

JOHANNESBURG



HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Presented at JHF AGM – Saturday 1 November 2025

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INCORPORATING PARKTOWN AND WESTCLIFF HERITAGE TRUST

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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

David Fleminger

From both a global and local perspective, the last 12 months have been unpredictable, alarming and challenging to say the least. Nevertheless, the JHF is running smoothly and punching well above its weight in terms of influence and reputation. I'd like to sincerely thank our Board of Trustees, Board of Management, Committee Heads, Tour Guides, volunteers and members for giving so generously of their time and money to ensure the effective functioning of the JHF as a whole.

My special thanks go to our Honorary Life President, Flo Bird, and vice-chair, Kathy Munro, for their invaluable advice and support. And to our secretary, Barbara Cron, for being the glue that sticks it all together.

My main priorities for the past year have been:

- To entrench a robust structure of sub-committees with responsible people in charge of each who are empowered to manage their own affairs as far as possible, with appropriate oversight from the Chair and BOM.
- To participate in the increasing number of stakeholder engagements that are coming our way. These currently include regular participation in the Presidential Johannesburg Working Group Workstream 7 – Cultural and Heritage Sites, the Johannesburg Tourism Company's Masterplan sessions, and several ad hoc projects that we are working on (including the Johannesburg City Library and Beyers Naude Square Precinct, the Rissik Street Post Office, Orange Grove Waterfall and House Bleloch, Bez Valley Farmhouse, the Metro Centre and Plans Archive, etc.). Attending these sessions is time-consuming and can be frustrating, but I believe it is important to be represented in these forums so that we can better fulfil our mandate of protecting the city's heritage.
- To enhance the JHF's sustainability in terms of succession planning, financial health, membership growth, and public awareness.

Additional details and personal commentary on these any other issues facing the JHF can be found below.

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Priorities for the year ahead include:

- Growing our paid membership, both in terms of numbers and diversity. At the moment, we only have about 375 paid-up members and I see no reason why we can't get that to over 1000.
- Expanding the role of our Heritage Plans Committees to take a more hands-on approach to heritage issues in their areas. This would include establishing HPCs for Johannesburg South, Soweto and North.
- Expanding our press and publicity portfolio to include more 'good news' stories about the work we do, as opposed to only issuing statements about the various crises facing our city. This would include strengthening our social media output, generating news articles for distribution, and developing podcasts and/or YouTube videos that promote the JHF, encourage an appreciation of heritage among the public, and highlight some of our illustrious members.
- Developing new tour offerings that will appeal to new audiences and drive engagement.
- Managing my time more effectively as Chair through better delegation. Unfortunately, I do have a 'day job' and have reached capacity in terms of what I can take on. I never want to become a bottleneck and will seek to empower others to take on a more active role to ensure the JHF continues to evolve appropriately.
- My passion project is to facilitate the development of Linksfield Ridge as an urban hiking reserve, but this is a long-term project that will require the participation of City Parks and Zoo and other stakeholders.

Finance

Thanks to the work of our excellent Treasurer, Jeanne Stegmann, and the finance committee, we are now fully tax compliant with SARS. This has been a slow, expensive (and somewhat tortuous) process that was necessitated by our previous auditors who failed to submit tax returns for several years. The FinCom has also identified new auditors who have offered to maintain our books on a pro bono basis. The next step is to apply for Section 18A status for certain activities, which will enable tax deductions on donations.

In terms of the big picture, financially speaking, our annual expenses roughly match our annual income so we are breaking even. This is better than making a loss but we do need to look at ways to grow our income and moderate our expenses so that we start generating a profit that can either go into new projects (such as restoration) or into interest-generating investments. At this stage, the BOM has decided to not eat any further into our investments as we rely on the interest they generate to meet our expenses. This means we are effectively

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in a holding pattern until our finances improve, with few funds available to enhance current activities or develop new projects.

Income growth will need to come from improved fundraising, increasing our membership base, and providing new offerings (our current tours schedule is currently running at near capacity and there isn't much room to increase our income in this way).

Blue Plaques

Our Blue Plaques programme is running well and is a flagship initiative of the JHF. We enjoy a very productive relationship with Eric Itzkin and Palesa Mnyaka from the COJ Department of Heritage and look forward to putting up more BPs in collaboration with them. We have also identified a new format for our BPs that makes them more cost-effective and easier to replace in the case of damage (see full Blue Plaques report below).

The appointment of Louise Marx to handle BP logistics has proven productive and has taken some of the burden off Kathy, who is now able to focus on other aspects of the portfolio. This has also allowed us to strengthen and better manage our internal BP process to avoid delays and confusion. Last minute blue plaque applications do come in, however, and can disrupt our timelines. These 'urgent' application should be kept to a minimum by following the established BP processes, but we do understand that some degree of flexibility may be required in certain cases.

Areas to be addressed include improving the promotion of BPs by getting stories in the press and on social media, and to develop a comprehensive BP database + interactive website (either on our own or in conjunction with others such as the Heritage Portal and/or COJ Heritage Directorate).

Committees / Portfolios:

The formalisation of committees with dedicated heads is helping spread the load more effectively (the JHF is a large beast that takes a lot of effort to keep running!). One aspect to bear in mind here is succession planning so that there is fresh blood to take over from senior leadership when they decide to retire. Case in point: our incredible vice-chair, Kathy Munro, has turned 80 and expressed her desire to step down at the AGM. She will remain on in her posts as head of Blue Plaques and Books Sales (for which we are extremely grateful). In honour of her many years of service, the BOM voted to award Kathy the title of Honorary Life Vice-President at the AGM. She was also presented with an honorary Blue Plaque in her name at a birthday party hosted by the JHF.

