

Introduction

Where you have an organised group of people, such as a residential estate community, co-existing within a common environment according to certain agreed guidelines, effective and efficient communication is essential.

Previously, no policy or guidelines existed with regard to how we, the Homeowners' Association (HOA) Board of Trustees and the Estate Manager, communicate with internal and external stakeholders of Berg en Dal Estate.

This Communications Policy (approved by the Board of Trustees on 6 March 2021) formalises the channels and mechanisms by which the Trustees and Estate Manager communicate with our stakeholders and has been added to the Consolidated Rulebook for Owners, Residents and Third Parties as Addendum F.

Stakeholders

The Berg en Dal Estate broader community consists of various stakeholders and role players that can either affect or be affected by what happens on the Estate. These include amongst others: the HOA members (the registered owners of Berg en Dal erfs); Board of Trustees; employees; longer term tenants; our managing agent; service providers; estate agents; potential buyers; neighbours; government; and various community organisations and forums such as HBNW, CCP Watchcon, HBRPA and HBRCF.

There are two broad communication channels that need to be considered - Internal and External.



Internal Communications

1. The official residential estate communication channel between HOA members (property owners), tenants, the HOA Board of Trustees and the Estate Manager is in the form of a dedicated online community portal which may be accessed via a web interface or a mobile app. This mechanism provides a secure, easily accessible communication environment as well as a host of other benefits, which may include the following:
 - Real-time estate communications
 - Direct notifications via a mobile app
 - General interest group forums
 - Polls to measure interest on estate related topics and issues
 - Ability to publish and distribute estate relevant content
 - Estate calendar providing details of events and activities
 - Access to relevant information and documentation
 - Updated user profiles – owners (resident and non-resident) and tenants
 - Access to various estate service providers
 - The ability for users to set their own notification preferences
2. At least one owner member, and one tenant member where applicable, per property is required to register on the portal and is responsible for ensuring that the contact details on their personal profiles are kept current to ensure effective communication and for security purposes.
3. Personal information will be protected in accordance with prevailing legislation such as the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA).
4. Whilst use of the residential community portal is encouraged, alternative channels to communicate with the Estate Manager or Trustees include direct emails, messages and telephonic calls during business hours.
5. With the exception of closed groups used for formal communications by the Board of Trustees and special Portfolio or Project sub-committees, public social media such as groups on WhatsApp, Telegram, Twitter, etc. are regarded as informal and will therefore not be accepted as a means for formal communications with the Board of Trustees or the Estate Manager. Should Trustees or the Estate Manager participate in any social groups, they do so in their personal capacities.
6. Information sessions for HOA members and/or tenants are to be held as and when deemed necessary or useful. These may be in the form of virtual, physical or hybrid meetings as appropriate.
7. Berg en Dal employees, with the exception of the Estate Manager, may not use the residential community portal and are excluded from this policy.

External Communications

1. The presentation and communication of the estate's unique brand and lifestyle message to the rest of the world is via the Berg en Dal Estate Website, www.bergendalestate.co.za.
 - a. The latest versions of the Berg en Dal Home Owners' Association's governing policies and rules are included for information purposes for potential buyers and residents as well as other interested parties.

- b. Newsworthy updates regarding the estate are to be published on a regular basis.
- 2. Apps used for security alerts and communications are usually push notifications and should not be responded to unless absolutely necessary to avoid “chats” developing.
- 3. Information sessions for external stakeholders are to be held as and when deemed necessary or useful. These may be in the form of virtual, physical or hybrid meetings as appropriate.
- 4. Direct communications with external stakeholders by the Board of Trustees and/or Estate Manager, are formalised via email.