

OLD PARKS SPORTS CLUB

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2020

There is no doubt that 2020 has been an extremely tough and challenging year for the Old Parks Sports Club and for all our Members. Who would seriously have thought that on the 26th of March 2020 that we as a Club and as a Nation would all have to go into 'lock down' in our homes for a period of 21 days up until the 16th of April 2020 – as South Africa and the rest of the world were hit by the 'Corona/Covid-19 Pandemic'? It was all very surreal at the time, and in fact still is to date, as we all work through the various governmental 'levels' of restrictions and regulations which are all having a major impact on the club and on our lives. This Chairman's report for 2020 has just over 4000 words – but in reality, and as you can imagine - it quite easily could have been closer to 14000 words...

The last 11 months have seen much suffering at the Club, especially in terms of some of our own people and families who have suffered from the virus, who have very sadly passed away from it and who have also had other serious knock-on effects in terms of business, employment and just general family life. Our own Staff at the Club have had to be laid off for months and are still in fact as we go into this the 2021 Annual General Meeting, only back to work on a part time and hourly paid basis. The various Sports Sections at the Club have hardly operated this past year and have basically played little or no matches against opposing teams. Leagues and competitions have been decimated, whilst players and officials have struggled to come to terms with new ways of having to train and to prepare. Our valued tenants have also all suffered over the last year – even though there have been periods where they have been able to operate to an extent. In essence and overall – we as a Club have had an extremely tough year which has naturally had massive knock effects in terms of our finances and our people...

Due to the above matters, this last year has seen the Executive Committee (EXCO) and Management Committee (MANCO) having to not only deal with the pandemic and its massive knock-on effects, but also having to deal with a whole load of historical matters and other issues which have arisen over the year. As we are a Sports Club, it may best be described as us having to deal with a whole lot of 'balls' in the air – with each ball and every ball having to be juggled at different times to prioritise and to manage every single aspect in the best interests of the Club...

Let us have a closer look at these 'balls' which the Club has had manage and deal with:

1. City of Johannesburg (COJ) – Municipal Matters:

"More and more the Club is facing municipal issues and pressures. As one of the few private 'sports club' clients and not municipal, one of our biggest headaches each month is managing these matters. Some are historical issues, and some are simply due to old infrastructure and modern or different policies."

- a) Property Zoning = The zoning of our property has been an on-going issue for many years. Various town planners have been involved and the Clubs EXCO's have had many different approaches to try to solve this matter. Last year for the first time, COJ implemented a penalty amount directly on to our accounts each month for not having the correct zoning. EXCO and MANCO immediately decided to try to resolve the matter once and for all by firstly engaging and appointing Schindler's Attorneys to research and to address the penalty issue, which was naturally of massive

concern – as we believed we had a fair case against COJ in terms of them not zoning OPSC correctly in the first place and not informing us correctly. Secondly, we began a process on a shoe-string budget to try to finalise an actual application for us to get re zoned into the correct zoning category with the municipality. As things stand and bearing in mind all the delays due to COVID-19, the ‘penalty case’ against the Club is at the High Court and is hopefully due to be heard in March or April this year – whilst the application process and efforts to secure the correct zoning application and information is in the hands of our Club Manager and key municipal employees who are working on what exactly the correct zoning should be. In the not-too-distant future, we are quietly confident that we will with further assistance and support be able to lodge a new zoning application which will hopefully put this matter to bed.

- b) Electricity = Much to the surprise of the EXCO and Club Management, we totally closed and shut down the entire Club from an electrical point of view due to the COVID-19 pandemic – only to find that even though we were literally using almost zero electricity during these periods, the COJ continued to charge a ‘supply to property’ charge of close to R50k a month. This hit the Club hard during a time when we were basically not receiving any income – and so are still busy investigating just how this is possible and how we as a Club can get this changed if possible. To date our Club Manager is on top of it and trying to find ways of managing such...
- c) Water =
Last year we were hit with a historical ‘catch up’ bill for supply, and so continue to pay such off on a monthly basis with an agreed to ‘payment plan’ with COJ.

