

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT : 3 SEPTEMBER 2014

EVENTS OF THE YEAR: (Rape, Crime, stats)

Our community was changed in an irreversible manner when we heard on 11 November last year that a jogger had been raped on Villiers Dr. The spectre that this could happen in our leafy green suburb truly shocked us and served as a rude wake up call to our vulnerability. Although this was less than a year ago the events of the period since make it seem much further back than that.

Following this incident there was a massively positive response from the community and the joggers in particular and we owe thanks to Margie Jenkins and team for rallying the community and essentially communicating an unwillingness on the part of the community to curtail our lifestyles and bow to criminal elements.

We took up a collection for a fence and bike fund for the Bobbies and raised a little over R10 000 and in what was only partially successful for a time we had the Bobbies in the Villiers Dr lookout area between 5 and 6am.

WHATSAPP:

Around this time Rowan White launched the first What's App group which brought us into an era of instant communication and this too has changed the face of community life. Love What's App or hate it - it has proven very successful in keeping us all in touch. There are now close on 200 Clarendon residents in contact via this medium. A heartfelt thank you to Rowan for his tireless drive and enthusiasm on this and other initiatives. If you are interested in joining a What's App group please contact Rowan on 084 513 8721 or rowanwhite@mweb.co.za

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH:

As 2014 dawned so did a wave of crime and by March it was necessary for us to call a community meeting to look at ways of addressing the issue. Our meeting on 19 March was another stand out event in the Clarendon community which saw, via Dion Curtis' persistence, the birth of the neighbourhood watch – the nightly patrols that have taken place every night since.

From 13 crimes in as many weeks we have seen 10 crimes over the last 5 months. This includes 3 incidents of copper theft. Although 10 incidents is 10 too many there is no doubt that the patrols have made a significant difference together with increased SAPS patrolling including random patrols by Ed Sudrawski the chair of the Townhill CPF who does not even live in Clarendon. Apart from the serious nature of what we are doing there has been some great community spirit not to mention the emergence of some good humour and even poetry. If you would like to join this excellent group please contact Dion Curtis on 083 3768 439 or dionlcurtis@gmail.com

FENCE:

In June and after much consultation part 1 of the Fence went up. Part 1 because the original vision was for a fence across the whole open area of the Villiers Dr lookout. Part 1 saw the two high risk areas on each end of the lookout area fenced off plus some work along the Botanical Gardens boundary. This was done by Craig Wilcocks and the team from Dusi fencing. Craig is a resident and apart from doing a great job also discounted his charge to us. The R10 000 which raised was spent on this and this job built upon the gate put in by Hugh Cocksedge and fence work by Paul Parsons. Thank you to all concerned.

The fence has been positioned so as not to be too much of an eyesore and certainly does not restrict our view. At the same time there is no doubt that anybody try to navigate the fence will come off second best as Craig Wilcocks will testify.

A recent review of the area shows that we will benefit from further fencing and we will be investing the remaining R10 000 from Association funds which was earmarked for this purpose in the near future.

Your committee has also been busy developing further strategies to prevent crime. These are :

SIGNAGE:

We have recently erected signs. The purpose of these signs is principally deterrent in nature and communicates our ethos which is zero tolerance of crime. Our thanks go to Tarryn White for graphics, Darren Rautenbach for sign writing and Greg Dreyer of Metal Form for the signs themselves.

CAMERAS:

The camera project has been a long time in development having had its genesis in our security meeting in March or prior. It has taken much research of various options and suppliers but I am pleased to report that we are well on our way to having Cameras operational and you may have seen the poles which have already been put up at the Roberts Taunton intersection. We will be putting a further camera at the top of Taunton nr the Tanner Rd intersection and one also on Villiers Dr. Thanks go to Derek Butler and Rowan White plus input from Kevin Cameron, Dave Griffin and others along the way. A big thank you to all those who responded to the pledge challenge. R41 000 has been collected and a further R35 000 has been allocated from the Association's reserves.

This sum of money will get phase 1 of the camera project in place.

