

MID Newsletter - June



"To conquer frustration, one must remain intensely focused on the outcome, not the obstacles."

— T.F. Hodge

The past month has been nothing short of an extreme exercise of the above, for the entire MID Board and myself, as we've been consistently stymied by frustration after frustration.

Despite our best efforts, we've been unable to make much headway on what's commonly become known as "the homeless problem" in Muizenberg Park and beyond (more on that below).

We're equally frustrated by the slow-pace of movement in our efforts to facilitate the creation of a community food garden at the old bowling club, which has the long-term potential of providing sustainable food security to economically vulnerable members within our community.

Likewise, our concerted attempts to alleviate tensions between the community and the local SAPs (resulting from heavy-handed enforcement of lockdown regulations) have been met with silence.

We're also dismayed daily by the actions of a few members of our community who seem to believe that the lockdown regulations do not apply to them, and who constantly flout regulations on social distancing and mask-wearing. We cannot stress enough that economically-enforced relaxations of regulations during Level 3 does NOT mean the pandemic is over! To the contrary, all scientific modelling shows we are at the stage in this pandemic where **we need to be extra vigilant in order to protect the vulnerable in our community**, whether that's the economically or demographically vulnerable due to age and pre-existing conditions. We implore all MID members to act responsibly and follow the regulations, not only for themselves but for all who live in this community.



The above notwithstanding, it is not all “doom and gloom”. Although overshadowed by the more pressing issues, MID has continued to make headway on many seemingly small, but significant goals, which we’re pleased to report on in this month’s newsletter.

We’re also buoyed by the number of local businesses that are coming back to life and are reinventing themselves during these strange times. We implore you to #supportlocal where possible to ensure Muizenberg remains a vibrant, thriving area where the community looks out for one another.

Importantly, the Board and I are not being deterred by our current obstacles. Rather, we’re choosing to focus on solutions in order to achieve our objectives, as it is the only way we will reach the outcomes that you, the MID members, have asked us to deliver.

Peter Corbett

MID CHAIR

Homeless & Muizenberg Park

In our May newsletter, we reported that MID had been in communication with the City of Cape Town’s social development department regarding the establishment of a place of safety for the homeless in Muizenberg.

At that stage, we had identified three possible sites and reiterated to the City of Cape Town (CoCT) that MID would assist with the funding of such a facility. This was – and still is – particularly urgent as the majority of people who “set up camp” in Muizenberg Park were “released” from the City’s Strandfontein Place of Safety – including many who were not in the Muizenberg area prior to lockdown.

Following several communications and a meeting with CoCT, we gained assurances that the City would fast-track this process and revert, but unfortunately more than a month later we have had no meaningful progress on this issue.



Some positive news, however, is that through collaboration with the non-profit organisation U-Turn, many of the legitimately homeless have opted to enter rehabilitation centres or to be relocated to homeless shelters that have space.

We'd like to reiterate here that the oft-touted line in the media that the homeless who are on the streets should simply "go to homeless shelters" is, in our view, disingenuous, as there are simply not enough places in shelters. In particular, the South Peninsula has a drastic shortage of beds in homeless shelters – at last count there were zero beds available, which is why there is such an urgent need to create another place of safety nearby.

The current status quo is that there are a group of about 20 people still camped in tents at the top of the Muizenberg Park, while others are living in the abandoned "Peppermint Palace" opposite the train station. Public toilets remain locked overnight during lockdown, which means the homeless still have no ablutions or access to water, resulting in the park increasingly becoming littered and soiled by human excrement.

In addition, several of the people in the park have been identified as criminal elements sheltering amidst the legitimately homeless, which we believe has resulted in an increase in crime that can anecdotally be linked to the "tents" in the park.

Our frustration with this situation can be summarised as follows:

- Since May, we have consistently engaged CoCT to allocate a site for a Place of Safety in Muizenberg, and have reiterated that MID would contribute funds towards such a facility, in addition to driving community support for this facility as opposed to direct hand-outs.
- We've repeatedly warned that the situation outlined above would occur when the homeless were "released" from the Strandfontein site and tried to preempt this by having, at the very least, a temporary place of safety ready.
- Despite these efforts, which are well-documented, we have been met with little-to-no assistance.

This situation will only worsen and become more uncontrollable in the coming weeks, to the detriment of the community and the legitimately homeless, as more people become indigent as a result of the Covid-19 crisis.

Until we have collaboration and commitment from all parties involved – local SAPs, Law Enforcement, City of Cape Town Officials – MID is, unfortunately, unable to take much more meaningful action in this regard.



