

# MEMBERS NEWSLETTER MARCH 2022



Sunshine Coast Tourism, represented by Jo Wilmot, attended the recent Meetings Africa Exhibition, 1-2 March 2022 at the Sandton Convention Centre. Our stand **STAY STUDY TRAVEL** (My Pond Hotel, Stenden South Africa and Sunshine Coast Tourism) attracted quite a bit of interest from corporates and provided an opportunity to highlight the Sunshine Coast as a business destination, conducive to product launches, conferencing, team building and the like. At the same time, queries were received from tour operators for golfing, leisure and wellness.

Our new brochures sporting QR codes linked directly to our website were distributed and follow up contact will be made with all interested parties.

## PA Business Forum networking CLINTON MILLARD - BUSINESS FORUM

After observing a minute of silence in honour much loved businessman Martin Bekker, Clinton Millard welcomed everyone to the first PA networking event of 2022, reminding us that through all the recent challenges, businesses in town have adapted, stood together and supported each other. He highlighted various projects undertaken by Tourism and Business Forum, such as the kiddies park in front of the Town Hall, East Beach patrols over December, Selfie frame project and thanks to CDR, a very impressive Xmas Light display. Clinton went on to say that there is a need to grow as a Forum. Critical to this growth is the collaboration of PARRA, a pro active and professional group working alongside businesses and tourism to better Port Alfred.

New projects currently in the pipeline include welcoming signs on the R-72, new Wharf Street signage and a tourism monitor programme for car guards.

## LINDSAY BURROWS - PARRA

Professional couple, Lindsay Burrows and her husband, Shaun, found themselves stranded in Port Alfred during lockdown. The pair fell in love with the town and its laid back lifestyle, deciding to make this their home. They invested in property and a business in Port Alfred and decided to get involved with, and proactive in the community.

The couple explored the ethos of several organizations and came to the conclusion that PARRA most aligned with them. Lindsay pointed out that PARRA has been in existence in various forms since the 1970's and has always been the connection between ratepayers, residents and the municipality. There have been many ebbs and flows over the years, and that they have committed to playing a part in the next chapter of this organization. PARRA's immediate objective is to get as many people from all walks of life, and all areas of the greater Port Alfred involved. The core function of PARRA will remain the same - i.e. to work as a watchdog organization, and to question and to hold people accountable for jobs they are being paid to do.



*Dr Wouter Hensens, Ed Gutche, Dr Rick Pryce, Dawie van Wyk, Clinton Millard, Lindsay Burrows, Sandy Birch, Mandy Roestorff, Judy van Wyk, Unathi Chinyavanhu*

It was pointed out that over the years, good relationships have been forged with Ndlambe, and PARRA wants to continue with this, as it is obvious that aggression does not achieve results. At the same time, strong alliances with Sunshine Coast Tourism and Port Alfred Business Forum exist.

Also key is accurate and reliable reporting of information. Infrastructure is of major concern, thus Dawie van Wyk, a valuable member of PARRA, has been monitoring and reporting on the water situation throughout the water crisis. Equally important is plot clearing, derelict buildings, verges, maintenance of public spaces and the like.

The digital footprint of PARRA has been expanded to include an up to date and professional website and facebook page reporting on current issues as they happen:

**Website : [parra.org.za](https://parra.org.za)**  
**Facebook : PARRA Port Alfred Residents and Ratepayers Association**

Lindsay also pointed out that Ndlambe's Customer Care platform is a valuable tool for reporting infrastructure issues as there is an audit trail for accountability. To make use of this channel, the fault should be emailed to : [gkombisa@ndlambe.gov.za](mailto:gkombisa@ndlambe.gov.za)

Everyone is encouraged to get involved by joining PARRA. Click onto the attached link for more information:  
**<https://parra.org.za/membership/>**

## ED GUTCHE - INVESTING IN PORT ALFRED

Ed Gutsche, well known businessman gave an interesting talk on investment in Port Alfred. He started off by saying that we need to be grateful for what we have and pointed out that each and every single day we are surrounded by natural beauty in Port Alfred.

Within a stones throw, we have river, beach and bush. Visitors return time and again because of the friendly townsfolk and the natural beauty, however, they are being confronted with undesirable issues creeping in. Safety on the beaches, Centenary Park, derelict buildings and infrastructure issues. We all acknowledge these problems, and it is easy to simply sit back and complain, but we need to fix the issues to attract investment in the town. As a starting point, whilst it is easy to find on-line information on tourism, an improved on-line presence for the Business Forum needs to be developed. Ed went on to draw a comparison of two towns and a city:

**New York:** Guiliano, love him or hate him, was the best mayor New York ever had. Up till 1993 the city had the highest crime rate in the United States, making South Africa look like a peaceful state. To turn this around, Guiliano adopted the Broken Windows policy. It is no secret that crime drives people away, so he focused on petty crime from pick pockets, prostitution to graffiti. Soon all the petty crime was stamped out as perpetrators were nabbed and got heavy sentences, New York's crime stats improved by 93%.  
The rest is history.

**St Francis Bay:** The fires of 2013/4 devastated the town. Its cause was arson with someone starting a fire in an abandoned property. This misfortune was a lesson, as the town used this example to strengthen community watch programmes to build a safer St. Francis. Cameras were installed throughout the town, beefing up security and eliminating the petty criminals. The knock on effect is a safe town where people want to invest. The council took the opportunity during lockdown to invest in infrastructure by upgrading 7 roads. The beaches offer amenities such as designer coffee shops, fish restaurant, and the like. Exactly the type of thing that visitors are attracted to.

**Port Alfred:** To make this town investment friendly, we need to focus on the strengths - beaches, rivers, natural beauty and Big 5 only moments away. We need to be able to go anywhere on the river or beaches and feel safe. We need to focus on derelict buildings such as the Ferrymans, overgrown plots and verges, and we need to keep the pressure on to sort out our infrastructure. We have organizations who have come together to improve the town and we need to build on this and we need to implement the Broken Window policy in Port Alfred. We have real examples to prove that this policy works ... The beach patrols initiated by Business Forum and Multi Security of December, the demolition of a known drug den in Campbell Street, are two examples proving that this policy works. This needs to continue until we stamp out the opportunities for criminals - and we need to expand it to include no-go areas such as Centenary Park. Ed offered to get involved and challenged others to do the same by investing R10,00 to start up a fund to implement these patrols, and challenged business and residents to get involved and contribute to this fund. Eventually the criminals will move elsewhere as opportunities are shut down for them.

At the same time, we need to focus on infrastructure, derelict buildings and general appearance and upkeep of gardens and verges. We need to encourage development of coffee shops and the like at the beaches. East Beach kiosk is hardly manned and Kellys Beach could do with a coffee shop. Owners of derelict buildings such as the Ferrymans need to be accountable. We need to implement the car guard programme and discourage people from tipping guards, fly tipping and encourage recycling initiatives.  
It all comes down to putting pressure on the municipality and SAPS to act and to working together.

We need to all stand together to ensure that Port Alfred is investment friendly by making people feel safe, ensuring that infrastructure works and that there is accountability. Finally, encourage everyone to join PARRA and Business Forum for a better Port Alfred.

### VISITOR NUMBERS

We are seeing a steady increase in visitors, including a number of internationals as travel restrictions ease. Week-end tourism has also picked up, with locals taking advantage of the excellent weather.

Easter week-end and school holiday enquiries continue to flow and we are seeing the return of enquiries for school groups.



### WHATS ON

Click on the link on our [WEBSITE](#) to find out what's happening

Check out our [FACEBOOK GROUP](#)