

# Abbeyfield South Africa

## Annual Report 2020-2021

*Managing in the time of COVID-19*



*Making time for older people.*

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## Meet the Board of Directors



*We thank the outgoing Treasurer, Mr. Eugene Johannes for his service to Abbeyfield.*

*We wish him the best in his future endeavours.*

From left: Mr. Cedric Meiring (Chairman), Mrs. Karen Pillay (Deputy Chair), Mr. Eugene Johannes (outgoing Treasurer)



From left: Karen Borocowitz, Richard Brown, Augustinus De Vos (new Treasurer), Bahaa Ebrahim, Liezel King, Pat Lindgren, Dr. Marcel Londt

Ashraf Sataar not included above

### OUR VISION

Abbeyfield South Africa provides quality, independent, safe, and affordable homes to older persons, guided by our common international ethos, expanding into all of South Africa.

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Abbeyfield South Africa facilitates opportunities for older people to become self-fulfilled in a caring, loving, and supportive environment within a secure and safe homely home where they co-exist in a supportive, compassionate, and dignified place of self-determination. As a financially viable, sustainable, and transparent NPO, we utilise our available resources effectively.

### OUR CORE VALUES

Caring about people, Support, Compassion, Dignity and Respect, Unity

# Chairman's Report



## Overview

COVID-19 has had a tremendous effect on businesses and organisations in general, and it has been no different for Abbeyfield SA (ASA). The pandemic has dominated our conversations and has been the catalyst for ASA to rethink and remodel our way of doing business. To protect our residents and limit the spread of the virus amongst our most vulnerable, drastic measures were put in place. Many changes were not welcomed by our elderly, but through constant communication and reassurance, we gained their cooperation, and to a certain extent, limit their exposure. Not all our efforts have been successful. A few cases of COVID-19 infections were reported at various houses. Affected residents were subsequently isolated at government facilities and returned to their houses once the critical period of exposure had passed. Sadly, we have had one COVID-related death and three reported non-COVID related deaths during this year. Having gone through two waves of the pandemic, and experiencing two hard

lockdowns, we are fully aware that we cannot afford to let our guard down. Mindful of the ongoing risks, we appealed to residents to be extra careful and to adhere to the COVID-19 protocols at all times.

*The virus only moves if people move.  
This too shall pass.*

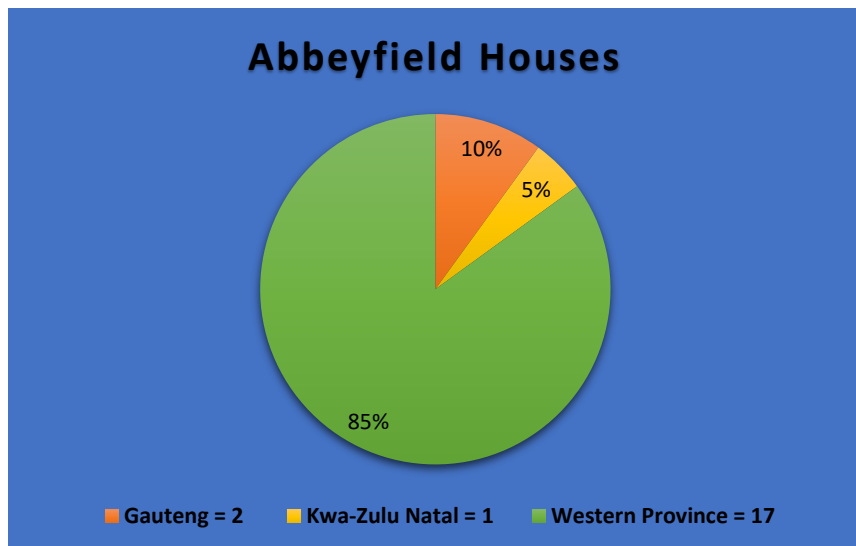
We realise that these are trying times. Our residents are cautioned not to visit and/or receive family and friends. Isolation is at times intolerable, but we are called to exercise patience and to persevere during these difficult times.

## Strategic Planning

At our ASA Strategic Planning session held in February 2021, we initiated discussion on various Abbeyfield Models that would best meet the future needs of the organisation. The options proposed include the following approaches: Decentralised Management, Merger, Centralised ASA Management. This requires more exploration, research, and meaningful debate before consensus can be reached on which Model to implement and take the organisation forward.

## Abbeyfield Houses

There are altogether 20 Abbeyfield houses in



South Africa; two in Gauteng, one in Kwa Zulu Natal and 17 in the Western Cape. Of the eight (8) centrally managed houses, ASA is the registered owner of three properties. If we include Wyndover number 5, and Wyndover number 7, we are clear owners of five properties. Going forward, we plan to transfer ownership of all centrally managed houses to Head Office and have already initiated transfer of two houses. We are also in the process of establishing Local Committees at all centrally managed houses to ensure that local issues are resolved efficiently and with local buy-in.

Accountability of Local Societies to Abbeyfield SA must be revisited. Areas that need to be addressed include the payment of an annual affiliation levy, submission of audited Annual Financial Statements, representation of Local Committees at Abbeyfield SA Board meetings and areas of collaboration and improved communication. Each Local Society will then be required to renew their Affiliation Agreement with Abbeyfield SA.

