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MID newsletter – July/August



Dear Members,

I must start this newsletter with an apology for it being a bit late. We have a good reason, though; the Board and I wanted our next newsletter to announce The Big News...the long awaited CCTV surveillance system is being rolled out!

It's been a long, hard road to get to this point, and we're all very excited about the potential this high-tech system has to fight crime in the MID-area in real-time (more below).

In other news, almost six months after the March 2020 'hard lock-down' we are still battling to find sustainable solutions to the influx of homeless people to the area. It is a frustrating process, but rest assured MID is working with all stakeholders to find a solution that protects the rights of residents and preserves the dignity of displaced people.

While we are deeply saddened to have seen the closure of businesses in the area – including long-standing restaurants The Empire Café and Gaslight Café – we are heartened by the fact that many businesses are still holding on, thanks in no small part to you, the community, showing them such great support through these troubling times.

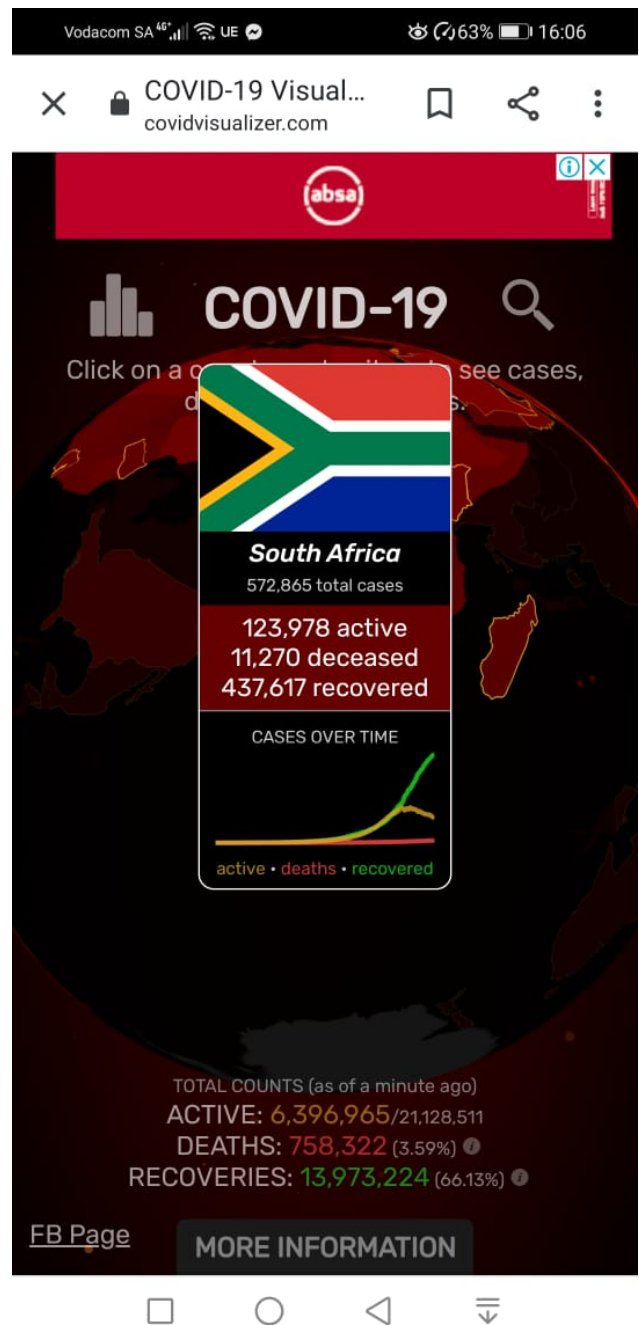
We've even seen the opening of two new restaurants, The Black Cat Café in York Road and ImagiNext Sushi on Main Road, and we have it on good authority that Palmer Road will soon have a new dumpling-delicious eatery. We wish all these new businesses success and MID's assurances that we will continue to support all businesses in terms of helping to keep the streets clean, safe and attractive to both visitors and locals alike.

On the topic of businesses, we must congratulate JOON in Palmer Road for being voted 1 of the top 15 Best Pizza places in the whole of Cape Town, as voted by locals in Cape Town Magazine. Muizenberg is indeed becoming a culinary hotspot and we encourage everyone to share the news and continue to #SupportLocal!

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and the Western Cape in particular, is starting to head downwards, this is no time for complacency.

At the time of writing, South Africa's curve was approximately at the place Spain's was when they eased restrictions further. See the graph below and note Spain's curve climb upwards after restriction easing.



The result? After a hard-won decline Spain is experiencing a 'second wave' and is currently in another hard lockdown. South Africa, and Muizenberg in particular, simply cannot afford the same to happen to us, so we implore everyone to continue wearing a mask, sanitising often and keeping strict social distance!

Peter Corbett

MID Chair

ensuring the entire MID area is covered 24/7.

