



Newsletter: August 2020

COVID-19 LOCKDOWN LETTER

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6 August 2020

Dear members

As the lockdown requirements to limit the spread of Covid-19 are still with us, we regret that it seems unlikely we will be able to resume with our monthly evening meetings in the near future.

We do hope that you are all keeping safe and warm and that you are finding enough to keep you occupied and interested during this time of lockdown.

Cycling, running, walking and picnicking (no braais) activities have resumed in the Modderfontein Reserve under strict protocols, including the wearing of face masks and maintaining social distances. Several members have taken advantage of this relaxation. Tuesday walkers have been seen setting off on the trails from as early as 07:30, no longer as a happy, chatty "conversation society" group, but in couples and singly. Some gather in the parking area for a brief chat – keeping their distances – before setting off. Some gather for a coffee later, but still observing the protocols.

Annual General Meeting

As we were locked down just days before the scheduled AGM, we organised a virtual meeting, a solution that worked well. We have provided the minutes of the AGM in this letter.

Subscriptions

These were due on 1 March and many of you responded to the reminder sent out with the notice of the AGM.

Understandably, there are still several renewal payments outstanding, these being overlooked in the demands of the lockdown. While we have been unable to provide you with high quality talks over the past three months, we would still like to retain you as members of the Society. If you have not yet paid, please do so by the end of August or we will sadly have to drop you from the membership register.

Obviously, we would not like to do this, so we look forward to hearing from you soon. See fee structure below.

Payments: For your convenience, EFT payments can be made to: Modderfontein Conservation Society, ABSA Bank, Savings Account, No: 29976791. **Please use your name as a reference and e-mail confirmation of payment to me. See Fee Structure below for details. There has been no increase for the 2020/21 year.**

Meanwhile, we have received the following two no-name payments:

R100.00 on 28 April and

R70.00 on 30 April

If you were one of these, please advise Robbie right away to avoid being deleted.

Remember: **we need YOU to help maintain the strength of the MCS.**



FEE STRUCTURE	
Individual Membership	R100-00
Family Membership	R170-00
Individual Senior (over 60) Membership	R70-00
Couples Senior (over 60) membership	R100-00
*Annual access to the Reserve – Family	R600-00
Individual	R300-00
Senior individual	R300-00
Senior couple	R600-00
*Optional	

Reserve entrance

The Committee have been advised that the Stone Bridge entrance to the Modderfontein Reserve will close in the near future as a new entrance is being built near



the newly established Taroko Farm (previously Isidleke). Fees for access to the Reserve will be paid at the new entrance. Members in possession of a paid up annual Reserve access card should not worry as the Committee is in discussion with M&T on how these will be catered for at the new entrance as the use of the proximity card system will be stopped.

Walking Trails

Maintenance of the walking trails has been contracted out. The Committee is working closely with the new contractor to ensure that the trail naming convention is retained and that the trails are well marked. In addition to the starting point of the trails at Fish Eagle Dam, another starting point will be located at the Taroko Farm entrance.

We are in the process of revising the MCS Trail Guide as the Jackal Trail through Taroko Farm (Isidleke) will be closed off and routed onto the Reedbuck Trail over the Hogsback. As soon as we're able to resume "normal" activities, we'll let you know.



Yours in conservation

Ellen van Dongen
Chairman

SEE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES BELOW!

MODDERFONTEIN CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Minutes of the Virtual Annual General Meeting

Held from 6 to 13 May 2020

1. Welcome

All members were sent the official notice of the AGM that was scheduled to be held on 19 March 2020. All members were advised on 17 March 2020 that the AGM was cancelled due to the proclamation of the Coronavirus National Disaster by the State President that required everyone to stay at home. As the lockdown was extended to 30 April 2020 with a gradual reduction of the lockdown from 1 May 2020 whilst maintaining social distancing, hygiene precautions and isolation of high-risk individuals, the MCS Committee unanimously decided to call a Virtual Annual General Meeting (AGM) of members to fulfil the Society's Constitutional requirements, without putting members at risk. The Virtual AGM was held using "Survey Monkey" from 6 May to 13 May 2020.

Copies of the following documents were sent to all Society members together with the link for the virtual AGM:

- Agenda
- Minutes of the Society's 2019 AGM
- Chairperson's Report for period 2019
- Financial report for the year 2019
- Treasurer's Report for period 2019

All 48 attendees agreed to the holding of the Virtual AGM.

