



10 February 2025

## **MEMO TO THE ROSENDAL COMMUNITY**

Dear residents

The RTC would like to give the community feedback after the first Meeting of 2025 and public meeting (19 December 2024). The AGM heard the chairperson's report with a review of the year's activities, and a report from the outgoing secretary outlining challenges for the RTC in the future (both reports included below). However, the meeting was disrupted by uncontrolled interjections from a handful of antagonists and thus did not proceed with the publicised agenda. No new members were elected and the committee resolved to delay any decisions until January; no minutes pertain.

The committee met in January. For those who don't have time to read the detail that follows, a summary:

The disruption of the meeting and negative gossip in the community, whether malicious or benign, has prompted a decision by the committee to halt operations, freeze new spending and activate research in the community as to what the RTC should be in the future. More about that in the coming weeks. In short, the annual public meeting is held to review RTC activities, although this is not a legal requirement – the RTC is not a legally registered organisation but an association. Its funds (donated or raised through the auction and accommodation listings) are allocated to projects based on requests (funding applications) and agreed to by a majority vote, as required by the RTC terms of reference. It has open finances that can be viewed on request, likewise minutes of meetings. This invitation of transparency is an RTC mandate but not a legal requirement either. Criticism that the AGM was illegal because of the day of the week it was held and that funds have been badly spent or misappropriated are false as per below and amount to personal opinion.

### **DETAIL**

Herewith perspective on the RTC as an entity:

1. The status of RTC according to the law  
The RTC is an association. It is unregistered and thus not a formal organisation or company. Another example of an unregistered body would be a soup kitchen, which has a simple objective (to feed people) using donations, and with volunteers. One rule of an association in law is that it can collectively change anything about its make-up and its rules of operation at any time. As an association, the RTC does not need to report to anyone or have an AGM, though key donors could require reporting on use of their donations. However, the RTC terms of reference stipulate frequent meetings, transparency, an AGM, and engagement with the community. Yet none of this is required by laws governing associations.
2. Future status

The RTC can continue as it is or it can change its legal status. For the RTC to be a registered entity it would need to abide by the legal framework of an NGO (governed by Act 71, 1997). Besides restructuring as a formal NGO or a trust, it could become a Non-Profit Company (NPC). This latter organisational vehicle is governed by members and directors but does not have shareholders. An NPC can generate income through donations, grants, or trading activities, though any surplus must be reinvested in its work. An NPC may also apply for tax-exempt status with SARS – if granted, donors can claim tax deductions on contributions. Funds can also be collected from an annual subscription (or not). A strong constitution with defined operating procedures, roles, responsibilities, governance structure and goals are compulsory for an NPC, along with frequent reporting, minutes, an AGM, elected representatives and audited financial statements. The RTC has been functioning as an NPC although it is not that.

### 3. Complexity

In the RTC's case, complexity is an issue. Unlike a soup kitchen, the RTC serves wide-ranging interests. Expert opinion says that associations with this kind of complexity need very well-defined rules so that it is clear what the criteria are for its projects and for decision-making. Most likely the RTC is floundering because of complexity, which can embolden sectarian interests. Portfolios, a clear purpose and select projects will go a long way to helping it run more efficiently.

### THE FUTURE

The January RTC meeting discussed how to move forward. It was agreed by all present to:

1. Remain constituted under the current legal framework of an association;
2. Allow new members if and when a reimagined RTC body is established, keeping current members until then (listed below);
3. Engage the community by collecting data via an independently run, anonymous survey to understand a future role for and purpose of the RTC;
4. Send communication to the community explaining the current state of affairs (this memo);
5. Freeze all funding except that which has been allocated to projects in 2024 projects (neighbourhood watch, the hiking trail, WA Malane thank you, cemetery sign) and apply strict, transparent spending. In addition, to keep a funding pipeline to two RTC monthly commitments – website management and social media – both of which are covered by income from listings.

Thank you for your attention. The committee looks forward to hearing back from the community about its role and future via the upcoming survey. Supporting documents follow below.

With regards

**The Rosendal-Mautse Committee**

## CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Name	Role	Office bearers
Mohlolo Eric Katsana (MK)	Exco Member	Chair
Lerato Mosala (LM)	Exco Member	Vice-Chair
Anton Burggraaf (AB)	Exco Member	Secretary
Bonni Meyer (BM)	Exco Member	Finance
Marius Combrink (MC)	Exco Member	
Robin Moorby (RM)	Exco Member	
Norman Botha (NB)	Ex-officio	
Klaus Staudt (KS)	Ex-officio	
Edgar Jellimann (EJ)	Ex-officio	
Hester Theron (HT)	Ex-officio	
Johan Reyneke (JR)	Ex-officio	

Noted in the January meeting that AB and RM will not stand for re-election in 2025.

