

# Invitation to a Member's Share in Kuthumba Nature Reserve CC



## Background to Kuthumba and KNRCC

Kuthumba Ecovillage was founded in 1993 by Ruby Ovenstone with the vision of a forest eco-village co-existing in harmony with Nature. Ruby acquired the land using Kuthumba Nature Reserve CC as the legal vehicle, and in 1995 the land was rezoned with municipal approval, and 32 private erfs were created.

As per the original proposal, the eco-village was “*comprehensively motivated on the grounds of environmental sensitivity and sustainability*”, and “*sought to develop a unique and innovative environmentally centred community that provided not only opportunity for nature lovers but for environmental education and healing*”.

Directly abutting the Tsitsikamma National Park, Kuthumba has an elevated position with every site commanding views of the local forest and the mountains of the Tsitsikamma. The

surrounding environment hosts exceptional wildlife, including rich bird life, bush pigs, badgers and leopard in the forest to otters, seals, dolphins and whales in the ocean.

Over the space of three decades, new members purchased erfs from KNRCC and erected homes and homesteads. The remainder of the 160 hectares that was originally acquired by KNRCC was signed over to the Kuthumba Home Owners' Association in 2023, allowing it to be held and managed by the whole Kuthumba community. In the same year, Kuthumba members voted unanimously to convert the commons into a Nature Reserve to protect the land against further development.

Kuthumba is now a multi-generational community of around 50 full-time residents, having grown rapidly over the past five years as the desire for communal living has expanded. While most residents rely on remote work to sustain themselves, there is an increasing interest in local engagement and enterprise. While 30 of the erfs on Kuthumba are zoned for residential use, the other two were given Resort Zoning for the purpose of becoming the 'Business Centres' of the village.

One of them is Portion 47, where Ruby has lived since the Kuthumba project began. It is owned by KNRCC, who is now inviting a new shareholder to bring a vision for the property that is aligned with its purpose of offering education and/or healing opportunities.



## Portion 47



Kuthumba Ecovillage properties, with Portion 47 in orange

Situated on the Eastern border of Kuthumba, Portion 47 comprises 3.56 hectares and is the largest property in the ecovillage. From the ridgeline that runs along the west and south sides of the property, there are unparalleled views across gorges and rolling hills of indigenous forest to Formosa Peak, the region's highest mountain, 23 kilometres away.

The property was given Resort Zoning at the outset of Kuthumba so that it could serve as one of the 'Business Centres' in the village - a place where some sort of commercial enterprise could provide opportunities for Kuthumba residents to earn a livelihood, and for the village to make a contribution to the betterment of people beyond its borders. This model has been central to the success of some of the world's best-established ecovillages, where communal businesses provide an opportunity for people to earn a living - and a way for members to build community through working together.





The original vision was for Portion 47 to create a 'Health Hydro' with up to 45 beds providing accommodation for guests attending healing workshops. This opportunity still exists, but with space for a new shareholder to bring their own vision to how the property can be developed towards the wellbeing of themselves, the future of KNRCC, Kuthumba, The Craggs region and humanity.

## Infrastructure

The original building on the property, known as Elephant House, was designed by architect Keith Struthers and built in the 1990s using the traditional wattle and daub method. It was subsequently extended, and more recently was modified so that it could comfortably accommodate multiple families in different sections.

In all it has seven bedrooms, two kitchens and three bathrooms, with the potential for different sectors of the building to be reconfigured to fit different needs. More recently, some of the rooms have been used as a pottery studio and a small classroom, and there is a possibility to use others for hosting workshops or healing retreats.

Two other living spaces exist on the property. 'The Nest' is a one-bedroom, dual-level apartment with lounge, kitchen and workshop, while 'The Tadpole' is a smaller, single-storey, self-contained dwelling. These could continue to be offered as long-term rental opportunities for single people or couples, or provide accommodation for people attending retreats, or be repurposed towards spaces that support education or healing.

A new shareholder would have exclusive use of all of these buildings, giving them an opportunity to live on the property and create a livelihood. On top of this, there are additional opportunities for development that are outlined below.

