BUSHMAN'S RIVER MOUTH / BOESMANSRIVIERMOND
Ratepayers' Organisation / Belastingbetalersorganisasie
(BRRAG)
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VOORSITTERSVERSLAG 2011 /CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2011

A voluntary organisation such as a rate payers' organisation per definition has a kind of inertia with the result that reading the annual reports of the previous years indicates that the same items seem to be attended to every year. There is only so much that can be done in a village. My personal view is that progress from one year to the next is not dramatic and that incremental progress is the best that a committee like BRRAG can deliver in a single year. Looking back on 2011 this is exactly the picture I see: **The establishment of portfolios** has been changed to enable a 20% attention frame to matters of critical interest and to prevent that the 80% nice-to-do matters derails the focus. This **80:20 approach** was followed in all matters throughout. There were also some **shifts of emphasis** in the approach to certain matters - a deliberate effort to write **less letters** to Ndlambe Municipality was made (with only one topic per letter), followed up by a personal discussion with high ranking officials. In this way four out of five matters could be concluded;

- at grass roots level the portfolio managers were asked to contact the local municipal officials directly to promote a **relationship of trust**. Those portfolio managers who reached this objective were also successful in completing many important tasks that necessary for the day to day running of our village. As could also be expected, many matters were also covered by the Municipality "in spite of BRRAG"; and here I refer to the (limited) pruning of trees, cutting of grass, (limited) repairing of roads, the painting of road signs and stripes and so forth. In this I would like to read the beginnig and seed of better service delivery.

- the **main objective** of BRRAG is *"to favourably influence for the benefit of its members the legislative, administrative and general activities of the municipal and provincial councils in whose area of jurisdiction such properties of members are situated* " (BRRAG Constitution, Art 3). I gladly report to the AGM that BRRAG in my view attained this objective satisfactorily which I motivate as follows:.

* **Samewerking op voetsoolvlak** kan sekerlik nog verbeter en items soos ooreengekome werkroosters en verdeling van die werksmag vir take tussen Boesmans, Riversbend, Marselle en Klipfontein sal deur die nuwe komitee verder opgevolg en uitgebou moet word. Ekself het heelwat tyd spandeer aan die bou van goeie verhoudinge met die senior munisipale amptenare. Hopenlik het dit bygedra tot die afhandeling van 'n hele paar kritiese aangeleenthede.
* Die **Wykskomitees** speel in toenemende mate 'n al hoe belangriker rol en dit is goed dat sake rakende Boesmansriviermond, Marselle en Klipfontein gesamentlik deur die oorkoepelende WYK 3 Komitee gedebatteer word om sodoende goeddeurdagte besluite na die munisipale raad deur te gee. Dit is ook duidelik dat begrotingsinsette deur hierdie forum geloods sal moet word.

*Die volgende belangrike vlak van oorlegpleging is **die koördineringsligaam** tussen die onderskeie belastingsbetalersverenigings in die Ndlambe gebied soos beliggaam in die NRF (Ndlambe Ratepayers' Forum). Hierdie liggaam hanteer gemeenskaplike sake van al ons dorpies met die fokus op Water-voorsiening en retikulering, Vullisverwydering, Brandbestryding, Paaie herstel en Rampbestuur. Daar

Executive Committee: Dirk Meiring (Chairperson), Sheila Swanepoel (Vice); Fanie Venter (Treasurer); Corris Krogscheepers; Ernst Linström, Pieter Mouton, Andrew Murray, Annabelle Northrop; Bill Northrop, Ian Smith, Roy Somers, Anton Vosloo.
Subcommittee members: Peter Bowen, Val Bowen, Dave Chalmers, John Charter, Rassie Erasmus