## REPORTS FROM AGM

### SECRETARY REPORT

Presented on 19 December 2024

Some thoughts on the challenges for the RTC in 2025 in five key areas.

#### 1. Setting Priorities

The committee's biggest challenge for 2025 will be setting clear priorities. While the RTC's mandate is outlined in its terms of reference, there is no guidance on focus areas or budget allocation. As per the distributed annual report, our actions reflect a broad approach—but do they address all our community needs?

- What are the priorities for Mautse and for Rosendal at this time?
- Should the RTC support the municipality with service delivery and upgrades and how?
- What principles should guide fund allocation?
- How can we successfully resolve the disjunction between, for instance, town aesthetic concerns and township socio-economic problems when both affect tourism so deeply?
- How much weight should donor wishes carry?
- Should all funds be fully spent in a year, or should a reserve be maintained for emergencies?

I personally believe the RTC should focus on two or three major projects annually, while reserving a smaller fund for ad hoc initiatives. Its strategy should look at ways to assist with poverty alleviation, which is the root cause of many ills.

Looking at our project spend over three years helps give context:

- 2022: Comparisons are difficult due to a fundraising drive for tourism, which used 45% of the budget but was ultimately unsuccessful, with a small budget
- 2023: Tourism received the largest share of spend (42%), with social responsibility and Mautse groups getting 30%, and Safety & Security and the website each received a 12% allocation
- 2024: Heritage was new item at 28% of spend, projects, Tourism (and projects supporting tourism) dropped to 23%, Safety & Security rose to 17%, website costs remained even and Mautse social programmes dropped by a third to 20%. A key difference was the comparatively large R167,000 allocated in 2024. This is 4½ times more than 2023 spend and 2½ times 2022 spend. The reason for this is that funds had accumulated over a few years and the committee decided to put them to use.

## 2. Financial Sustainability

Without a successful auction, which typically raises R50–60k, income relies on accommodation listings, next year projected to be R35k. Meanwhile, 2025's regular monthly expenses for social media and website management will surpass listings income, making more than a few projects unlikely in 2025.

There are critical questions for the committee to consider because annual funds of R80k or less will not sustain the level of activity it achieved in 2024, despite a positive bank balance of R90k.

- Are there creative funding opportunities to explore?
- Should residents contribute directly?
- Should the RTC become a ratepayers' association with annual subscriptions?

## 3. Decision-Making Legitimacy and Transparency

The committee must clarify its decision-making processes. This year, tensions arose between achieving a consensus decision-making and majority voting. For smaller, ad hoc funding of less than R1,600, a committee WhatsApp voting poll system worked well. However, major decisions—like the cemetery rehabilitation and walking trail, together costing over R60k—required robust discussion and formal voting in committee meetings with a quorum.

- Consensus makes things easier, but the RTC terms of reference are clear: “Decisions will be based on a majority vote, and a motion will be passed if a minimum of 51% of committee member votes, including proxy votes, agree to the proposal or submission.” This means 6 out of 10 exco members must vote yes. A diversity of opinions drives healthy debate and informed decisions, and members with concerns should not feel pressured to agree to every proposal that is presented, especially when so done by its own members.
- The committee strives to be transparent, keeping the community informed on its activities via reports. The meeting minutes are also available to anyone who wants them, as well as access to documents, files and communication with third parties, like government, contractors and the municipality. In addition, there are transcripts of the WhatsApp group on record. Residents are most welcome to mail [rtc@rosendaltown.co.za](mailto:rtc@rosendaltown.co.za) with requests. The financials are also available to anyone who would like them.

## 4. Streamlining Funding Applications

Currently, the RTC lacks a clear, publicised process for funding applications. This has led to proposals being directed to individual members. This creates confusion and sets a dangerous precedent that some committee members hold the purse strings or are a fast track to getting money. Applications should be submitted formally via the RTC email (or a designated portfolio holder). The committee can then review these with context. This eliminates random proposals appearing on the committee

WhatsApp group with little context or that are poorly rendered. This will further ensure transparency and fairness.

#### 5. Professionalism and Training

In small towns, personal and organizational dynamics often overlap. This can hinder teamwork and decision-making. To address this, the committee should prioritize a training workshop for members, covering organisational procedure and etiquette, including:

- Appropriate conduct and role adherence for members and office bearers.
- Strategies to mitigate personal agendas, or race- or class-based biases, and behaviour that undermines (e.g., side-texting, shaming, gossiping about members' views).

