

HAMERKOP MOUNTAIN TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 24 October 2025

CHAIRMAN JAD BALL'S ANNUAL REPORT



1. INTRODUCTION:

As most of you know, my chairmanship of the Management Committee (Mcom), commenced at the October 2022 AGM, when I came into the position “cold”. I have now served in this capacity for three years. This Chairman’s Report addresses my resignation, a general overview of my three year tenure and the 2025 feedback.

2. RESIGNATION:

After thinking about the length of my chairmanship periods in other forums, as well as where I am in my life’s journey, I have decided that October 2025 would be the right time to step down as chairman of Mcom. I submitted a letter of resignation six months ago and this AGM is the last meeting I will chair. Among my reasons for this decision is that I no longer have an appetite for committee meetings which sometimes bring out the worst in me. Also, as I have said many times, recruiting younger people to serve and hold portfolios on Mcom is essential for Hamerkop’s wellbeing. I believe that this concept also holds for the position of Chairman.

Since I have a deep love for Hamerkop and its conservation, I would like to remain very engaged when I am there in March each year and hopefully in future Work Weeks, if I can manage the trip from Cape Town. Finally, I will remain a Trustee.

3. THREE YEAR OVERVIEW:

When I become Chairman of the Management Committee, I had hoped to maintain my management style. In this regard, I think that all I got right was the addition of a Hamerkop logo to some of the Mcom documents. What I did do though, was make a lot of mistakes and eat lots of humble pie. While I did not enjoy this, in retrospect, I guess that it did contribute to my spiritual evolution.

Seriously, notwithstanding the above and the occasional differences of opinion, Mcom performed very well over the three years in question. *The team of willing and capable people, together with the dedicated staff, kept Hamerkop running relatively smoothly, solved problems and made improvements.* Examples include, amongst other things, banking problems, fire management, roof and other painting, path and road upgrading, tree removal and trimming, staff contracts, a lightning strike and subsequent electrical system upgrading, a new Mcom treasurer, a website, significantly improved staff supervision, document management and numerous other improvements.

4. CURRENT 2024/25 YEAR OVERVIEW:

4.1 TEAM AND STAFF

It is appropriate to commence this section with a comment and a sincere THANK YOU to the Team and Staff, who made the success of 2024/25 possible.

Margie Owen Smith: Our Team Leader, who did an enormous amount of work herself and ensured that everything was done according to protocol and to her high standards.

Magdeleen Enslin: Our willing Committee Secretary; always friendly and efficient, who I can now describe with the words of my predecessor, “an absolute honey”!

Mark Epstein (who has also resigned): Our Trust Secretary; who was often the voice of reason, handling Beneficiary involvement, management systems and taking initiative.

Steve Spottiswoode and **Karin:** Our dedicated “feet on the ground” couple, who jointly managed staff situations, information transfer effective control of alien vegetation.

Serv Venter: Our common sense Property manager who knows his way around contractors and neighbours, and can get the work done properly!

Judith Oppler: Our Household and Occupancy Manager who is keeping her finger on the pulse and working on numerous related tasks

Jane Luck: Our “debt collector” who made a significant impact on Levy Payments. With her love for Hamerkop she is our conscience, always ready to step in and help out.

Roy Kendall: Our MCSA Liaison man who headed up the ongoing Bush Camp project and erected the MCSA signs.

Paul McKenzie: Our multi skilled Treasurer, who is very committed, practical and a sound thinker. He is an excellent example of the “new blood” that we need in Mcom.

Tina-Culwick Fatti: Our Website manager is also an example of what “new blood” can achieve. She has made wonderful strides with the Website and is an uplifting presence.

Aleck: Our Groundsman, who has worked well doing routine work, fire breaks, alien vegetation control and reporting. He stays busy and also takes initiative.

Pretty: Our Domestic Worker who we all know and love. She keeps the house and linen clean, has a happy demeanour and is always willing to take on work.

4.2 TASKS ACCOMPLISHED SINCE THE LAST AGM

Administratively, *thanks largely to Margie*, great progress has been made with numerous tasks, including Tina’s work on the Webpage.

In addition to routine property work, projects were undertaken in March and at a Work Meet Week in July. Some of these are addressed in Serv’s Maintenance Report, especially the electrical work done on the house. A brief overview is as follows. However, for any additional detail, the March 2025 Report and the Work Week report back in the July 2025 Mcom minutes can be consulted.

4.2.1 Routine:

On account of well thought out contracts, report back and monitoring systems, routine work went as well as could be expected. This included cleaning around the house, watering, and upkeep (the road, paths and drainage). as well as alien vegetation management. The fuel load around the house was kept to a minimum and the fire breaks were all in place in good time, (thanks to Aleck’s very hard work in the heat and the dust!)

4.2.2 March Projects:

During my three weeks in March, I was able to supervise and work with Aleck, who did the brunt of the fire break cutting then. In addition to his normal duties, Aleck was able to cut back trees blown over in the storm, clear paths and store wood in the reservoir. There was also a lot of judicious tree trimming. Numerous little problems around the house were also attended to. These included plumbing, catches and appliances.

The most important addition to Hamerkop, (first used in March by the writer), was Francois Enslin's new kitchen table. This is an example of fine workmanship and a very generous donation! THANK YOU Enslins! Also, four electric tools were donated to the workshop by Rupert de Kock. Thank you!

4.2.3 July Work Week:

This Work Meet was arranged from Cape Town; however, Paul McKenzie and Mark Epstein were the beneficiaries that made things happen! This included much needed painting in the main house and Annex, a security gate at the end of the Annex passage and a hole in Reservoir wall to give access for wood management. Weeding teams from the Magaliesberg and Johannesburg Sections, made a big impact, (thank you Tam and Adele?). Finally, Gavin Ehlers, from the Magaliesberg Section, organized a group who was involved in all of the above, but most importantly for refurbishing and painting the garden furniture just the right color. THANK YOU so much!

5. FUTURE NEEDS AND POSSIBLE PROJECTS

These are seen to be as follows by the writer, but may well be seen differently by others, especially as circumstances and priorities change.

- The Annex is a "work in progress", with the Guest room carpets and ceiling probably being the priority at present.
- The stoep paving needs to be extended further onto the terrace area, and the lawn needs to be upgraded to make this key area more "user friendly".
- The water pressure at the house is very low and it is felt that, notwithstanding fire policy, protection etc., a high pressure water point near the house, would not be a bad idea.

6. ONGOING CONCERNS:

Pretty and Aleck are both Zimbabwean citizens and neither of them have their papers in order. While Pretty's papers are pending, Aleck has to travel to Zimbabwe every three months to get his passport stamped. This draws on the couples' time and energy and is financially unsustainable. This in turn impacts Hamerkop in terms of reduced performance and ongoing debt cycle. Hopefully, measures put in place to obtain a Zimbabwean marriage certificate for the couple; so that Aleck can "ride on the back" of Pretty's imminent papers will bear fruit by the New Year.

As always, the *lack of Beneficiary Input into the running of Hamerkop* is a concern. However, the addition of three new members to the Committees this year has gone a long way to alleviating this situation. THANK YOU Tina, Paul Carstensen and Gavin and maybe Marina Ehlers.

7. CONCLUSION:

Finally, I personally would like to thank the Team and the Staff for their input over the past year. I trust that once the Beneficiaries have read/heard this report, they too will feel that the Management Committee has managed to keep most of them happy most of the time and want to thank them as well!

THANK YOU!

Jad Ball

October 2025