

# ***New Killarney Riviera Association***

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**Hi everyone**

The Covid-19 pandemic continues to continue, and it is really hitting close to home. By now we have probably all lost somebody close to us to the virus. Unfortunately in January, Covid also took Mike Kalk, a long-time and committed attendee of NKRA meetings, and a hard-working participant in NKRA projects. Mike was a vocal supporter of positive action. He didn't just talk about what needed to be done, or complain on Whatsapp, he was one of the rare people who actually went out onto the street himself and helped to make a difference. This was rare as well as valuable, and Mike will be sorely missed.

Please everyone be very careful, as well as diligent about your precautionary measures – this disease kills, and it kills quickly. There is no cure, and if you get infected you are in serious trouble. Wear your masks, keep your distances, wash your hands, and do everything else you can think of to avoid the disease while we wait for a cure or a vaccine.

We mentioned in December how Carmel and Rudolf of Dumbarton Oaks have made a huge difference to the pavements in 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave, first on their own Dumbarton side as well as now on the side of Brenthurst Court. They then carried on to beautify the pavement in 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave corner, alongside the Chartwell building. These small improvements greatly improve the visual aspect of these pavements, especially if the pavement was looking a bit abandoned at the start. Many thanks to Carmel and Rudolf for these efforts. If anybody would like to join them in this initiative, please let us know.

There are other "sad spots" in Killarney-Riviera, which could be easily and cheaply improved. If you (or your building's garden staff) could spare a morning here or an afternoon there, much value can be added with relative ease. Some buildings maintain wonderful pavements, but some do absolutely nothing outside their boundary fence. In addition to looking after and beautifying our own pavements, perhaps we need to all look at the pavement across the road as well, and maybe make a small additional contribution in necessary cases.

For example the pavement at the corner of Main Road and Riviera Road is often a mess – long grass, dumped rubbish etc. This is the intersection of two very busy roads, and it is thus very

visible to passers-by. A mess on this corner sends a very negative message about our suburb to the rest of the world, so it would be really wonderful if the buildings in that immediate vicinity could co-ordinate their own members and employees and resources to keep that pavement under control. City Parks have helped us with big projects such as pruning the big pavement trees, but they do not seem to have the capacity to manage every pavement every week, so we will need to be a bit proactive with these issues ourselves.

After the Johannesburg Roads Agency finally repaired the most serious potholes in 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, we were hopeful that they would address the rest of our list as well. These other potholes are less serious than the potholes that were fixed, but with all the rain, these potholes are getting steadily larger. We sent the detailed list to the urban inspector for action. Although he was initially very supportive, he ended up in quarantine for Covid exposure, and he has been unable to pursue the matter. I spoke with him again recently, and he will be back at the office next week, so hopefully we will soon see some further progress.

We all pay fortunes in taxes every year, to national government and to municipal government, and although we understand the need to cross-subsidise less-developed neighbourhoods, we do also hope to get some service delivery in our own areas as well. We are also aware that the JRA is heavily focused on fixing Oxford Road at present, which obviously carries much more traffic. Therefore, in cases where our own needs are clearly not a high priority to the Council, and where our own property values and quality of life are suffering as a result, we need to be proactive and take the initiative to protect and uplift our suburb and our lifestyle.

These potholes grow larger with every rain shower, and therefore if they are not repaired soon, we will undertake a project to repair them ourselves, along with areas of pavements which have become dangerously uneven. This is expensive, and funds are scarce, so we will obviously focus on the most dangerous issues only. In order to facilitate this repair process despite the continued postponement of physical NKRA meetings, I proposed in December that the NKRA members agree (by email) to authorise this project up to a maximum spending amount – I suggested a maximum of R40,000. I have received zero objections thus far. However some members might have been out of town over the last month, so I am repeating the suggestion here. If we do not get serious objections from members this time either, and if we do not get a favourable response from the urban inspector on the proposed action plans of the JRA, then we will undertake these repairs ourselves.

Please would you help us by reporting to us all serious potholes, or areas where pavements are dangerously uneven, so that we can build up a project scope.

You can also help a lot by individually reporting all cases of potholes and other damage on roads and pavements, through the following channels:

- JRA customer contact centre: 0860 562 874
- Email them at [hotline@jra.org.za](mailto:hotline@jra.org.za)
- Tweet them at @MyJra

Please be very clear on the exact location of the problem, and include a photo where possible – it really does seem to help. The size of the problem can be a bit ambiguous on the photo, so if the hole is really large, it might be an idea to include a cool-drink can or similar in the picture as well, to demonstrate the scale of the hole.