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More specifically the Heritage Plans Committees, Tours Committee, Blue Plaques Committee, Book Sales Committee, Research Centre, Finance Committee, Education Committee and Friends of Johannesburg Cemeteries are all operating well. We do need to re-establish our Restoration Committee following the tragic passing of Jocelyn Rhodes. And we still need to find that elusive fundraiser!

Vice-Chairs

It has been suggested that we appoint two vice-chairs going forward – one to focus on tours, promotions and marketing, and the other to focus on administration, constitutional matters, stakeholder engagements, etc. This division of labour will help streamline operations and will also alleviate some of the pressure on the Chair, who is currently operating at full capacity. The BOT has approved the nomination of Michele Vrdoljak and Aleksandra Burr-Dixon as our new vice-chairs and their names will be put forward at the AGM for approval.

Board of Trustees

As per our constitution, trustees cannot serve more than two consecutive 3-year terms. Accordingly, 5 current members of the BOT need to step down. These are: Colin Barrow, Vincent Bath, Tshenolo Mokhele, Isabella Pingle and Maggie Savage. We sincerely thank these trustees for their many years of dedicated service on the board and trust that they will remain involved in the JHF in whatever capacity is appropriate for them. Letters of thanks have been prepared. The names of our new trustees will be presented at the AGM for approval.

Stakeholder Engagements (PJWG, etc)

Following Cyril Ramaphosa's alarming late night drive through the inner city some months ago, the Office of the Presidency has instituted a Presidential Johannesburg Working Group (PJWG) across 8 workstreams. The goal is to 'assist' the COJ in improving its governance of the city ahead of the upcoming G20 Summit, scheduled for mid-November.

As such, the JHF was invited to participate in PJWG Workstream 7 – Cultural and Heritage Sites. Due to the wide scope of issues under this workstream, it was agreed to divide it up into three sub-streams: Johannesburg City Library and Beyers Naude Square, Johannesburg Art Gallery and Joubert Park, and Historical Landmarks. The latter category is very broad so it was further decided to prioritize five projects as the first phase, with other sites to be added at a later date. The first 5 historical landmarks to be addressed are: Walter Sisulu Square of Dedication / Freedom Square, Chancellor House, the Drill Hall, the Bez Valley Farmhouse, and the Rissik Street Post Office.

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Due to the large number of stakeholders in attendance, the PJWG process has been somewhat slow-going with a lot of talk and not that much concrete action. It has also been hampered by ad hoc logistics in terms of invitations, last-minute scheduling and cancellation of meetings, and a lack of responsiveness from some authorities to questions asked and materials requested.

What has become apparent is that many of the sites under discussion require collaboration between different government departments and agencies (including but not limited to the Johannesburg Property Company, Johannesburg Roads Agency, Johannesburg Development Agency, COJ Department of Community Development, Gauteng Provincial Legislature, Gauteng Provincial Government, etc.). However, there seems to be little if any communication between the various authorities which results in inefficient planning and implementation. From our perspective, these are all complex, long-term issues that will require genuine discussion and dialogue to generate a cohesive blueprint that all parties can execute collaboratively, as opposed to the current system that sees each entity pulling in its own direction.

Despite the long meetings and slow progress, the PJWG process is, I think, valuable as it holds the authorities up to regular scrutiny, with the Presidency firmly expressing its desire to see progress as opposed to more talk. We will continue to participate in the PJWG process but will reconsider should it become apparent that the COJ is simply going through the motions to pacify the Presidency and has no intention of genuine dialogue with stakeholders.

We have also been invited to participate in the Johannesburg Tourism Company's regular stakeholder engagements regarding the formulation of the city's first-ever Tourism Masterplan. This forum has met twice so far and has been relatively productive. Feedback has been welcomed and the JTC has thus far demonstrated a realistic grasp of the challenges facing the tourism sector in Johannesburg, as do many of the participants. We will continue to participate in this process as appropriate as we believe that properly managed heritage assets play a major role in the tourism appeal of any major city.

Additionally, the new head of the JDA, Themba Mathibe, has proven himself to be very proactive and is actively seeking closer cooperation between our two organisations in order to deliver effective results for the city and its people. This open and collaborative approach has been a game-changer, and a Partnership Agreement between the JDA, Friends of JAG and the JHF is currently being negotiated. This document specifically relates to both the relocation and restoration of the Johannesburg Art Gallery collection, and the restoration of the Lutyens building. Once this document is signed, we will be issuing a joint press release to

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this effect. Based on the progress we have made thus far, we will continue building a relationship with JDA to better enhance and protect Joburg's heritage resources, on the understanding that we will remain independent and not simply rubber-stamp their plans.

Johannesburg Art Gallery

A major issue for the JHF over the last year has been the condition of the Johannesburg Art Gallery. The JHF and Friends of JAG (FoJ) issued a joint legal letter in September 2024 demanding the COJ live up to its mandate of care regarding both the JAG building and collection. Additionally, the FoJ proposed a fully funded and credible plan to relocate, restore and digitise the art collection at no cost to the city. Webber Wentzel has been representing the FoJ and JHF on a pro bono basis throughout.

Despite support from the national Department of Arts, donors, cultural organisations and many other entities, the COJ proved remarkably stubborn on this issue, with several follow-up letters and meetings failing to break the deadlock (it seems that certain people with the COJ refused to be 'bullied' by FoJ/JHF and insisted on formulating their own plans to save the collection that they themselves have allowed to deteriorate). However, recently, the JDA has stepped in to facilitate a new working relationship that has made real progress in resolving the thorny JAG issue. As such, FoJ, JHF and JDA are currently negotiating a partnership agreement that outlines how the three organisations will work together and 'speak with one voice' on the JAG.