This phase has two objectives namely to be a deterrent and to provide us with a means of follow up should we experience criminal incidents.

The next phase will involve monitoring of cameras in some form.

The technology we have gone for is well proven practical stuff that gets us on the road. Upgrades could involve wireless links to the cameras which will improve options and also number plate recognition software. The sky is basically the limit on what can be done given sufficient funds. Thanks go to Andrew Booyens, also a Clarendon resident, of VIS.

WEBSITE:

We are developing a website with help from Dave Griffin of ProsysCom and have reserved the domain clarendoncommunity.org.za this site will enable us to post salient community information and will also allow for membership log in to get access to crime stats and patrol feedback. We envisage a community business directory for members so that we can have Clarendon's version of "local is lekker". There will also be the opportunity for businesses to advertise for a small fee.

UIP

During the course of this week Rowan White had contact with the head of RTI Victor Chetty about something called Urban Improvement Precincts. Essentially this involves engaging with the local municipality about additional services and possibly substitution of services taken over by a local community. These services then form part of the rates base. This is something we would like to investigate more fully.

ONGOING INITIATIVES :

CPF

We are represented on the Townhill Community Policing forum by Derek Butler who is also the vice chair of the resident's committee.

The committee meets once per month and is embarking on a new mode of dealing with crime information. This will be taking the form of crime analysis rather than direct stats which SAPS will not give out. The analysis will hopefully answer the when what type of questions so that we can respond appropriately.

This is not an easy portfolio but it is a critical one for us in maintaining a link with SAPS. A big thank you to Derek for his commitment in this area.

GARDENS AND CONSERVANCES :

Pam Read and her team are always on the go with one worthwhile cause or another. From the garden at the bottom of Roberts Rd to brushcutting the Villiers Dr lookout. We employ a gardener on a part time basis to assist with this.

Conservancy work has been a quiet but no doubt spring will see some resurgence of activity. It is good to note that we do have something to conserve in Clarendon with duiker, dassies,

bushbuck, bushpigs, porcupine, honey badger, caracal, mongoose numbering among our four legged denizens. There was also the recent spotting of a Narina Trogon along with our more common feathered friends including Wood Owl, Buff spotted flufftail, Crowned eagle, Yellow billed kite, dikkop, and the list goes on.

SACAN

Hence the concern over recent hunting parties. A contact number via SACAN has been circulated via the What's App groups : 0861672226. We can also recommend joining SACAN – have a look at them on the 'net.

BOBBIES / SUBSCRIPTIONS :

This leads me on to talking about our Bobbies on the beat but before I do it is important to say something about the association.

The association in the simplest of terms is the co-ordinated effort of the Clarendon community for the good of the community. That is the only reason for its existence. It comprises our residents and is for the residents and needs to be about doing our collective will.

Your committee is committed to moving things forward but ultimately if the committee is not working then we need to make way for whoever is prepared to carry the community forward. As Clarendon residents I don't think anyone can afford to not be part of a collective effort. Rather be part of what is happening and make a difference in influencing your destiny.

I think that many have made the equation LCCA = Bobbies. I hope what I have said thus far would demonstrate that this is not the case. Certainly the Bobbies have been the major application of our membership levy but we need to be applying these funds in whatever manner achieves our objectives.

We have recognized that the Bobbies in their current format need radical change from both a concept and management perspective and there has been a lot of work behind the scenes to determine just what that might be. When we called the community meeting in March we had already met with Magma Security and they quoted us approximately R130 000 pm for a full armed and patrol solution. We subsequently met with other providers and it seemed that there could be a similar service for R65 000pm. We are collecting R28 000pm so R65 000 is still too much. We have considered doing something in house. This is still a possibility but has some complications including employment responsibility. We also need to look at harnessing the many individual home armed response solutions to the broader community service. There is a lot of inefficiency at present. So we have not got a concrete solution yet but we know that car patrols form part of the future together with camera monitoring. This is the next issue to be resolved once cameras are in place.