2. Tenants and Partners:

“The OPSC and in fact any surviving sports clubs around the country, rely heavily these days on private tenants as a source of income. It is not the only way to survive as a Club, but more and more it is an extremely important area to keep the doors open. During this COVID-19 period all our tenants have suffered business wise, and as a Club we took the decision to work with each business individually in terms of their rental payments over these times. Each tenant has benefitted greatly from relief in some form – as we wanted to look after our tenants and people.”

- a) The Gym Area = This building houses the following tenants - Gavin Horton Biokinetics and Robbie McIntosh’s Gym Trainers & Physiotherapists. Both tenant’s contract periods are now aligned and are due to expire in the middle of 2021, as it is the Clubs intention to work with our tenants to launch a new ‘Old Parks Wellness Centre’ that will hopefully take the facility to a new level for everyone’s benefit.
- b) The 5 A-Side Courts = Our ‘Fast Sports Fusion’ tenants have continued to operate where possible on an ad hoc basis during COVID-19. Their leagues were initially basically decimated, but more recently towards the back end of 2020 they were able to get in some game time. As things stand at the start of 2021, unfortunately under Level 3 restrictions – not much is possible for now on the courts.
- c) Rand Athletics Club (RAC) = Our oldest partners and tenants RAC, has also had to struggle with COVID-19 matters. So much so that the extremely popular ‘Tough One’ marathon had to be cancelled – along with many of the weekly time trials during the year. More recently they have managed to see some improvement in terms of

runners returning to the Club, as well as being able to get in more Tuesday night-time trials.

- d) Rustic Café = Rustic Café has now been up and running for almost 5yrs and has brought many good things to the Club. They too were naturally affected by COVID-19, although there were times when deliveries were allowed and in recent times have been able to be operational. In saying this, with less foot traffic through the Club it has been tough like with all our tenants. As things stand, the Club is busy re engaging with Rustic Café re the future – and will hopefully in the coming months be able to shed more light on such.
- e) Extreme Bike Park = During the middle of 2020, the Club became involved with Matt Barnett and extreme mountain bike enthusiast who began building bike jumps alongside Old Parks and in the spruit area. We engaged with Matt, for a good few months in an attempt to together work out a business plan that suited us all. Good progress was being made, until unfortunately the City Parks Department made both OPSC and Matt Barnett in writing aware of the fact building and activity was in fact happening on their servitudes. After some research investigation into the documents the Club owns and what reflects on title deeds etc., our Club Manager managed to go back to the early 1990's (some 25+ years ago) – where the Clubs EXCO at the time 'sold off' the servitude next to the Club to the City of Johannesburg which current town planning documents the Club has in its possession do not reflect such on any diagram. As such, this project for now is on hold – as we engage with both the City Parks Department and Matt Barnett in an attempt to see what is still possible and what is not.

3. The Club:

“The Club will always be bigger than any individual and will be standing for many more years than any of us will live. Clubs in general are evolving and adapting in the modern world in terms of various new offerings and in terms of finding ways to survive and to serve its members. In a world where it is now extremely tough to find committed and loyal ‘volunteers’ for zero remuneration – Clubs have to try to be smart as to how they operate and make things work.”

- a) Staff = Our people have been our priority over the last year during COVID-19, as without our people – the staff – there are simply only buildings and fields. As far as possible we have tried to ensure that they have all been able to survive. Unfortunately, with no big lump sums sitting somewhere in a bank account, we however had no choice other than to lay off all our staff initially when we went into our first lockdown. As things then started coming back into place, we were slowly able to bring some of our staff members back to work. To this day the vast majority are however operating on hourly rates and are sharing the working hours that we as a Club can afford to pay. Let it be said - our staff have been champions through this whole period and have 'chipped in' positively wherever possible, and often for little or no pay just to keep our special facility open. Many thanks to Lizette Driescher for her leadership and all the staff – as we owe you all a huge amount of gratitude and thanks for keeping the ship afloat during some dark days which are unfortunately not yet over...
- b) HR = As the year progressed it became more and more obvious that we needed some serious HR assistance. In the past we had survived with generous ad hoc

contributions and expertise from club members, but when COVID-19 hit it became glaringly obvious that we needed a more hands-on and professional approach. As such, in June 2020 we appointed a HR Consultant in John Povey, to come in and to clear up all the clubs HR matters. It has been an area which perhaps has not been effectively managed for many years – and now for the first time all our staff have an HR ear, they have KPI's and the Clubs leave registers and various policies are all now nearly well in place.