While rainwater harvesting is encouraged as the primary source of water in Kuthumba, portion 47 owns a strong borehole with excellent water quality. Residents in Kuthumba regularly source their drinking water from this borehole for use in their homes because of the mineral balance that it offers.

The property also has a small dam in front of the main buildings, increasing ecological diversity, water security, and aesthetic appeal.

## Heaven's Door





On the southern side of the property, Ruby is currently constructing 'Heaven's Door', a ceremonial space designed to support the expansion of human consciousness. It is envisaged that the space will be used by members of Kuthumba for ritual gatherings, and will also provide a gentle and beautiful arena for people who are at the end of their human life to undergo a conscious transition into the next phase of their soul journey.

Other structures are being erected around the ceremonial building to support this purpose, as well as to provide accommodation for Ruby. This part of the property will become an exclusive use area for her, as part of the shareholding she will retain in KNRCC.

## Butterfly Field



Over the past six months an emerging biodynamic garden has been established in collaboration with a landscape designer in the village. This is supported by a large greenhouse and potting shed.

The intention is for the garden to run as its own entity within a new shareholding structure, allowing it to serve whatever enterprises new shareholders decide to establish. For example, it



could have the commercial potential to feed retreats, providing participants with farm-to-table meals whilst generating employment for gardeners in both Kuthumba and Kurland Village.

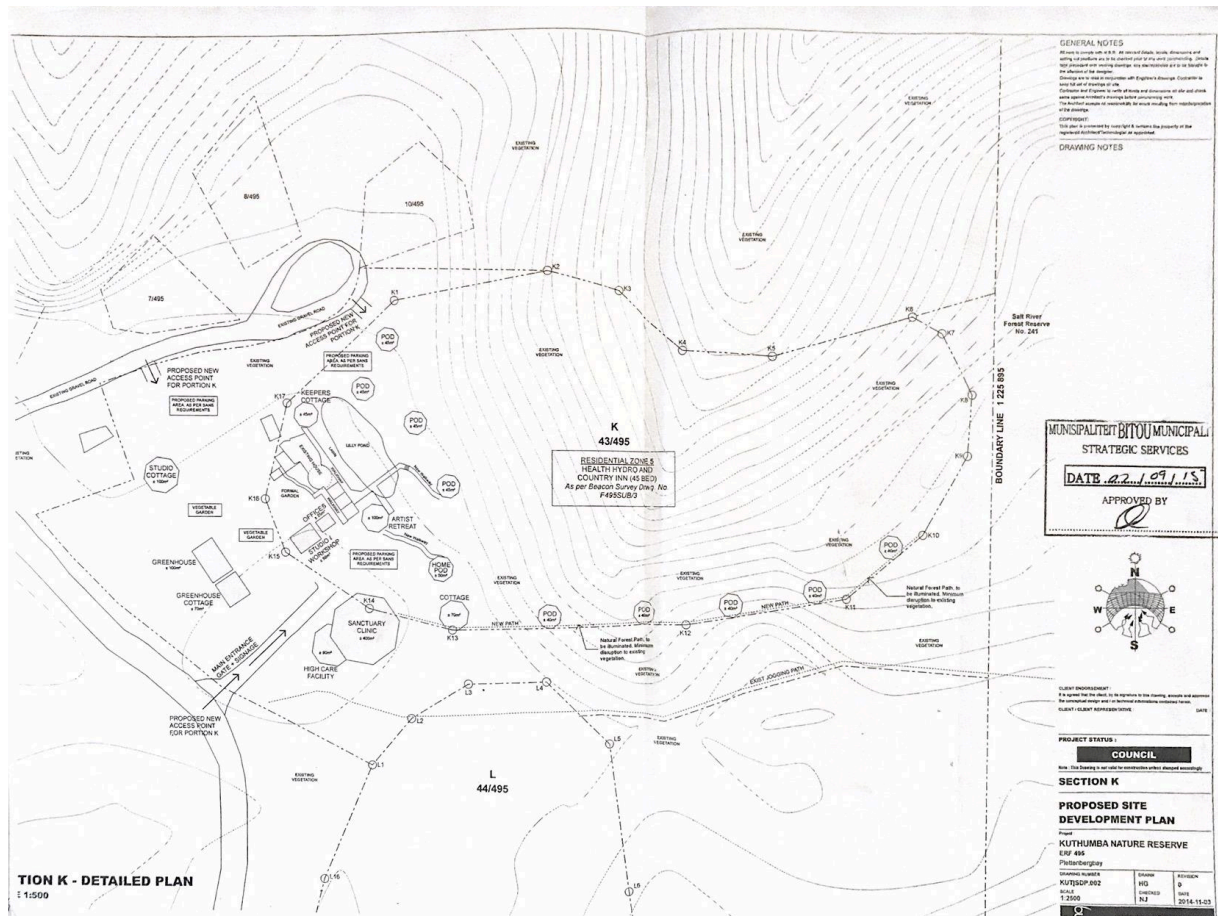
The exact scope and shape of this would be agreed among the shareholders.



