OHOA Chairman's Report 2022 – 2023

08 August 2023

Dear Members,

The past year has been a challenging one as the newly elected committee has tried to find its feet in dealing with some major issues in everyday Village matters. But the committee members have worked well together and accomplished a lot over the past year. There have been some committee changes, but we have a good working group. We don't always agree on everything, but we come to a solution and work in the best interests of the Village.

The Village has seen growth with new people moving in and a lot of construction and renovations taking place. A big welcome to all new members, tenants and families.

I would like to start by thanking everyone, from the committee, co-opted members and all the others who have worked hard this past year and contributed both financially and with their precious time. Thanks to those who have put forward practical ideas, suggestions and just been supportive in making Ongegund a beautiful, peaceful place to live.

Again, a special thanks to the co-committee members who have stuck it out through thick and thin and been supportive. Thanks to Danie Sadie, Steven Strauss (PPC General Manager), Dion and Pam Fuller of St Monica's and their team, Haumann Brink, Ster and Glynis and their team, and Swartland Municipality, just to mention a few.

1. THE COMMITTEE AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The 2022-23 Committee is represented by:
Paul Riley (Chairman & Security)
Dion Fuller (Vice Chairman)
Rosa Kruger (Parks, Gardens & Municipal Affairs)
Robyn Louw (Secretary, PPC Liaison)
John-Henry Roberts (Fire & Safety)
Lynne Glass (General Assistant, Ongegund West Liaison)
Chantal Smuts and **Greig Stewart** (Communication and Website)
Warrick Raubenheimer (Building Plans and Approval)
Annatjie Foot (Treasurer and Accounts)
Koos Myburg (Assist Admin Security)

2. WEBSITE

The purpose of the new website is not to advertise or market the Village, but rather to help with communication and transparency. Residents have complained about a lack of information with regards to general running of the Village, decisions made by the committee, where money is spent, events or technical work taking place, and so on. The website is designed to bridge that gap and keep everyone informed. It contains the key documents such as the Constitution and House Rules. This website is an ongoing development and will be translated into Afrikaans and extended over time.

Visit the new website at: https://ongegund.org.za/

3. ENTRANCE & FENCING

During the 2019 AGM, the OHOA Committee proposed a controlled entrance at Ongegund East (main entrance) which was approved in principle by the Swartland Municipality (SM).

Thanks to the previous committee for their hard work and achievements. We now have most of Ongegund fenced-in. We have a beautiful main entrance and continue with the proposal to improve the entrance to Ongegund West with a matching wall and Ongegund signage.

Thanks also to Rosa Kruger and her team for the effort, time and money they have put into the main entrance. What a beautiful welcome to the Village.

We have had to spend a considerable amount on maintaining and repairing our entrances, playgrounds and fences due to vandalism, reckless driving and general disregard for these areas. It is worth noting that 90% of these unexpected and unwelcome costs are due to damage done by visitors, trucks and people who generally have no business in the Village.

The committee is strongly in favour of continuing with the projects regarding the three entrances:

- The proposed entrance wall and signage at Ongegund West (entrance 3)
- The completion of Phase 2 – building a wall and installing the gate (already made) at entrance 2, with access control entry for large vehicles.
- Phase 3 – which has been on the cards for years – aims to close the main entrance (entrance 1) with two booms. This entrance will be manned 24/7 with card or disc access and details will be discussed and decided during the course of the next year.

4. GENERAL SECURITY & FIRE MANAGEMENT

Security

We have had break–ins, attempted break-ins, bicycles, tools, garden items and music systems stolen over the past few years. We urge all residents to be vigilant. Thanks again to St Monica's patrol guys for their diligence. They certainly give a sense of security, and their visibility is a big deterrent.

We give a massive thanks to those who are contributing to this initiative, which is on a donation basis only as the Village cannot afford to formally pay for it at this stage.

We will be sending out communication about voluntary donations to security in the near future.

Security cameras

Unfortunately, the contractor employed to install security cameras in the village did not fulfil his contract, which we terminated. The committee chose not to abandon the project and lose the investment and employed another contractor to complete the project. This included upgrading the cameras and providing UPS backup batteries for each camera and the main server due to load-shedding. We now have 24-hour surveillance and monitoring of our five cameras in Ongegund, which has been invaluable to our Village security.

Fire management

There have not been any major fire issues during the past year, and we thank Haumann Brink for help with maintaining the fire breaks.

However, we continue to urge residents to maintain the long grass on their stands, especially during summer when the fire risks are higher. If needed, we can assist with maintaining them at the property owner's cost.

5. PARKS, GARDENS and COMMON AREAS

The maintenance of our parks and common areas is one of our biggest expenses, but they are the pride of the Village and talk of the Swartland.

The very existence of the Ongegund Homeowner's Association is due to our rare open spaces.
When PPC sold its houses in 2001/2, the municipality only agreed to take over the water, sewage and electricity infrastructure on condition that an association was formed to manage the parks and open areas. The municipality has never, and will never be able to, take care of our parks.