Under the agreement, the FoJ will oversee and contribute towards the relocation and restoration of the collection in conjunction with the current gallery staff, the South African Heritage Resource Agency, the Art Gallery Committee and other stakeholders. This includes installing 145 artworks, recently returned from Korea as part of a loan, in the empty Standard Bank Gallery for an exhibition in time for the G20 meeting. The remainder of the extensive JAG collection will then be properly catalogued and relocated from the Lutyens building to suitable facilities (ideally within the city of Johannesburg) for restoration and digitisation. The suggested venues to house the bulk of the collection are still under discussion and need to be approved as fit for use by SAHRA, the AGC, etc.

Meanwhile, the JHF will concentrate on overseeing the restoration of the Lutyens building, which needs urgent intervention in terms of water ingress, structural damage, etc. Following JDA's initial presentation of their restoration plan, the JHF raised several areas of concern – most notably that there was no suitable heritage architect attached to the project. We are gratified that the JDA has now appointed the reliable firm of Mayat Hart as the heritage consultants (contracted by Lamela Consulting, who will be executing the project). The JHF enjoys a productive relationship with Mayat Hart and we have nominated Wynand Dreyer,

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Paul Wilson and Kgao Mashego as JHF representatives who will attend regular stakeholder engagement sessions and keep an eye on the restoration of the JAG building once the process gets underway.

The ultimate objective is to have the restoration of the collection and the building running concurrently so that the collection can return safely to the JAG once the building is once again fit for purpose. This brings up the issue of the current location of JAG within Joubert Park and whether this is sustainable. As part of the PJWG discussions, it has been acknowledged that the entire precinct needs to be addressed, including the nearby Jack Mincer taxi rank, park maintenance, etc. We are particularly concerned about a proposal to convert Joubert Park into a temporary taxi rank while the Jack Mincer facility undergoes necessary refurbishment. Clearly, this is not something that we would support and have sent a letter of objection to the relevant authorities.

Ultimately, though, the future of the JAG does need to be discussed and we support the proposed establishment of a multi-stakeholder symposium to discuss the future form, function and governance of JAG. Suggestions have been made, for example, to create satellite galleries around Joburg to spread the collection beyond the inner city, and it has been mooted that the overly complicated management relationship between JAG and the city needs to be reconfigured to make the gallery more agile and self-reliant. Whatever the outcomes of this symposium, we maintain that the JAG must remain a gallery in some form, as was intended by the founders.

Johannesburg City Library (JCL)

Following our successful protest action and media campaign last year, held in collaboration with the Johannesburg Crisis Alliance, the city finally started focussing on getting the JCL re-opened after many years of inaction. To this end, JDA established a regular stakeholder workgroup where progress on the project was shared and input was taken. We are very grateful for the participation of Wynand Dreyer and Flo Bird in this process and believe that, although they didn't take everything we said on board, it was a reasonably effective and productive engagement that resulted in improved outcomes for the JCL. For example, we were able to convince them to create two smaller water tanks rather than one big water tank, which makes for a more symmetrical and less obtrusive structure that doesn't distract too much from the façade.

The first phase of the re-opening took place a few months ago with the full re-opening event happening on the 9 August 2025. We are gratified with this positive result and are happy to have been able to play a role in holding the authorities accountable for their responsibilities

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regarding this vital civic resource. With the JCL once again open to the public, we are now working with various authorities to improve the condition of the wider Beyers Naude Square Precinct.

Nevertheless, there is still the issue of the continued closure of various branch libraries around the city, and we have been assisting local interest groups to apply pressure to get these no-less-important facilities reopened. We also support getting all libraries in the city open on weekends (especially Saturday mornings, when people have the time to visit). This used to be the case pre-COVID and Library Services supports extending the current opening hours, but this issue still needs to be negotiated with the unions.

Affiliates

Jozi My Jozi (JMJ) has been very active in trying to rejuvenate the inner city and we enjoy a good working relationship with them. In particular, we have been working together to try and find a suitable tenant for the Rissik Street Post Office and the Orange Grove Waterfall properties. These are both problematic sites that will require a lot of investment, so it's taking a while but we remain cautiously optimistic that a solution will be found.

We are also still investigating the formation of an independent property holding company or trust that can receive donations of property from the city or other owners. This will remove problematic entities, such as JPC, from the equation and facilitate more effective development. I have had a verbal agreement with Webber Wentzel's property division that they will assist pro bono, but it's still too soon to initiate that process. First, we need to find a suitable developer for either the RSPO and/or the Waterfall property and then take it from there.

We are also a member of the Heritage Association of South Africa (HASA), which was headed by our own Kathy Munro (her four-year term as Chair ended in October 2025). We support HASA as the umbrella body for heritage associations around the country and believe that we need to forge stronger connections between these various regional and local organisations to better represent the heritage cause across South Africa. The JHF contributed some funds towards both their previous conference in Clarens and this year's event in Middelburg, Mpumalanga. And we sponsored the attendance of several people at both conferences.

Other valued affiliates include the Johannesburg Crisis Alliance (with whom we worked on the successful campaign to get the City Library reopened). And we enjoy good relations with several Residents Associations across the city.

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Joburg in Crisis: Metro Center / Mark's Park 'Alienation', etc.