Strong chairing of meetings and adherence to procedure can foster healthy discussion and neutralise egos. The recent idea of introducing member portfolios is a step in the right direction that will further depersonalise tasks and responsibilities. I also believe service to the committee should be limited to two years to prevent entrenchment, entitlement, and preferential strategies.

In summary: 2024 has been a successful year for the RTC, as reflected in the annual report. I believe the committee is fulfilling its mandate to serve the community by organizing, lobbying, and funding valuable projects. I hope this momentum continues in 2025. It's been an honour to serve on the committee and I wish you all the best for the future. Thank you.

#### CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Distributed on 10 December 2024

The Rosendal-Mautse Town Committee (RTC) was active and engaged this year. The quality and quantity of projects undertaken is high and is a good measure of civic engagement. It is worth noting that this is far above what is achieved in neighbouring towns in our region, if not the Free State.

Over the years the RTC has taken on a growing number of actions, projects, and activities. These all fall under the mandate and vision outlined in our Terms of Reference, which states the committee's aims to:

"...coordinate and achieve social and economic potential through projects and initiatives, to promote community development and the aesthetic appeal of Rosendal as a tourism destination and the quality of life for all residents. A shared vision is for Rosendal and Mautse to be one of the most pleasant towns to live in in the Free State and in South Africa, and a place of harmony and increasing employment, able to support a decent life and income for a growing number of people."

The RTC invites residents to get on board in 2025 either by joining the committee or making themselves available for ad hoc projects. Residents are also welcome to attend committee meetings on the last Wednesday of every month.

#### MANDATE AND ACTIVITIES

Town committee's actions and activities are aligned with its capacities, in four areas:

1. As a representative body with lobbying capacity, the RTC provides a forum in which to express and represent community interests, in particular with provincial and municipal authorities. We have a specific need to engage with Dihlabeng Municipality at local level in favour of service delivery, and to cooperate with the SAPS Rosendal station on security and community matters.
2. As an entity able we initiate and run small projects directly, whether this is to plant trees and landscape the town's streets or install solar lights or fund marketing and tourism promotion.

3. As a funder of projects and initiatives with a view to social responsibility. The RTC receives limited income from the annual auction, ad hoc donations, and revenue from guesthouse listings. Projects, large and small, are considered for funding in light of our constitution and vision statement, especially where this enables youth activity and community cohesion. Sport teams and tournaments, for example, have been enabled on a regular basis and this has helped to develop a positive bond between Rosendal and Mautse.

4. As an intermediary. There are autonomous or ad hoc groups that function independently from the committee in Rosendal and Mautse. The RTC receives and disburses funds for these groups on their behalf, in the manner of direct 'in-and-out' transactions. There are currently four such independently managed groups for which the RTC provides this service:

- o Tshepo soup kitchen (independent funding)
- o Rosendal Neighbourhood Watch
- o Rosendal Tourism Coordination Group
- o Rosendal Heritage Association

#### RTC ACTION AND ACTIVITY IN 2024

A brief summary of the RTC's work this year follows. More detail can be found in the half-year report and in subsequent minutes distributed on the INFO group, available to anyone who requests them. Kindly email [rtc@rosendaltown.co.za](mailto:rtc@rosendaltown.co.za)

#### R70 Road Rehabilitation

Two R70 road rehabilitation contracts were awarded, for Rosendal-Ficksburg (TauPele) and for Rosendal-Senekal (Actophambili-Busi). The RTC worked to be included in progress meetings. This proved difficult when letters and inquiries went unanswered as work started. We were told incorrectly that we were not a recognised stakeholder, yet the departmental guidelines proved our right to participate in oversight through the Project Steering Committee (PSC). Standing on the PSC was eventually granted in early August, after five months of effort, when our queries were sent to the companies through a pro bono attorney (NO Oelofse Ing., Senekal). An RTC representative participated in the second PSC meeting and will continue in 2025. These are two-year contracts so the Ficksburg section has been completed in half the time, and the Senekal section is on schedule. The road rehabilitation has resulted in a significant amount of work for local sub-contractors and creation of employment in Mautse. Local sub-contractors initially were at risk of being excluded and with these contracts going to companies in Bloemfontein and elsewhere.

#### Service Delivery

This remains a serious challenge for Rosendal. Water, electricity, and town roads are our priority. The RTC received no reply all year from Dihlabeng's Municipal Manager (Bethlehem) to numerous requests for an urgent meeting to discuss the following: maintenance and upkeep of town boreholes; repairing streetlamps; grading and maintenance of town roads; a the honeysucker service; the town's electricity supply; and installing measures to reduce motor vehicle speeding in town. The RTC was successful in pressurising the municipality to grade roads, sort out the dump, fix streetlights, get a permanent electrician on call, communicate a honey sucker schedule, and other smaller. The RTC is very encouraged by the appointment of Keneiloe Mothibeli as Acting Unit Manager for Rosendal-Mautse who has made her mark with responsiveness and a willingness to act as well as keep the community informed on issues in an open manner. We wish her much success.

