

## Circular 0153

2 August 2021

Dear Residents,

### **FIRE INCIDENT AT HOUSE 36 ON FRIDAY 30 JULY 2021.**

There has been a lot of misinformation doing the rounds in the Village regarding the fire at unit 36 on 30 July 2021.

So, for the sake of clarity, I will highlight some of the facts for you on what transpired on the day.

At approximately 17:43 The Guardhouse was called by the resident from house 36 to ask for help with a gas bottle that had caught fire in her unit. The resident had tried to extinguish the fire with her fire extinguisher and had thrown a fire blanket on the gas bottle as well.

The Duty manager and security guard rushed to the house with fire extinguishers and tried to put the fire out. They decide to evacuated the resident and her dog out of the house for safety reasons. As they excited the house the gas bottle exploded and engulfed the kitchen in flames. Further attempts were made to extinguish the flames with fire extinguishers. At this time the Duty Manger had already called the fire brigade and they rushed to the guard house to get hoses out. Residents that had heard the noise had come to help and the fire Marshall for this zone was on site as well. The resident was taken to a neighbour's house to be treated for shock. The next-door neighbour was evacuated from her house as a precaution as well. Residents and staff worked to move the resident's car out of the drive way and to try and contain the fire with hoses so that it would not move to the neighbour's roof.

The Fire brigade's first truck arrived at 18:12 followed by a second and third truck. Fire fighters were on site to extinguish the fire and damp down the house until 20:00. At 20:21 the scene was declared safe from fire inspectors' side.

I would like to thank the likes of Graham Brickett, Royston Knowles, Colin Grenfell and Hennie Du Preez who all responded to my call for assistance when the fire broke out. Their help and assistance on site helped prevent further damage and played a big role in containing the fire and keeping it from spreading. A huge well done and thank you to Kim Grimes (Duty Manager) who took charge of the situation and who's swift decisive actions to evacuate the resident out of the unit prevented potential fatalities. As well as Security who assisted her. Phindile the security guard who assisted Kim in evacuating the house was hit in the face by a piece of debris after the explosion and has had stitches on her lip and a bump on her head. She was sent to hospital for stitches and to be checked for any other injuries. I am delighted to inform you that she is well and back at work again.

I am extremely grateful that all fire equipment was serviced as per protocol and all in working order. Fire extinguishers were serviced in June 2021 and the fire hydrant that was used was had its annual service in October 2021. We have already had the 5-fire extinguisher used during the fire refilled and serviced and returned. We also had the fire hydrant that was used by the fire brigade serviced afterwards. There has been a lot of questions around fire hoses that we had and used on site to try and assist with putting the fire out. These hoses were damaged when the fire brigade drove over them with their truck. These will not be replaced by the Village as we are not allowed to have hoses like this. By law we are not allowed to open the fire hydrants or operate them. It is for the exclusive use of the fire department

and they will bring their own hoses that they were trained to use. This is a legal requirement as the pressure in hoses like this needs specialised training and 3 people to handle a hose.

We now look at this in hindsight and ask ourselves what could we learn from this and what can we do better to avoid situations like this?

I think it is imperative that residents who might not have the strength in their hands to change gas bottles or gas bottle fittings, call maintenance to assist them with doing this. IF you are unsure, then take the gas bottle outside and replace the fitting outside. This way if it does catch fire, it is easier to contain. Whenever you get new gas bottles delivered, please call for maintenance to come and assist you with installation of the new gas bottles. (This is in your house rules as a requirement and all gas deliveries should be supervised by Maintenance)

When there is an emergency situation in the village, please ensure you stay well away from the scene. My team and the fire brigade had their hands full trying to get curious residents out of the way so that they could fight the fire. Spectators standing around and cars parked in the way of the fire brigade trucks made the task of tending to the fire a lot more difficult for fire fighters.

We recently send out communication on how to operate your fire extinguishers which you were given for the houses. (This is not applicable to apartments as they have fire hoses on every passage) Please refresh yourself on this brochure and ensure you know where you have put your extinguisher. We also send out a recent communication about servicing your gas equipment. We have had 19 people only book for this service which will take place next week 10 and 11 August 2021. Please make use of this opportunity to have your gas heaters etc checked.

We will be arranging fire training for staff again and will invite residents who want to join and handle the fire extinguisher to join us to do so. This helps make the use of the extinguisher less daunting and will be a practical demonstration of how to best extinguish all kinds of fires. Please keep your eyes open for this communication.

We will shortly arrange for a village fire drill again to refresh residents on the procedures and to ensure all Fire Marshalls know what to do. We will again issue Evacuation plans for residents who might have misplaced theirs. Please ensure you keep these with your fire extinguisher somewhere close by where you can easily access them.

Please let me assure you that our resident's safety are our first priority and that management remain committed to providing a safe and secure environment.

Kind regards



**Wilma Swart**  
**Village Manager**