

# JOBURG CRISIS ALLIANCE

MAY 2026

NEWSLETTER 08/2026



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## CoJ Crisis Deepens as Finance Minister warns the City!

In this edition of the Joburg Crisis Alliance newsletter, we explore the growing challenges facing Johannesburg and the inspiring civic responses emerging across the city. As the 2026 local government elections approach, the JCA reflects on the deepening water and governance crises while highlighting community activism, accountability campaigns and grassroots solutions shaping the future of Johannesburg.

Readers can learn about the JCA's visits to impactful community organisations including the Finetown Movement Response Team, the Love of God Disability Foundation in Ivory Park and the innovative Makers Valley Swop Shop in Lorentzville where recycling is helping restore dignity and food security. The newsletter also profiles TUHF's work in affordable housing and explores the growing FixLocal initiative aimed at improving service delivery through civic technology and citizen action.

This edition further covers the resolutions adopted at JCA Summit-9, including demands around Johannesburg's worsening water crisis and the deteriorating Metro Centre archive.

We also feature the launch of the JCA Youth Forum, which seeks to empower young people to become active participants in community organising and civic leadership.

Additionally, readers will find an opinion piece by Johannesburg Heritage Foundation chairperson David Fleminger examining the ongoing

governance failures within the City of Johannesburg and the growing role of civil society in defending the city's public institutions, heritage and accountability systems.

As we were putting the final touches to this edition, we learnt of a letter written by the Finance Minister to Mayor Dada Morero threatening to withhold the next equitable share grant. The letter highlights R25.2 billion owed to creditors, a R10.3 billion wage agreement deemed unaffordable, and concerns over weak revenue collection, cash flow problems and non-compliance with financial reporting systems. Treasury warned that the City's financial sustainability is at serious risk if urgent corrective measures are not implemented.

The Mayor has responded by seeking a meeting with the Minister, but has also insisted that the City is not in a financial crisis. The JCA will make a formal input into the current IDP/Budget process to present its own analysis of the state of the financial health of the City. The submission will be shared with JCA members and made public through our website.

The JCA continues to grow as an alliance of civic organisations and we welcome several new organisations who have formally joined the JCA. These include the Lower Houghton RA, WASP, Community Change Makers, Kganya Projects and I Am That Man. For a full list of affiliated organisations visit our Civic Activism page [HERE](#)

**FOR FREE JCA MEMBERSHIP CLICK HERE**



# THE JCA VISITS.....

## Finetown Rapid Response Movement - Region G, CoJ

The Joburg Crisis Alliance (JCA) recently visited the Finetown Movement Response Team (FMRT), a grassroots organisation working tirelessly to restore dignity, hope and opportunity in one of Johannesburg's most vulnerable communities. The FMRT evolved from the previous Action-For-Accountability project that was implemented in Finetown. The visit highlighted the importance of community-led action in addressing the daily social and economic challenges facing residents of Finetown.

What stood out most during the visit was the breadth of FMRT's programmes, all designed to respond directly to the realities faced by local families. From food insecurity and youth development to addiction support and education, the organisation has built a network of practical interventions rooted in compassion and solidarity.

Among its flagship initiatives is 'Share a Plate', a bi-weekly feeding programme providing warm meals and bread to vulnerable residents, particularly those battling addiction. The 'Ke Moja Kadi Drugs' programme complements this effort by offering drug awareness education and rehabilitation support through non-judgemental community engagement.

The organisation's focus on education and youth empowerment is equally inspiring. 'Books Before Play' promotes literacy and structured after-school learning, while the 'Student Café' creates a safe space where young people can access mentorship, educational support and career guidance. FMRT also runs 'Tsa Kasi', a sports and arts initiative aimed at keeping youth active, disciplined and inspired through community tournaments and creative workshops.

FMRT's work extends beyond youth programmes. Through 'Comfortable Drive', learners in need receive sanitary products and personal care support to help them remain confident and focused at school. 'Perfect Fit' distributes pre-loved clothing to vulnerable residents, while 'Small Beginnings' assists families affected by shack fires with temporary shelter and food parcels.

The 'Voice Up' programme further ensures that residents have a platform to report grievances and access referrals to professional support services.

For the JCA, the visit reinforced the importance of strengthening community-based responses to Johannesburg's growing social crises. FMRT's work aligns closely with the alliance's campaigns around food justice, public health, youth development and community dignity. Across Johannesburg, many communities continue to face rising unemployment, hunger, addiction and failing public services. In this context, grassroots organisations are increasingly filling critical gaps left by under-resourced systems.