The municipal palisade "security fence" at the 7th Street circle, which was vandalised a few months ago, has still not been fixed. This parking area is already the scene for illegal hawkers, so if we don't maintain the area it could go downhill rapidly. Since the Council doesn't seem to have the money or the will to fix the fence, perhaps we should attempt something ourselves. It will not be easy to fix, so we will need to bring in a competent company who have both the skills and the proper equipment. If anybody knows of a contractor who can do this type of work, please would you approach them on our behalf?

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there is currently a national curfew in place. This means that nobody is allowed to be outside on the pavements after 11pm, unless they have a "good reason". The welcome rain is currently keeping people indoors on many evenings, but if you notice people having a drinking party on the pavement, please call the police.

The SAPS Sector Patrol Car still exists, but the dedicated cell-phone in that car is not currently working. Meanwhile the services of the patrol car can be requested by calling our SAPS sector manager, Sergeant Mdlolo, on 082 355 5646. However failing that, please call the 10111 SAPS emergency number.

We have had a number of cell-phone snatchings this year on the pavements, as well as thefts of purses and bags. The criminals can see the various security guards and patrols, and they time their crimes for when the guards are too far away to intervene. Please all try to resist the temptation to stare at your phone when you are walking or standing on the pavement, as these are the situations which the criminals target for preference.

Eventually we will have high-spec security video cameras at trouble-spots all around the suburb, to monitor all types of illegal activities, to accumulate video evidence to assist the police with their investigations, and to hopefully create some deterrence. However in the meanwhile, all buildings can help a lot by putting up LED floodlights along your perimeters to

illuminate "dark areas" around your buildings. Criminals feel bolder in dark areas, so lighting up the pavements will make the streets a bit safer.

We have been advised that, in addition to the regular career thieves, some people who have lost their jobs have become seriously desperate and are turning to crime as well. These are not expert criminals, so they aim only for "easy targets". Fewer people are attending gyms during the pandemic, and more people are exercising outside instead. These people often carry fancy "exercise watches", in addition to the usual phones and money and jewellery etc. Joggers and pedestrians sometimes listen to music via earphones, which are a sought-after prize as well as making the owner a bit less aware of the people around them. Criminals target pedestrians by approaching them in cars or on foot, snatch their valuables and race away in a waiting car. Expert thieves tend to use false number plates, but the amateurs do not always think of that, so getting their licence plates on video could be extremely useful.

Robbers are also targeting cyclists – apparently an upmarket bicycle costs more than a small car, it is easier to dispose of and it is more difficult to trace and recover. I have been told that owners of expensive bicycles paint them with "microdots", so that the bicycle can be identified if the robber tries to sell it at a second-hand store. I don't know exactly how this works, but it sounds like a good idea.

We have received a communication from the Mall, warning us that robbers are active inside the Mall, and are targeting senior citizens in particular. They are active in the parking areas, at the doors and at the parking pay-stations, and they also follow people around inside the Mall waiting for an opportunity to steal bags and other personal possessions. The Mall's internal security service provider (SSG Security) are watching for this, but they can't be everywhere, and the thieves obviously act when the security are not close by. Once again, we all need to be careful about our phones and handbags etc inside the Mall as well – particularly when we are pre-occupied with children or a trolley – and we need to be fully aware of the people around us. If you are being harassed by a stranger in the Mall, scream for security to assist you (and I mean **SCREAM**.) It is much easier to corner a robber inside the Mall than outside on the street, so hopefully they will be inclined to run away immediately once they realise they have been spotted.

On our website we have a page of suppliers who have been recommended by our residents. See <http://www.nkra.org.za/recommended-suppliers/>. This is helpful to all residents who might need such a supplier themselves at some point. If you have had good service from a specific service provider, please would you let us know, so that the service provider can be added to the recommended list.

As the pandemic drags on and the economy sinks ever deeper, increasing numbers of families are struggling to put a meal on the table. Our Killarney-Riviera arm of the SA Harvest food security project therefore continues to add great value. SA Harvest collects all types of foods, and delivers them to established feeding projects around Johannesburg. A number of our buildings already have functioning SA Harvest food collection points, but if you wish to establish a new collection point in your own building, please contact Suzie on 082 336 3230.

If you notice any municipal service-delivery issues at all, please report these problems to the municipality on 011 375 5555. The municipal departments monitor the help-desk logs, so please call the help-desk, log the issues, and wait for them to give you a reference number. It helps if you call them repeatedly, as it seems that they give higher priorities to issues that are the subject of larger numbers of calls.

Please would the NKRA members give feedback on the pothole-repair project proposed above? If members don't specifically object, then I will assume that you are in support of these projects.

We also welcome all suggestions from all other residents, on all issues.

Keep well, and keep safe. 😊

Wayne Ford