word ook met die burgemeester vergader (maar dalk nie genoeg nie) en gesprekke met Bhisho het ook al plaasgevind. Die NRF het pas ‘n memorandum oor probleemgebiede binne munisipale bestuur opdateer vir bespreking in 2012 met Bhisho.
* Om sy taak te kan uitvoer het u **BRRAG komitee** sewe (uitvoerige) vergaderings gehou wat noukeurig genotuleer is en waarop portfoliobestuurders moes rapporteer oor vordering met sake wat by die vorige vergadering(s) aan hul opgedra is. Ons het ook die Ndlambe brandweerhoof na ‘n vergadering uitgenooi om die nodige grondslag te skep vir brandbestryding (en in die proses’n skenking van brandslange bekom).
Verder is daar **gemeenskapsvergaderings** gehou om insette te lewer in die IDP (geïntegreerde ontwikkelingsplan) asook ‘n voorligtingsessie oor die “Ndlambe Bulk Water Supply Project” waarvolgens water vanuit die laer Visrivier deur die hele munisipale area versprei sal word. Ons is by hulle geregistreer as ‘n belanghebbende liggaam en het reeds insette gelewer. Dit is jammer dat daar nie veel belangstelling by die breë publiek in hierdie vergaderings was nie.
*We try to keep co-operation with our neighbours across the river on an acceptable level and Simon Oliver and myself respectively attend BRRAG and KOSRA meetings where useful information is exchanged.
*Members of BRRAG also officially serve on the committees of Estuary Care, the Chamber of Business Committee, the Community Security Agreement Committee and the Policing forum. In this way your committee receives direct feedback and this allows us to formulate our position on any matters that affects us directly or indirectly.

From the above the AGM should obtain a clear overview on the range and extent of the consultative and co-ordination structures that exist – and perhaps feel some sympathy for those who must attend many of these meetings. We have started to look at possible ways to streamline these activities and to cut down on duplication of effort. I am, however, not optimistic that we can cut back on the number of meetings.
A logical question flowing from the background sketched above, is to ask what the **relationship between BRRAG and the Municipality** really is. I am satisfied that at this local level a cordial relationship exists. This does not imply that we are satisfied with the level of service delivery. This relationship also does not imply that we agree on all issues. Our present relationship however does mean that we can talk to each other in a civilized manner – and that we can agree to differ when necessary. It also means – and this is important - that we can collectively tackle issues in which case our slogan becomes “*Together* we make a difference”. You will find examples of this in the body of the report.

BRRAG is not the municipality and has no ambition to become the municipality. Specifically, in this regard, there has also been a significant shift in emphasis: If an individual ratepayer would phone and ask (mostly in a rather brusque manner) what BRRAG is going to do about the building rubble lying across the street then the answer is simply: “Nothing. You must please phone the Kenton office and ask the municipality to attend to the matter”. In those cases where a ratepayer does not get a satisfactory outcome, they can approach us again to facilitate intervention with the municipality. I receive weekly calls with similar requests that usually concerns only one individual – and in many cases the person is not even a member of BRRAG! We are trying to stimulate a *culture of selfhelp* in which each resident can play a positive role and not just simply resort to passing the buck. I am optimistic that there are already signs that this approach is working..

As u sou vra wat die uitstaande kenmerke en gebeure van 2011 was, dan is my antwoord : twee sake - die vloede van 2011 en tweedens die uiteindelike uitbetaling van die rivierganggelde (miskien beter bekend as die “passage money”).
Vloede 2011: Stormwater is reeds vir baie jare ‘n probleem in Boesmansriviermond en baie briewe (almal op rekord) is oor die afgelope aantal jare aan die Munisipale Bestuurder en die relevante Direkteur gerig. Geen reaksie is verkry nie en geen remediëring van enige aard is nog onderneem nie. Die basiese