The JCA believes that organisations like FMRT demonstrate what is possible when communities organise themselves around care, accountability and collective action. Their

programmes are not only providing immediate relief but are also rebuilding social cohesion and creating pathways for long-term resilience.

As Johannesburg continues to grapple with deepening inequality, the work being done in Finetown serves as a powerful reminder that sustainable change often begins at community level.

Driving the work of the FMRT is Thabiso who can be reached on 081-722-9794



**ABOVE:** Elderly women arrive for their early morning exercise session. **BELOW (L-R)** Nokuthula Khwela (JCA Media Officer), Dawood Raphaelalane (Community Organiser JCA), Joe, Thabiso and Nonkosi Maliti (JCA Organiser) planning a community meeting.



# THE JCA VISITS.....

## LOCK... Swopping Waste for Food at Makers Valley, Region F, CoJ



Keitumetsi Mokoena (left) and Zwelihle Magwaza (right) who have driven the “Love Our City Klean” effort since 2020.

### Turning Waste into Dignity: Why the Makers Valley Swop Shop Needs Support!

In the eastern inner city of Johannesburg, a quiet but powerful experiment in community resilience has been unfolding for several years. At the heart of the initiative is the partnership between Love Our City Klean (LOCK) and the Makers Valley Partnership—two civic organisations that turned a moment of crisis into an opportunity for innovation.

The project, centred around the Swop Shop at Victoria Yards in Lorentzville, allows residents to exchange recyclable waste for points that function like a digital currency. Those points can then be used to purchase essential goods such as food, toiletries and clothing. What began as an emergency response during the COVID-19 lockdown has become a model for community-driven solutions to poverty, food insecurity and urban decay.

But today, despite its proven impact, the project is struggling to continue due to inconsistent donor funding.

Following a recent visit to the site, the Joburg Crisis Alliance (JCA) found that operations have slowed significantly, threatening a programme that once helped hundreds of residents meet basic needs while improving the environment.

#### A Project Born Out of Crisis

The initiative emerged during the economic devastation of the 2020 pandemic. Millions of South Africans lost their jobs and hunger levels rose dramatically. In response, community leaders and social entrepreneurs in the Makers Valley area began organising relief efforts.

The Swop Shop became one of the most innovative outcomes of that response. Residents were encouraged to collect recyclable materials—cardboard, plastic bottles,

cans and other waste—which they could exchange for points loaded onto a card. These points could then be spent at the weekly shop on essential groceries and household items.

For many families, this system was a lifeline. It did more than provide food. It allowed people to earn assistance through contribution rather than charity—cleaning neighbourhood streets while supporting their households.

The project also addressed another pressing urban challenge: waste management. By incentivising recycling, the programme helped reduce illegal dumping while promoting environmental awareness and community participation.

#### A Circular Economy in Action

The model is simple but powerful.

Residents collect recyclable materials from streets and homes. These materials are brought to the recycling hub where they are weighed and converted into points. The recyclables are then sold to buy-back centres, and the revenue is reinvested into maintaining the programme and purchasing goods for the Swop Shop.

The result is a small but functioning circular economy in one of Johannesburg's most economically challenged neighbourhoods.

At its height, the programme attracted participants from across the inner city—mothers with children, pensioners, unemployed youth and migrants—many of whom relied on the Swop Shop for basic groceries each week.

#### Why the Project Matters for Johannesburg

The neighbourhoods that make up Makers Valley—including Bertrams, Judith's Paarl, Troyeville and Lorentzville—are home to thousands of residents, many facing unemployment, food insecurity and deteriorating public infrastructure.

In such environments, grassroots initiatives often step in where government systems fail.

The Swop Shop demonstrates how community innovation can simultaneously address multiple crises:

- Hunger and food insecurity
- Unemployment and dignity of work
- Environmental degradation and waste
- Community cohesion and civic pride

These are precisely the kinds of initiatives that the Joburg Crisis Alliance seeks to support through its **Civic Activism Campaign**—a campaign built on the belief that organised

# The People's Pantry Swop Shop needs corporate support!

citizens can help rebuild the city from the ground up.

## A Promising Initiative at Risk

Despite its success, the project now faces an uncertain future. The JCA visit revealed that inconsistent donor support has stalled progress and limited the programme's ability to maintain regular operations.

Without stable funding, it becomes difficult to maintain the supply of goods in the Swop Shop, support volunteers, and expand the recycling network.

This is particularly concerning because the project has already proven that it works. The model is replicable, scalable and deeply aligned with the needs of Johannesburg's inner city.

## A Call to the Private Sector

Johannesburg's private sector—particularly companies involved in retail, manufacturing, food distribution and recycling—has an opportunity to help sustain and expand this initiative.