2. Present

There were 48 attendees:

Bob Davies	Janet Davies	C R de Bruyn	Dennis McKitrick
Althea McKitrick	Lesley Rae	Keith Williams	Sheila Williams
Jonathan Cook	Allan John	Kerryn Krige	Ian Adams
Carol Gaynham	Don Gaynham	Pat Ayling	Carol Sherwood
Irwin Juckes	Jennifer Gough	Dave Gordon	Barbara Gordon
Ann Raats	Tricia Llewellyn	Graham Pirie	Patricia Pirie
C E Muller	J D Muller	Peter Olive	Robbie Vermont
Janet Brodrick	John Hudson	Sigrid Hudson	Keith Martin
Wendy Martin	Quentin Turner	Hanlie Turner	Margaret van Wyk
Alison Coppin	Barry Coppin	Ann Douglas	John Cruickshank
Jen Cruickshank	Pat van Nierop	Daryl Fuchs	Nicholas Lotz
Rachel Lotz	Ellen van Dongen	Unknown 1	Unknown 2

3. Approval of previous AGM minutes

The Minutes of the 2019 AGM, which were proposed by Janet Brodrick and seconded by Daryl Fuchs and emailed to all members were approved by 85% of attendees.

4. Chairman's Report

97% of attendees confirmed receipt of the Chairman's report.

Ellen van Dongen, Chairman, reported on:

- The sad loss of members: Rae Brown, Colin Wyatt, Karl Köhler and Sally Hogan who was our Vice Chairman.

- Geoff McIlleron, a founding member and past president of the MCS, was awarded the prestigious Owl Award by BirdLife SA.
- Membership now stands at 99 member units.
- The Tuesday morning Birding and Heritage walks remained popular.
- Thursday evening talks covering a wide range of interesting topics presented by good speakers were hosted.
- Heritage projects undertaken included commencement with the capturing of Karl Kohler's handwritten records into electronic format, assisting with the AEL Detonator campus decommissioning Heritage Impact Assessment and advising the new Taroko Farm tenant on the heritage buildings on the Isidleke site.
- Robbie Vermont handed over the chairmanship of the Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER) Committee to Irwin Jukes after many years of dedicated service. He continues as a committee member.
- MCS and Park development
- MCS serves a strong monitoring function and has registered as an interested and affected party for several EIA's for development projects for Nevada and M&T Development.
- We continue with monitoring of the alien vegetation, fishing at Fish Eagle Dam, impacts on the Reserve from neighbouring developments as well as the development of the farmers market at Isidleke.
- Maintained the walking trails and trail guide.
- Arranged work parties for alien vegetation removal.
- Participated in the Greater Modderfontein Property Umbrella Association with Keith Martin as a director. Through this position the MCS found out that the Modderfontein Reserve is only 265ha in size and not the 275ha that we were led to believe.
- Projects proposed for the new year:
 - Establishment of the Sensory and Wheelchair trail along with a butterfly reserve.
 - Installation of a new MCS notice board at Fish Eagle Dam.
 - Upgrading the walking trail signage and points of interest markers.
 - Participation on the Modderfontein Reserve sub-committee.

The MCS is thankful to our sponsors:

- AEL Mining Services for the sponsorship of our annual calendar
- Acacia Real Estate for the use of Heritage Haven
- EWT and now Theta Graphics & Print for photocopying
- *Bedfordview and Edenvale News, Kempton Express* and *Get It* for publicity
- Church on the Way for our Thursday evening talks venue.
- Ellen thanked each of the committee members for their hard work and support.

5. Treasurer's Report

Patricia Llewellyn reported a gain of R45,772.81.

Lesley Rae pointed out that the net gain on the Financial Report was incorrectly stated as R13,366 instead of R45,772.81. The correct net gain was reflected in the Treasurer's report. 91% of attendees confirmed receipt of the Financial Report and Treasurer's report. 91% of attendees accepted the corrected Financial Report and Treasurer's report, which were proposed by Keith Martin and seconded by Carol Sherwood.

6. Election of Committee Members

6.1. Ellen advised that the current committee had agreed to stand for another term.

6.2. Robbie Vermont had resigned as a committee member at the 2019 AGM, however he continued to assist with managing membership and the newsletter. Ellen van Dongen proposed Robbie Vermont as a new committee member.

6.3. The following committee members were unanimously accepted for the period 2020/2021:

Ellen van Dongen	Pat van Nierop	Carol Sherwood
Janet Brodrick	Patricia Llewellyn	Keith Martin
Peter Olive	Peter Ewen	Jenny Gough
Daryl Fuchs	Alison Coppin	Robbie Vermont

7. General

7.1. CR de Bruyn commented that the MCS WhatsApp group started earlier in 2020 was useful for announcements concerning Society activities. Unfortunately, after COVID 19 lockdown, the group became a means for members to make posts unrelated to official announcements.