probleem bly die oormatige invloei in die Vlei area vanaf die bokant van die R72 wat afkomstig is vanaf Boknes, die plase noord van Marselle, Marselle self en Klipfontein sowel as vanaf sekere nuwe ontwikkelinge in die ou Boesmans. Die Vlei vloei dan oor in die dorp in die pype wat vir baie jare al te klein is en nie die volume water wat die rivier moet bereik, kan hanteer nie. Die vloedwater beweeg dan bogronds. Gedurende die onlangse vloede (Julie 2011) het die water – soos altyd – deur verskeie strate en erwe gevloei met die gevolg dat 17 huise water teen hul mure gehad het terwyl 7 huise waterskade binne-in die huise self gehad het. Die nuwe burgemeester is duidelik bewus van die probleem en gedurende gesprek met homself en sy senior amptenare het hy – in ons teenwoordigheid – opdrag aan die verantwoordelike amptenare gegee om hierdie ernstige probleem aan te spreek. Sekere kort-termyn maatreëls is in samewerking met BRRAG afgehandel soos die afleikanaal noord van Marselle om vloedwater vanaf die plase vroegtydig na die rivier te kanaliseer. Twee lede van u komitee het ook toegesien dat die omgedolwde areas tussen Umthati en Melkhout en tussen Melkhout en die Vlei herstel word (met groot dank aan Johan de Villiers vir sy skenking wat ons in staat gestel het om die nodige swaar masjinerie te huur). Dit is egter absoluut noodsaaklik dat die ingenieurs (wat reeds aangestel is) nou met ‘n plan na vore kom wat op ‘n volhoubare grondslag deur die munisipaliteit in werking gestel kan word. Die inkomende komitee sal hierdie saak aktief bevorder.

Rivierganggelde (“Passage monies”) Meeste persone wat aan BRRAG behoort ken die agtergrond van hierdie saak maar te goed. Aan almal wat skepties was – wonderwerke gebeur nog. Veral as so ‘n wonderwerk versigtig benader word en konstruktiewe ineengryp (engagement) as werksfilosofie gebruik word…… en natuurlik met tonne geduld as draer van ons werkswyse…… Hierdie gelde is begin Oktober oorbetaal en gelukkig was al die beplanning afgehandel om ‘n hele reeks projekte onmiddellik van stapel te stuur. Belangrik is ook die feit dat die munisipaliteit bereid was om materiale ter waarde van ‘n beraamde R30 000 by te dra. Ek boekstaaf graag ons dank aan Richard Pote vir sy betrokkenheid by die bevordering van hierdie aksie.Die uitkoms is duidelik sigbaar in die toerisme-verwante verbeterings (voorskrif van Ndlambe) wat onder die energieke leiding van Bill Northrop met hierdie gelde aangebring is: die slagboom by die see-parkering, verbetering van die parkeerplek self, opgradering en nuwe bankies en braaiplekke in die piekniek area, verstewiging van die seekanttrappe van die rivierloopgang, sitbankies by die uitkykpunt (ook by die Rivierstraat uitkykpunt), verdere bankies by die sleephellingparkering asook by die tennisbane is alles die gevolg van hierdie oefening. Geld is nog beskikbaar vir sekere projekte in 2012.

Terwyl ons kyk na **verbeteringe**, kan ons vra watter ander verbeteringe gedurende 2011 beslag gekry het. En dan is dit ook nodig om te verstaan dat BRRAG nie werklik kan funksioneer sonder bydraes – groot en klein - van sy lede en ook van ander belastingbetalers nie. **Skenkings** beide in direkte kontant asook indirek (“in kind”) lewer ‘n groot hupstoot aan ons werksaamhede en ons opregte dank gaan aan ons 52 donateurs. Nie minder nie as tien persone het R1 000 en meer geskenk met byna R27 000 as grootste enkele skenking deur ‘n individu. Baie van die skenkings is geoormerk vir spesifieke projekte en hierdie benadering word verwelkom. Pieter Mouton bly ‘n unieke steunpilaar - nie alleen het hy die geroeste en verweerde stormwaterroosters en munisipale waterleidingdeksels met gegalvaniseerde produkte vervang nie, maar is die sny van helfte van die dorpsingang na Boesmans vir sy rekening.‘n Tweede kategorie is diegene wat self inspring en hulle tyd sowel as geld skenk om vrywillig projekte aan te pak. Die meeste komiteelede val in hierdie groep maar ek lig graag een ander voorbeeld uit en ek doen dit omdat hulle nuwe intrekkers is wat hart en siel deel van hul nuwe dorp geword het. Glen Green het die vervalle en verwaarloosde tennisbane en klubhuis geneem en verbeter tot op die vlak wat u dit tans vind. Hy het sy eie “donateurs” gehad wat items soos splinternuwe tennisnette bygedra het. Sy vrou Desiree staan hom by en sy en ‘n vriendin het die ingangseiland (driehoek) herstel en beplant sodat dit nou ‘n mooi fokuspunt is. Ek lig hierdie twee groepe mense uit bloot om te toon wat gedoen kan word. Nog ‘n enkele naam: Matt Mullins het uit die verre NieuSeeland ‘n stewige kontantbydrae gemaak – afstand speel dus geen rol nie.

