



16th June 2022

Dear Loyal Members,

The last time I wrote to you we were all 'in and out' of various Covid lock down levels and struggling along just to manage all the different restrictions and requirements. It is really good to now be able to write to you in the middle of 2022, with a lot less stress and not so much of a threat hanging over the club's head. I trust that you are all personally wintering well, keeping yourselves healthy, and fighting your way back to some normality after what has been a really tough few years.

As a Club, we have managed over the last few years to keep the doors open and to serve you our members as best as possible – but let it be said that in recent months we are perhaps only now really starting to feel the financial pinch and the impacts from the Covid period, which I suppose you are all also starting to feel in your own home. With food prices, drinks prices, petrol prices, and the like all soaring and on the up – we are all being affected and we are all having to operate a lot smarter. Good luck with your approach – and as ALWAYS... 'keep the faith'...

“So What Is The Latest At The Club”

1. 'OUR' Staff:

Our wonderful staff are all now thankfully and at last back on full wages, after having to take cuts in terms of income and hours at work during the Covid period. This has meant getting some normality back into their lives – but will for a long time still mean having to play catch up. Please keep supporting our staff where you can and be patient with 'our good people' who genuinely dig deep to offer us all an awesome space to just unwind. Please also join me in welcoming our new Head Groundsman 'Desire' to the club – who as part of our contract with Penquip, he has been appointed to oversee and to manage our ground staff and the facilities as a whole.

2. 'OUR' Sections:

Our sports sections continue to fight back after having been hit hard with membership numbers during the Covid period. Most sections have taken some form of hit as some players have stopped attending sessions due to Covid concerns, or due to their own financial issues they were no longer able to pay membership fees. The sections along with our Treasurer and the Section Chairmen themselves, are all busy working through each sections finances whilst also collecting any outstanding fees. Please if you are one of these members who still owe your membership, dig deep and pay what is due to the Club so that we can continue to offer you your sporting outlet.

As sections:

- a) The Bowls section have recently hosted a few successful JBA Competition days, and our very own players have also walked away with some amazing results and trophies. We may as a bowls section be one of the 'smaller' clubs in membership numbers – but we definitely are one of the clubs with the best spirit and most committed players who seem to just love flying the flag. Well done to the hard working Bowls Committee, and also to all the players/members in general who support this section so well.
- b) The Cricket section ended their season in March extremely well with the Clubs Premier League team (which plays in the Gauteng Lions Cricket Leagues Premier A Section), managing to again qualify to remain in the 'A Section' of the league. This was a brilliant effort by all of the players due to some superb cricketing performances on the field of play, due to much depth and some great youth in the 2nd and 3rd XI's, and due some excellent work off the field from the cricket committee and coaches. Well done to all in what seems to be a section which is once again growing slowly but surely. In term of the Junior Cricket section, the number of players definitely dropped off quite a bit from previous years. There were probably many reasons for this – some being the Covid factor, but also and importantly the number of schools which now

require boys to attend school cricket on a Saturday morning. This section has a few challenges, which with some smart thinking will easily overcome and once again flourish under some extremely determined and good people.

- c) The Hockey section are well into their season and hovering around mid-table across the board. The section continues to attract players of all ages, whilst their spirit both on and off the field is brilliantly lead by their Chairman Andrew Todd. If any of you are still maybe interested in getting in some game time – why not make contact with the hockey section...
- d) The Soccer section are also well into their new season with regular practices and matches happening every week-day and every week-end. As a section, soccer has also struggled a touch number wise compared to what they have been used to in the past. Again, there are a number of reasons for this including the Covid factor and the various school soccer requirements – but also let it be said that some players have disappointingly being poached away to join other clubs. The soccer section just before the start of their season, unfortunately saw a Chairmanship change due to a relocation situation, but wonderfully Mr. Ben Matai has now stood up to take the helm and to drive the club forward. There is definitely some work to be done here by Ben and his committee, but excitingly the future looks bright with new leadership as they somewhat fight back from a tough few years.