This is not your standard 'grainy CCTV in a driveway' system, which is all but useless to tackle crime in real-time. The MID cameras, as you can see from the image below, are extremely high definition and responsive in that they are activated to alert controllers when there is movement. This is all monitored 24/7 by a dedicated team at the GRIT control room, enabling our Public Safety service provider to respond in real-time on the ground.



GRIT will be sharing this intelligence with law enforcement and Muizenberg SAPS, and MID is currently looking into an app-based reporting system that will enable us to form a better picture of when the prime 'criminal hours' are, the hotspots, suspects, known suspicious vehicles, etc. All this will help us to tackle crime in the area more proactively and efficiently.

Crime Spike In The 'Berg

There has, unfortunately, been a spike in crime in the MID area over the past month. We have no evidence as to what this spike is due to; however, anecdotally it may be attributed to the number of people forced into poverty and an influx of displaced people to the area as a result of the Covid-19 economic crisis.



While GRIT continues to patrol and LE and Muizenberg SAPs continue their activities, we are confident the new CCTV camera and real-time responsiveness will do much to help combat this unwelcome surge in crime.

Security Patrollers Up-skilled

Meanwhile, MID has introduced a financial incentive scheme for GRIT public safety provider patrollers, whereby the 'best patroller' is monetarily rewarded each month.

In addition, GRIT has instituted renewed training with all patrollers and we are seeing the results of this, with patrollers becoming more proactive in terms of reporting possible incidents, suspects, etc.



As mentioned above, MID is also looking into an app reporting system that would assist us to collate all incidents and reports, which in turn will assist our public safety providers to have better data to work from and, in turn, a clearer view of where and when resources must be deployed.

Please remember: the MID safety patrollers are there for YOU. If there's any suspicious activity or an incident within a MID public space, you can call the MID's GRIT patrollers for assistance any time of day or night. Call: 021-7888453.

Homeless Programme Stymied (again)

For the past two months MID has been in talks with longstanding NGO U-Turn, The City of Cape Town and the Muizenberg Community Action Network (CAN) with regards to starting a rehabilitation and feeding programme for displaced people within Muizenberg.



This project would ideally involve:

- A community food garden whereby people are given the opportunity to work in the garden to earn vouchers.
- Produce from the garden would be used in the Muizenberg CAN kitchen and, if there is surplus, sold and the revenue reinvested in the project.
- A voucher-based meal system that would enable vulnerable people to either purchase meals from the Muizenberg CAN at low cost, or to use vouchers earned through the community food garden and/or other employment opportunities to purchase meals.
- U-Turn would run a rehabilitation programme linked to the above.

MID has, in principle, committed funding for a six-month trial period from our social development budget for this project. However, this project is now in limbo as U-Turn has unfortunately not been able to secure rental for the building they would like to use.



We are deeply disappointed that this project has not yet come to fruition, as the Board believes Muizenberg is in desperate need of such a project and MID is invested in supporting it.

However, we have not given up! MID will continue to work proactively with all stakeholders to push for this project to get off the ground as soon as possible.

NB! Help us find a venue for this project: If you know of any large, suitable property within the MID area that is up for rent, or are the owner of such a property, please email chair@mid.org.za

Crack Down on Illegal Beachfront Traders

MID has received numerous complaints from restaurants on the beachfront about food trucks without the necessary permits 'poaching' business from them. While we do understand that these are exceptionally hard times and the proprietors of food trucks are also trying to eke out a living, it must also be understood that businesses on the beachfront pay high rentals and have overheads to pay, including staff, electricity, water and rates and taxes.

As such, over the past month MID has doggedly pursued this issue with The City of Cape Town and its Law Enforcement officials. As a result, the unregulated food trucks have been issued numerous fines and been told they may not continue operating without the necessary permits. We continue to monitor this situation daily.



MID realises that this is a contentious issue and that there may be backlash from supporters of the food trucks. We reiterate that we do empathise, but we also do implore the community to consider that the beachfront restaurants are permanent members of our business community, who are struggling to keep their doors open and their staff employed during these turbulent times. It is therefore categorically unfair that food trucks who are able to pack up and trade from market to market with little to no overheads or staff to support are able to continue operating without the necessary legal permits, and in doing so are jeopardising the livelihoods of permanent eateries on the beachfront, as well as all the staff they employ.

Weed and Dumping Blitz

Our priority over the past month has been to keep the streets clean, which our cleaning staff are doing admirably. We recently did a blitz on weeds growing in the streets and on pavements, spraying them with an organic weed preventer and extracting them. This is a very necessary job as growing weeds undermine the infrastructure of roads and pavements by shifting tar and paving stones, and the last thing we need is more infrastructural damage!



A major problem in this regard is the frequent dumping that continues. Residents often put out branches and garden refuse alongside their bins, which is against council instruction. Please ensure that whatever refuse you put out fits into your bin. If it does not, please make a plan to have it removed separately. This includes couches, broken furniture, boxes, etc.

