

GSI response to queries raised by community – 4 June 2023

1. Why is an increase of monthly contributions required?

Securing the Village costs the GSI approximately R365,000 a month. The GSI funds these expenses through contributing members. Currently the standard contribution is R900 per household per month increasing to R1,100 from 1 July 2023. There are, however, several residents who per agreement with the GSI, with consideration of their personal circumstances, pay less than the standard contribution rate.

The services the GSI provides are currently not sustainable, as 30% of residents do not contribute at all, and the current monthly contribution is inadequate. The GSI suffers a monthly deficit of approximately R35,000 (after the latest security cost increase) excluding provisions for much needed capital expenditure and planned maintenance.

The GSI's expenses rose significantly over the last few years with no equal increase to membership contributions. Increased costs include a government enforced increase in security industry wages, increasing the GSI's expenses by approximately R20,000 per month. There are also continuous increases including electricity costs from Eskom among others.

Expenses include among others Paxton administration fees, Axon security, employment of Graham De Lange, communication costs (gates, guards, etc.), water and electricity, guard house cleaning and toiletries, bank charges, audit fees, insurance premiums, taxes and other costs as well as provisions for maintenance and capital expenditure.

2. Why does the GSI not recruit more members?

The GSI is a CIPC registered non-profit company founded by a team of Groenkloof residents in February 2007 with the singular goal of improving safety and security in the Village. During this period the GSI has constantly recruited members.

The GSI relies on voluntary community participation to provide their professional services to the Village. It is the responsibility of every single resident in the Village to contribute and to ensure that their neighbours contribute as well. The GSI implores all contributing members to actively engage with and to recruit residents that do not contribute to become members that support a safe and secure Village.

New residents to the Village are actively recruited. The GSI has relationships with the estate agents operating in the Village whereby the estate agents refer new residents to the GSI. However, it is critical that existing GSI members engage with new residents to promote contributing to the GSI. No one is better placed than a neighbour to encourage active GSI involvement and community responsibility for Village safety.

3. Can GSI contributions be reduced?

The GSI is managed by volunteers on a no cost basis and thus incurs no management expenses. The GSI is responsible for the management of the service providers rendering services to the Village, such as Axon. The GSI does not have a profit motive and is run on a cost recovery basis.

As per the detailed financial feedback provided at the annual public meeting, operating expenses have increased drastically over the last few years with no corresponding increase to GSI contributions.

It is not possible for the GSI to provide the current level of security services to the Village at lower costs. Reducing GSI contributions is only possible if security measures are reduced. However, reducing costs may be possible if a significant higher proportion of Village residents contribute.

4. Are smart measures being taken to improve safety without increasing costs?

The GSI is constantly looking for ways to improve security in the Village with the limited means at its disposal. In the last two years two major initiatives were undertaken to improve security without increasing the operating costs of the Village.

- Smart perimeter fence with artificial intelligence monitoring was installed on the Fort Klapperkop nature reserve border.
- Enhanced monitored access into the Village was implemented. This was at a once-off fixed capital cost of approximately R12,000 with no additional operational costs.
 - The Village's safety measures depend on identifying suspicious vehicles and flagging these for intervention. The following implemented procedures have improved the ability of security guards to monitor vehicles entering the village.
 - GSI members' vehicles display stickers enabling guards to easily identify vehicles that require scrutiny.
 - Contributing members' vehicles should be registered on the number plate recognition cameras. Booms open automatically for contributing GSI member's registered vehicles, enabling guards to focus on identifying suspicious vehicles. Automatic opening of booms for identified vehicles facilitates rapid traffic flow.
 - Two-step access verification devices have been installed at the Village entrance booms.
 - These require a guard to open the boom with a second access button, when a non-member / contributor activates the normal access button. For this purpose, the guards now stand on the boom islands. If a guard needs to leave his post, for instance to go to the bathroom, the system can temporarily be deactivated.
 - The improved process forces the guards to better focus on the vehicles accessing the Village and to assess vehicles for suspicious elements.

The two-step access verification was installed at the Village entrance booms at the beginning of April 2023 and has rendered excellent results. Guard engagement increased significantly without any negative impact on traffic flow.

- Remember, no one can be refused access to the Village. The two-step process just allows a little more time for the guard to identify a suspicious vehicle and to alert the armed response vehicle, if necessary.

5. Why does the GSI not act to increase security and improve safety in the Village?

The GSI is hamstrung by what is financially possible. As discussed, at the annual public meeting it is not possible to have armed guards at the gates nor to have additional patrol vehicles in the Village unless member contributions increase significantly.