- c) The Bar = Naturally the bar sales took a huge hit compared to previous years with COVID-19 and the various 'no alcohol' regulations imposed by the government. In between these periods of 'no alcohol' sales – we were however able to open the bar and have had some surprisingly good numbers which have helped the Club hugely to keep ticking over. This bar area is naturally a crucial area of the Club in terms of income, and like our Sports Sections is very much the heart of the club. Looking ahead and when finances allow, EXCO have a few plans and ideas to re vamp the bars aesthetics and feel – so am hopeful that the new 2021 EXCO will be able to continue such thinking along these lines in the best interests of the Club.
- d) Facilities = Remarkably the main field has not suffered this last year as much as some may have thought. In fact, the break may just have been what it needed. The 'B' field however remains a problem from a water collection point of view and will in time have huge costs associated to try to solve the historic problem. The main Soccer Field is also not looking too bad considering COVID-19, but it has been tough to manage and keep visitors off key areas where new grass was planted – as youngsters and non-members seemed to love kicking balls around on that field during lockdown. The buildings on our property are incredibly old and there are now ongoing and regular monthly maintenance challenges, with breakages and things to fix on a regular basis. Maintenance and the general upkeep are now tough to stay on top of, especially when one's finances are extremely stretched. Sports facilities wise our bowling greens are looking great, whilst unfortunately the cricket net facility is now very aged and needs urgent attention.
- e) Security = A few years ago the Club began to try to improve our security offering with the levels of crime growing all over the country little by little. We installed new cameras, new alarms systems, a boom at the gate and appointed a new security company. This all make a huge difference and worked well, however in saying this probably no solution is ever the 'silver bullet' in terms of solving all one's security related issues. Since we initially installed the extra security, we have when financially possible invested more into this space – but unfortunately do not have enough income into the Club to for example have full time security at the gate or walking guards operating around the entire premises. Safety and security are an ongoing challenge and focus for the Club, and as part of our focus we have just recently moved away from 24/7 Security to move to a more locally based security provider in Special Ops – which we hope will increase response times and see us having more regular on-site drive throughs. Worth mentioning is also the fact that we have all had to remain as patient as possible at the main gate during these times, as by law our security staff have had to take temperatures and ensure that everyone is sanitised – with the Club relying on all members to also fill in the online declaration form. In saying this – sadly, some have been more patient than others, but in general the Club thanks you...