Supporting the Makers Valley Swop Shop is not simply charity. It is an investment in:

- cleaner neighbourhoods
- improved food security
- circular economy innovation
- community resilience

Corporate partners could support the project through donations of food and household goods, sponsorship of recycling infrastructure, or financial contributions to stabilise operations.

With relatively modest investment, the programme could once again become a powerful engine of community transformation.

## Building Civic Activism in Johannesburg

For the Joburg Crisis Alliance, the Makers Valley project represents exactly the kind of civic initiative that Johannesburg needs more of.

It shows that when residents organise themselves, innovative solutions can emerge even in the most difficult circumstances.

But community initiatives cannot survive alone. They require partnerships—with civil society, with government, and crucially, with the private sector. If Johannesburg is to overcome its current crises, we must build a city where citizens, businesses and communities work together to create solutions. The Swop Shop in Makers Valley has already shown what is possible.

Now it needs the support to continue.



### IN RESPECT OF THE METRO CENTRE



Due to the lack of action by the COJ authorities, the JHF, JCA and affiliated organisations acting on behalf of civil society and the citizens of Johannesburg are issuing the following demands, which were supported at the Summit:

- An on-site meeting must be held at the Metro Centre with the relevant COJ authorities, the MMC for Development Planning, and civil society to examine conditions in the archive first-hand.
- The COJ must draw up a full and credible relocation plan with timelines.
- The relocation and re-filing of the archives needs to be done under the supervision of an experienced and qualified archivist in collaboration with current Archive staff so that the complete archive can be 're-built' in a suitable location.
- Information regarding any partial relocation and/or digitisation processes currently underway should be conveyed to the JHF/JCA.
- Information regarding the location and backup of digital plans submitted since the closure of the archive should be conveyed to the JHF/JCA and integrated into the new Plans Archive structure.
- The restored Plans Archive needs to be re-opened for full and normal operations as a matter of extreme urgency so that architects, developers and heritage practitioners can

### IN RESPECT OF THE WATER CRISIS



Ingrid Bester from the People's Water Forum reiterated the following demands on the government to address the water crisis:

- National intervention and coordinated leadership.
- Protection and ring fencing of water funds
- Acceleration of repairs, maintenance and expansion
- Improved service delivery response times and system reliability
- Ending the systemic reliance on water tankers and invest in permanent supply
- Fair billing, transparency and consumer protection
- Embedding civil society in governance and oversight
- Strengthened governance, professionalism and accountability
- Long-term national water security and the just transition.

The report noted that the government response to date has not been adequate, including setting up yet another Water Crisis Committee and temporarily increasing the Rand Water use license. The Water Crisis, therefore, sought support for the following demands and actions:

- The call for a People's Water Forum Summit
- New ways to intensify and build protest and advocacy
- A formal meeting with the National Water Crisis Committee.

# JCA Summit-9 Image Gallery



# JCA Summit - YOUTH FORUM

## Building the next generation of Joburg Leaders

**J**CA Youth Forum Aims to Build the Next Generation of Community Leaders On 14 March 2026, the Joburg Crisis Alliance (JCA) will convene a Youth Forum aimed at encouraging greater youth participation in community activism and civic engagement across Johannesburg. The forum, which will bring together young people between the ages of 18-25, forms part of the JCA's broader commitment to building grassroots leadership and strengthening community-driven campaigns.

At a time when many young people are facing unemployment, social exclusion and limited opportunities, the JCA believes that youth voices must play a central role in shaping solutions to the challenges facing Johannesburg's communities. The Youth Forum will create a platform for young people to engage directly with issues affecting their daily lives while also exploring ways to become active participants in campaigns for social justice, environmental protection and community development.

The initiative comes as communities across Johannesburg continue to grapple with rising inequality, food insecurity, deteriorating infrastructure and growing frustration over poor service delivery. Young people are often among the hardest hit by these challenges, yet they remain underrepresented in many decision-making spaces.

Through the Youth Forum, the JCA hopes to bridge

this gap by creating opportunities for dialogue, leadership development and collective action. Participants will engage in discussions on community organising, youth activism, environmental justice, public accountability and local development initiatives. The forum will also provide a space for young people to share their own experiences and ideas for improving conditions within their communities.

Importantly, the JCA sees the forum not simply as a once-off event, but as the beginning of a longer-term process to build a stronger youth movement connected to ongoing civic campaigns across the city. Young participants will be encouraged to contribute to local campaigns addressing issues such as waste management, food justice, anti-drug initiatives, public safety and social cohesion.