Ek is huiwerig om verdere inligting bekend te maak omdat ek die vertroulikheid van skenkings respekteer. Ek wil egter graag weer ons opregte dank boekstaaf teenoor al ons donateurs.

But let us return to the improvements themselves: The **mowing of grass** represents a substantive portion of our expenditure. A Garden Service has the contract to mow all the public domains including the cemetry and parks. In the case of grass mowing there is an interesting perspective that is not always noticed or given recognition. Over the years an unspoken agreement developed in which home owners accepted responsibility to cut the verges on their property boundaries themselves. *Without this tacit agreement our Village would have projected a completely different image. We are indeed all indebted to both members as well as non-members of BRRAG for their sterling efforts.* In the whole of the old Village there are only two erven that are completely neglected. It is perhaps symbolic that one of the two belongs to the municipality! In our Riversbend extension the situation unfortunately is different – and the reasons for this difference is not always understood by our detractors who easily state that BRRAG does not give attention to Riversbend. Drive through Riversbend and you will soon realise that the built-up erven are neat and their verges cut – obviously by the owners themselves who accepted responsibility to cut themselves or to have it cut. Our thanks to these persons. But this property is often surrounded by neglected erven. And invariably in all these problematic cases, it can be ascribed to **the absent owner syndrome** - an erf was bought for speculation and now it literally just "lies"; or it was bought and never been built on. Unfortunately this is the case with the largest percentage of erven in Riversbend. The committee has no easy solution for this problem. Owners should perhaps a follow a strategy of "adopt-an-empty-erf" and then simply mow the verges of the neighbouring empty erf. Or they could suggest workable and sustainable solutions.

Grass on the boat beach: Very little progress has been made with this problem. As a desperate if-you-cannot-win-them-join-them attempt I asked Koos Kooy to cut – on an experimental basis - a strip of about 20 meters instead of trying to remove it. It is too early for any valid conclusions. I would love to see Estuary Care assisting us with this problem – as well as with the sea grass invading the swimming beach.

Ablution facilities on the beach: Unfortunately these facilities are abused and damaged. The facilities on the main river beach has been neatly painted and BRRAG services them on a daily basis. Holidaymakers are requested to treat these facilities with respect. The facilities are locked daily at 1700 to discourage overnight sleepers and further damage.

Security: Fortunately we have experienced a relatively crime-free year – which is different to the experience of our neighbours on the other side of the river. The long-negotiated agreement between Hitec, BRRAG, KOSRA, the local Business and Tourism Chamber and the Merry Hill Property Owners' Association was signed on 31 March 2011. Since that date further upgrading has been done and a number of additional cameras have been installed. All cameras are monitored centrally. In lighter vein - residents and visitors beware: You are on candid camera! The conclusion that the cameras do act as deterrent probably is true. Another welcome improvement in security is the result of the erection of an electrified game fence around one of the newer developments. A secondary but also welcome reduction in traffic density via Salie Street to the town centre has also occurred because of the erection of this fence and their gate system.