It is not possible for the GSI to increase the level of security services to the Village without significant increases to member contributions.

6. How are families that are unable to afford full membership contributions accommodated?

As discussed, at the annual public meeting any resident that is unable to afford the monthly contribution of R1,100 should contact the GSI to discuss a reduced monthly contribution. We need to create an environment in which all residents pay towards keeping the Village safe.

The GSI relies on voluntary community participation to provide security services to the Village. There are a number of families contributing towards the GSI at reduced amounts. It is the responsibility of every single resident in the Village to contribute and to ensure that their neighbours contribute as well. All contributing members should engage with and recruit residents that do not contribute to become members that support a safe and secure Village. Where such residents cannot afford the full contribution, they should engage with the GSI on a reduced amount.

Similarly, there are residents that contribute more than the standard monthly contribution. If residents can assist their neighbours with less means, it is appreciated as it enables everyone's safety in the Village.

7. Why are posts removed from the GSI Security Alerts group?

As per the name, the GSI Security Alerts group is there for residents to alert Village security to any urgent safety issues that require a rapid response. If the group is used for discussion purposes, it is not available to inform security response action. There are several other groups in Groenkloof that cater for discussions.

The GSI has repeatedly requested that residents do not post any non-security incident messages on the group and that those queries rather be addressed to the GSI via one of the well

communicated channels. Removing posts is not aimed at silencing the residents. The GSI is always open to suggestions and constructive criticism. The GSI Security Alerts WhatsApp group is, however, not suitable for community engagement. The GSI frequently visits resident and if required, an in-person meeting can be arranged.

As discussed, at the annual public meeting, to remove administrative posts from the group in totality, in future the GSI WhatsApp communication will be via two groups with distinct purposes. The existing consolidated GSI Security Alerts group will be converted to the GSI General Communication Group where announcements and updates can be posted by administrative users only. A contributing members group is in the process of being set up. The splitting of the group requires significant administrative work which the GSI is currently undertaking.

8. Can guarded gates be reduced to reduce costs?

As discussed at the annual public meeting, the monitored access into the Village was approved by the City of Tshwane based on strict conditions on access and the associated impact on traffic flow. It is not possible to unilaterally change the current gate and access structure. To do this requires a formal application to the City of Tshwane, supported by updated traffic impact studies among others. Altering the terms of the approved monitored access is not a process the GSI can afford at the moment.

9. Can patrols be reduced or patrol vehicle be removed to reduce costs?

As discussed at the annual public meeting, security measures can be reduced to lower costs, but this is not supported by the majority of contributing members. Since armed guards at gates cannot be afforded, visible armed reaction patrol is a core element of Village security.

It is critical for residents to understand that the armed patrol vehicle functions as first response to any alarm or panic signal in the Village. Removing the patrol vehicle will significantly increase the time it takes for armed response to arrive in the case of an emergency. Removing the armed reaction patrol vehicle will also remove the meet-and-greet security option that allows families to arrive home with the peace of mind of having security present.

Electronic monitoring is already used at the smart perimeter fence on the Fort Klapperkop nature reserve border to reduce costs.

10. Why do some contributing members not have membership boards?

As discussed at the annual public meeting and announced on the GSI Security Alerts group, new membership boards for contributing members have been printed to over time replace the previous boards which are due for replacement due to wear and tear, as well as to identify contributing members. All contributing members will receive a new board. Fitment of the new boards have commenced and members that require a specific placement have been asked to contact Colleen Gerber at info@gsigroenkloof.co.za.

If any contributing GSI member does not have a membership board or is accidentally skipped when new membership boards are fitted, please contact Colleen Gerber at info@gsigroenkloof.co.za to immediately rectify the error.

11. Can families that did not contribute the initial capital to close the Village contribute additionally?

At inception of the Village families first contributed R1,550 towards the costs of the application and when approved, R15,000 per household for the capital outlay to construct the infrastructure to implement monitored access to the Village.

Presently the GSI does not have adequate financial means to meet capital expenditure and planned maintenance. Any resident that is willing to make a capital contribution will greatly assist the GSI to perform the necessary maintenance to GSI infrastructure. Residents who did not contribute initially, are specifically invited to pay their dues.

12. What contact details should be used for the GSI?

Administrative queries: Colleen Gerber – info@gsigroenkloof.co.za

Emergencies: Axon reaction vehicle – 083 781 4489

General security and maintenance issues: Graham de Lange – 066 304 6611

GSI website for frequently asked questions and membership forms – GSIgroenkloof.co.za