SUBSCRIPTIONS – WHATEVER IT TAKES

What I would therefore like to ask tonight is that in our minds we change the LCCA = Bobbies equation - to LCCA = whatever it takes. On that basis I appeal to any non-members to join the association and pay the R200pm. It is a small price to pay and what we can achieve can only be multiplied by more members. As you will have noted our levies have not only paid for Bobbies but have also made a meaningful contribution to cameras and the fence plus neighbourhood conservancy/gardening.

Our membership base is now 165 out of 320 households which is a shade over 50%. This reflects a fair increase from March this year. Thank you to the new members. We do however need more if we are to implement a proper guarding and monitoring system.

The fact that we raised R10 000 for the fence/bikes earlier this year and then R41 000 for the cameras is fantastic but regarding the cameras at an average pledge of R1000 that is 41 out of 320 households. R320 000 would be handy!!!

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS:

FIRSTLY ABOUT CRIME :

Crime is not something unique to Clarendon. Even when we were being picked off earlier in the year I do not believe we were the most crime affected suburb.

The awareness of crime created by better communication is just that – it is awareness and sometimes one begins to wonder if we live in a crime zone. It is better however to know about what is really happening than to bury our heads in the sand!

Crime unfortunately with our economic and social demographics may get worse.

We don't really have any option but to face these facts and make ourselves a difficult target.

I am pleased to say that there is a core of residents who are not going to take things lying down

So we need to tackle this on two levels : Corporately, which is what the association is all about and individually.

As individuals we need to sort out our own house and garden security. Chief among these are having an alarm and setting it. Having good garden lighting. The night patrols have made it very clear who is the easy target by lack of lights.

We also need to monitor workers in the area – particularly builders and any contract workers. These workers need to have ID's recorded or photos taken as there is a very strong link between such workers and subsequent crime.

NAME CHANGED :

We would like to change our name from Lower Clarendon Community Association to Clarendon Community Association to reflect the broader geography of our members.

Inclusion of Clarendon Ridge Community Association and Clarendon “West”.

We are discussing the potential synergies of joining with the above areas. We already are working jointly on neighbourhood watch patrols. This is something that will unfold over the weeks and months ahead.

THANKS :

Firstly I would like to express thanks to our members for their support and contributions financially as well as suggestions

Then I would like to thank the AGM team headed by Pam and Jim Read – Chris Withers, Marlene Daly, Julia van Heerden, Karen Rosenberg, Rob van Heerden for his free lance and free ranging signs, Craig Backhouse of CPW for the great fliers and posters.

On the food front :Oscars, Oscars deli, Pizzology, Adele from Olive Tree and residents Petro Walshaw, Pam Cockroft, Jenny Du Plessis, Kiam Germiquet, Jackie Hart, Sally Seager, the Whites, Steve Crosly and I suspect others too - thank you!

FINALLY THE COMMITTEE :

You have been served faithfully by your street representatives :

Rouen Bruni on Taunton Rd, Steve Crosly on Fettes, the Ushers Charlotte and Andrew on Altair, Chris Whithers Kitchener, Ian and Sherrell Michie Moreland and Centenary, John and Jane Kassner Kitchener, Marlene Daly Kitchener, Craig Smith and Greg Bissett Somers, Chris Halford Lower Roberts, Jim and Pam Read Upper Villiers and Gloucester – a big thank you.

We are in need of folk to represent Upper Roberts and Lower Taunton. If you can help please let Pam or me know. I cover Wavell and Wellington.

You have also been well served by the portfolio heads whom I have already mentioned as we have covered the various areas. I need however to mention Jim Read who has diligently served us in monitoring Bobbies and Dylan Horn our Treasurer who has been incredibly efficient and an absolute stalwart. Thanks to Jim and Dylan.

Finally I would like to express a special vote of thanks personally and on behalf of Clarendon to two pillars in our community Jim and Pam Read. Clarendon is truly a better place because of you!!

In conclusion then

- We have a security problem to deal with
- We have been served well by a dedicated group of people
- We need more folk involved (please see sign up form attached) and
- Together we can make a difference

Thank you.

Rob Evans
LCCA Chairman