Roads: A lack of sustainable planning and maintenance of the roads infrastructure has resulted in serious deterioration of almost all roads in Boesmans and Rivers Bend.Where maintenance have been attempted, it has been done in a primitive manner which does not comply with engineering specifications. The recent floods have severely damaged the surface of the roads and eroded the verges of those areas in the path of the flood water. It is clear that a long term plan to repair the roads infrastructure is necessary.We are in discussions about this. Furthermore, I would be less than honest if I should state that our roads/streets are in a worse condition than in some of the other towns and villages in the Ndlambe area. This does not imply that the committee should not give serious attention to this issue.

Refuse: The Boesmansriviermond dump is one of the two registered waste disposal sites in the Ndlambe municipal area (Port Alfred being the other). Although the site was recently refenced, it is not being managed efficiently. There is a tremendous problem with blown plastic since cattle graze in the

“distribution area” of the plastic. Since Kenton-on-Sea’s dump site has been closed the amount of refuse transported to the Boesmans site has increased alarmingly. Especially tree cuttings and building rubble is simply dumped and not compacted since the site is inefficiently managed. If Boknes and Cannon Rocks’ waste is also dumped here, the magnitude of the problem increases. The waste disposal site is a long standing problem which has been seriously compromised by the additional rubble being dumped. This problem affects more than just the rate payers of Boesmans and we are handling this actively at the NRF which is representative of a wider group of concerned parties. Geografically we are however directly linked to the site and will have to play a leading role.

Verkeerbeheer: Die twee ingange by die Red Apple het baie aandag geniet. Deur BRRAG se fasilitering het die Paaie-departement in Bhisho gedurende die Paasnaweek voertuigtellings by hierdie ingange sowel as by Kenton gedoen. Ons het verneem dat die uitslag na die Streekkantoor in Port Elizabeth verwys is. Ons het verder verneem dat verdere oorweging van die versoek om verkeerbeheermaatreëls by hierdie uitgange in te stel eers hanteer sal word nadat die opgradering van die hele R72 tussen Nanaga en Oos-Londen afgehandel is. Ons is in die proses om vas te stel wat die ware feite is.

Brandbestryding: Dit het nou absoluut duidelik geword dat ‘n brandweerwa slegs in Port Alfred gestasioneer sal word. Weens die tydsverloop om hier by ons uit te kom, is dit noodsaaklik om ‘n plan te hê om tussentyds ‘n brand te begin beheer. Na gesprek met die brandweerhoof en sy skenking van brandslange is die sykamer by Isea Eiendomsagente vir hierdie doel ingerig. Details van kontakpersone sal op die deur wees. Die brandkrane werk en kan gebruik word. Opleiding van vrywilligers om as brandbestryders op te tree, sal volgende jaar hanteer word.

Rampbestuur: Ndlambe het nog geen rampbestuur van die grond af nie en die volgende komitee sal moet aandag gee. Ten spyte van hierdie feit het munisipale amptenare en vrywilligers amper instinktief na ‘n rampbestuursmodus oorgeskakel gedurende die vloede in Julie. Sandsakke is waar nodig geplaas om eiendomme teen die water te beskerm en hulp is verleen om watervloei te bestendig. Dit was goed om te sien hoe BRRAG, munisipale werkers en ander saam kan werk onder krisisomstandighede. Dit was ook goed om die toe pasverkose Wyk 3 raadslid, mnr Eric Khoathane, byna die een hele dag in die vloedarea te sien.

