

Mutual Heights

Darling Street, Cape Town
<http://www.mutualheights.net>

News from your Trustees

Edition 15

April 2009

Dear Fellow Owner,

This newsletter is to keep you informed about the “damp management project”, as it is becoming known. Apparently you can not eliminate damp, you simply have to decide how much of it you can tolerate!

There are also a few other things to bring to your attention whilst writing (see below).

Damp management

First, thanks to everyone who submitted additional information about damp problems in response to the mail-out that the management office organised recently.

The plan is proceeding as expected. An independent expert has been appointed and has already inspected a number of the more problematic units. He is being provided with additional information that he needs concerning the actual structure of the building, and so on. He will be reporting back shortly.

Test case needed

The next stage (if we continue to run with the plan) is to take one apartment – if possible, one that demonstrates most of the evident problems – and then undertake the actual remedial works in that one unit. Only by this means will we be able to know exactly what will have to be done more generally.

If you would like to offer your apartment for this purpose, do let us know and we can discuss the detailed arrangements.

Legal issues

We will also be dealing with the legal ramifications. The expert will be looking for evidence of problems that should have been addressed in the conversion of the building, by the developers and/or their subcontractors, and we have to be patient and await the outcome of his deliberations on that matter. Then, in cases where there is no redress from the developers, there is the question of apportioning the costs of remedial works to the body corporate and to owners. More about this in due course.

General maintenance

Occasionally we get complaints – quite strongly expressed sometimes – about the “lack of maintenance” in the building. I am tempted to ask for volunteers to help change the hundreds (thousands?) of light bulbs that light our way around the building, but this is of course a *serious* issue. There may be a *perception* of a lack of maintenance, but please be assured that there is a continuing effort to keep things under control.

One of the principal problems faced by the building management is that they do not always know about maintenance needs – they can NOT continually tour the building looking for problems, we need to help them.

So, if you *ever* see something that needs to be done, whether it is a failed light bulb or a major structural defect (heaven forbid!) then *you must let the office know*. Thank you!

I have asked the building management to prepare a listing of current and outstanding maintenance items, and (if we can) we will put it up on the web site so that you can see how much work is actually done to keep the building in good shape. And, when you report a problem, you will see it added to the list.

Service contracts

Another potential issue – related to maintenance – is that of *service contracts* (such as cleaning, maintenance and security). Our current policy is to review service contracts only on an as-needed basis, which clearly varies according to the nature of the service. For example, the security contract was a matter of concern at the AGM: it has been reviewed and there is now a new security manager in place, helping to tighten things up.

We need your help in determining how well services are working. Although the management office will always have a view about this, it is ultimately for the benefit of *owners* and *residents* that these services are procured and we must be the final judges of service quality.

If you have any comments or suggestions about any service, or any aspect of a service, you must let us know.

Rubbish disposal

Finally, something that is entirely within our powers to deal with ourselves is the matter of rubbish disposal. Some residents are in the very bad habit of putting black bags outside their doors, in the expectation that someone else will take it to the dustbin. That's not the deal here!

We are ALL obliged to take our rubbish *all the way to our nearest dustbin*, where it will then be taken away within 24 hours. Outside your front door, it could stand for days, and while you are having a good time with your friends in Kraggakamma Park your neighbours in Cape Town are getting very angry with you.

If this habit persists, then we will consider introducing a system of fines or penalties for offenders.

[Oh, do please remember that we have a **re-cycling scheme** that is, happily, working very well. We think. Again, what do *you* think? Do tell us!]

With warm regards,
on behalf of the Trustees,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Bytheway". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

(Professor) Andy Bytheway,
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