## Personnel and management

The previous Executive Director, Mrs. Anthea Barendse, vacated her position in July 2020. We thank Mrs. Barendse for her service and commitment during her tenure. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours. Mrs.

Lorna Solomon was appointed as the incoming Executive Director and commenced duties on 15 July 2021. Mrs. Solomon brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience, and we wish her every success in the position.

In August 2020 the organisation appointed an accountant on a full-time contract position to implement sound financial management systems. With our new accountant in place, we embarked on a massive drive to become financially compliant. This proved to be quite an exacting and time-consuming task for our office staff and the Executive Director. We are happy to report that great strides have been made in this regard. Efficiencies have since improved, but there are still many hurdles ahead to overcome.

Our Treasurer, Mr. Eugene Johannes, resigned as a member of the Board due to demanding work pressures. We wish Mr. Johannes all the best in his future business ventures and thank him for his dedication and the invaluable time he has given to Abbeyfield SA.

## Policies

Substantial headway was made in updating and implementing policies. The task ahead is to roll out these policies to our Local Societies to ensure that all tiers of the organisation are



aligned. There are still other policy gaps which must be addressed to ensure compliance with the Older Persons Act and Department of Social Development's criteria. The organisation will give attention to these over the next period.

## **Fiduciary**

Abbeyfield SA is in a relatively stable financial positions mainly due to two significant donations received from the late estate PF Pieterse and the Marrani Trust. Fundraising has not taken place as the approach is first to define key projects and the cost thereof.

In the ensuing financial year, we will be auditing each house and costing much needed upgrades, repairs as well as determining the cost of maintaining our houses. Currently, our biggest cost driver is the high municipal bills which contributes to our houses operating at a significant loss. We appeal to residents to use our limited natural resources wisely and with consideration for each other's needs.

Managing our investments has been prioritized to ensure that the organisations financial position remains stable for as long as possible. We are also looking to expand the Abbeyfield

SA footprint since we have not established any new houses in the past few years.

Abbeyfield SA has made substantial progress in the last period and there are still many exciting plans in the pipeline. I must thank our Executive Director Mrs Lorna Solomon for her enthusiasm and commitment to turning this organisation around in the short time she has been with us. To our Accountant Natalie Seldon, we are appreciative of the vast improvements she has made to our financial systems. To Zizi Mende our Social Worker, and Sonja Majola our Finance Officer, your much needed support has contributed to our many successes in the past year.

Our Funders and The Department of Social Development for their continued financial support. We are grateful and thankful to you.

To all our committees, who voluntarily support and care for our residents, our heartfelt thanks. Finally, to my fellow board members, for your support and commitment to Abbeyfield SA and our residents, thank you very much.

**Mr. Cedric Meiring**  
**Chairman Abbeyfield SA**



# Executive Director's Report



## Overview

The period under review has been a management rollercoaster. Despite two major COVID-19 surges - accompanied by the hard COVID lockdown periods - we have managed to achieve some successes vis-à-vis the 3-year Strategic goals as determined at the October 2019 Strategic Planning workshop.

## Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning workshop held, in the week of 8 February 2021, set the tone for the new financial year. We commend our Board members for availing themselves for the workshop. Discussions were vibrant and invaluable, and provided the necessary impetus for taking ASA forward. There is clearly much work to do to ensure that the vision, mission, ethos, and integrity of the organisation is upheld. Having said this, the

ASA administration is committed to incrementally address pertinent issues and implement recommendations.

Our focus has not wavered from achieving objectives set out in the three strategic thrusts namely, (i) to stabilise the organisation, (ii) to achieve financial stability, and (iii) expand the Abbeyfield footprint to areas where accommodation is most needed.

Most gains were realised with the first two thrusts, as these are somewhat interdependent. Expanding the Abbeyfield footprint has been the most challenging. Added restrictions imposed by Government to limit the spread of the pandemic has significantly impacted on our ability to mobilise funders and market the organisation. Despite these constraints, we have scanned the environment to see where elderly accommodation is most needed. The Census statistics (2016) shows a general increase in the elderly population living alone (8.8% to 10%). With this in mind, we will continue to pursue the ideal of providing supported accommodation for elderly persons in a communal environment.

## Governance

ASA Governance was strengthened through the establishment of Sub-Committees within the categories of Finance and Human Resources, Membership and Legal, and Fund Raising and Marketing. On each of these sub-committees, Board members are represented and they are elected based on their interests, individual skills, and their areas of expertise. With the appointment of two new Board members, ASA now has a total of 10 directors providing the organisation with much needed depth and expertise.

## **Fiduciary**

Our approved Finance Policy has set the required framework for alignment of financial processes and procedures. Focus and energy were directed to ensure that the organisation is tax compliant. To this end, we appointed a full-time accountant. This new appointment proved to be fruitful as our accounting practices were in dire need of review and improvement.

## **Personnel and management**

In the reporting period, a decision was reached to allow all staff to work from home. This was largely influenced by the real risk of exposure to COVID-19. Management was also of the view that this would reduce rental and other costs over time. With this in mind, staff were enabled with the necessary resources to work off-site, and staff meetings were held on virtual platforms. This experience has taught us that effective communication is critical to organisational efficiency. Delayed response to emails and calls can prove to be debilitating and time-consuming. Staff were encouraged to read communication and to respond timeously where applicable.

