



To All Members

Report of the Committee – 2014

The Committee has pleasure in presenting its report for the year ended 31st October 2014.

Membership

The Association has 293 contributing members, comprising mostly property owners but also including residents who do not own properties. This represents only 68.6% of those who own property on the Island.

Thus, 31.4% of property owners/residents do not contribute to the security and general upkeep and beautification of the Island, *key factors which maintain property values for all owners.*

This non-participation of a large number property owners, many of whom can easily afford what is a relatively small monthly cost, is the most intractable problem with which the committee must contend. The efforts which committee members (who serve on a voluntary basis) have to put into this matter is often onerous.

Every resident, business and property owner on Leisure Isle benefits directly from the ambience and safe environment maintained through the efforts of LIRA.

In excess of 89% of LIRA levies are spent on security matters. Most of the security budget is spent on the remuneration of a team of Island-dedicated security guards, at least two of whom are on duty every hour of the year.

Leisure Isle would be significantly less safe and pleasant if LIRA's proactive security measures were not in place. All LIRA members should pressure those residents and owners who are shirking their community obligations by simply taking a free ride.

Once again, as we proceeded through the year, we were faced with the prospect of incurring a considerable financial loss. Only through major effort were we able to persuade some late payers to honour their commitment and some other property owners to become contributing members.

We have calculated that, conservatively, if 90% of properties are subject to the levy, the annual 2015 levy of R3 900 (monthly R340) could be reduced by \pm 30%! It is patently unfair to those who do contribute that they must 'carry' the load.

A number of members have suggested that LIRA 'name' non-members. We are, however, advised that this may carry legal risk. We are thus considering ways in which members could assist in canvassing non-members to support LIRA.

We extend sincere thanks to all our members who do support LIRA and the security we thereby enjoy.

Security

An exceptionally high level of security has been maintained on the Island during the year. The weekly Allsound Report reflects the success of our security operation. Compared to other parts of Knysna, we are at this time able to enjoy a peaceful life free from the worry of crime.

We extend to Allsound our appreciation for their excellent management of the guards and security facilities during the year.

It is, however, clear from press and other reports that crime is on the increase in Knysna. We will continue to escalate Island security to the optimum but clearly we are constrained by available resources.

An essential element of our security operation is to improve surveillance through more sophisticated cameras and recording equipment. In addition, the regular vehicle and cycle patrols by our guards – 'Bobby-on-the-Beat'- appear to be a major deterrent.

We have set aside funding in our Financial Accounts this year for replacement of the existing camera configuration with upgraded equipment, as well as extension of surveillance over the Green Hole area.

Island Infrastructure and Municipal Services

Leisure Isle continues to experience declining standards of its infrastructure as well municipal services, the result of apparent severe budgetary restraints.

Portions of the south sea wall are in imminent danger of collapse. Appeals have been made to the municipality to fund urgent repair work to sections of the walls. The municipality has applied to the Dept of Environmental Affairs to provide substantial funding.

A legal opinion is being sought by the municipality as to whether it, or SANParks, has responsibility for maintaining the sea walls of the Island.

The state of many of the roads on Leisure Isle is unacceptable with, inter alia, numerous potholes. It is astonishing that the municipality is unable to attend to the matter, especially with the obvious impact it must have on local visitors and tourists.

Financial

The surplus for the year is R1 827.

This is after making provision for security equipment replacement and extension of surveillance of R71 000. We had planned for completion of the upgrade in 2014; installation will now be completed early in the 2015 year.