With the city in more or less constant state of crisis, heritage-related issues are coming up all the time. These include:

- The abandonment of the Metro Centre and the dereliction of the irreplaceable plans archive.
- The JPC's vague and ominous proposal to 'alienate' certain parts of Mark's Park and the wider Geldenhuys land grant to the city (which includes the Melville Koppies, Emmarentia Dam, etc.).
- The confusion regarding the renewal of leases on heritage buildings that currently have reliable tenants, including Salisbury House and Mike's Heritage House in Parktown.
- The drastically increased rates now being levied on the Rand Club, Killarney Country Club and others, making them financially unsustainable.
- The invasion of the Bez Valley Farmhouse (the invaders have now been largely removed by Joburg City Parks and Zoo and a meeting was held on site with representatives from various COJ entities to identify a new purpose for the oldest house in Joburg). We are currently awaiting a site assessment from qualified heritage architects to determine next steps.

In short, there is a lot going on in Joburg right now – much of it bad. We will continue to release statements and comments on these various issues as appropriate. We are also in regular communication with many of the stakeholders and encourage the sharing of information and resources. In all cases, we maintain that Joburg's heritage assets need to be properly maintained and beneficially occupied so that they can contribute to the well being of the city and its people.

Heritage Plans Committees

The HPCs are running well and are an important resource that should be promoted more widely to the property industry, including homeowners, developers, estate agents, etc. I am very grateful to Andre Marais, William Gaul and Sue Zenha and their committees for stepping up to take on the many enquiries we get about developments, demolitions, etc.

In the year ahead, I would like to further capacitate the HPCs so that they are able to take on a more active role addressing heritage issues in their respective regions. As chair, I have reached capacity and need to be able to delegate some responsibilities to the HPCs as I don't want to become a bottleneck. To make this process more effective, however, we do need to establish an HPC South, HPC Soweto and HPC North to complement our current HPC

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Central, East and West, all with clearly demarcated boundaries. It has also been requested that the minutes of all HPC meetings are to be submitted to Barbara for our records.

Fundraising

Appointing a good fundraiser remains a priority in order to bolster our income. This role would include approaching corporates, donors, embassies, national lottery, etc. We have been advised that paid fundraisers are not considered appropriate by many corporates and sponsors, so we need to find someone who will take on the role within the JHF. One professional fundraiser suggested appointing someone from our side that they would train (at a not inconsiderable cost). Any suggestions on how to improve our fundraising activities is welcomed!

Press and Publicity

The JHF's presence in the media has been growing consistently. We are often approached by radio, TV and press outlets for interviews and comments – especially after we issue a release to our substantial press list. Recently, we have been avoiding press releases about the PJWG process by request of the organisers. I do anticipate, however, the need to issue statements on pressing heritage issues such as the Metro Centre and the proposed alienation of Mark's Park. Even though we have been accused of 'running to the media', I can confidently state that we only resort to the media after our attempts to communicate through official channels has failed. And even if our presence in the media is sometimes lamented by the authorities, it has undoubtedly contributed to our growing influence and reputation.

Our Press and Publicity Committee has recently been further bolstered by the addition of volunteers with extensive public relations experience, and we are grateful for their participation.

Research Centre

Led by the incredible Di Steele, the Research Centre is an invaluable asset for the organisation. However, it is expensive to run – amounting to almost half our annual income. We are working to monetise the RC by charging fees for access to the archive, but there is little to no likelihood that the RC can be self-sustaining by monetisation alone. As such, I would like to try and find a sponsor/donor to make a substantial contribution to fund the RC for a period of several years (perhaps in exchange for naming rights?). If we could remove RC expenditure from our operational budget, it would release a lot of money for use in other aspects of the organisation.

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I also have a feeling that the RC is outgrowing its premises at Holy Family College, which is narrow, cold and difficult for the public to access. The school has also expressed an interest in getting the space back at some stage. Although it will be hard to find a secure location at such a low cost, I believe we need to start thinking about a new home for the RC in the medium term.

JHF Book Sales and Bookshop

Under the outstanding leadership of Kathy Munro, our regular book sales continue to raise substantial and much needed funds for the JHF. The Books Committee works very hard to set up these book sales and the entire organisation owes them a debt of gratitude. Kathy (with generous support from her husband, Keith) is also setting up a permanent JHF book shop at Northwards where selected titles can be stored and sold during the week (either during set times or by appointment). This is a very exciting development and we thank everyone who has contributed to making this happen (see Book Sales report below). There is currently no name for the 'Book Shop' and suggestions are welcome.

In closing

I am extremely grateful for all the support I have received over the last year and pay tribute to many dedicated members of the JHF who contribute so freely of their time. The city is currently at an inflection point and our activities have seldom been more relevant or important. We therefore need to keep up the good work (no matter how frustrating it may be at times) and continue to grow the organisation by attracting new members and volunteers.

