

Mutual Heights

Darling Street, Cape Town

<http://www.mutualheights.net>

News from your Trustees

Edition 13

November 2008

Dear Fellow Owner,

This newsletter serves to introduce myself as your new chairman, and to report briefly on the Annual General Meeting that was held on Thursday 23rd October.

New Chairman of the Trustees:

As the new chairman it is my first duty to express my heartfelt thanks to Paul Rippon, the outgoing chairman, for both the high level of commitment that he has shown to the building and for his able leadership in "growing" the Body Corporate in its early years. I suspect that it has not been an easy task, but his attention to the many issues that came forth during this time, many of which were complex and challenging, has been admirable. It was particularly comforting to know that as a practiced lawyer he was well able to keep an eye on the legal issues, and we should consider ourselves very fortunate to have had him with us during this period. On behalf of the whole community, I would like to say "**thank you, Paul!**"

Perhaps it is appropriate at this point in the development of the Mutual Heights community that your new chairman should be an engineer, and whilst I share Paul's passion for the building my personal perspective is one of structure and function. This is not going to be an easy building to maintain in the coming years, and now that the developers are insisting on withdrawing from the endless snagging (always a difficult stage in a building project, and always contentious), it will increasingly fall to us to take the necessary steps to maintain and preserve the building for the future. The AGM conveyed some strong messages of concern about the state of the building.

Annual General Meeting:

The draft minutes to be circulated shortly will show the AGM passed off well under the careful eyes of our management team, and with Paul's guidance from the chair. The financial statements were accepted and a budget for the current year was agreed. Paul was pleased to report positively on the significant improvements that are now taking place, including the new security doors at the main entrance and the new garage door. Finally (for the present purpose) the six trustees who were willing to continue were all approved, and so your new trustees will actually be familiar to you. We are (in alphabetical order):

Andy Bytheway (new chairman)
David Falck
Simon Hudson
Susan Lieberman
Paul Rippon
Dion Williamson

Trustees could always do with help. If you have any interest, or if you have any special contribution that you wish to make, do let me know.

Other details of the AGM are recorded in the draft minutes, do please peruse them when they are sent to you and let me know of any questions or concerns. But, before I close this newsletter, I must address the most important concern: to assess the extent of the penetrating damp that has been reported, and to address it pro-actively.

Damp problems

There was strongly expressed concern at the AGM about the actual and potential problems in the building that arise from damp penetration. It would be easy to sigh deeply and remark that this was inevitable after the wettest Cape Town winter in many people's living memory, but we must not just do that. In fact, it was agreed at the meeting to take expert advice, and in order to commence that process we must make an initial assessment of the damp problems that we are facing, and collect available evidence.

We are therefore asking *all owners* (and we will also be asking *residents*) to place on record any and all concerns that they may have about damp penetration. I have reviewed the correspondence to date with the building manager, and there seem to be fewer than ten recorded cases to date, but there may be more. Please therefore report (in summary at this stage, please) all the damp-related problems that you are aware of, and include photographs if you think that would help. Please be sure to include your unit number, and contact information so that we can follow up in due course. A form is attached to this newsletter for your convenience, and can be downloaded from the web site at www.mutualheights.net. Thank you.

Please talk to us!

Finally, we have agreed that it is critically important to keep the lines of communication open, so do feel free to contact the building manager (or me directly) if there is anything that in your opinion needs our attention. Please call the Management Office in the first instance (021 465 6377), or use the email address (below) which causes a message to be copied to me, and to the Building Manager.

Thank you. I look forward to working with the whole Mutual Heights community in the coming year, to ensure the best possible return from our shared investment in this magnificent building, whatever that "return" might be, in our different contexts!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Bytheway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

(Professor) Andy Bytheway,
Chairman of the Trustees, Mutual Heights, Cape Town.
info@mutualheights.net