OVERALL: There are quite a few members from all of the different Sports Sections who have outstanding fees, and so I sincerely ask you all to please make a HUGE effort to settled what is due. Without these current and even past outstanding amounts, the club and the sports sections are suffering - and perhaps not even able to offer you all of what we could offer if everyone just made a payment or made a payment plan at the office or online.
YOUR CLUBS PLEASE NEEDS YOU!!!

3. **'OUR' MANCO & EXCO:**

The Executive (EXCO) and Management (MANCO) Committees have been hard at work to keep things ticking over. As I mentioned above, it has only really been over the last few months that we have felt the real impact of rising costs and what is termed the 'Covid Factor'... The knock on effects of Covid are being felt, and so now more than ever the committees are having to work harder and harder – and you as our valued members are now needed more and more.

Here are some of the key areas of interest which we are busy managing:

- i. City of Johannesburg - Zoning Application / Rates / Penalties / Electricity Etc.
There is some good news here and some bad news here:
 - In terms of the ongoing Zoning / Rates issues with COJ and after much time and much effort on a 'pro bono' basis with Schindlers Attorneys, it has all arrived at a bit of dead end due to a few similar cases which we were going to climb onto the back of – now having applicants that no longer wish to pursue their battles for whatever reason. This has basically meant that if we wish to continue to fight our 'battle' alone, we as a Club will potentially be in for some exorbitant Supreme Court costs – which quite simply we cannot afford financially and cannot afford to put the club at any risk. As such, we are currently as MANCO and EXCO looking at our options and deciding on how best to move forward.
 - In the mean-time, we have wonderfully managed to get COJ to stop the monthly penalty fees and to even get them to reverse a few months - by getting our correct Zoning Applications into place, which had been hanging over the head of the club for a few decades. A huge amount of effort on this matter by MANCO members and our Club Manager has us all now seeing some light at the end of tunnel.
 - During the months of Covid lockdowns and during the various Covid levels where we closed shop, the club's electricity account went into arrears with COJ, due mainly to what is termed a 'demand charge.' This demand charge we have since found out, is basically a cost of around R40k per month which gets added to our account just to bring electricity to our property and facility. This in our

minds is a 'madness fee' and have for a few months been trying to get COJ to reassess this fee and to work with us to manage and reverse the status. In the mean-time, COJ arrived at the Club recently to turn our electricity off one afternoon due to us 'being in arrears' – which meant that our Club Manager had to rush off to the Council to agree to a settlement term, even though we as a club were paying extra cash each and every month on our own to catch up and to self-settle the outstanding amount. In fact, if one were to take away the 3 month total lock down 'demand fee', where we used next to zero electricity – we remain just a few thousand rand in arrears...

GENERAL COMMENT: The COJ challenges continue as we stand strong fighting for our club!

ii. Our Tenants

All of our valued tenants are now fully operational and slowing but surely clawing back their businesses, after what was quite a testing time for all... Please support them ALL as much as possible – as they are all good people, and they have great businesses...

Some selected information on some of our tenants include:

- RAC = The Rand Athletic Club and OPSC are busy discussing and negotiating a new contract with the newly elected RAC Committee. After 40 plus years at the Club and with an outdated contract which has been running month to month for nearly ten years – together we are sitting down to try make it work well for all parties, at what is an awesome venue and an awesome running club.
- Padel Tennis = The Executive Committee is a long way down the road to hopefully securing some brand new Padel Tennis courts at the club. For those not in the know, Padel Tennis is one of the worlds fastest growing sports and courts are popping up all over the world with a few already well positioned in Johannesburg. We as a club want to offer you our members the opportunity to play this game, whilst at the same time entering into a business deal with potential new tenants that can benefit the club. Watch this space and our social media in the coming weeks...

4. 'OUR' Finances:

As I have alluded to above, we are as a club keeping our heads above water – just!! We however really do need YOU our valued members to please come down to the club to use our wonderful facilities, and we also do really need YOU all to please pay any outstanding subscriptions. A huge thank you to those who have already paid such for 2022 – and for those who can get to the club to support us in whatever way possible. Our MANCO and EXECO committees with the guidance of our Club Treasurer are regularly assessing and working on old and new ways to keep the books fluid and to raise funds so as to keep our operational side alive and well. Your support and care in your own way is vitally important...so please do keep supporting YOUR club and look out for some fun 'Club Fund Raisers' over the coming month or two...