## **Abbeyfield Houses**

To ensure that we maintain communication with our centrally managed houses, WhatsApp groups were established for each house. In this way communication channels were kept open to ensure that residents did not feel isolated or abandoned during the height of the pandemic. Residents were encouraged to share their concerns as well as their day to day challenges. Unfortunately, not all residents use WhatsApp, and management had to rely on key individuals in the residences to act as spokespersons to relay important information.



Abbeyfield SA has accepted the transfer of two houses from Local Committees, namely, York House (in Hout Bay) and Sutherland House (in Rondebosch). ASA recognise and acknowledge that Local Committees struggled to maintain their commitment to volunteer during these challenging times. As from 1 October 2020, the assets and the administration of York House were officially ceded to ASA. Transfer of Sutherland House is still in progress and Ms. Cheryl Dean, the International Partnership Manager (IPM), is overseeing the acquisition process. Werksmans Attorneys was appointed to facilitate the smooth transition of the property.

## **Communication**

Effective and timeous communication, across all spheres, remains a challenge. The slow turnaround of responses, and at times the lack thereof, has put an additional strain on management and our ability to make decisions timeously.

## **COVID impact**

COVID-19 pandemic has not left us unscathed. One of our Board members was incapacitated for an extended period of time but has since recovered. The Chairperson of the Paarl

committee, however, succumbed to COVID complications, and his passing left a void.

Despite having visited each house and implemented COVID-19 protocols, it was extremely difficult to curtail the movement of residents. Residents continued to move freely to malls, visit relatives, and attend hospitals for routine check-ups. We have relied heavily on the assumption that residents will be each other's guardian and conscience. The absence of a functioning local committee is perhaps singularly one of the most significant deficiencies. This is especially true where our houses are centrally managed, and effort is being made to change the status quo.

## **Upgrades, maintenance and repairs**

An immediate concern is to secure funding for upgrades and repair and maintenance of



existing houses. Running costs of an Abbeyfield house far outweighs the collective rental income we receive. Since most of the residents are recipients of a Government pensions, management must constantly balance rental increases with residents' ability to meet their daily need. The Department of Social Development subsidy provides some relief but it is not sufficient to cover increased municipal costs, amongst others. Going forward, we will prioritise a funding drive to cover much needed improvements and meet the ever-increasing need for expansion. The demand for accommodation for elderly is growing steadily and new applications are received daily. Our aim is to develop and implement a Social Media and Marketing Strategy to market Abbeyfield effectively and to secure donor funding. In addition, we need to promote each house as a self-sustaining and financially independent entity.

## **Occupancy**

Regrettably, we ended the year with a 90% house occupancy rate. Where houses do not run at full capacity, it impacts negatively on the financial stability and optimal functioning of the house. Although there is no shortage of applicants, we have been careful not to expose residents during the height of the pandemic. A concerted effort will be made to bring the houses up to full capacity.

Non-participation and lack of interest of family members/sponsors in the welfare of residents have come sharply into focus during the pandemic. It is inevitable that the elderly will require assisted care at some stage, and that families/sponsors will need to make alternative arrangements as, and when, the need arises. However, one or more of the reasons below has come to the fore:

- Families cannot be traced.
- Family members have immigrated or reside in different parts of the country.



- Family members are themselves aged.
- Sponsors not willing to take responsibility.
- Lack of accommodation.
- Residents unwilling to move as they regard Abbeyfield as their home.

Given the above, the organisation will conduct a more stringent and prolonged screening process for families to acknowledge and accept the role that they have in the continued care of the aged. Administration has also reviewed the Admission Policy and processes to ensure that prospective residents are a good fit for the house and comply with the Abbeyfield rules and regulations.

## Conclusion

Challenges arise when least expected. Having said this, the work of Abbeyfield is never done. We are sustained by a firm resolve to provide the elderly with the best alternative in their twilight years.

We do what we must to preserve the dignity and independence of those who have worked hard to provide for a better future for others. We applaud and thank the residents for enriching our lives.

**Mrs. Lorna Solomon**  
**Executive Director Abbeyfield SA**





## **Comments from our residents**

*What a privilege I have to be part off York house; surrounded by beautiful mountains and sea. Staying with different people I understand why the Creator gave us all different fingerprints. Sometimes I laugh by myself and enjoy every day.*

*I am a very happy resident. The reason for my happiness is: I have the most beautiful view from my windows. The front window overlooks the bay of Hout Bay, from Hangberg side right across the bay and up the valley, and to the right, I have a view up Chapman's Peak Drive.*

*In the morning I get the sun in my front windows that overlooks the bay and, in the afternoon, I get the sun in my windows to the left of my bedroom and a beautiful view up the mountain. So, I have the sunniest room in York House! What a pleasure to live in here!*

### **Hout Bay**

*It is nice staying at Abbeyfield because it is a nice home. We cook, we do everything. I like to stay in Abbeyfield because I am happy, [it's] like staying in my own house. I tend to the garden. I also knit.*

### **Gugulethu**

*I enjoy living in an Abbeyfield home. [Here] I have made a friend and it is wonderful to have companionship in my old age. We can confide and joke with one another. I also watch my favourite soapy on her TV in her room.*

### **Plumstead**

*Morning living at Abbeyfield is a blessing. I am a very independent person and living in an Abbeyfield home made me realise that I can do it. Thanks Abbeyfield. Don't look away, look forward.*

