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Chairperson's Report 2024.

Suiderstrand is a special and unique place — one of the few communities surrounded by a National Park. It is a place where you can still see the stars clearly and where the animals, plants and sea are part of your life.

December 2024

The Suiderstrand Community, Conservation and Fire Protection Association was constituted on the 7th September 2023 for the sake of fire protection, conservation and community building. Attention to all three these goals was given during last year.

1. Fire protection

The fire wagon was continuously maintained so that it remains in good working condition. It is tested weekly to ensure that it will be as effective as possible in an emergency. As a result of representations to and cooperation with CAM, 9 new water couplings to the fire hydrants were installed and 18 were upgraded. This means that there are presently 27 fire hydrants in workable order and ready for use in case of a fire (25 in Suiderstrand, 1 in Moquini Bay and 1 in Blue Bay).

As a result of discussions with the National Park, there is now clarity about the fire breaks and the evacuation routes. We can report that the Park is doing an excellent job in and around Suiderstrand.

We are very thankful to Schalk van der Merwe, our first fire protection officer and initiator of the fire wagon project, for the above-mentioned successes.

To ensure effective action during emergencies, a map of the fire hydrants in Suiderstrand and a notice with emergency numbers will soon be put up in the parking area. A magnet sheet with the emergency numbers will also be made available soon.

Our fire protection committee has recently been reconstituted with Gerrit Posthumus as fire protection officer with the following members:

Tina du Plessis (Vice Chairperson)	Derik Duvenhage
Wouter Trollip	Stevie van der Spuy
Elma von Plaster	Ewald Swart
Schalk van der Merwe	Louis Lourens
Jaco van Zyl	Ross Kettles
Geoff Nichols	Theo Fourie

2. Conservation

Alien plants and beach cleaning — Our community has regularly on Saturdays (weather permitting) been active in the eradication of alien plants and cleaning the beaches. An estimated 3600 alien plants have been eradicated in this manner. Schalk van der Merwe, Geoff Nichols and Derik Duvenhage are thanked for this initiative, and Matilda Wassenaar for the beach-cleaning initiative.

iNaturalist — An opportunity was created whereby the community could be introduced to iNaturalist (Citizen Science).

CAM's policy for the clearing of vacant erven — Successful representations were made to CAM regarding their new policy for the clearing of vacant erven. Klaas and Linda Steyn must be thanked in this regard. After the new policy was adopted, the association, under the leadership of Geoff Nichols, met with CAM officials and undertakings were given by CAM that the new policy will be implemented taking our concerns into consideration.

Conservation Village — The association has adopted the idea of Suiderstrand as a "Conservation Village". This will not only promote conservation, but also give Suiderstrand an own identity, which is valuable. This does not

entail any legal or statutory obligations, but reflects a commitment by the community to conservation, one of the goals of this association.

3. Community

Logo — After considerable involvement by the members and the community of Suiderstrand a logo was adopted. The association has obtained the permission of the National Parks Board to use a depiction of “Lagoon House” in our logo.

Signage — It is clear that the present entrance to Suiderstrand does not meet expectations. A Proper welcoming sign with an indigenous garden will be a great improvement. A need has also been identified for signage that has emergency information and promotes conservation. The committee made proposals in this regard to CAM, which agreed to the proposals. The signage with the emergency information will now be put up. The rest of the proposals are referred to the community for their comments and for alternatives to be proposed. This can be made at the AGM or by e-mailing it to suiderstrand.association@gmail.com before 1st January 2025.

Community Market — A Community market is held at the parking lot on every first Saturday of the month, weather permitting. There is growing interest in the market and we thank Anita Joubert-Bagshaw for her initiative in this regard.

Speed bumps and storm water ditches in roads — After the need for this was established, CAM was requested to assist, and 5 of these were built. There is a need for a few more, and CAM has again been asked to consider building them.

4. Communication

Newsletter — Two newsletters were distributed — one in April 2024 and one in September 2024—to make the activities of the association known. On several occasions the community and the members were asked to make proposals to the committee.

The Suiderstrander — Three editions of this publication were produced. The April edition dealt with alien plants. The May edition dealt with indigenous plants and blombos, and the June edition dealt with the black oystercatchers of Suiderstrand. We thank Anita Joubert-Bagshaw for this excellent initiative.

Electronically available information about the association — On the website www.suiderstrand.co.za with the community link there is a considerable amount of information available about the background and activities of the association, including the constitution of the association, emergency contact numbers, evacuation procedures, minutes of meetings and much more.

5. Finances and membership

Bank accounts and financial statements — Two bank accounts were opened at Standard Bank: one an interest-bearing account and the other to be used for running expenses. At the end of our financial year (31 August 2024) our bank balances stood at R20 750,64, of which R14 315,28 has been ringfenced to be used for fire prevention purposes only. The estimated value of our capital assets — the fire wagon and accessories—is R30 900.

An audited statement will be available at the annual general meeting to be held on 18 December 2024.

Membership — One hundred membership forms have been completed and submitted. Thanks to every member who has paid the R150 membership fee and to the many who have made donations in money and in kind. Just in the last three weeks we have received more than R4 000 in donations. Our aim is to have 120 active members. We also would appreciate further donations to be able to meet the expenses regarding the implementation of the signage proposals.

7. Further actions

Storeroom/garage for fire wagon — There is a need to store the fire wagon in a better and more accessible place. Several options are considered in this regard.

Conservation Initiative — It is important to reassess our conservation initiative and put it on a better footing. One option which is to be considered to adopt a conservation management plan and to register as a conservancy thereafter.

Completion of signage proposals — After receiving advice and alternative proposals from the community, as suggested, the matter will receive further attention.

8. Cooperation

The association has in the last year established excellent cooperation and relationships with the National Parks Board, the Agulhas National Park, and with CAM, and Suiderstrand has reaped the benefits as a result. We also thank Dr Andries Eksteen, our councillor, for his cooperation and assistance in the last year.

9. Thanks and the committee

Suiderstrand Community — We thank the community of Suiderstrand for their involvement and interest in their environment and community, despite widely different backgrounds and differing personalities. There is appreciation for the diverse views being expressed. Suiderstrand is not only an exceptional place, it has exceptional people.

Committee — I would also like to thank the members of the committee for their involvement, enthusiasm, and the sacrifices they have and are making for the association and Suiderstrand. Meetings were held monthly and were very well attended.

The present committee is:

Danie Schutte (Chairperson)	Gawie du Toit (Vice-chairperson)
Matilda Wassenaar (Communication)	Anita Joubert-Bagshaw (Conservation and market).
Derik Duvenhage (Secretary)	Louis Lourens (Treasurer)
Gerrit Posthumus (Fire protection)	Geoff Nichols (Conservation)

I would also like to thank Schalk van der Merwe and Klaas and Linda Steyn for the valuable contributions they made on the committee during this year.

9. In conclusion

I am now more than ever convinced of the necessity of an organization like ours in Suiderstrand.

There is no way Suiderstrand is going to avoid rapid development. It is clearly happening around us. The only way in which the unique character of Suiderstrand can be maintained and encouraged, is by imaginative actions and especially examples promoting respect for the environment and our community.

This community has basically two options: (1) Sit back and expect CAM to develop this as an interesting place with character — we all know that this is not going to happen and that we cannot expect CAM to do that. (2) We can as a community become involved and try and make a contribution towards making this an interesting place. That is what we are entitled to and that is what this association is trying to do with your assistance.

Danie Schutte
Chairman