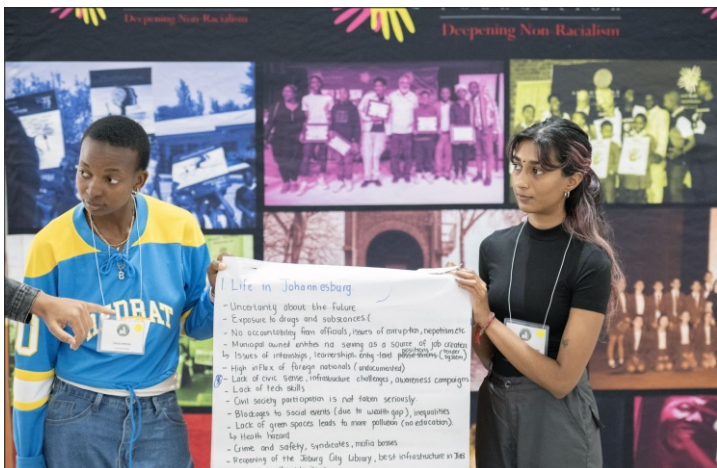
The alliance believes that meaningful social change requires the active involvement of young people who understand the realities of their communities and are willing to work collectively towards solutions.

As preparations for the Youth Forum continue, the JCA has called on young people from across Johannesburg to take part in the initiative and help shape a more inclusive, just and sustainable future for the city.

Are you between the ages of 18-25 and have an interest in the JCA Youth Forum? Contact Dawood Raphaelalane on 078-947-5675



# JCA Youth Forum Image Gallery



# The JCA speaks to .... Shereen Usdin of **FIXLOCAL**



will be launched in late April/May 2026. The app is a gamechanger because it will allow users to register on the site with their municipal reference numbers, and fixlocal will automatically escalate unresolved issues up the municipal ladder on their behalf. The app will collect data that can be used by citizens with the municipality as an evidence base off which to advocate for improved service delivery.

***There has been some discussions about focusing on a particular area as a pilot. What would an area focus help bring about?***

***The FixLocal project was introduced to JCA Members at the JCA Summit-6 in May 2025. What has been the developments since then?***

The project has been going from strength to strength. When we presented to the JCA Summit we had a website and WhatsApp site to help citizens better navigate local government. It provides the right contacts for people to report issues and how to escalate them through the correct channels if the municipality is unresponsive. Its also full of ideas of how to organise collectively if all else fails. Since the Summit, we've added a lot more useful content and have organised the site to make it more user friendly. We have also accumulated a large repository of stories that will inspire readers to fix local. Also, at the time of the Summit we had not yet started our monthly newsletter. We are onto our fifth edition and our subscriber list is growing. The newsletter is full of the latest information on all things local government. You can subscribe to the newsletter [here](#).

Our biggest news is we are developing an app which

What we are hoping for is for communities to begin using the app collectively so we can provide them with data that can be used for advocacy with their municipalities. The app will develop heat maps of where the problems in their specific municipalities are and what sort of response has been forthcoming from the municipalities including response times and resolutions (if at all). There have been examples of communities who have used data to help improve the



way that they are able to work with local municipalities to improve service delivery. With significant number of users, we will have enough data to analyse on behalf of the communities we partner with.

***In the course of engaging with communities, What have you observed in terms of communities doing this for themselves?***

Our website is full of the most inspiring stories of people and communities who – instead of giving up in despair – have stepped up to get things fixed. Some have done what they can themselves as individuals,

# The JCA speaks to .... Shereen Usdin of **FIXLOCAL**

others through collective action. The stories include what they did to solve the problem and what made their actions successful. We are not encouraging people to take over the municipalities' obligations with regard to service delivery but very often communities that act together do get results. We try to showcase examples where there has been good collaboration and how that happened. But equally, we have stories of how communities have come together to protest inaction and their successes. A good example of this is the action communities took to reopen the Johannesburg library which had remained closed for over 4 years. The Johannesburg Heritage Foundation and the JCA joined forces to pressure the city to take action and to communicate. They held widely publicised protests outside the closed library in downtown Joburg and embarked on a strong social media campaign. They also ensured they had media coverage for their protest events. After decisive mobilisation and peaceful protests, the library was reopened in August 2025.

A wonderful example of a story where communities have collected data and used this for advocacy, is the Equality Collective's Amanzi Kumntu Wonke (Water for All) project on advancing water as a constitutional right. It's an activist, community-centred law project based in the rural Eastern Cape that is embedded in the communities it serves and centres the lived struggles of marginalised people, especially women and children. Their work focuses on strengthening community participation, generating credible ground-level data on the state of water delivery, and ensuring that this information feeds into municipal decision-making and accountability systems.