*God Bless Abbeyfield*

### **Macassar**

*I find Abbeyfield good to live in. You just have to fit in no matter what people tell you. I'm living in Abbeyfield house for 8 years. I find no problem. There are ups and downs, but we must bear with each other. Thanks.*

### **Atlantis**

*I love living in my Abbey Home. I give thanks each day that I managed to get a spot in the home. So many people don't have a roof over their heads and have no place to call home. My home is called, ABBEYFIELD.*

### **Pelican Park**

*After spending months living in my car, and surviving numerous attacks while parking behind a garage, my car was stolen from a Mall.*

*I then slept under my brother's kitchen table until I asked Mr. Albert Fritz (an ex-pupil of mine), for help. Abbeyfield helped me with accommodation on his request.*

*This event saved my life.*

*Bless you ABBEYFIELD.*

### **Pelican Park**

*I always tell the residents how thankful I am for Abbeyfield. Yes, there are challenges, because we come from different backgrounds, but I love the overall concept of Abbeyfield to provide a place of safety for seniors.*

*Whenever I enter my room I say, "thank you Abbeyfield, for my happy place".*

### **Pelican Park**

*Abbeyfield is an absolute blessing. I always tell people it feels like your home without a bond. Our head office really*

*cares about their abbeyfielders, and they are always ready to assist. They have our interests at heart. My wish is that Abbeyfield goes from strength to strength.*

### **Strandfontein**

*I choose Abbeyfield Society because I needed peace of mind, relaxation, and a new family of my age to communicate with. Just the thought of having a roof over my head makes me very happy. I would recommend Abbeyfield to any person.*

*Abbeyfield has high ranking officials always there to assist when and where they can. On the whole I just love coming to 'MY HOME'. It is reassuring and a peace of mind. Thank You.*

### **Pelican Park**

*I feel privileged to be a resident in Bethany Lodge, one of the sought-after residences of Abbeyfield.*

*It is family oriented, homely and provides a safe haven for the over sixties.*

*I find privacy and independence, within a communal environment, to be a major attraction to the Abbeyfield house.*

*Feelings of isolation and loneliness - a major concern to the elderly - are dispelled as we are afforded the opportunity to interact with fellow residents.*

### **Plumstead**

*What I like of Abbeyfield: it's very convenient and homely. It's close to the clinic and I have my personal space. I've been living here for 5 years.*

### **Pelican Park**



# *‘Unity in Diversity’*

## **International Partnership Manager Report**

*“One Abbeyfield, financially viable, sustainable, sharing a common ethos and exploring expansion.”*



At Abbeyfield, our diversity is reflected in our residents, local societies and Board of Directors. We accommodate persons of different cultures, lifestyles, races, different languages, inter alia. Our governance structures as well as regulators are all demanding and different, but the one thing that unites us all, is the Abbeyfield ethos. This ethos defines us as a family.

### **Overview**

Statistics for non-UK-based Abbeyfield centres, shows that there are currently 90 Abbeyfield houses in eight countries with a capacity for 885 residents. Of these countries: Australia has 23 houses; Belgium has 9; Canada, 21; Jersey, 1; New Zealand, 14; Poland, 2; and South Africa, 20. These houses presently have an occupancy of between 90-99%.

The majority of the countries use the conventional Abbeyfield model: 10-15 residents per house sharing common areas,

with a housekeeper serving meals. On the whole, accommodation is predominantly for the elderly, but there are some variations. For example, Abbeyfield Australia has four houses which cater for persons with mild intellectual disabilities. In Belgium we find an example of an intergenerational house, with a creche for children (three months to three years old), a heated swimming pool for disabled community members to exercise in, as well as a 12-bedroomed Abbeyfield house for seniors. In South Africa, we only offer accommodation for independent living.

In the near future, further expansion is expected in Belgium, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Malawi, which currently has no houses, is working on raising funds to build an Abbeyfield house in Chikwawa.

### **Governance**

Governance in all countries is sound and led by proactive Country Boards. Through the International Chairs Council, strong relationships have been forged amongst the Chairs of all the countries. The International Working Group - made up of all CEOs and executive directors - meet quarterly and are able to share best practices across the Abbeyfield family.

### **COVID-19 impact**

There were COVID positive cases reported among residents in Belgium, Canada and South Africa. Sadly, the pandemic claimed the lives of five residents in the non-UK houses: Belgium (1), South Africa (1) and Poland (3). No COVID positive cases were reported in Australia and New Zealand.

The low death rate can be attributed to the Abbeyfield model: smaller family-orientated

households with mainly independent assisted living. Houses remained well managed. Staff remained dedicated, even during this unusual period, and local committees were actively providing love and care to residents during this difficult time. Our thanks to both residents and their families for their cooperation this past period.

### **The Abbeyfield Family**

In 2019, at the Coventry Conference, the Abbeyfield Society (TAS) - under the leadership of David McCullough (CEO Abbeyfield Society) - announced their progress on the Strategic Review which started in 2018. Sadly, Mr. McCullough passed away in February 2021. The main thrust of the review is that Abbeyfield UK will return to the original Carr Gomm model of membership-owned and managed houses. Over the past 20 months, driven by the TAS Board, various working groups implemented the “*Our Future Together*” strategy.

It is envisaged, that a three tier structure will take Abbeyfield into the future:

Tier 1 - The Membership Council, comprising of the Chairs from all countries, including United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales), will be the custodians of the ethos, the brand, and new admissions of members.