- f) Club & Staff Welfare Fund = When Covid-19 hit us in March 2020, the Clubs Management Committee started to talk about how best to support and care for our staff who we knew would be financially affected. At the same time, we received a letter from past Chairman, Mr. Brian Whillier, who wonderfully suggested and kindly offered to get involved in some sort of fund raiser for similar causes. The Executive Committee thus established the 'Club and Staff Welfare Fund', which was run by a sub-committee Chaired by EXCO Member and Association Trustee Kevin Robertson, along with Andrew Todd (EXCO Member) and Brian Whillier himself. These three gentlemen did an unbelievable job and raised close to R200k for this fund – which was used predominantly for the staff's needs and well-being, as they were all laid off and not earning a salary. The Club is extremely grateful and thankful for this sub committees' efforts, love and care – and were along with all the donors sincerely thanked at a special 'Club and Staff Welfare Fund' function held at the Club during early December 2020.
- g) Membership = Membership at the Club is still sadly on the decline, and since the pandemic hit it has naturally been even worse. This is an area that the new committee needs to seriously address, to find an improved way in this modern and changing world - to secure funds for the club and to keep people coming to enjoy our wonderful space. In saying the above, the Vega Design School for the first time in 2020 added some 500 students onto our membership lists – which was a big win for the Club and for the students who seem to love using our facilities and their own new "Thirsty's Bar" based at the five a side soccer courts.
- h) Fund Raising = It is not easy to fund raise during these times, yet the club embarked on a new online 'Joker Jackpot' fund raiser during the lockdown period which kept interest in the Club and raised some much-needed funds. As the COVID-19 restriction levels relaxed, the Joker Jackpot resumed back at the Club itself and remained online with wonderful live Facebook draws. Much credit needs to go to Gavin Taylor, Conn O'Donoghue, Terry Theron, Kirsten Theron, Paul Hector and Lizette Driescher for driving these successful fundraising events each and every week.
- i) Social Media = For the first time this last year, the Club signed up with a specialist social media and advertising agency to drive and to grow our social media and advertising areas. TNT Digital under the leadership of Terry and Kirsten Theron have done a superb job with our social media platforms seeing increased numbers and improved productivity. As we all know, social media and an online presence is the future, and we as a Club need to have these platforms to survive and to grow...
- j) Charity Drive Thru = During the COVID-19 Lockdown in late April 2020, our clubs EXCO took the decision to give something back to our community and to host a 'charity drive through' – whereby members and local visitors could drop off clothing and food for our chosen local charity which was 'One Small Act of Kindness'. The drive through was advertised extensively and was open for just 3 hrs one morning. Most of our EXCO members who could - came on down to accept, pack, collect, sanitize and to direct matters as literally hundreds of people and their cars came driving through the Club's car park to drop off food and clothes. It was an unbelievable experience as people continued to give and give... This for me was probably one of the highlights of my time as Chairman of the Club.

4. The Clubs Finances:

“The Club has over the last many years struggled to break even and this year was no different. In saying this our finances and financial office management have been excellently managed by our Treasurer in Birgit Lategan, and our Bookkeeper in Sharon Eloff. Every MANCO and EXCO meeting this last year we have had full financials available and our debtors and creditors have remained well in control even during these tough periods.”

- a) The actual financials which have been produced and shared with all members before the AGM, clearly shows what sort of tough year we have had. Naturally, the pandemic had a huge affect on the Club and our figures do not look too good.
- b) In saying the this, the Clubs doors remain open and operating as best as possible for now - in the hope that we can hang on and that you our valued members keep supporting the facility and memberships.
- c) The City of Johannesburg issues are what is really hanging over our heads, and if we can come out of the court case reasonably unscathed and we can settle on finding a way to re zone the property – we will for sure be in a much better space and able to survive well into the future.
- d) Looking ahead, there are definitely a few areas in which we can cut back and make smarter financial decisions – but these all take time to position and to then get done.
- e) Thank you to Birgit Lategan, Sharon Eloff and Lizette Driescher for their efforts in this massively important area – you 3 x Ladies “Deserve A Bells”...

5. Old Parks Association Property Development:

“Many years ago, forward thinking Executive Committee members started the process of exploring property development options – to assist the Club in moving forward and to finding a way to get a cash injection in order to sustain and to maintain the Club in the long term. Various developmental options have come and gone over the years – and right now the Association has wonderfully approved a potential development which can greatly assist the Club.”

- a) Joint Venture Agreement = During September 2020 both the Clubs Executive Committee and the Associations Council unanimously agreed to a new development deal with Profica Pty Ltd, Colonial Concepts Pty Ltd and Tri-Star Construction Pty Ltd know at the Joint Venture (JV).
- b) The Development = The proposed development which has not yet made much progress due to construction ‘due diligence’ needing to be done on the southern side of the property – in the same position as where previous potential property development negotiations were discussed. The agreed to development will be high end apartments, which will all hopefully blend in really well with the Club as a whole and will create that much more foot traffic and even potentially Sports Section members.
- c) Membership Communication = In early October 2020 both the Executive and the Council held a combined ‘members meeting’ to share the news and to answer any questions. The meeting was extremely positive and was supported by the vast majority attendees on both an online meeting option and also those in the room at the actual meeting.
- d) As things stand, our lawyers are in the process of drawing up all the agreements which will be looked at by the Clubs Property Development sub-committee – and

which will then be followed by the necessary due diligence work and investigations by the JV contractors all at their expense.