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BREAKDOWN OF PORTFOLIOS 2026

*Honorary Life President: Flo Bird / Honorary Life Vice-President: Kathy Munro
Chair: David Fleminger / Honorary Treasurer: Jeanne Stegmann / Secretary: Barbara Cron*

Advocacy and Affiliates	David Fleminger	Head
	Wynand Dreyer	Vice
Blue Plaques	Kathy Munro	Head
	Louise Marx	Vice
Education	Brenda Adams	Head
	Flo Bird	Vice
Finance + Financial Planning	Jeanne Stegmann	Head
	Maggie Savage	Vice
	Elaine Persona	Bookkeeper
Fundraising	?	Head
	?	Vice
HPCs	William Gaul	HPC Central
	Andre Marais	HPC East
	Sue Zenha	HPC West
	?	HPC South, Soweto, North
Legal	Monique McDonald	Head
	Luke Goncalves	Vice
Communications (website, social media, press, publicity, etc.)	David Fleminger	Head
	Antoinette Morgan	Vice
	Tracy Clayton	Vice
Research + Resource Centre (including digitisation and conservation)	Diana Steele	Head
	?	Vice
Friends of JHB Cemeteries	Sarah Welham	Head
	Nici Noble	Vice (BOM)
Restoration (Physical repairs of buildings, etc.)	?	Head
	?	Vice
Tours + Guide Training	Michele Vrdoljak	Head
	Aleksandra Burr-Dixon	Vice
	Tracy Clayton	Quicket + Social Media
Book Sales	Kathy Munro	Head
	Louise Marx	Vice

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BLUE PLAQUE REPORT

K A Munro

Summary: The Blue Plaque programme continues to make Blue Plaques a visible marker of heritage in the city. This is a self-funding project of JHF. We (as JHF) fund 5 blue plaques a year for disadvantaged communities (often following Flo Bird's nominations). Some blue plaques are for private homes with owners funding the recognition of their houses as heritage homes. In addition, the City of Johannesburg Heritage Directorate funds approximately 10 blue plaques a year.

In addition to promoting community pride and awareness of heritage assets, our objective remains to ensure that blue plaques are a visible and recognisable pointer to the work of Johannesburg Heritage. Financially, we aim to ensure that the blue plaque programme at least breaks even with the ability to subsidise blue plaques for communities that cannot pay with surplus income from sponsored blue plaques. This is an ongoing project with the development and installation of blue plaques planned into 2025/26 year.

Challenges: Over time, we face deterioration in some blue plaques (e.g. fading) as well as vandalism. This means that we are busy replacing plaques as we also try to grow our blue plaques numbers. We have had two instances of blue plaques facing rejection from state/city government following manufacture and prior approval. Therefore, keeping track of the process of blue plaques - i.e. where any one plaque is in the pipeline – is of utmost importance. In terms of pushing plaques through our pipelines, timelines vary.

Then, we need better data capture of new BPs with the intention of building a comprehensive database of plaques across the city. But this will require a capital investment or someone skilled at building a data base. We are working on these problems in collaboration with the Heritage Portal, etc.

New developments - Exploring new materials for blue plaques: We have been concerned for some time about the fibre glass moulded material we have been using for blue plaques (questions of cost, logistics, durability, fading, vandalism etc). We need to bring down the costs of blue plaques and to make replacements easier and more cost effective. We are currently exploring alternative materials and approaches – viz. a flat ACM material with a blue background set within a substantial circular base made of cement). Our objective is to improve longevity, durability, solve fading and lower costs but not at the expense of aesthetics.

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Team work and Thanks: The following people have served on the Blue Plaque committee: Kathy Munro (Chair), Flo Bird, William Gaul, Paul Kotze, Diane Levine, Andre Marais, Brian McKechnie, Maggie Savage.

Louise Marx has joined the Blue Plaques team. We took the management decision to pay Louise an honorarium for each blue plaque she oversees (R500 per plaque). Her task is to coordinate and manage the processes and capture blue plaques in a data base. Danie and Reuben Smit continue to install the blue plaques. Magda Mostert handles the design, art work and production. Barbara Cron handles correspondence, invoices/ queries.

We thank Eric Itzkin and Palesa Mnyaka of the City Arts and Culture Dept for their ongoing collaboration, which has been most productive.

Diana Steele at the Research Centre and David Fleminger as chair are kept informed.

Publicity: Information on new BPs go up on our social media pages. It's a challenge to cover all. Tracy Clayton, Samantha Perry and Carol Kolk will help us to develop stories for additional promotion.

How we work: The Blue Plaques programme is successful because of teamwork. The process includes the following steps: nominations; research and assessment; establishing the funding; site visits; structuring, circulation, debate, final agreement of text; art work preparation and mock up; approval of artwork; production; installation.

We try to install a few plaques in a single round to cut the unit costs of installation. Finally, there may be an unveiling – but JHF does not fund unveilings and this is an opportunity for local communities or building owners to get involved.

Policy and Application Forms: are available online and sent to people who make enquiries via the website. We have revised and simplified the blue plaque policy this year. We have grappled with the applicability of the 20-year rule.

Extent of JHF coverage of blue plaques: We recently backed Krugersdorp in the installation of a blue plaque at the St Ursula's convent, but we find the logistics of taking on blue plaques beyond the Jhb boundaries are difficult. We advise that we should retain as our boundaries the Jhb municipal demarcation. We are delighted that Krugersdorp have now formed their own Heritage society, and we look forward to cooperation.

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JHF sponsors 5 blue plaques a year from its own funds: the current batch (2025) are

- Ebenezer Congregational church in Noordgesig
- House of struggle activist, Geoffrey Beck, in Noordgesig
- Henry Nxumalo (courageous investigative Drum journalist) in Dube
- Prof Dart's identification of Taung child at Hospital Hill
- House 1 Mooki Street which is the very first house built in what became Soweto.

