



Synod Report

Brief Background

The St. Johann's Organisation, trading as St. Johann's Lifestyle Estate, is constituted by:

- St. Johann's Heim, an Old Age Home with capacity for 70 residents ("the Heim");
- St. Johann's Gardens, a Retirement Village with 50 houses/flats offered as life rights ("Gardens"); and
- St. Johann's Park, a sectional title unit extension of the Retirement Village with 46 houses/flats ("Park").

The St. Johann's Organisation adopted a new Constitution in October 2022 to re-organise its governance and adjust the Constitution in view of legislative changes. The Organisation now has a leaner Management Committee which consists of between 4 and 6 voting members: 4 members are nominated by the Founder Members (Cape Church, German Catholic Church, German Club Cape Town and the Johanniter Orden) and up to 2 members are elected at the annual AGM. In addition, the executive management (Estate Manager and Lifestyle Manager) and a representative from Watchprop. The Organisation has outsourced its human resources (Labournet) and accounting functions (Watchprop) to ensure continuity in the case of changes in personnel and correct adherence to prescribed compliance requirements. These changes have yielded good results after an initial teething period where systems had to be updated and accounting processes corrected.

The Covid pandemic had severe consequences on the Organisation as bed occupancy was very low and due to the contact restrictions the residents and their families had a very difficult time. The finances of the Organisation felt the pressure as the new Mountainview independent living accommodation did not take off as expected at that time and due to delays in obtaining the occupation certificate could not be utilised as quickly as was hoped for. Since most of the reserves went into the Mountainview project, it was only due to continued support from the Johanniter Orden that cash flow shortfalls could be met and the Organisation was eventually able to trade out of these adverse circumstances.

Currently, the Organisation has rebuilt some of its reserves due to bequests and prudent cash management. The contract with Estate Manager, Ms Cockbain, was renewed in June 2023 and there has been a stable executive management in place now for a few years already.

Challenges

- With rising inflation and an increase in overall costs for nursing, electricity and groceries, there is considerable upward pressure on the cost of care so that the Organisation's reliance on donations, income from the sale of life rights and exit levies is the only way to ease the impact on residents in terms of accommodation fees or levies.
- Occupancy level at the St Johannis Heim have increased but are not yet at the target level of 80% and this is affected by economic conditions and general affordability;
- Bigger capital improvement projects such as the replacement of the roof and solar infrastructure and the renovation of the frail care units will only be possible if additional funding is obtained.
- Finding committed volunteers continues to be important to ensure that residents have meaningful contact with other people (although there are occasional visits by congregation members, which is appreciated).

Encouragements

- The Organisation has embarked upon a lifestyle programme that offers residents activities that aim to enhance their emotional and social well-being. For example, a karaoke party was held and a spring tea was hosted. Residents can also partake in movement classes and overall this initiative has been very well received and uplifts the spirits of the residents.
- The waiting list for Mountain View has also been growing.
- The Organisation has excellent facilities in terms of meeting rooms, a café and a large hall.
- The executive management team works well together and recent management accounts showed that the Organisation was achieving a break-even operational performance.

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