#### Water Supply

Of particular concern is water supply because the pipeline from Bethlehem is to be shut down for repair. Although the pipeline is frequently inactive there are opportunities in this situation in as far as Dihlabeng Municipality is meant to invest in repair and upgrade of the town boreholes, which, together with the municipal dam, is our most consistent source of supply.

The RTC did a costing to take this on as a project but it is prohibitively expensive.

#### The Neighbourhood Watch

Following a crime spree involving robberies at homes in Rosendal, local volunteers set up a Neighbourhood Watch (NW) group. This was at the request of the local SAPS station commander. The RTC donated funds to reimburse volunteers for fuel. A suspect was later apprehended by police following the provision of information via the NW. There are current discussions for a community security service to be set up in which participating residents and homeowners will be able to call for assistance and have home alarms connected to a central number. This is a private initiative.

#### Safety and Security

The RTC liaises with SAPS and the CPF. We were active in reminding the community to report any and all suspicious activity, providing the correct procedure protocols. It is vital that residents report incidents and that these are recorded in the local SAPS incident report. The RTC funded solar lights for the town, which have been placed on existing municipal street poles after appeals to the community for suggested locations.

#### Annual Auction

The annual fund-raising auction was held in April at Yolla's Teater. It has been historically managed by a small group and began a month before the day with a call for donations and services. The event was a great success and accounts for the bulk of funding for RTC, the other being fees for listing guest houses on our website. The next auction will be in Easter 2025.

#### Funding

This year the RTC funded the following major category projects: Upgrade of the town website; a Mautse food garden; heritage plaques for historic Rosendal buildings; a digital map of the town; the rehabilitation of the Rosendal cemetery; a hiking trail through Kestell Tuin and on the north side of Meulspuit; and the Let's Draw project. These are successful by majority vote at committee meetings where the merits are debated at length. Ad hoc funding is considered for applications below R1600. These are successful by committee majority vote to a funding cap of 10% of the RTC budget, after presentation and discussion on the RTC WhatsApp group. We believe that support for these initiatives contributes to community building. Ad hoc funded projects include: CPF youth league, woman's football, high school achiever awards, town clean-up and road filling, a netball team sponsorship, and the Mautse children's Christmas party. Monthly running costs are website maintenance and a new social media manager. The 2024 financial report gives full detail of income and expenditure.

#### RTC & Tourism

Initiatives to promote Rosendal as a tourist destination are important. The Rosendal Tourism Coordination Group is very active and the RTC has assisted with the following:

§ An independent company based in Rosendal was engaged to revamp the town website and be on standby for updates and new content. The town website is managed and paid for by RTC.

§ A social media strategy and content manager from within Rosendal is working from December on recommendation from the tourism group in a probationary phase. An integrated, professional, social media content and marketing strategy will be designed and implemented.

§ Funding was made available by the RTC for a walking, hiking, and cycling trail starting at the Retreat Hotel, creating an attraction for visitors. The project has applied for recognition from Park Run and the outcome is looking favourable.

§ Funding for the highly successful "Let's Draw Rosendal" initiative has been renewed and will commence in December and run during 2025.

#### RTC & Heritage

The Rosendal Heritage Association (RHA) was active with a number of projects and initiatives this year to celebrate Rosendal's heritage and promote the town as a heritage tourism destination. The RTC assisted with the following projects:

§ The original 1911 town planning map was digitally scanned and is available for download from the town website.

§ Heritage plaques will be installed at various buildings of interest around town. Anyone interested in local heritage or wishing to have their own building featured with a heritage plaque are welcome to contact, or become involved, with the RHA.

§ The fence around the cemetery was replaced and a new gate installed. This has stopped livestock from entering and damaging the tombstones. Plans are to erect an entrance sign as a future project.

§ A museum project is under discussion with a proposal to host this at the NGK.

#### Municipal Boundary

The Municipal Demarcation Board (MDB) issued a change in local boundaries where Rosendal-Mautse would fall under a proposed new, and much larger, Mantsopa regional municipality. Fortunately, this proposal has been dropped. The RTC had submitted two objections and this was useful in having our voice heard in regard to this potentially troublesome proposal.

#### RTC Committee

It is important that residents of Rosendal and Mautse are represented and take an active role in standing up for our rights as a community. The committee is an excellent forum for this. The committee thanks everyone who has assisted this year and invites those at the AGM to join as members of the exco or as ad hoc volunteers.

/ends