

L I R A
LEISURE ISLAND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 17TH OCTOBER 2018
AT THE LEISURE ISLAND COUNTRY CLUB

1. Present

51 members as per the Attendance Register plus accompanying persons, as well as several other Leisure Isle residents. 80 attendees in total.

By invitation: Chris Gould, Chairman of the Knysna Ratepayers Association and committee member of The Heads Residents Association.

Apologies for non-attendance were noted from:

Alistair Armstrong, James Botha, Duncan Carmichael, Penny Costley-White, Clem Gray, Noelene & Gary Jorgensen, Chris Kay, Derek & Benita Kibble, Angelique & Alistair Knock, John & Gill Koch, Ricky Maskew, Hilary & Jim Saunders, Dave Spence, and Brian & Judy Steele.

2. Welcome and opening

The Chairman, Keith Hollis, extended a warm welcome to everybody present. He clarified that the meeting was an informal one to present proposals and to elicit views and suggestions. Even though a quorum was present, no voting would take place. He said that the presentation and discussion would be led jointly by himself and Dave Stromberg, LIRA's Deputy Chairman.

3. Background to the meeting

The background to the meeting was contained in the LIRA newsletter of 2 October 2018, namely the antisocial and illegal behaviour which had occurred on the Island on Sunday 30 September 2018.

LIRA had subsequently engaged with Knysna Municipality (KM) who were already aware of the problems but had not been prepared with adequate manpower for that weekend. KM has asked for full engagement with LIRA ahead of the holiday season to ensure that there is no repetition of what occurred on 30 September.

The Chairman confirmed that LIRA has a good relationship with KM and that, through adequate planning, preparation and additional resources, last year's holiday season was well managed.

Nevertheless, in engaging with KM this year, the LIRA Committee felt there was a need to first establish **Guiding Principles and Values** which could guide our approach with KM and other stakeholders. Although the Objectives of LIRA are contained in its constitution, there are at present no Guiding Principles and Values in the constitution for the utilisation, protection and enhancement of the residential and environmental heritage of Leisure Island.

The purpose of this evening's meeting was to elicit members' views on these Guiding Principles and Values, as well as on the proposed action plans.

4. Guiding Principles and Values

The following comments and feedback were given as the Chairman went through the Principles, one by one:

Guiding Principle/Value	Reaction and feedback
That the public areas of the Island are available for the enjoyment of residents and visitors	General agreement
That the rights of residents to live in peace and security be respected	General agreement. Add "safety"
That the rights of visitors to enjoy public areas and amenities be respected	General agreement
That all applicable laws, especially the municipal by-law prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in public, must be enforced effectively and continuously	Vehement agreement
That adequate amenities such as picnic areas, shade, ablution facilities etc be provided	Much discussion – see below
That the capacity of the Island's recreational areas is limited; thus the number of visitors should be controlled to prevent overloading such areas	General agreement but much discussion – see below
That the significant economic value that Leisure Island brings to Knysna must be preserved	General agreement
That harmony and peaceful co-existence between residents and visitors, and between visitors themselves, be promoted by appropriate and continuing communication to all role players	General agreement
The effective implementation of the law requires an adequate contingent of Law Enforcement Officers, properly trained and sensitive to the needs of residents and visitors	General agreement

Effectiveness of Law Enforcement

- Chris Gould, who interacts with KM on a continuous basis, reported that an additional 16 Law Enforcement Officers are proposed by KM for 2019. With KM's limited resources this year, it would be unrealistic to expect the policing of a total prohibition of alcohol in public places. The most that can realistically be expected this year is for bad behaviour to be policed. In addition, road blocks on George Rex Drive are planned.
- Declan Nurse, Director of Allsound and LIRA Committee member, reiterated the importance of **reporting bad behaviour**, as quickly as possible, **to the Allsound Control Room on 044-382-5589**. Allsound would then in turn engage with SAP.
- Dave Stromberg confirmed that extra resources from Allsound have already been arranged for the peak December/January season.

Adequate amenities on Leisure Island

It was acknowledged that the peak season is no longer just the December/January holiday period but that it extends into all summer weekends.

- There was general agreement that temporary chemical toilets should be provided at Bollard Bay and Thornely Park.

- However, there was strong opposition to providing additional permanent ablution facilities at either Bollard Bay or Thornely Park. The general view was that if the consumption of alcohol in public was properly enforced, the pressure on the Island's facilities would be reduced.