6. Sports Sections:

“Sport Sections remain the heart of the Club and are crucial to our survival. However, as the world around us evolves - it becomes that much tougher for our Sports Sections to survive, to compete and to manage their affairs within an extremely competitive and financially strained environment. Looking ahead we will need to become inventive and we will need find ways to sustain our sections.”

a) **Bowls = Attached to this report is the Section Chairman’s reports.**

Bowls AGM was held on Sunday 24 January 2021- good turnout considering Level 3 restrictions. The President of JBA – Rob Zimmerman gave us a presentation on what clubs could do to try and promote the game and grow the numbers as so many clubs were closing in the district. At our next committee meeting we will be looking to set up a subcommittee to market /advertise the game which hopefully will result in holding various competitions at our club. Although we are limited to the number of players as set out by JBA, TABS is running well with a good 30 odd players arriving each session to have fun in the sun, whilst also adhering to the COVID protocols. Our greenkeeper NEIL BELL and WILLIE the groundsman have done a great job in maintaining our greens during these difficult times. Their hard work has certainly paid off as we are hosting a JBA Competition on 31 January 2021 and the play-offs on 7 February 2021. Due to COVID we were unable to host the Mixed Trips Finals and the Women’s National Tournament. Our members have been great in taking out and putting away the equipment used as our greenkeeper is currently only working certain days during this period. Our League season has been postponed until further notice, but when it does, we will be entering:

Men:	2	x Teams of 8 players
	2	x Trips teams
Ladies:	1	x Team of 8 players
	1	x Trips team

Our internal club competitions start on 30 January 2021.

Bowls is proud to have Michele Schliesser, playing under the Old Parks banner selected as a Provincial B player and is also a committee member on the JBA Players Association. Also playing under the Old Parks banner, Enrico Menezes was selected for the JBA Junior Challenge. Thank you to my committee and members for your support, commitment and co-operation during these unsettling times - in the meantime, stay safe – wear your mask and adhere to the COVID protocols.

Eileen Breakey – OPSC Bowls Chairman

b) **Cricket = Attached to this report is the Section Chairman’s reports.**

The 2020/21 cricket season is proving to be one of the more challenging and interrupted seasons with the Covid19 pandemic hindering and halting all senior and junior competitive matches. Fortunately, the current senior and junior cricket committees have done well in organising various practice sessions and internal matches to give our players some much needed time in the middle. The senior section had managed to participate in an unofficial ‘friendship league’ coordinated by the Central Gauteng Lions governing

body. This allowed us to play once-off games against Old Eds, Jeppe, Wits, Delfos and Florida. These matches would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our Old Parks ground staff in the preparation of fields, pitches and nets whilst operating with skeleton staff. A big thank you to the managerial staff too for getting our club's Covid19 compliancy up to date. We have for the first time in many years also procured Admiral warm-up kit for our whole senior section to further improve the overall playing experience at Old Parks. Old Parks is currently sitting on 47 registered senior cricketers (43 of whom have paid up, paid half, or are on debit orders) with the number to increase or decrease slightly - pending on the possibility of completing a competitive season. Our junior section is boasting with a number of 106 registered players with only 10 accounts yet to be settled. We are spoilt with great groups of players over both sections as well as supportive parents and spectators. Our cricket section is fully committed to create a platform for all players to achieve success individually and as a collective, providing they work hard and stay humble.

Bryan Jacklin – OPSC Cricket Chairman

c) Hockey =

Hockey like many other sports during 2020 was a non-event. We did however manage to scrape in one game before lock-down but then the season came to an abrupt halt. The two men's social sides remain in the league as does the ladies side which plays a more competitive style of hockey in a much higher league. From a financial perspective we are very fortunate that savings over the years as well as payments from last year will be able to fully fund the season in 2021. All three sides are very keen to get on the Astro and hopefully will be able to play this year. The 2021 season is scheduled to begin towards the end of March, but no formal start dates have been finalised due to the fluidity of the situation with regards to Covid. A men's side was entered into a summer league at the back end of 2020 and this went exceptionally well, and the players really enjoyed the run around as well as a socially distant beverage afterwards! Fingers crossed we are able to get going when the season begins in late March 2021, but like 2020 has taught us - anything can happen!