Tier 2 - The National Boards in each country will ensure alignment to the Abbeyfield Family’s ethos, brand, and quality standards, and abide to the regulatory standards of their respective countries.

Tier 3 - Local Societies will contract with the National offices.

The above will result in a new Abbeyfield Agreement between Members Council and Country National Board as well as a new agreement between the Country National Board and Local Societies.

There has been good support and cooperation from all international country Chairs, CEOs and executive directors during The Abbeyfield Society (TAS) restructuring process. Many of

them are members on their respective working groups.

### **Highlights of countries outside of the United Kingdom**

**Australia:** After detailed feasibility and sustainability studies were conducted to ensure the sustainability of Abbeyfield in Australia, it became evident that a merger of all local societies was the way forward. As of 1 July 2021, 18 local societies have voluntarily merged into Abbeyfield Australia Limited. Five local societies are still undecided. All the administration, for example, procurement, payments and recruitment will now be carried out by Abbeyfield Australia head office. This has streamlined processes and procedures which proved to be more cost effective. The merger has not impacted on the residents who still enjoy the comfort of their homes and the social interaction of the local committees. Currently, Abbeyfield Australia has embarked on a Board renewal process. A new house was opened in Wagga Wagga in December 2020 for residents with mild intellectual disabilities.

**Belgium:** The 25th year anniversary of Abbeyfield Belgium was postponed due to the COVID pandemic. Construction commenced on a new house in Malle. The Intergenerational House is a flagship for Belgium.

**Canada:** Abbeyfield Canada formed a partnership with the Francophone community and is concentrating on active marketing and fundraising. Various expansion projects are in the pipeline. The house in Manitoba was closed down in April 2021 because it was not financially sustainable.

**Jersey:** There is one house in Jersey which accommodates 16 residents. There are good communication channels at the house.

**Malawi:** After 18 years, Malawi has finally acquired a piece of land from the Chief in the village of Chikwawa. The Board and the community are actively fundraising to build an Abbeyfield House. Any support in this fundraising effort is greatly appreciated.



**New Zealand:** There is much interest shown in Abbeyfield model by communities in both the north and south island. Abbeyfield Australia remains financially strong.

**Poland:** Lezsno, in Poland, is home to 15 residents. This house is still funded and supported by the London Polish Society.

**South Africa:** The operations at Abbeyfield South Africa were consolidated this past year. A new Executive Director was appointed, the Board has stabilised, and the organisation is financially strong.

### **Abbeyfield expansion**

We have been in discussion with France since October 2020. They are keen to open a house in Montfaucon.

The project in Spain is still in the early phase of discussions and presentations to the community. It is spearheaded by a past Chair of a London society and three locals.

The Methodist Church in Namibia is keen on the Abbeyfield model. They are taking it to communities in the Windhoek area.

Recently, the Portuguese community has enquired about opening a house in Nazaré, Portugal.

As we know it can take many years for communities to open an Abbeyfield House. The COVID pandemic has slowed down progress tenfold.

### **Challenges**

The challenges facing Abbeyfield Houses, in all countries across the globe, were exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. Some of these challenges were common in the countries where Abbeyfield has a presence.

**Capital funding:** Capital funding for expansion is a big challenge. The Buxton Legacy Fund bequest assisted Australia, Belgium, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa with expansion and with renovations.

**Board rejuvenation:** Recruiting and retaining Board members is a huge challenge. This also has implications for succession planning.

**Ageing local committees:** There is a dwindling culture of volunteerism especially amongst younger people. In most countries local committees comprise of older individuals.

**Housing stock not fit for purpose:** Newer houses are purpose-built but some of the older houses are in need of major renovations and repairs.

### **Conclusion**

We look forward to a renewed Abbeyfield with many more societies spread the globe.

**Cheryl Dean**  
**International Partnership Manager**  
**(IPM) Manager**

# Abbeyfield Milwood House, Milnerton

## Governance

Our Board comprises four members: Anthony Gregorowski (Chair), Nicky Burns (Treasurer), Bruce Lewis (House Manager), and Ursula Gregorowski (Secretary).

In this reporting period we faced many challenges, mainly due to COVID. This has also had an impact in the normal operations of our Board. Our meetings were not only irregular, but on occasion had to be cancelled or postponed. It meant that we had to explore other means of communication. Social media platforms like WhatsApp, in particular, became the main vehicle for communication and correspondence between Board members, management and the residence.

Our Board meetings are now always preceded by an informal meeting of residents with the Board. Our rule is that here we may say whatever we want, but have to speak in love, as part of a positive process. We scrutinise the Incidents Book and deal with issues from there if there are any. These meetings have become

an important and encouraging medium of communication.

Our final meeting of that financial year was with representatives from Cape Town's Head Office, who met both with the residents and with the Board. This was a valuable meeting, and we felt that closer communication with the House and Head Office would be helpful to us. We look forward to more of the same.

## COVID impact

Having said this, even amidst the abnormal situation created by COVID Lockdown, our residents have coped well and were resilient in these trying times. We have managed to navigate the challenges of communal life. Our residents at Milwood House were cooperative and adhered to COVID regulations. Behaviours vis-à-vis socialising and movement were adapted, and we are happy to report that we have had no incidence of COVID at Milwood to date. This came at a cost: Our residents have had limited contact and visits with family and friends which is a huge part of their well-being.