City of Johannesburg Blue plaques 2025:

- Chancellor House (installed)
- Wits Planetarium (installed)
- St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Church, Martindale (installed)
- Ridgeholm at the Parktown Children's Theatre (replacement - installed)
- Mai Mai Market, inner city (site visit – under development)
- Brixton Tower, Sentec (manufactured and awaiting installation)
- Gandhi family house in Troyeville (replacement - approved and in production)
- Struben Stamp Mills at Confidence Reef (replacement - approved and in production)
- Eyethu Cinema Soweto (under development)
- Dr Melville Edelstein – replacement (approved and in production)
- Abiel Lebello, June 16 Soweto Heritage (replacement – approved and in production)
- Confidence Reef blue plaque and replacement NMC badge now covered by the Friends of Kloofendal Reserve (Roodepoort)

JHF blue plaques installed 2024-25:

- Oxford Road Beacon (replacement)
- House Bullock, Killarney (2 blue plaques)
- Shandukani Health precinct
- Wits Medical School – 2 Esselen Street
- Whitehall Court, Killarney
- Midways, house in The Valley Road, Parktown (Chameela Bhagowat)
- Sunbeam House (Berea/ Hillbrow) for Mark Steele
- House Hillbrow / House Houghton for Mark Steele
- House Pentz, Melville
- Wits Digital Dome / Planetarium (with COJ)
- St Francis Catholic Church Martindale (with COJ)
- Randjes beacon, Wits Junction, Parktown (replacement)

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Plaques under development / replacements:

- Ravenscraig in The Valley Road (Philip and Marie Henriette Botha)
- St Mary's on the Limpopo, Park Lane (approved and in production)
- Ben Xitasa, African Messiah Choir, Johannesburg
- Upper Houghton, 12 Young Avenue, Robert Howden House (Zimasa Mabuse)
- Upper Houghton, 5 Ash Avenue – Hermann Kallenbach House (Dee Ferrandi)
- Upper Houghton, Bear Lodge (replacement)
- Observatory, Urania Street – Malfour / House Hotz Wayburne and Wayburne House
- 66 Carr Street, New Town (redeveloped Premier Milling building - early 20th C)
- Mill Junction, New Town (converted silos – redeveloped as housing units)
- Northwards, 21 Rockridge Road (needs a new replacement plaque as old plaque now obscured by turnstile gate)
- The Ebenezer Congregational church (Noordgesig)
- The House of struggle activist, Geoffrey Beck (Noordgesig)
- Henry Nxumalo House, Dube (courageous investigative Drum journalist)
- Prof Dart's identification of Taung child Hospital Hill (Wits Medical school)
- House 1 Mooki Street (very first house built in what became Soweto)
- First Christian Science Church / Kallenbach Church 1909 (would need to find funding)
- Catholic Cathedral of Christ the King (in correspondence with Father Lawrence)
- The Legacy Complex (old Our Parents home, German Jewish Old age home – Manfred Hermer design) – Louise to discuss with the developers.

JHF / COJ auspices Plaques awaiting Installation:

- Anna Smith, JPL City Library (motivation was required – grateful for help of Jane Carruthers)
- Brixton Tower blue plaque

Sponsorship from Eric Itzkin: Eric has generously donated an honorarium for a tour he did for Wits students to be allocated for 3 replacement blue plaques; vote of thanks to Eric.

- The Battle for Fordsburg Square - 1922 strike action
- Shlom Eating House Newtown (replacement)
- Mary Fitzgerald Square

From the 2024 end of year list for attention in 2025 - no progress on these, remain as ideas:

- Kensington, Gray Street, outside the Scientology Centre: remembering T P Gray (Mayor of Jhb) and Kensington Golf Club

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- Observatory Golf Club, Fourie/ Regent Street Observatory: oldest Jhb municipal course
- Carmel Mansions, Diagonal Street - faded, needs renewal
- Sci Bono / Electric Workshop, Newtown – under discussion, still need a visit
- Ellis Park Tennis commemoration – Gaganakis is the contact person
- OG Waterfall - plaque is faded and needs renewal (House Bleloch plaque is OK)
- Observatory Golf Club - research and writing inscription phase
- Pallinghurst Road estate, Westcliff – replacement plaque, urgent, Residents' Association has been asked to fund
- The Scott / Iran House, Young Avenue , Upper Houghton / Mountain View - still being mulled over by the Iranian authorities
- Michael Sutton Houses - proposal under way to have 3 of his Jhb houses / work recognized
- Pancho Guedes House in New Forest Road - Kate Otten now heritage architect
- Fairview Fire Tower, Commissioner Street – renewal required

INCORPORATING PARKTOWN AND WESTCLIFF HERITAGE TRUST

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HERITAGE FOUNDATION

BOOK SALES / NEW PUBLICATION SALES

K A Munro + Louise Marx

Overview: Book sales are proceeding well and have become a good fundraiser and major contributor to JHF's annual income. We sell second hand books and new books. For the former we depend on donations from our members and friends. For the latter we purchase at the wholesale prices from the publishers and then resell to our members.

2024/2025 efforts: We ran a book sale at Victoria Market in cooperation with James Delaney (artist and Friends of the Wilds project leader) in Dec 2024 and added two tours of the Victoria Yards area.

Our May 2025 book sale event at the Holy Family College ran two months later than previously but combined well with two special walking tours of the Killarney/ Saxonwold area. We thank the tours committee for their efforts. We also had a good result from our major book event at the Heritage Weekend - mid September 2025 - at the HFC. This sale is now an annual tradition that combines wonderful tours over two days with the Big Book Sale event.

New Book Sales: We committed to a large outlay on the Herbert Baker book by John Stewart and anticipate that this will do well as we are able to offer our members an excellent discount on this title. We will continue sourcing additional new book titles where appropriate and, in future, we'll investigate facilitating the sale of new books through the website.