We live in a time where municipal budgets, Swartland included, are not able to meet all the needs for which they are responsible. Many proactive businesses, body corporates and homeowners associations in South Africa are aware of this reality and have taken responsibility and control to protect beautiful, well-maintained environments. Our properties are, for most of us, our biggest investment and we need to take care of and maintain our surrounding areas.

Thank you to the excellent team that maintains these areas for us.

There has been a problem with some trees on the communal and municipal properties that have been ring-barked or poisoned. These matters are and will be investigated and prosecuted accordingly.

Please protect our trees. They are a precious component of our environment. Should any tree be dying or dropping branches, please let Rosa Kruger know so the committee can deal with them. If anyone wishes to donate trees they would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Rosa.

6. FINANCES and LEVIES

The committee has investigated ways to lower levies for households under financial strain in these difficult times. We looked at providing reduced levies and debt relief for certain households, but were advised that it is not legal to do so and is discriminatory.

We have tried our best to keep increases in levies down as far as possible. Over the Covid-19 period, levy increases were restrained, and that has had a knock-on effect. We are unable to maintain our Village or make any improvements without this income. It should be noted that our levies are extremely low when compared to other homeowner organisations. **We thank all of you who pay your levies on time.**

Levy increase

With the new budget proposed for 2023/24, the property values of the 2019 evaluation roll have been used. The Committee has tried to keep the general increase in membership fees as low as possible and has worked on 9% for the coming year.

Inevitably, there will be extra funds needed for certain projects for maintaining and improving our Village. This includes the previously mentioned plans for the three entrances.

Income statements

The gross income for the 2022/23 financial year was R366 445,48 as compared to the previous year which was R327 854,14. After the expenses for 2023, R397 424-54 we have an end loss of R30 829,06. Please see the attached financial statements.
Main loss was due to security camera project completion and start on entrance 2 project.

Our current total assets are R144 362,50 which is not as healthy an amount as it seems since some may be needed to fund certain projects this coming year. The balance will be reinvested in a new investment account which pays a better interest rate than we currently get.

We currently have around R40 000 outstanding in levies. **We cannot continue to run the village at a loss.**

Security and patrols

Security and patrols will need to be looked at on a continued donation basis but with a yearly commitment by members wanting to continue this necessary service. Most areas in South Africa have deteriorated rapidly as far as crime goes, even nearby towns. It would be sad to see the same happen to Ongegund due to lack of initiative.

We need these patrols and security. We cannot afford to hire an outside company to do this. That would cost R65 000 per month for far fewer services than we receive from St Monicas.

As the OHOA we have not been paying for this service. We currently receive 24/7 patrols, 24/7 camera monitoring, free internet for the server, free power, and night foot and vehicle patrols.

This is all done on a voluntary basis. Thank you to St Monicas, and to Koos Myburg, Louis Conradie and Rosa Kruger for free power supply to our cameras.

Transgressions and Fines

A schedule of transgressions and associated warnings and fines (on the Ongegund website under Documents) forms part of the House Rules in the Constitution. Their reasoning will be explained at the Annual General Meeting by our legal representative Eric Louw.

7. ROADS and WATER

Roads

After many meetings over the year with Swartland Municipality about our road maintenance and repairs, we were assured that they would schedule repairs to the worst sections of roads with their new budget for the next financial year which they have just received. They have already earmarked these areas and will start in the next few weeks.

The committee is also working hard on the creation of a common walkway for pedestrians, dog walkers and joggers between Ongegund Main and West. We have the support of PPC and other members. We will keep residents posted on plans and progress.

Water pipes and stormwater drains

All stormwater drains have been cleared or are in the process of being cleaned by municipal subcontractors. While the fairly frequent pipe bursts in the Village are a frustration, the municipality has made it clear that it is not possible to replace the old pipes (a major enterprise) as it has no budget for that. They will continue to repair as necessary. There are complete areas and townships in the Swartland that that have no or very limited municipal water, and these understandably take priority.

A big hand to Swartland Municipality for doing what they can with what they have.

8. PETS and DOMESTIC ANIMALS

By far the most complaints the committee receives are regarding pets. That includes dogs on the loose and continual barking while owners are at work.

Please take care of you pets and be considerate of your neighbour’s. Fines are being issued and our Transgressions and Fines rules include the eventual removal of animals that continue to be a problem.

Trapping and sterilisation of feral/stray cats in the Village is ongoing, with some support from Riebeek Animal Welfare (RAW). A huge thank you to De Wet van Aarde for agreeing to sponsor a dedicated cat trap for the Village, which will help to make these efforts far more consistent.

9. GENERAL / OTHER

Ongegund Tree-Planting Day

We will be having a tree planting day in the near future in which we would like to involve all the younger ones in the Village. Trees and compost will be donated by the committee members of OHOA. We will also have snacks and cakes for the children.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

I look forward to seeing you at our AGM on **Tuesday 29 August**. It will be held at the PPC training centre, starting at 6pm. Please do attend. We all have a part to play in maintaining and securing our Village.

The agenda and financial statements are attached to this letter and can also be found under the 'Documents' section of the website at https://ongegund.org.za/.

Once again, a special thanks to the committee members and supporting members for all their hard work this past year. May we continue to take care of our beautiful home.

Sincerely



Paul Riley

Chairman

08 August 2023