Kommunikasie: Verskeie *nuusbriewe* is gedurende 2011 opgestel en versprei. Daar is gepoog om die belangrikste gebeure, verwikkelinge en besluite aan u oor te dra. Omdat ons graag alle lede wil bereik, het ons ‘n persoon gevra om die databasis te suiwer en te verbeter. Hierdie taak is afgehandel. Toe u vanoggend geregistreer het, is die verbeterde databasis daarvoor gebruik. Diegene wie se eiendom in die naam van ‘n Trust geregistreer is, moet asseblief direk na die vergadering by Ian Smith aandui wat die naam en adres van die BRRAG-lid is met wie ons moet kommunikeer. Ons Tesourier vind dit moeilik om ‘n elektroniese inbetaling vanaf die Tiddlywinks Trust te koppel aan die naam van ‘n spesifieke lid. Ons wil graag ons kommunikasie verder verbeter en wag suggesties in. Ons het ook vir die eerste keer ‘n *inligtings-brosjure* opgestel wat via die plaaslike besighede versprei is. Die brosjure bevat beknopte in-ligting wat vir belastingbetalers en besoekers handig kan wees asook ‘n hele aantal belangrike telefoonnommers. Dit verg baie werk om so ‘n samevattende brosjure saam te stel en ons vra graag u terugvoer oor die nuttigheidswaarde daarvan voor ons dit volgende jaar weer aanpak.

Huishoudelike afval en tuinvullis: Indien u sou vra wat op voetsoolvlak – hier op dorpbedryfsvlak - die grootste probleem is dan sal u tien teen een antwoord: Die Stadsraad. U is egter verkeerd: die grootste en mees irriterende probleem is ‘n onaanvaarbaar hoë persentasie van huiseienaars en van naweekgangers wat onnadenkend en onsensitief is rondom hierdie twee tipes afval.

Tuinafval en bourommel word bloot op leë erwe, in parke maar meesal op die sypaadjies van hul eie of ‘n buurman s’n gegooi waar dit dan vir tot 9 maande sal lê. Die oortreder self is dan terug huis toe en die agtergeblewenes moet dan vir die hele tydperk in die onooglikheid vaskyk. Die Stadsraad sal slegs tuinafval wat in swart sakke is, verwyder. Dit bly huiseienaars se verantwoordelikheid om toe te sien dat hul grootmaat tuinvullis na die vullishoop by Boesmans se industriële gebied verwyder word. Indien u dit nie self kan doen nie, sal die Munisipaliteit of tuindienste l dit op versoek vir u koste verwyder.

TREF ASSEBLIEF DIE NODIGE REëLINGS **VOOR U VERTREK. Ons is gedetermineerd om hierdie irriterende probleem op te los – selfs al moet die tuinrommel in erwe teruggegooi word.**
Household refuse is a more complex problem - nothing can be more irritating for a committee member than to clear up torn bags of household garbage after a weekend. It is understandable that weekenders do not know what to do. Positioning a skip is such an emotional issue and the containers that were built did not work out. However, several alternatives exist - look at the monkey/dog proof refuse containers displayed and buy one for your home; or buy a city refuse container with weels and chain it to your fence on the side walk; even better - before leaving on a Sunday to return home after the weekend, dispose of your rubbish in the skip at the entrance of Kenton (they use "our" waste disposal site and I see no problem if we use their skip). A BIG THANK YOU goes to the majority of our people and visitors who handle this vexing problem with sensitivity and responsibility.

In conclusion:
To serve on the BRRAG Committee carries no status. You are a volunteer and unpaid but it is expected of you to give your time, to use your own computer and your own telephone and to provide your own transport to meetings . You are sometimes addressed as if you are the important resident's lowliest employee. You mostly do not get any recognition – even for a job well done. You are expected to swallow the frustration of service delivery which is below standard. The output expected of you is that which is expected of a forty year old in the prime of his or her career. But you still remain a member of the BRRAG Committee................
For me it was an amazing (and I use this term advisedly) an amazing experience to work for the whole of 2011 with a group of persons who spared no effort *to* improve *the quality of life* of all residents of the Village we all love. I believe they did this because in the final analysis that is what BRRAG is all about. Even if some of us might feel that we could have given more, I applaud you for that which you have given. Unselfishly, mostly unquestioning and decidedly with dedication.

Since we are all only human, my thanks to those members of the AGM who showed and expressed appreciation for the silent work of their committee.

Dirk Meiring
Chairperson
27 December 2011 Boesmansriviermond