Silent Auctions: A new venture at the May sale (repeated at the September sale) was a silent auction which included maps, prints, a photo album, heritage portfolio prints, special books. This venture worked well, though three watercolour paintings did not sell and were consigned to Strauss and Co for one of their auctions.

Exciting new development. We are developing a Book Nook room at Northwards, thanks to the generous help from Neil Viljoen and the Northwards Trust. A large room has been allocated and with a donation of paint and labour have repainted and prepared the room. Rent will be approximately R3000 for the year. Neil has donated some furniture. Maggie Savage and Di Steele have given bookcases. Our huge thanks. We plan to sort, store, price and sell books from the room. It is work in progress and we shall announce opening times and a launch in due course.

Donations appreciated: We are dependent on donations of second-hand books, prints, maps, and ephemera that enables us to assess, price and resell. This year to date we have

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received good donations from James Findlay and from Jonathan of Boskruin. And we thank all donors. We are also in discussion with several deceased estates containing substantial book collections.

Team work: We work as a team and I thank Louise Marx for her dedication and support as well as everyone who assisted at the book sales - Barbara Cron, Sarah Welham, Mary Boyeasse, Di Steele, Merle Ruff. Thanks too to all donors and to all buyers. We thank Neil Viljoen, Barbara for selling books from our office store, and Maggie Savage for bookcases. We also thank our husbands, Keith and Les, for their support.

Book sales are a fun activity for all – a good way to circulate books, pass on family book collections, find good homes for good books and ensure everyone benefits. Popular sellers include art, architecture, South African interest, travel, military, history, heritage books.

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RESEARCH CENTRE

Diana Steele

The Research Centre has created an index of over 18,000 entries of properties, people, subjects and events, plus a database of well over 100,000 documents.

Scanners and Photocopiers

- We have purchased an overhead photographic scanner which enables us to scan pages from books and larger sized pages much more easily.
- We were able to fix our Canon scanner's paper feed roller ourselves at no cost to the JHF. This will extend its life for a few more years.
- We have replaced the large photocopier in the Research Centre with the Ricoh which was in use at Northwards. The Innani company has been incredibly generous providing service at no charge to us, only charging for spare parts when needed. They also moved the copier from Northwards to the Research Centre and took away the old photocopier – also without charge.
- We have cancelled the Kyocera contract which has been running for many years. This will save us over R12,000 a year.

PCs and Laptops

- We will have to upgrade our server PC to Windows 11 but I don't believe it's necessary to replace the two PCs in the general office.
- Maggi has donated a laptop, upgraded to Windows 11, which is already in use in our office.

Backup

Thanks to Maggi, the IT technician from Robson Savage has advised that we will be able to backup our entire database separately through the Robson Savage setup. This will give us peace of mind if anything were to happen with our current setup through One Drive.

Volunteers

- Kathy's suggestion of formalising the appointment of volunteers and offering students free membership and access to our tours, to encourage their participation and understanding of our work, is an excellent one. Our first student volunteer to receive these benefits is Amber Boulton, who is currently studying for her Masters Degree in Heritage Studies through UCT.
- Louise Marx has drawn up a very useful application form for volunteers which will help in identifying the best function suited to their skills.

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- I am searching for a retired volunteer who can dedicate at least 2 days per week working at the Research Centre and with the skills to be able, gradually, to take over from me.

Research Enquiries

I have been receiving many more applications for information from our archives over the past year or so. Some, of course, are for our own tour guides planning future tours, but many more enquiries from overseas which we would not have been possible before digitisation. Each enquiry is unique and it has taken time to figure out the charges for the different types of requests.

Research Finances

The Research Centre runs at a loss with the digitisation efforts making up the major portion of the expenses. What is not taken into consideration is the amount of research matter we provide to the tour guides, especially for new tours. This of course is ultimately for the benefit of the foundation with income from the tours, but with no direct financial benefit to the Research office.

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FRIENDS OF JOHANNESBURG CEMETERIES

Sarah Welham

Since our last report, we have had a few work days in the cemeteries, cleaning headstones and clearing overgrown bushes, weeds, etc. We have also got back to turning fallen headstones in Brixton but this is not sustainable on a long-term basis as members have to bring and pay for their gardeners to help with this heavy work as we don't have the funds to pay them.

We also presented at the South African Cemeteries Association's National Conference in August this year on the work we do in the cemeteries, and our collaboration with other communities and City Parks. It was a good way of showcasing our involvement in the cemeteries.

Liz Haines has over the past few months been replanting the flowerbed behind the 1922 Strike Monument in Braamfontein cemetery. We are now hoping for permission to pay one of the staff at the cemetery to keep the 3 beds we planted up there watered and weeded and looking good.

We also acknowledge the impressive work done over the past two years by our committee to successfully rehabilitate the vandalised Ash Walls at Braamfontein Cemetery. This complicated process was completed earlier in 2025 and we thank everyone who contributed their time and money to this important cause.

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EDUCATION / SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Brenda Adam

Our tour at Holy Family College is still popular with schools. They enjoy learning about life in a classroom long ago, writing in cursive with ink and a dipping pen, seeing the beautiful architecture at the school, and learning some History of Johannesburg. These are all self-funded tours.

In 2024, we did not apply for additional funding as we were using the grant from the Jim Joel Trust. Strictly speaking this Grant is aimed at pre-school children so we decided to use it for the younger group i.e. Grade 3 learners and offered tours of the Transport Museum. It is an important item in the syllabus for that year and the Museum introduces them to the concept of changes over time.

The James Hall Transport Museum is free of charge and the staff welcome young children. They actually run the tours and allow them to climb on certain vehicles so we had only to supply worksheets and employ Silas to welcome the groups, divide them up, and monitor the children who all had a wonderful time.