Retained Reserves at 31st October 2014 total R82 193

Major income and expenditure items are as follows:

	Year ended 31 October 2014	Previous year
INCOME:		
Levies	R1 036 122	R994 090
Interest and donations	30 572	22 986
EXPENDITURE:		
Security	R930 633	R864 533
Steenbok Nature Reserve	38 000	38 000
Maintenance/Beautification	38 458	31 959
Administration/general overheads	57 675	76 822

Levies 2015

The levy for 2015 has been increased marginally as follows:

Annual	R 3 900	(2014 – R3 800 pa)
Monthly	R340	(2014 - R325 pm)

Overcrowding, Noise and Alcohol Abuse

We reported last year that an intense effort was embarked on to get the Knysna Municipality to effectively address the problems which we experienced during the 2012 Festive Season, particularly late December and early January 2013.

We wish to thank our Ward Councillor, the Municipal Manager and her officials for their efforts which saw a substantial reduction in the unsavoury behaviour over the Festive Season last year (2013/2014).

We continue to enjoy excellent relationships with, and the support of, the Municipality but this issue is an extremely difficult problem to manage. We can only hope that the folks who visit the Island this Festive Season will respect our way of life and our beautiful Island.

Steenbok Nature Reserve

The Reserve is in good condition and attracts a significant number of local and tourist visitors. The Management Committee's main focus is on securing formal nature reserve status and it is hoped that this can be achieved under impending changes to zoning regulations.

The plans to restore more salt marsh by introducing additional pipes in the Steenbok seawall to increase tidal flooding of a limited area have been put on hold pending possible changes in environmental regulations.

The website (www.steenboknaturereserve.org.za) is in the course of being re-written and updated and should be launched early in the new year. Some of the signage in the reserve is looking 'tatty' and will be gradually replaced.

Unfortunately labour problems involving the two long-serving gardeners are currently being experienced and it seems unlikely that they can be resolved. Alternative maintenance possibilities are being examined, but in the short term it might not be possible to keep up the standard of maintenance enjoyed in recent years. It is unfortunate that this could extend over the Christmas holiday period.

Many regular visitors are members of Friends of Steenbok Nature Reserve contributing R320 per annum. Funds collected are used to implement special projects. Those wishing to join as Friends can do so by sending an email to info@steenboknaturereserve.org.za.

Environmental Matters

A member of the committee maintains a watching brief of environmental matters affecting both Leisure Isle and the estuary. This includes active liaison with SANParks and the Knysna Municipality.

LIRA arranged for SANParks to erect signs at various points around the Island notifying dog owners of the legal requirement for their dogs to be on a leash. This is essential for certain water birds which only feed at low tide to be protected.

The increased patrolling by SANParks has led to a decrease in illegal bait collection.

LIRA is represented on the Knysna Environmental Forum (KEF) which deals with a wide range of environmental matters in and around the Knysna area.

Leisure Isle Festival

The 12th Leisure Isle Festival, held over the weekend of November 1-2, was a resounding success. The quality of exhibitor stands was top rate, the choice of food on offer was superb, and the background music, village green décor and overall ambiance was amazing.

Since it started in 2003 this Festival has become well known for its congeniality, but the new-look 2014 Festival has taken the event to new heights that hopefully will be emulated in the future.

R187 000 was raised for Hospice, ePap Children Feeding Scheme, Knysna Animal Welfare, Loeriefhof Old Age Home and Steenbok Nature Reserve.

Sotheby's, the major sponsor since 2003, was joined this year by Knysna Tourism and Allsound Security. The latter two brought to the Festival important factors necessary to achieve the high level of professionalism that was evident to all attending. Another 15 organisations and individuals provided professional and other services on a sponsorship basis, while many others worked with the beneficiaries or participated as exhibitors.

As the Festival continues to grow, the organisers are looking for energetic volunteers to join the Festival committee. Four key roles have been identified. One of these in particular, would be an ideal area for a LIRA member (not necessarily a current committee member) to play an active role in the planning phase of the festival.

For further details contact info@leisureislefestival.co.za.

Forthcoming Festive Season

We extend to all members best wishes for a happy and restful time with family and friends over the coming Festive Season.

Leisure Island Residents' Association

On behalf of the Committee:

Keith Hollis
Chairman