Andrew Todd – OPSC Hockey Chairman

d) Soccer = Attached to this report is the Section Chairman's reports.

The past year weighed heavily on the football section with lockdown starting straight after we had our junior tournament opening up the season. SAFA issued instructions that all game play and training should stop in light of the pandemic and we were able to only train in very small groups and one on one during most of the year. This never met the physical needs of most of the members, but as a result we have been blessed with no serious impact through infection etc. The football section was fortunate to assist the club with engaging with SAFA to arrange training for two PSL teams at our grounds during lockdown which brought in a little cash to assist with overheads and help keep things going. A huge thank you to the MANCO for dealing with all the red tape and managing things for us. At the end of the season, we tried to squeeze in a little training and friendly matches only to be locked down again. While we were in lockdown the football section was

approached by a company called Football Spotlight to look into making Old Parks the home of Real Betis in SA. Real Betis is a first division team based in Spain and they are franchising their brand around the world in an effort to gain feeder clubs in other countries. Negotiations are still underway with the representative based in SA and Zimbabwe to investigate viability and benefits for the club. The 2021 season should open as soon as lockdown levels are relaxed and SAFA gives the go-ahead for football to resume. Until then, stay safe, train at home, contact the committee for online content that supported the physical and mental development of the players.

Kevin Mc Donald – OPSC Soccer Chairman

7. Club Committees:

“No club can survive or perform without many willing members who are prepared to give up their own valuable time to service and to assist in driving the club forward. This last year we have definitely had those sorts of people on all of our committees - which has made my job just that much easier.”

- a) Executive Committee = Our EXCO this year have been extremely supportive of the Club and have again gone above and beyond to assist and to manage where possible. Many for the first time in their lives managed to connect onto our first ever Zoom Online EXCO meeting which was just superb. Also, for the first time in their lives many had to sneak down to the Club during lockdown periods with masks and with sanitizer to have socially distanced meetings. Without committed and supportive EXCO members like these, who have had to make some tough decisions in the best interests of the club along the way – the Club quite simply may not have been here today. Many thanks to you ALL – you are all TOP ‘Club People’ who have served your club with absolute distinction.
- b) Management Committee = I think that this year I may just have seen our MANCO members more than my own family...:) Together as a small but amazingly effective committee we have literally met in person, zoom called, whatsapp’ed and whatsapp called, SMSed or just landline called each other at least two to three times a week over the last 10 months. There has been just SO many things going on to keep the Club alive and well – along with just SO many other old and new issues to manage and to deal with as they suddenly appear. Yet throughout it all – Gavin Taylor, Birgit Lategan, Conn O’Donoghue, Eleanor Talbot and Lizette Driescher have remained resilient, hardened and totally focused on every aspect of the Club. They have all no doubted hated seeing my number come up on their phones but have not once flinched or moved off and away from the many challenges. For all your support, your hard work and your total commitment to the Club – I and the entire club are eternally grateful and thankful – and you all deserve more than medals of service. Many thanks troops!

In closing and from the above, one can see that 2020 has been an extremely tough and busy year in trying to manage and to support the Club. Without your ongoing support and care in the coming years, the Club will I am afraid suffer – and so my closing words are once again one of asking and encouraging you to again be ‘proactive and positive’ in putting your hand up wherever you can to assist and to help grow and sustain our wonderful Club... Please also do not wait to be asked – and rather please come forward with ideas, suggestions or even concerns – so that ‘together’ we can keep the Club intact for many future generations to come.

Many thanks for the support this last year, and may 2021 be a much-improved year for us all!
“Stay SAFE – Keep the FAITH”.

Yours faithfully,

Dave Nosworthy
OPSC - Chairman