Our involvement was inviting schools from the poorer suburbs, ensuring they had proper permission to go on the tours and Silas ensured that they attended, behaved reasonably well, and completed the work sheets. Both Museum staff and their teachers were happy with the experience. Our biggest cost was the buses. Unfortunately, the grant from the Jim Joel Trust is now exhausted and we need to find new sources of funding.

Plans for 2025-2026

We are hoping to return to tours involving Museum Africa as these are more focused on heritage and match the Grade 5 syllabus. This has been an extremely popular tour but needs funding as we paid for guides from Constitution Hill.

I would also like to re-instate the *Baker walking tours from Northwards to St George's* but we need to look at tour guide resources. *The View* is also a possible resource we should be using. But we would need to train guides and develop a new worksheet.

All these proposals depend on getting the funds for the tours as we have no funding at the moment. Losing the classroom at Holy Family College has meant reducing the number of children we can take at any one time but we are working on a solution for this.

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FINANCE AND BUDGET REVIEW

Jeanne Stegmann

Financial result for the year ended 31 March 2025

The main contributors to income - membership subscriptions, Heritage Day and tour income - remain robust at R690 184 for FY 2025 (FY 2024: R606 519). Operating expenses comprise of salaries, office and research centre expenses amounting to R696 533 for FY 2025 (FY2024: R659 947). Audit costs paid in FY 2025 amounted to R36 225 and related to the audit of the FY 2024. The JHF remains heavily reliant on interest income on the investment account (FY 2025: R139 655 vs FY 2024: R143 498) to return a net profit from operations, as operating costs continue to exceed operating income (FY 2025: R42 574 vs FY 2024: R53 428). Net profit from operations after taking into account interest income remains positive at FY 2025: R97 081 (FY 2024: R90 070).

Financial forecast and projects

Budgeted income is set conservatively and estimated to remain flat or marginally increasing. Budgeted operating expenses are adjusted for average annual inflation. The FY 2026 budget includes an expected payment for the review of the FY 2025 financial statements of R18 000 and an additional cost for rendering historic tax returns of R10 350. This amount should reduce going forward as only one return will be submitted annually. The 2025 financial statements have now been reviewed by the existing auditors and the audit cost will be paid in FY 2026, which cost will be roughly the R18 000 adjusted for inflation.

Now that all our historic tax returns have been completed and submitted to SARS, and we are once again fully tax compliant, it is proposed that we apply for Section 18A status for the Education & Friends of the Cemetery budgeted spend as these projects are likely to qualify for 18A purposes. Funds can then be raised and allocated directly to these projects and 18A tax certificates can be issued to donors, as opposed to being funded from the operating profits of the JHF. Future special project expenses will only be approved if the JHF returns a net profit as the investment account cannot be utilised. This is to ensure the financial viability of the JHF.

Should the JHF succeed in its application for S18A and start issuing 18A tax certificates, an additional compliance burden arises. Firstly, the JHF would need to perform certain onboarding procedures to verify donor's identities for Anti-Money Laundering purposes. Secondly, the JHF would need to report to SARS "IT3D" s which is a report of 18A certificates issued alongside other information mostly pertaining to the donor's identity. The financial committee will consider where responsibility for these functions will reside, i.e. in-house or with the auditors.

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TOURS AND GUIDE TRAINING

David Fleminger

Our tours schedule is running smoothly and many of our tours sell out quickly. Private tours and joint tours with other operators also take place with a high rate of success. This is thanks to the excellent work of the Tours Committee (Michele Vrdoljak, Aleksandra Burr-Dixon, Tracy Clayton, Barbara Cron, Flo Bird and others). Our tour leaders are, of course, quite wonderful and a vital component of the organisation. All in all, there is a good deal of camaraderie among the tour guides and that is most gratifying.

With tours doing nicely, we are looking at ways to expand our offering through talks/lectures, music concerts, picnics, etc. We have already held two 'movies under the stars' events with a screening of 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' on the Northwards lawns and 'Sunset Boulevard' at Villa Arcadia. Both events were considerable successes and more are planned.

In planning our tour schedules, we always try to strike a balance between catering to our core membership and attracting new, younger and more diverse audiences to our wide range of events.

Our annual tour guide training session took place in August and was well received. This time, the agenda was modified somewhat to be more attuned to the specific needs of the JHF. As such, the course does not offer any kind of official accreditation apart from a certificate of completion, but we may be able to assist those who are interested to pursue a professional grading (subject to certain conditions). In any case, guide training is an excellent way to bring new people into the organisation (and a good way of encouraging passive members to become more active volunteers).

We look forward to another year filled with entertaining and inspirational tours that promote the appreciation and awareness of our city's fascinating heritage.

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WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

David Fleminger

Our website remains our main access point on the internet. It is well-maintained and attracts a decent number of visitors – as demonstrated by the number of emails we receive through the website. While the website is functional, at some stage I think it will need a revamp to keep up with the times.

Our social media accounts are popular (nearly 10 000 followers on Facebook and nearly 6000 on Instagram) and are an important platform to promote our tours and activities. We also share selected articles to drive audience engagement. At the moment, apart from tour promotions, our social media is managed ad hoc by myself, Michele, Antoinette and Tracy. Ideally, I'd like to appoint a dedicated social media manager (which has a specific skill set) to keep an eye on these important outreach platforms.

A long-gestating project is to create a JHF Youtube channel that features video interviews with prominent heritage personalities, inserts on important sites and houses, etc. A JHF podcast is also a possibility.