Restricting the number of visitors

- In answer to a question, the Chairman said there is no precedent elsewhere in the country that he is aware of where visitors are restricted into a public beach area. Nevertheless, with Leisure Isle's limited space and sensitive ecological environment, this principle could guide our interaction with KM.
- Several people drew attention to the politically charged environment that exists in the country at present with the upcoming elections in 2019. Great care must be taken to ensure that our actions do not aggravate any sensitivities.

5. LIRA's proposed plan of action

Having concluded the discussion on the Principles and Values, the Chairman handed over to Dave Stromberg to outline LIRA's proposed action plans. These proposals contain summarised suggestions which people made following the 2 October newsletter. They comprise short and long term actions.

Context

Restricting the number of visitors to the Island will be difficult. The Leisure Island waterfront is Knysna's favourite beach recreation area. Increasing numbers of visitors are using this area. This is an understandable trend given the unique, safe, beautiful 3kms of waterfront on the Island. However, it puts pressure on the social, natural and built environments. And if not carefully managed it will lead to negative consequences.

Any actions taken should be effective and achievable, and must involve all roleplayers. These actions must avoid any "us and they" and rather be inclusive of all, with mutual respect. Members expect LIRA to play a leading role in driving the process.

5.1 Short term actions

5.1.1 Encourage and enforce compliance with existing legislation

- Existing legislation covers everything we want.
- Preliminary meetings have been held with KM Security and Waste Management to discuss the recent overcrowding. Further engagements are planned to assist with preparations for the festive season, with emphasis on preventing:
 - Alcohol abuse
 - Antisocial behaviour
 - Noise and late night parties
 - Littering
 - Open fires
 - Illegal parking and dangerous driving
- LIRA has allocated funds for an enhanced Allsound Holiday Enforcement team.

5.1.2 Improve facilities to cater for all beachfront users

In our seasonal discussion with the Council, LIRA will table the following proposals :

- Put up prominent sign boards encouraging compliance

- Improve picnic and braai areas
- Erect post-and-rail fencing to restrict cars from picnic areas
- Provide more bins and increased refuse removal services – there will be people picking up litter all the time. Recycling bins will be provided
- Ensure that adequate temporary toilets are provided at Bollard and Thornely
- Implement one-way road and traffic calming measures

5.1.3 Undertake a communications campaign

- Erect information signboards focussing on the DO's and DON'Ts of a visit to the Island's beachfront
- Place informative notices and articles in the local press
- Interact with schools and community and religious institutions
- Employ beach ambassadors to promote positive behaviour

5.2 Formulate a long-term vision for Leisure Island

Two historical photographs of Leisure Island (1930's and 1970's) were screened to show how much development has taken place and to give context for the need to proactively develop a long-term vision for Leisure Island.

What legacy would we like to leave for the next generations?

- LIRA intends arranging workshops with residents in 2019 to discuss possible futures for the Island
- Appoint a team to turn the vision into an Integrated Development Plan
- Engage with KM, SANParks and other roleplayers to align and integrate with their planning processes
- Implement "Leisure Island: 2123 And Beyond". Leisure Island's Centenary is just five years away!

5.3 Feedback on the proposals

- Members present expressed appreciation for the efforts and work of the Committee.
- Their hope is that Law Enforcement (especially in relation to alcohol abuse) and Litter Removal will be as effective this holiday season as it was last year.
- They reiterated the need for every resident to have the Allsound Control Room number handy (044-382-5589) in the event that they wish to report anything.

6. Other matters

6.1 Buses on the Island

In response to a question on whether we can ban buses from coming onto the Island, the Chairman said the Committee would engage with KM on the matter as LIRA has no jurisdiction over the roads on the Island.

6.2 Ward 9 meeting

The next Ward 9 meeting is taking place on 30 November at 6.00pm in Brackenhill Community Hall. Members may attend as observers. Members will be notified of the next official feedback meeting.

7. Closure

The Chairman appealed for understanding of the challenges facing LIRA in dealing with a municipality which is not fully functional.

In addition, members have widely divergent views on some of the issues. He assured everybody of the Committee's best endeavours in pushing for solutions which would be as close as possible to the majority view.

Dave Stromberg encouraged people to assist with as many of the projects as possible.

The Chairman reminded everybody that the Committee is a team of volunteers who give freely of their own time and resources, for the good of the whole community.

That concluded the meeting.