As a ratepayer and/or MID member, if you would like to add your input and/or concerns to The City of Cape Town, please send feedback to local ward councillor Aimee Kuhl at Aimee.Kuhl@capetown.gov.za and cc Mayoral Committee Member for Services and Health at City of Cape Town zahid.badroodien@capetown.gov.za, as well as admin@mid.org.za for record-keeping purposes.

NB: We implore the community NOT to exacerbate the situation by giving directly to homeless people – including self-appointed “car guards” at the beachfront. Instead, we encourage contributions via the Muizenberg Community Action Network (CAN), to ensure your goodwill is fairly distributed to people in legitimate need.

Visit www.muizenbergcan.org for more info. Alternatively, contact the following helplines:

- **Muizenberg-CAN general helpline:** 067 764 3329 (phone or whatsapp).
- **Muizenberg-CAN emotional support hotline:** Anna Els 064 866 5991 (phone or whatsapp).
- **Vrygrond United 4 Change helpline:** 063 064 5348 (phone/whatsapp).
- **Costa da Gama/Capricorn-CAN general helpline:** 072 991 0388 (phone or whatsapp) or email costadagamacan@gmail.com

Covid-19 Masks For People In Need

Following our donation of masks to the Muizenberg CAN, the MID ordered a further 50 face-masks to be distributed to the incoming homeless to Muizenberg.



We'd like to thank Rebecca Young, of locally-based Classic [Craft Studio](#), for once again providing the masks at cost price.

Community Food Garden

The MID is in regular communication with Coastal Management, a Council Department, as it appears they are likely to take over the old Muizenberg Bowling Clubhouse and greens, following which the buildings will be renovated and secured.



MID is in discussions to find a home there and to facilitate the use of some of the area for a community vegetable garden. However, these matters will take some months to finalize, and we will keep members posted with progress.

Covid-19 Lockdown Policing

As has been widely reported in media, Muizenberg SAPS has been under investigation for “inefficiencies” in policing related to lockdown regulations.

Prior to this, the MID board wrote to the Muizenberg SAPS Station Commander asking him to urgently address this increasingly antagonistic situation. Six weeks-plus later we have yet to receive a response.

However, it must be noted that since the introduction of Level 3 the number of complaints related to heavy-handed and allegedly irregular enforcement of regulations has dwindled.



We'd like to remind members of the legal advice we obtained in this regard: if you are detained for lockdown-related regulations, and you believe this to be overzealous or unlawful, do NOT pay an admission of guilt fine, as this will result in a criminal record. Please also report any such issues to the MID Chair via chair@mid.org.za.

Related to the above, the Institute for Security Studies – a non-profit organisation partnering to build knowledge and skills that secure Africa's future – is still calling on the public to document their experiences during the Covid-19 lockdown so that they can work with others to improve safety. If you've been affected by lockdown policing, please partake in the survey [here](#).

Lockdown Cleaning & Illegal Dumping

Over the past few months the MID cleaning team in conjunction with the CoCT's Solid Waste team has managed to make a substantial impact on the cleaning of the MID area, with a particular focus on the sweeping and weeding of the area.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak the streets were significantly cleaner due to the lack of pedestrian and vehicle traffic, therefore the MID Board made a decision to limit the amount of time the cleaners spent at work in order to limit the risk to our staff.

As things now return to "normal", the MID cleaning team is mostly back on a regular schedule and we're currently focusing on drains and gutters due to it being the start of the winter season.



A constant challenge we face – and where we do require the assistance of the community – is on bin days. Please bear in mind that Council will only dispose of waste that is **inside bins**, therefore anything you place outside the bin is NOT collected! Please help our cleaning team keep Muizenberg clean by only placing items *inside* your bin. If your bin is too full, save it for the following week's collection, or make arrangements to dispose of this waste at suitable sites (i.e. recycling stations).



Importantly, we are constantly identifying illegal dumping "repeat offenders" and refer these buildings/houses to the CoCT for further action. Please help us by reporting illegal dumping to the MID manager via Whatsapp on 0824631525, or email ops@mid.org.za.

Public Safety and Camera Surveillance

The installation of the MID's 42 high-tech surveillance cameras began on 8 June 2020. These high-end cameras at 19 points will provide extensive coverage of the MID area, and will be monitored 24/7 by a state-of-the-art control room with real-time radio communication to GRIT, the MID's public-safety provider.

The entire installation process should be completed by the end of June, however it is expected to take a few more weeks before the 24/7 surveillance operators become fully familiar with the system.



Given the recent spike in incidents, the camera system is a very welcome and long-awaited tool to enhance MID's public safety mandate.

Please help us to make optimum use of the system by immediately reporting suspicious activity to GRIT on 021-7888453.