## Existing Site Development Plan

The SDP for Portion 47 was originally intended to support a retreat centre, and various iterations have been looked at over many years. The most recent iteration was created a little more than five years ago and approved by the Kuthumba HOA and Bitou Council. The essential approvals can be utilised in a number of ways. Some of the rights have been exercised, but there is still further potential for future development - or not - depending on what a future shareholder motivates for to support a mutually beneficial vision for the future.

In the SDP below, most of the buildings in the south-west area have been created. The 9 smaller accommodation 'pods' that form something of a semi-circle in the middle of the property have not been built, and could be adapted in shape and number.



Approved SDP from 2015

The invitation to a new shareholder is to come with your dream. If it is compatible with the original intention for the site then we can go through a process to decide on what further development would be appropriate for a long-term plan. Thereafter we can modify the SDP and take it to the Kuthumba HOA and the Bitou Council for approval.

It's important to note, however, that the property was only granted the development rights that it has in order to carry out activities that serve Kuthumba Ecovillage and the broader community. So new development would need to be towards this end, and not purely motivated by the desire for financial profit.

## Opportunities

As outlined above, there are already buildings on the property that could be adapted to fit the vision of a new shareholder. They could support the creation of a retreat centre, a small education centre or cottage school, or a mixture of small businesses.



Within this there is the possibility of canvassing the Kuthumba community to see what some of the existing needs are. In the past, members have expressed an interest in office space, dance studios, rooms for healing practitioners, or a venue for hosting workshops.

Some of the structures - both existing and future - could provide accommodation for teachers, retreat participants, practitioners of healing modalities, or artists on retreat.

There is potential to easily redesign Elephant House, expanding it in a way that refreshes an elegant building and allows for increased enjoyment of the views and location.

A new shareholder would not be expected to 'hit the ground running', and could take some time to understand the property, its place in the village and the details of their vision. It would only be important to have an intention to work the property towards a broader benefit - especially in the way that additional development unfolds.

## Proposal

One of the main values that would be held in a new shareholding agreement is: 'common ethics, individual expression'.

This speaks to the intention to build trust between shareholders, knowing that there are shared values and ethics *and* sufficient sovereignty for everyone to create and manage their own lives and businesses. To this end, the plan is for different areas of the property to be demarcated by survey, providing clear delineation of the different domains.

This would allow a new shareholder to run their own enterprise without unnecessary restriction from Ruby, who would in turn expect the same in her creation and management of 'Heaven's Door'. These different enterprises, as well as 'Butterfly Fields', could be registered as separate businesses if they so wish.

Collective decisions would include issues such as the creation of an updated SDP and the placement of new infrastructure, while decisions around the day-to-day running of each section of the property would be left to the individuals responsible.

The exact details of this would be held in a new shareholders' agreement that would be collectively drafted, with input from professionals. Also important would be for this agreement to have a robust 'succession plan' to protect the future of the property.

## Contact

If this invitation interests you, and if you think you could be a good fit for what is proposed, please reach out to Ruby on WhatsApp +27 835810832 or email [ruby@anima-mundi.co.za](mailto:ruby@anima-mundi.co.za)