

Chairman's Report 2021

The past financial year has been a momentous one for the Friends of Mosterts Mill. On Sunday 18th April a veld fire started on the lower slopes of Devils Peak and spread into the trees above the M3 opposite the mill. A spark blew onto the thatch and the mill was very badly damaged in the fire that ensued. All the wooden machinery was burnt. What remained was the masonry, the sail stocks and the ironmongery. This latter was collected in the following days and put into safe storage before any scrap metal collectors could carry it away. The top of the building was covered with a heavy plastic tarpaulin to prevent any further damage to the walls by the ingress of rain water.

The task ahead now is to restore the mill to its original state before the fire. A proposal has been put to the Department of Public Works (the property with the mill on it belongs to the state with the DPW as its custodians) that FoMM are prepared to fund and undertake the restoration of the mill.

A funding appeal was made locally and a crowd funding initiative was started in the Netherlands. Nearly R500k has been raised in a short period of time. A restoration team has been put together. This comprises of John Wilson-Harris of Fagan Architects (who had done the 1995 restoration of the mill building), Andy Selfe (who has helped with previous maintenance work on the mill machinery), Clive Thorpe (who is the treasurer of FoMM) and myself (the current chairman of FoMM). John Wilson-Harris has been tasked with the restoration of the building. Andy Selfe will be the technical manager in charge of the rebuilding of the machinery. Clive Thorpe will be responsible for handling the financial side of the restoration project. I will coordinate the whole project.

Work has already begun on sourcing suitable timber for the machinery and who will undertake its manufacture. Fagan Architects have submitted their report to Heritage Western Cape. Once the DPW have signed the agreement for FoMM to undertake the restoration, work can begin in earnest. It is difficult to say how long this will take but be assured that Mosterts Mill, an iconic structure in the City of Cape Town and an important cultural heritage site, will once more have her sails turning in the wind. The Friends of Mosterts Mill will continue to maintain and run the mill for future generations.