Chairman's response: The MCS Committee were also concerned that the MCS WhatsApp group had become a platform for making posts unrelated to official MCS announcements. As a result, the MCS Social Group was formed for members who want to connect with one another on a social level.

7.2. Kerryn Krige and Ian Adams made some suggestions, ideas, and questions for 2020/2021: -

What is our role in terms of protecting the Heritage of Modderfontein (is there an opportunity to work to have the area declared a heritage site by the City of Joburg, for example?)

Chairman's response: One of the objectives of the Heritage Sub-group has been to declare Modderfontein a heritage site. However, it is partly the responsibility of the landowner to apply for this, there would be some reluctance to doing this as it will bring restrictions to development. A lot of information, photographs and history is required before the area can be declared a Heritage site and hence more help to gather and co-ordinate this information would be wonderful.

What is our role regards conservation in the Reserve, not just of nature but in terms of input around building developments and plans?

What is our and the community's vision for the area's development? - Do we gather evidence / data on Modderfontein so that we can motivate for our vision of development? for example, I imagine there has been a drop in air pollution / noise pollution during lockdown. Do we measure this, so that we can motivate for a more car-free / industry free area?

Thanks and congratulations to the committee on their re-appointment, and to Robbie who provides excellent support and input.

Chairman's response: The MCS looks out for notices advertising Environmental Impact Assessments for new developments and makes comments on development proposals from an environmental, conservation and aesthetic point of view. Once development starts MCS plays a watchdog role to try and minimise the negative impacts on the environment. MCS also has a representative on the chemical industry CAER Committee at Modderfontein/Chloorkop through which it is also able to raise environmental concerns. Unfortunately, development in Modderfontein is inevitable. MCS's mission and vision has been and is to keep the Modderfontein Reserve as an open space which does not become another public space such as Zoo Lake, but an open space in which indigenous flora and fauna can survive and people can enjoy nature within an urban context. Also, to encourage the maintenance of green corridors, specifically along water ways to enable the movement of animals. The stronger the MCS, through its members, the easier it is for us to achieve this.

The MCS does not measure air pollution or noise pollution. We monitor this as part of the impacts on the environment. Industries are required to measure noise and air pollution and as the MCS is part of the CAER Committee we have the right to request this information in that forum.

7.3. Comments received:

7.3.1. Bob and Janet Davies: Keep up the good work.

7.3.2. John and Sigrid Hudson: Well Done. Thank you all

7.3.3. Margaret van Wyk: Thank you for all your hard work to keep this green space open for our use.

7.3.4. Ann Douglas: Thank you for virtual AGM.

7.3.5. John and Jen Cruickshank: Just a vote of thanks for keeping the MCS flag flying in difficult times.

7.3.6. Pat van Nierop commented: I Propose a thank you to Ellen van Dongen for her dedicated hard work in keeping the Society on track during the past year.

The Committee thanks all our members who participated in the virtual AGM.

Janet Brodrick
Secretary

Ellen van Dongen
Chairman



LETTER TO THE ED

When Flick & Peter Grube resigned from your Society prior to their move to Plettenberg Bay, Robbie dropped them a line. He accepted their resignation with deep regret and indicated what a pleasure and privilege it was knowing them and walking with them for the past 12 years. Their response was:

We are very grateful that you have accepted our resignation, otherwise we would not be able to move to Plett. 😞 😊

More seriously: we enjoyed our 12 years (that long!) with MCS and we will miss all the friends we made. The MCS is the only society we have ever belonged to where everyone is friendly to one another, information is happily shared and there are no politics and snide side comments about other members. It was refreshing and a true privilege to be part of such a 'family' of like-minded and knowledgeable people. We plan to stay in touch via WhatsApp and other media.

Please extend our very best wishes - especially concerning good health, safety and many, many more years of being able to enjoy all of the MCS activities - to all of the MCS and the committee members. The committee (and special non-committee members, like John Cruickshank, who ceaselessly looks after the reserve trails) deserve special mention and our thanks for all that they have done - and continue to do - for the Modderfontein Reserve and the MCS.

With virtual hugs to you all,
Flick & Peter
(the Grubs)



NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

There was very little news to report on in the early part of the Corona-19 lockdown as this photo of the cover page of the B&E News attests.

The rescue of three Egyptian geese goslings in Modderfontein by the Edenvale SPCA was about as exciting as things were.

Your Committee

Name	Portfolio	Cell phone	Home phone	E mail
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