



Mutual Heights

News from your Trustees

Edition 38: 30 November 2016

Trustees and management can report on useful progress in a variety of important issues that are of concern to all of us. This newsletter deals with **Damp Proofing**, the installation of **Fibre Data Services** and **Smart metering**. Also: **Security**, **Short-term Letting**, the way we manage **Contractors**, and **Equipment** in the gymnasium. We are reminding you about the **Rules** that we must all observe. The big sticks are coming out!

Damp proofing

It's high summer again, the prospect of rain has evaporated, and we all forget that we still have work to do on the waterproofing of the exterior of the building. Much urgent work has already been done; work on the remainder of the building is now waiting for approval from Western Cape Heritage and is most likely to commence in the new year. More news about this in due course of time.

Fibre installation

Following our survey of internet access and web site services, and with fibre now becoming available in the City Bowl, trustees have evaluated a number of fibre installation options and we have decided to go with [Octotel](#). The essential 'short' story is:

- There is **no cost** to the Body Corporate or owners for the installation of the fibre infrastructure.
- There is a choice of more than **12 Internet Service Providers** (MWeb, RSAWeb, WebAfrica and so on), on 12-month contracts (at no installation cost in some cases) or on monthly contracts (with a variable cost for the actual connection and for a new router). You will need to review the details and decide about your choices.
- If you just want **Internet access**, then the service will be delivered to your existing network access point in your apartment (*not* over your telephone line, as might be the case if you have a Telkom ADSL service).
- If you want the **additional DSTV service** (the one that needs FOUR co-axial cables!) then the fibre will be brought directly to your section, and a DSTV connection box as well as a router will be provided. This will also be at a reasonable cost.

This fibre installation promises data access at costs comparable to ADSL, but five to ten times faster and more reliable, without 'shaping' or 'throttling'. This is what was asked for in our survey earlier in the year.

Smart water meters

Reviewing the finances at our last trustees meeting, it was revealed that we are *significantly over our budget* for water usage and sewerage charges. This is because our usage *has not fallen to the level where we avoid the surcharges for excessive use*, and we cannot allow this to continue.

It has been decided to install smart water meters. In simple terms, the pay-back period for the costs involved will be about five years, and owners and residents will become responsible for their actual water usage. This means that empty or lightly-used sections will (at last) be relieved of paying for everyone else's water; the few commercial sections that necessarily have higher water usage will now have to pay for it. More details will be available when we have a full implementation plan. In the meantime, [let us know](#) if you have any questions.

Security, access control and short-term (vacation) letting

There is continuing concern about managing access to the building, and as the volume of 'short lets' increases, those of us who actually live in the building can feel the place changing. At one level, teams of cleaners, branded with one holiday agency t-shirt or another, come in on a daily basis; at another level, small (or large) groups of strangers might be seen looking lost in the entrance hall; at the worst level there is garbage left outside of apartment doors that should be taken to the dustbins, or there is careless behaviour or 'partying' that disturbs the established rhythm of life for permanent residents.

Four immediate outcomes from trustees' deliberations about these changing times need to be noted:

- There has always been a rule that security staff are not permitted to admit strangers (or people without access cards), unless the strangers are being met at the door by a known person.
This rule will now be STRICTLY enforced.
- There has also always been a rule that visitors need to identify themselves by presenting themselves to the management office with their passports. This is rarely if ever actually done, but we need to know who is in occupation of ALL sections of the building, and so systems will be put into place to ensure that names and contact information are noted in the office.
There will be a REGISTER of the identities of short-term visitors.
- In the case of any misbehaviour by short-term visitors, owners will not be allowed to hide behind the agents that they choose to use, and will be directly accountable for any costs and penalties involved.
Owners will be held DIRECTLY responsible for incidents.
- A register of 'incidents' is now being maintained, that will allow Trustees (and the community at large) to monitor the actual extent to which problems arise, and to determine how best to deal with them.
Incidents will be RECORDED.

The management office will be asking to meet with the agencies that we know are operating in the building in order to review the way things are working, and to make sure that agencies understand our requirements. If you are 'doing' vacation accommodation, then please review your arrangements and procedures and make sure that your visitors understand they are not staying in a hotel (or back-packers' doss-house), they are staying in a community that regards the building as their home.

Alterations/renovations and contractors

In the same way, we continue to have contractors coming to the building for building works. While several large projects are now close to completion, a further project to finalise the renovation and adaptation of the Assembly Room (Section 801) will start when formalities are completed.

- Contractors working on site need to provide proof that they have comprehensive all-risk insurance. If not, they will be added to the body corporate insurance policy.
This (and any other related costs) will be recovered by debiting the owner's levy account.
- We need to limit the noise and inconvenience of building work to residents. Contractors must observe the rules about times of working, cleanliness, and the use of lifts. There are penalties for breaches of the rules.
Owners must provide details of contractors and dates for all work being undertaken.

Gym equipment

The equipment in the gymnasium is now at least ten years old. We will be budgeting for replacements in the coming year, we invite comments and feedback concerning what other gym equipment that you feel is necessary.

With warm regards,
on behalf of the Trustees,



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Check out "Mutual Building" on Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutual_Building