## COVID vaccinations

All but one of our residents have had their COVID vaccinations. The person not vaccinated



yet has reservations but as an institution we uphold the individual's right to not vaccinate. Having said this, it has opened a Pandora box, not only of emotions, but the fundamentals of what it means to living in an 'isolated' community. And the discussion is broader than just Millwood House, for there are many facilities where people have opted to, have volunteered to and/or have been forced to live (or be kept) in close confines. The list is endless: hostels, prisons, shelters, rehab facilities, etc. The question of 'the common good' becomes relevant, and what this means to all of us. We salute the residents who were vaccinated, and as we weather this COVID storm, we remain optimistic.

## Occupancy

We have sadly had two deaths during this reporting period. These were not COVID-related deaths. We have recently accepted a new member on a three-month probationary period. We currently have one unoccupied bedroom and are looking forward to filling it soon.

## Upgrades, maintenance and repairs

Milwood House is an old building. It requires ongoing attention and in this reporting period the plumbing and roof gutters, among others, needed repairs.

We also experienced an invasion of ants and had to respond to this problem.

Municipal rates, in general, has seen an unprecedented increase in this reporting period. Water, sewerage and electricity have seen huge increases in the Cape Town Metropole which meant that we had to monitor our electricity and water, closely.

To minimise our ecological footprint, we joined a recycling programme. It is adding to our running costs in the short term, but we will see the benefits in the long term.

We installed Wi-Fi Millwood which the residents are able to access. This has been a heaven-sent during COVID as it allowed for our

residents to remain in touch with family and friends.

We have discontinued our Telkom landline service.

It has taken us all year to get online banking with FNB working, and this has been most frustrating and time-consuming. We have had to change our system slightly to be able to get back to online banking, which we have now done. It has been quite a process but we are now back online.

## Future Projects

Inside the house – rather strangely, and sadly, because of the frustration of the children of the previous family living here - bedroom doors have been kicked badly and could well do with replacing. That atmosphere in the house is long gone, exorcised by rather happier relationships since but holes in doors remain.

Outside there is much garden space which can be better utilised. The garden is large, comprising mainly sea sand type soil. We plan to put shade cloth outside the lounge area, and some robust garden furniture would greatly extend the living space.

We also need paving under the twirly washing line; much can be done to enhance the rather drab garden space.



**Anthony Gregorowski**  
**Chair, Milwood House**



# Abbeyfield, Durban

## Governance

The year under review was extremely challenging for us all. It necessitated several changes to both routine and mindset.

We only managed one quorate committee meeting and communication was done primarily through our WhatsApp group chat. The secretary, Mrs. Mary Baxter, and I met at least once a month after the hard lockdown.

## COVID impact

Visits to the Residents were fairly regular. It was necessary to constantly reaffirm the need to wear masks and maintain social distancing. This was a great challenge. Even more challenging was convincing some of the Residents of the seriousness of the situation created by the pandemic. During the hard lockdown we had a few major confrontations between some Residents. This necessitated personal intervention and frequent counselling sessions.

One of our Residents became very frail and confused and left the house to stay with her daughter in May. We gained a new Resident in mid-June after following all necessary protocols.

During this period, we had at least one unoccupied room. Recruiting new Residents

was quite a challenge. This resulted in the reduction of our rental income.

## Upgrades, repairs and maintenance

We managed to do renovations to the unoccupied room. We replaced the bath with a shower. Due to heavy rains, we had electrical faults impacting the outside rooms. This required repairs. The garden became very overgrown during level 4 and 5 lockdown and I took it upon myself to mow and maintain the garden.

Our main concern this year is the upgrade of our security for our residents. In this day and age, we can never have too much security.

When that has been done, we need to upgrade the ablution area for our domestic worker and the gardener. That area is in great need of a makeover.

## Conclusion

Unfortunately, due to the hard lockdown in December, the Residents did not have the usual Christmas lunch in a restaurant. This was an occasion sincerely missed by all.

It was a period unlike any other, but we continue to soldier on and hopefully in the not too distant future a sense of normality can be restored.

We all send good wishes to you all.

**Ms Judy Peters**  
**Chair, Victor Daitz Lodge**



## Abbeyfield, Gemoedsrus

*“Every storm does not come to destroy,  
some also come to clear the path...  
Every difficulty does not arise to reduce  
our confidence, some difficulties enhance  
our confidence...”*  
Ankit Khemani

### Governance

The above lines by Ankit Khemani were echoed by one of our Board members. The COVID-19 pandemic made us realise, that in order for our activities in Wellington to continue, we needed to strengthen our relationships with our stakeholders to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

Having said this, the Board introduced a recovery plan to pave the way forward. Key to this plan was to adhere to the COVID protocols and regulations communicated the President of South Africa, and to align our organisation’s vision and mission to the constitution of the country.

### Implementing the plan

One of our Abbeyfield aims is “to provide regular social interaction for aged persons to promote their physical, emotional, spiritual and social well-being.” In our recovery plan we revisited this aim, drawing on the expertise of our members and expanding our team (and stakeholders) by including the friends of the aged in our operations. Through using technology i.e., WhatsApp, we implemented virtual activities to reach our members. This platform created opportunities to remain in touch with the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of our Residents. Jean Bantjes presented spiritual programmes, Jerome Julies presented fitness activities, and Auntie Connie kept the Residents entertained with practical activities things to keep Residents busy and their minds active.