5. 'OUR' Property Sale for Development:

The sale of the small piece of property owned by the Old Parktonians Association (OPA) for development into wonderful new apartments behind the cricket sight screen on the south side of the property, is still ongoing and is closer than ever to being finalised. The process has been a laborious 2yr plus task to initially gain your much appreciated support, and to then canvass across various top professionals in various different fields of expertise – so as to always try to ensure that the club will only benefit from the sales agreement and never be at too much risk. Wonderfully in the coming week or two, we believe that the final draft agreement is likely to land on the desks of the Old Parktonians Association Trustees – who will vigorously peruse the work done and collectively meet to sign the agreement into place so that the various bits of due diligence can get started before there is officially a green light. Personally, I am crossing my fingers that everything goes to plan, and that the Trustees agree - as this potential injection through the Association into the Club is seriously needed to boost the business and to take us all into a new era. In my humble opinion, exciting and positive times ahead...

6. Club Security:

The club has sadly in recent weeks and months seen an increase in crime, and especially the loss of cars which have by hook or by crook managed to evade our various layers of security. This is definitely a trend in the region as just recently at Emmarentia Dam, which is not too far away from us, they had 7 cars stolen in one day. What needs to be remembered, is that not too long ago we as a club had little or no security in place and so have over the last few years fought back and invested as much as finances have allowed - by employing main gate security control through a professional company, employing a very proactive patrolling security provider, installing various well positioned cameras, installing new LED floodlighting in the carparks, and also appointing a specialized vehicle license plate recognition system as our layers of security. These layers of security have already saved many a situation and have brought crime down in general - but like with all security there is sadly never that 'silver bullet,' as criminals will forever find ways around these layers of security as quite simply people are desperate.

In saying the above, we as a club will continue to invest in security where possible, and we continue to take your security exceptionally seriously – and so kindly ask you as members:

- To remain vigilant at all times.
- To never leave any valuables in your cars.
- To be patient at the gate when you are asked to stop, show your keys, or even re start your car.
- To lock your cars and ensure again that they are locked.
- To report all and any suspicious activity to the security on site or to the barman who can push their panic buttons.

Further to the above, where I have focussed mainly on our entrance and car park areas, one also please needs to be seriously alert at the back of the club alongside the spruit – as there have also been quite a few incidents of mugging/stealing. At some places along the back there are no fences, and so it is extremely easy for criminals to sneak up the hill and to run back down with your goods into the spruit area. The property in the spruit area does NOT belong to Old Parks but to COJ – and so please try to remain vigilant and keep up close to our fields and buildings, whilst perhaps even carrying some pepper spray if walking or running in the actual spruit.

7. Dog Walkers and Dogs at The Club:

As a club we try to welcome ALL and have an open door policy for the community, but there are set rules in place that require ALL dog walkers or visitors with dogs to have them on a leash at all times. Recently I have been approached by some of you, as we are seeing more and more visitors and members arriving without their dogs not on a leash – and also even allowing them into the bar to wonder around and to sit next to them. To add to this, naturally there are a few 'bombs' being left on our fields and so we sincerely ask you all to adhere to our rules - and to also as members manage the rules for us if necessary for visitors by reporting such incidents to our barmen to manage. To clarify:

- All dogs must be on a leash at all times
- No dogs are allowed in the bar or inside the clubhouse
- Pick up all your dogs 'bombs' and dispense of such

In closing, many thanks for your ongoing support in what is and has been some really tough times. May you and your families all remain positive and especially supportive of the club itself and our various committee's objectives, so as to keep the club healthy and strong well into the future. As always, also please feel free to contact me and to speak to me amicably at the club re any matter or concern which you may have. #KeepTheFaith

Yours in Sport,

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