

## **Chairman's Report AGM August 2021**

My dear THOA Members, fellow residents and tenants and visitors. Here we are again at a virtual Annual General Meeting. Last year I did consider asking Santa for a fast forward button on life due to Covid, only considered it, but little did I know what was to still come. Add to that now the looting and unrest and we have a year topping last for its ability to sap our belief in normal reappearing soon. Despite all of that, it is my duty to reflect on the year gone by and how it has affected our association.

### **Covid19 Impact**

It does seem a while since I wrote about the Board considering a one-way jogging direction around the fence due to covid (did I get flack for that). Of course, it never came to that but that was an indication of just how little we knew of the virus and how worried we were that we would even consider such steps. Today we are rewriting the 'what we know about the virus' section daily with no further progress on how to deal with living with it really. At least our Covid notices faded as the world came to terms with it and information seemed to be a tad more uniform coming from all sources. Now it seems to be a battle about the vaccine, will it grow you two extra heads or just one? There is no question the virus is ripping through the estate either. I have been through it with my family, and I am well aware of many other residents who have also had it. This time around the people not making it are younger and fitter, but we can see no link as to why they should succumb to it. We have lost one of our top guards to it recently and I must thank you all for your outpouring of support for his family. So, the only thing I can add to this topic is, please be careful, get vaccinated if you can and help stop the spread of it. It is not for us to tell you one vaccine, or the other is the right one, it is for you to consider the community you live and work with and do whatever is the right thing to protect them as well as yourself.

### **Security**

This is our main reason for living in Thornhill, but you all know that crime has been a nightmare outside of our fence. That has not changed much since last year. We still have the odd robbery of people out jogging as well as attempted hi-jackings at the various roads towards our estate but so far, our residents have been okay. We have taken steps to increase our camera coverage and quality which is helping us track other known problems as they pass by our LPR (License Plate Recognition) cameras. Our Modderfontein Neighborhood Watch members have been active too, working together with other security companies in the area making our overall security in the area as good as we can get it all things considered.

The recent bout of looting that was mostly in KZN was cause for concern and we noted a lot of feedback from the community wanting to know what we had planned. As a rule, we do try to keep our tactics close to our chest as these newsletters, notes and AGM notices are great intel for those looking to take advantage of any perceived weaknesses we may have. What I can tell you is that our fence has never been in such good shape, we are constantly working on it be it fixing rust prone areas, plinthing at the bottom of it or improving the lighting along it.

We do have strong support from all of the security companies in the area as well as our own so we believe we have the resources for the current risk. However, we are not naïve, if we do need to call on residents we will not fail to do so at that time. All of this has been made possible by the hard work of all trustees and members that have gone before us setting high standards for us to live up to and build on. Of course, our security side could not work so well if our financial side was not in such

great shape so a big thank you to all residents that pay your levies on time as well as those residents that assist in sorting out our cost issues and admin issues.

### **Estates & Gardens**

After security this must be the next priority for our members, keeping our many parks and gardens in tip top shape. With Covid around we have not been able to make full use of them for yet another year. Regardless our Estates and Gardens contractor does a great job to keep things looking good. We will shortly start to lift the silt out of the dams which builds up every year. We have established our veggie garden now and anyone walking in the road reserve will notice the bike track for the kids too. Thanks to John Carle (Ashlea from the Gardens Committee's hubby) & Carl Knight and his team for that, much appreciated by us all and especially the kids. A few things have sprung up of late, the beehives and areas where we get our new trees started off are becoming quite established. The area that we use for our E & G storage will get a tidy up so that it blends in as much as possible too, all solid progress I think you would agree.

Looking higher up to the area at the far top of the road reserve is where to let your dogs off their leashes. There is nowhere else in the estate that it is acceptable, and fines will be issued when you do. Obviously, there are times your pets make a dash for freedom when you open your gate, but it is up to each of us to do our best to avoid that. I know mine have gotten out a few times over the years and it is always a stress for me. Here I am talking about people taking their dogs out for a walk and not keeping them on their leash. It seems like I am being harsh, but we came up with these rules as a community to avoid what was happening before, dogs fighting, kids getting in the way, and you know where that all ends up. I only mention it here as it has started to be an issue again so thought, best I mention it now and hopefully the problem will be considered in a new balanced light and head off up to the top end of the road reserve. Thanks everyone for being patient and supportive on this issue.

### **Architectural**

There was a time this was the hottest portfolio in the estate. So much so that at one point we had this as the focus of one of our live, in person, AGM's. Today, all but a few stands remain unbuilt on, and alterations have not been massive the past year. Having said that it still is an area we have to be very strict with and I am pleased to say that we do find the vast majority of residents doing their best to comply with our new stricter conditions such as how you let us have your plans. Now it has to be in CAD format etc. We do insist that you get your direct neighbours' signatures on your plans too. A quick reminder, this is only so that we know your neighbours have been informed in plenty of time. It is not their permission you are asking for, only our committee and the council can give you that.

### **Financial**

For this year we have picked up the slack caused by the lock down issues we accounted for last year. I have great confidence in our financial team, and you know that old saying, money makes the world go round, and this estate is no different. We are pleased to see the progress we have made in building up our reserves and managing our day-to-day costs too. The accounts speak for themselves, so we remain one of the best estates to live in when you look at value for money.

## **Social**

This has been cancelled yet again due to Covid. Just as we thought we could all come out to play we got smacked down with another lock down. Just as well as the new Delta variant (B.1.617.2) seems to spread easily. I am sure you are all just as Covid fatigued as we all are on the Board, and we all look forward to getting our chance to socialize with you all, but it won't be too soon unfortunately. Please be patient, be considerate and do what you can to stop the spread.

## **On a personal note**

Thank you all for taking the time to write to me when you have found the need to. I have had a few crackers this year in reaction to some of my comments in our ad hoc newsletters but all good really. I was enjoying our very well-organized magazine as it meant I got to leave you all alone. My wife especially enjoyed not reading about our personal life along with the rest of the community, whoops, here I go doing it again. Sorry darling. Seriously now, a big thank you to Xandi Van Der Merwe for all the time she and Linda put into making that happen, thank you to you too Linda. It has been a loss I think so if anyone else would like to try their hand at this please let Linda in the office know. Otherwise, it is back to me dribbling on about my TV and music tastes and telling stories to get my point across. I have to say I do enjoy it when I have the time but often I don't, so I am just not consistent enough for the job to be frank.

As always, I like to end the Chair's report with a thank you to our office staff, Kevin & Linda, as well as all of our security staff, garden staff and the residents that all get involved making the life of the trustees that bit easier to deal with and the experience of our members first class. To my fellow trustees, Ian, Armour and Carmen, without all of you guiding and tolerating me, meeting after meeting, I would not be able to deal with the role of Chair.

Finally, to all of you, the members of the organization, that take the time to thank us all when we get it right as well as those of you who point out our failings the odd times, we miss the point. It is only through your support that this estate looks and feels the way it does. I look forward to the day the dreaded Covid heads for the hills and we can get out there and use our open spaces to enjoy our time within the estate, it is long overdue but being patient is the best we can do right now.

*Stephen W Burrow*  
Chair, THOA