### Communication

Lenna kept the members informed of what was happening in the ‘outside world’. We created

our own “Gemoedsrus Channel” that allowed our Residents to talk and engage with each other during periods of isolation.

### COVID care

Our Board members took upon themselves the responsibility to distribute food parcels and warm meals to our Residents, once a week.



All our Residents had their vaccinations and to date we have had no COVID-related fatalities.

### Conclusion

At this moment, the recovery plan which we have implemented seems to be a ‘Winning Recipe’. We will continue doing what we are doing, and we are looking forward to unfolding these activities, in person once things have normalised.



**Mr. L. Moses**  
**Chair, Gemoedsrus**



## Sank House, Sea Point

### Governance

Sank House is the Sea Point home of seven residents - six ladies in the main house and one gentleman in the outside cottage. It has a hardworking Board made up of a few elderly Board members who established the house many years ago and who are still very involved. The younger Board members play a hands-on management role together with a bookkeeper managing the accounts.

The Board had their hands full this year managing the house and the safety of all residents amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Zoom and a WhatsApp group keeps the Board in the loop and a What's App group for the residents has been an effective means of communication even before the pandemic. There are two residents that unfortunately do not have WhatsApp, but communication is via SMS.

### COVID protocols

At the outset of the pandemic the Board purchased all the essential personal protective equipment as well as a thermometer, masks and control sheet. All residents were given cotton/reusable masks, sanitisers, handwipes, soap and new handtowels. A flip file with COVID-19 protocols, national helpline numbers etc. were placed at the front door to educate residents. We ensured that all

residents were well informed when restrictions changed and detailed information as to what was and was not permitted. We replenished stocks of sanitiser and masks regularly. Sank House has remained COVID free – all our residents have been vaccinated with one awaiting a second jab. We regularly shared positive WhatsApp messages to keep spirits up and to ensure that all felt that they were connected despite being separate. A large flat screen TV was donated for the communal lounge area.

### COVID impact

This period has probably been the most challenging. Communication generally was difficult for everyone. Socially residents were restricted especially during the times of hard lockdown. It was a completely different way of doing and understanding things. Of the seven residents, three chose to join friends and family where they spent either all or part of lockdown. Those that had part-time jobs to earn extra money, lost this source of income and so too the loss of the little extra luxuries they were able to afford.

Much has been written on the impact of COVID on the elderly. This is especially true of those who were alone in their own apartments and residential facilities. It certainly did have an impact on our residents, however living in a communal house where help was close by could have been an advantage despite the challenges and social distancing requirements. Being away from family and grandchildren

visits especially over celebrations like birthdays, Easter and religious holidays certainly did have an impact.

### **Sad farewell**

One of the residents, Myrtle Welgemoed, stayed with her childhood school friend during hard lockdown, in Sea Point. Sadly, we got news that she had passed away in her sleep on the 2 November 2020. Myrtle called Sank House home, since she moved here in July 2018. She was kind, gentle and respectful of all the other residents. She brought much joy to everyone she met. Rest in Peace dearest Myrtle.

### **Way forward**

The Board continues to maintain a good relationship with our residents. We provide a few extras for the residents – like toilet paper, a gardener, two domestic workers and all internal maintenance work. The extra luxuries and the exceptionally high cost of food and clothing is having a devastating effect on our elderly. Those on SASSA grants are finding it extremely difficult to survive without the generosity of donors for gently used, warm clothing especially during this bitterly cold winter.

It is also a shame that the Cape Town City Council no longer gives a rebate to houses housing the elderly. Fundraising during this time and the additional financial burden of these items that were once “sponsored” makes it challenging to afford a dignified home for our elderly and vulnerable.

We are finding however, that larger maintenance items are out of the reach of our budget. Waterproofing of the roof, painting the house, repair to the fascia boards, and a security wall in the front of the property (because of the vagrant problem in Sea Point) are items which need attention.

### **Karen Borochowitz Chair, Sank House**

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## **Abbeyfield, Wyndover Manor, Claremont**

### **Overview**

COVID-19 brought panic and uncertainty for many of the residents at Wyndover Manor. The Committee rallied together and made sure that the residents knew how to stay safe and kept them up to date with COVID-19 protocols. Nonetheless, the year in review presented a set of unique challenges and calling on all of us to do things, differently.

### **Governance**

The Wyndover Manor house is privileged to have on its Committee a retired nurse with about 25 years of service to the residents and to Abbeyfield. The Committee did not meet as often during the last 18 months, but we had several ad hoc house meetings with the residents, to offer support during this time and to listen to their concerns.

### **Operations of the facility**

One of the highlights of the year in review was the Spring Tea held in September 2020. We managed to arrange this, despite COVID. The residents enjoyed the event and the ladies wore fun hats.

The house was always kept immaculately clean and the residents pitched in and assisted with the cleaning in the absence of housekeeping staff.

We are happy to report that despite one or two of the residents refusing to be vaccinated, none of the Wyndover residents were affected by the virus.

Wyndover Manor had a resident who became dependant and it was heart-warming to see the residents support her by making a meal, visiting the dependant resident and attend to her various other needs.

Covid-19 continues to challenge the regular visits to residents by family members. Also having 11 residents come eleven personalities. Conflict is inevitable and the residents have

done well in managing themselves and the interactions in the house.

