**Baboons, your home and you!**

Dear new Rooiels villager

Welcome! You have chosen a wonderful place in which to live or vacation. We want to introduce to you the issues around one of Rooiels’ most remarkable residents… our baboon troop. We are part of a biosphere reserve, and hence beholden to interact empathetically with our natural environment and its residents.

For this reason, the village has initiated a Baboon Coexistence Task Team. This answers to RERA, our rate-payers association. RERA is another reason you have chosen a great village in which to belong. RERA is a long-standing and excellent institution which has worked tirelessly and creatively for many decades to serve our small community. Their successes are legion; for example, their work on the security of the village has resulted in an almost zero crime rate for many years. This is in stark contrast to our neighboring, far larger communities. RERA also interact with our Rooiels Conservancy grouping (REC) whose brief is to conserve and promote conservation in our village.

So, what is your role? As a most welcome new resident, we hope you will participate in our local committees and activities (eg the monthly hack, the beach clean-ups, outreach projects, security association etc) and familiarise yourself with topical issues. The baboons are a prominent one of these. We don’t want you to be caught unawares by these animals and, on arrival, find yourselves in an intimidating situation for which you had no forewarning or preparation. .

The village wishes to co-exist peacefully and constructively with the troop. The baboons are beautiful and fascinating to observe and they not going to disappear! So the responsibility falls to each resident or visitor to secure their home and dustbins. No-one likes the baboons in their home nicking food and invoking fear and panic. There is much “fake news’ and disinformation around baboons. Each troop is different, and the Cape Point troop are as similar to our troop as Californians are to Manchurians. We have no record of our troop ever biting anyone. They avoid conflict instinctively. Instead they are frequently attacked and often killed by dogs. This Rooiels document is a most excellent introduction: https://rooiels.weebly.com/what-if-a-baboon-gets-in.html

Architects and owners of new builds should tap into the experience of longstanding residents on how to do this, for example baboon proof window catches, strong mesh screens for sliding doors, secure dustbins etc. Even the plants in your garden can be selected to both encourage the birds and discourage the baboons. https://rooiels.weebly.com/how-to-protect-your-home.html

Please would you, your architect, and your builder consult timeously with us. It is always a shame to see new builds with obvious deficiencies in baboon proofing, which then require expensive revisions later. We really want to assist you on five fronts:

* Home security and effective, empathetic outside lighting
* Waste management
* Understanding and valuing baboons
* How to manage a baboon in your house!

Once more, welcome and please do make contact with. We would love to connect with you soonest. And do visit www.rooiels.org

Regards

The Baboon Coexistence Task Team