We also ask all residents to report illegal dumping (with pictures and addresses) to the MID Ops manager by emailing ops@mid.org.za. This can be done anonymously if you wish.

'Green Back' Muizenberg

The MID has inherited several of the public green spaces Muizenberg, which sadly have been neglected. We plan to change this radically in the months to come, starting with the Beachfront and Palmer Road Gardens, which will be rejuvenated in August – #WatchThisSpace!

We are aware that working in gardens so close to the sea means that planting options are limited, so will be opting for water-wise succulents. If any of the community have time to spare and have 'green fingers', we would welcome all help. Please email gardens@mid.org.za directly to volunteer.



While MID is doing our best to keep Muizenberg's public spaces green, we do also ask for all residents to also look after their verges, if they can. It would be wonderful to have not only a clean suburb, but also a beautifully green suburb.

Keep Up To Date

MID is in the process of starting a dedicated WhatsApp group for business owners, to be followed by monthly get-togethers with expert speakers to facilitate support for local business owners (please SMS the Ops Manager on 078 014 827 or email him on ops@mid.org.za to be added to the business group).

For non-business members, aside from this monthly newsletter please follow us on Facebook at [@MIDMuizenberg](https://www.facebook.com/MIDMuizenberg) for regular news updates.



Can you help? Lastly, the MID website is in need of a facelift! If anyone in the community is able to volunteer their web development services (simple Wordpress site, with all copy provided), please email communications@mid.org.za

Meet the Directors

We admit, we've been remiss... The new Board of Directors was voted into office in December 2019 and, while many members were at the meeting, not everyone was introduced to the new directors, which was pointed out to us by a few members. You spoke, we listened. So, without further ado (and with our apologies for the delay), please meet the current MID Board:

Joanne Hichens

Portfolio: Cleaning and Gardens

Crime fiction author, editor and long-time resident of Muizenberg, Joanne served on the original MID board and has been a strong and active supporter of the MID ever since. Since re-election in December 2019, Joanne has taken on the role of Vice-Chair, as well as the portfolios of gardening and cleaning.



"It goes without saying that we've had to face unprecedented challenges over the past few months, but when it comes to the future, we're hoping that Muizenberg will indeed show itself as a Model Community, which has a place for all.

I would like to see more community members becoming involved in taking care of our street gardens and taking responsibility for keeping verges neat

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The MID Board has gelled nicely since last year's AGM. I'm hoping, however, that once we're able to hold meetings face-to-face, and are able to interact more fully with the community, our efforts will reach new heights."

Dale Simpson**Portfolio: Social Development**

Muizenberg local, property owner and property developer, Dale is passionate about creating a diverse Muizenberg where all people – from rate-paying residents to displaced peoples alike – live in a symbiotic, caring community.



"My vision for Muizenberg is that it grows to become even more of a hub for people of all walks of life to enjoy the natural wonders of our beautiful beach, mountain and vlei, as well as the diversity of the people and businesses resident in our village. A place where we engage honestly with care and sincerity to the social challenges of our community to create a safer, happier environment for all of us."

Melany Bendix**Portfolio: Communications**

A Muizenberg Village local for 15-plus years, Melany is a two-time previous MID director and owner of Muizenberg-based content marketing agency Bonzai Media and the co-founder of the Village Vibes festival, which aims to showcase the creative talent and unique 'vibe' of Muizenberg village through festivals, monthly markets and other events.



"This is my third stint as a director of the MID board and, while much has changed, many of the challenges remain the same. Chief among them is creating unity and social cohesion within the community. I believe this can be done through proper and effective communication.

I'd also like to see the long-held ambition of expanding the MID area achieved, as I strongly believe this is the only way for the MID to 'go up a level', from a mostly volunteer-driven organisation to a larger-earning CID that can afford a full-time team spearheading improvements in the greater Muizenberg area."

Toby Megaw**Portfolio: Public Safety**

Toby has been on the board for 2 years and has taken on the mammoth role of public safety. Involved in Muizenberg security for the last 5 years, he



"I am confident that with a comprehensive, good quality CCTV camera network using black-screen monitoring software, well-trained controllers and patroller response working efficiently together with improved radio communication and smart phone data collection, we will have a highly effective crime combating strategy in place and can expect to see a significant drop in crime in the MID area."

Peter Corbett**Portfolio: Chairman**

Peter served on the MID Board for some years in its early days and was elected for his second stint in December 2018 and has been Chairman since then. He also holds the portfolios of Finance and Governance so is very much the red tape go-to person. His 20 years as a City and Metro Ward Councillor in Durban some years back are very useful in dealing with Council departments here. He has owned his home in Palmer Road for 23 years.

**Contacts to note:**

Public safety (emergency): GRIT 021-7888453

MID Ops Manager (Non-emergency service issues): ops@mid.org.za

MID Ops Manager (emergencies only): 082 463 1525

MID Chair: chair@mid.org.za

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