## Conclusion

Wyndover Manor continues to be a beautiful, affordable facility which is well run. It is a pleasure to serve our senior folk in this way.



**Merle O’Ryan**  
**Chair, Wyndover Manor**

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## Abbeyfield, Paarl

### Governance

After the passing of the acting chairman, Mr. Hendrik Lesch, I took over as Chairman. It was a difficult time, not only the managing the transition and the loss which was worsened by the onset of COVID-19. Given the circumstances, we have done our best during this most trying time.

### COVID impact

The year under review was one of many mixed emotions. COVID had a huge impact on our residents. We had five COVID patients and sadly lost one of them. For the purpose of quarantine, we had to move them to a care house facility until their recovery. It was by no means easy to uproot these residents, more so

the fact that they would be cut off from family, friends and loved ones, but it had to be done.

Residents still remain fearful of interacting with each other and the outside world.

### Occupancy

Due to the departure of one of our residents, as mentioned above, we have one room vacant. No one has applied yet for this room. We are glad to report, however, that rent is being paid on time.

### Maintenance

The house was fully sanitised four times during this reporting period. Having said this, we follow COVID protocols to ensure that the environment is clean and to prevent further COVID infections.

We do have a person that comes around once week to assist with then cleaning.

### Planning

There is a need to assists our residents, with some of the most basic needs. We have applied at Pick ‘n Pay and Woolworths in Paarl to help with the monthly requirements of the residents.

### Conclusion

We look forward to a fruitful year and thank everyone who assists us in making Abbeyfield a place that cares for older people.



**Linda Kamalie**  
**Chair, House of Grace**

# Treasurer's Report

This reporting period brought about numerous financial challenges. During the 2020/21 year, Abbeyfield found it difficult to manage in an environment with increasing financial pressure on a global scale. Within the South African context, we experienced steep increases in electricity and water tariffs which had a snowball effect on other municipal charges. Added to this are the escalating costs of repairs and maintenance of our Abbeyfield facilities.

During the 2020/21 fiscal year, the COVID-19 pandemic caused havoc on our already fragile economy, and Abbeyfield SA was negatively affected. Even against this bleak backdrop, we are not only operational, but continue to offer support to the elderly.

Donations received decreased significantly during the fiscal year, a consequence of the global economic crises. The surpluses from prior years continue to sustain Abbeyfield SA.

I am glad to announce, that in this reporting period we continued the strive to meet our fiduciary requirements. Our new Constitution was approved by the Board and under trying times of isolation and lockdown, we endeavoured not only to keep operations going, but to explore new strategies to ensure the financial viability of Abbeyfield SA.

On a personal note, I would like to express my gratitude to Abbeyfield for allowing me to be part of the institution for last couple of years. Due to external factors I had to resign, as my availability had decreased significantly. I wish Abbeyfield SA all the best and I will be watching with keen interest from outside.

With thanks to all our donors, partners, and sponsors.

**Eugene Johannes, CA(SA)**  
**Outgoing Treasurer**  
(resigned 17 February 2021)



**THANK TO OUR DONORS**

*Thank you*

*Dankie*

*Ngiyabonga*

*Enkosi*

*Ngiyabonga*

*Ke a leboha*

*Ke a leboga*

*Ke a leboga*

*Ngiyabonga  
Ngiyabonga  
kakhulu*

*Ndo livhuwa Ro  
livhuwa Ndo  
livhuwa nga  
maanda*

*Ndza nkhensa  
Ndzi khense  
ngopfu Inkomu  
swinene*

**Abbeyfield Society of South Africa**  
**(Registration Number 003-393NPO)**  
**Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021**

<b>Figures in R</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	
500 Club	8,103
Department of Social Department	537,855
Donations & Bequest	219,000
Rent income	216,627
Sundry Income	244,992
	<b>1,226,577</b>
<b>Other income</b>	
Insurance Claim & Recoupment of expenses	<b>81,698</b>
<b>Administrative expenses</b>	
Accounting fees	(20,644)
Auditors remuneration - Fees	(15,950)
Bank charges	(101,879)
Computer expenses	(8,477)
Telecommunication	(53,647)
	<b>(200,597)</b>
<b>Other expenses</b>	
Advertising & Promotions	(7,618)
AGM expenses	(9,232)
Cleaning Materials & consumables	(4,667)
Consulting fees	(248,875)
Covid 19 Outreaches	(25,641)
Depreciation - property, plant and equipment	(110,725)
Distribution to Affiliates	(7,223)
Distributions to Member Societies	(388,188)
Donations	(3,000)
Electricity & Water	(77,137)
Employee costs - members	(385,920)
Employee costs - salaries	(364,697)
Fines and penalties	(25,966)
Insurance	(95,128)
Intervention - Pinelands	(114,922)
Legal expense	(4,784)
Membership Fees	(30,640)
Motor vehicle expense	(7,939)
Printing and stationery	(11,867)
Repairs and maintenance	(89,968)
Travel - Local	(4,805)
Welfare - Residents	(684)
	<b>(2,019,626)</b>
<b>(Deficit) / surplus from operating activities</b>	<b>(911,948)</b>
<b>Finance income</b>	
Interest received - Investec	<b>881,683</b>
<b>(Deficit) / surplus for the year</b>	<b>(30,265)</b>

*Providing quality, independent,  
safe, and affordable homes to  
older persons.*



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**RG/0018/04/05**