look forward to the completion of these two wooden frame structures as well as the landscaping on these two sites.

The build on site 107 for House Sithole initially progressed quickly but finishing will be delayed till the new year as a result of changes to the design.

Building on site 31 for the Butterscotch consortium started a few weeks ago.

The alterations/additions on sites 136/135 for Petmar Familietrust have now been completed.

The alterations/additions on 73 House Baird are in progress and should be completed by shut down.

In addition to all the above, several plans have been approved by the committee and are in different stages of municipal approval not least of which is the upgrade of the estate workshop. Building on the workshop and two carports at the office will commence in January.

The gravel road to the builders' yards has been upgraded to make it much easier for builders to move material from their yards to their building sites.

We would like to thank Dario and his operations team for the upgrade. The improved road will also be much more attractive (and enjoyable) for mountain bikers during the festive season!

We trust that all homeowners and their guests will have a blessed and relaxed time on the estate during the festive season and we look forward to 2019 with the hope and trust that it will be a good year for the estate and the country!

## ESTATE ROADS

Dario Raciti



A harsh climate takes its toll on roads, particularly in rugged, hilly terrain.

Rehabilitation of the service road to the builders' yard and the 4x4 track was undertaken and completed in November. You will recall the 4x4 track was closed some months ago due to its poor condition.

The maintenance of roads in general is costly and requires ongoing attention. One only needs to travel our country's road network to experience the deterioration due to the lack of maintenance, and understand that major capital input is required to restore them to an acceptable standard.

The Estate is no different and we once again make an appeal to adhere to the road rules to prolonging the life of our roads and save unnecessary expenditure.

- 1) **Please stick to the tar road and if you do have to give right of way to an oncoming vehicle do try and keep the driving off the road to a minimum.**
- 2) **The same rules apply on the Estate as they do on public roads, a valid driver's licence is required.** Allowing your vehicle to be driven by an individual who does not hold a valid licence is an offence and dangerous not only to themselves but to others as well.
- 3) **Do not allow children to travel on running boards/bumpers or anywhere where they can fall off.**
- 4) **The speed limit is 40 km/h.**
- 5) **We appeal to all to refrain from using 4x4 track when it is wet as this is when most damage is done to that section.** That road is to give access to the southern side of the property. It is not an adventure trail to test driving skills. A few years ago, late Gappy (who had to travel in from Bergville) and I had to go and pull someone out who had got horribly bogged down on the 4x4 road. What was most annoying was that not only was the vehicle a 2x4, but it happened as we were both starting to enjoy a few drinks after Christmas lunch. Please let's not have a repeat.
- 6) **Service tracks for fire breaks etc are strictly for estate use.** Recently we had a private vehicle driving through the village grassland.

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## CONDUCT RULES

It is unfortunate but necessary to once again appeal to homeowners to ensure that they, their families and friends and tenants are aware of and abide by the Estate's rules during this holiday period.

This is a time when occupancy increases significantly. Be aware of the estate's rule of 2 persons per bedroom plus one extra person.

Be aware of noise, which carries far in these surroundings particularly after dark.

Remember this is a NO DRONE ZONE.

We appeal to owners who are renting to casual holiday tenants to ensure that these tenants obtain a copy of the detailed conduct rules prior to arriving on the estate. We would suggest you get these tenants to sign that they have read the rules and undertake to abide by them. Remember it is the owner who will be contacted and possibly fined for any breaches of the rules.

By working together we can all have a fun festive season .....and that includes the managing team.

Happy Holidays!

# WATER

Tim Smythe



## Please use water sparingly as the supply dam is low.

Due to this low level we are drawing water from a greater depth than usual. You will see from the chart below that the past few months' rainfall are way below the 12 year average for the estate. The rainfall we are getting is more than adequate for gardens but run-off to dams is poor. Where possible please don't wash cars or run sprinklers.

What is noticeable is that the clarity or turbidity of the water has worsened drastically over the last five months despite our efforts to change dosing rates of chlorine and flocculent. After various efforts to clear the turbidity proved fruitless we have now met with the company that constructed the estate water plant for advice.

Outcome: The plant is in good working order. Swann's are returning to change the filter sand. Tests have proved that the parameters tested meet the SANS 241-2011 for potable water and is safe to drink. In the interests of diligence we have brought in a second, independent company to verify test results using samples from the dam, through the plant to the reservoir..

Water and weather conditions are constantly changing and new treatment products are now available.. We are waiting for results.

## Monthly Rainfall for 2018 vs Average for 12 Years - Recorded on Stand 64 Catkin Estates

|           | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Total Jan - Nov |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----------------|
| 12 Yr Ave | 244 | 183 | 165 | 66  | 16  | 16  | 16  | 27  | 38   | 107 | 111 | 1199            |
| 2018      | 153 | 294 | 173 | 118 | 10  | 1   | 1   | 53  | 13   | 42  | 72  | 917             |