## ***So what's next for FixLocal?***

We will be focussing our energies on strengthening the new app, building on the current web content and forging partnerships with communities who will work with us to gather the data described above. As a free service, we are also constantly fundraising for the important work fixlocal is doing. So anyone with good ideas can contact us on [info@fixlocal.org.za](mailto:info@fixlocal.org.za)! Please visit our website on [www.fixlocal.org.za](http://www.fixlocal.org.za) and sign up for our newsletter which will keep you updated on all local government news as well as on the progress of our app. You can subscribe to the newsletter [here](#).



# THE JCA VISITS TUHF

## Financing the Future of Affordable Housing in Johannesburg

The JCA visited the offices of TUHF (Trust for Urban Housing Finance) to gain a better understanding of this specialised financial services company providing funding for affordable rental housing in the city of Johannesburg.

Johannesburg faces a deep and persistent housing challenge. Rapid urbanisation, population growth, and the legacy of spatial inequality mean that thousands of residents struggle to access safe, affordable accommodation close to economic opportunities. While government programmes remain critical, innovative partnerships with the private sector are increasingly playing an important role in addressing the city's housing gap. One organisation that has made a significant impact in this space is TUHF.

Founded in 2003, TUHF is a specialised commercial property finance company focused on supporting affordable rental housing in South Africa's inner cities and townships. Instead of directly developing housing, TUHF provides long-term loans to property entrepreneurs who purchase, refurbish, or convert buildings into affordable residential units. This approach enables local investors to revitalise neglected properties while expanding access to housing in areas where demand is high.

The model has proven highly effective in cities like Johannesburg, where many older buildings in the inner city have fallen into disrepair over the years. TUHF sees opportunity where others see decline. By financing the refurbishment of these properties, the organisation helps bring derelict buildings back into productive use as safe and affordable rental accommodation.

Since its establishment, TUHF has financed hundreds of property developments across South Africa. The organisation has supported more than 700 buildings and helped deliver tens of thousands of rental units. In total, more than 50,000 affordable housing units have been created through projects financed by TUHF, providing homes for many families who need to live close to jobs, transport routes, and urban services.

Importantly, the TUHF model does more than just create housing. By supporting small and medium-sized property entrepreneurs, it helps build a new generation of local investors who are committed to improving the neighbourhoods in which they operate. These projects stimulate urban regeneration, create employment opportunities during construction and management phases, and help revive local economies in inner-city areas.

TUHF's work also aligns with broader efforts to promote urban densification—a key strategy for making cities more

inclusive and sustainable. By encouraging residential development close to economic centres, TUHF projects reduce long commuting distances and help residents access jobs, education, and services more easily. At the same time, refurbishing existing buildings helps limit urban sprawl and makes better use of existing infrastructure.

More recently, TUHF has expanded its impact through partnerships aimed at scaling affordable and environmentally sustainable housing. Collaborations with international finance institutions are supporting the development of green-certified buildings and energy-efficient retrofits in inner-city and township areas. These initiatives show how housing solutions can address both social and environmental challenges.

For civic organisations such as the Joburg Crisis Alliance, the work of TUHF highlights an important lesson: addressing the housing crisis requires collaboration between communities, government, financiers, and entrepreneurs. No single actor can solve Johannesburg's housing shortage alone.

As Johannesburg continues to grapple with rapid urban growth and increasing housing demand, innovative models like TUHF's offer practical pathways forward. By unlocking investment, empowering local property entrepreneurs, and revitalising inner-city neighbourhoods, TUHF is demonstrating how finance can be a powerful tool in building a more inclusive and liveable city.



*JCA Coordinator Yunus Chamda, right, with Lusanda Netshithenzhe of TUHF (left) Lusanda is also a Steering Committee Member of the JCA.*

### Another day, another crisis courtesy of the City of Joburg



**T**here is a stark contrast between our constant, challenging dealings with the City of Johannesburg and the special devotion by civil society organisations and passionate individuals to the City of Gold.

In mid-2023 I was standing in the parking area of Northwards (Herbert Baker's imposing mansion perched on the edge of Parktown Ridge) and looking down into the expectant face of Flo Bird – the diminutive but indomitable founder of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation (JHF). She was about to turn 80 and had just asked me if I would take over from her as the new chair of the JHF. Although Flo's shoes would be hard to fill, I said yes. After all, how hard could it be?

Well, since then the JHF has been thrust into an escalating series of heritage-related crises including: the tragic Usindiso fire, the indefinite closure of the Johannesburg City Library, the degeneration of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the derelict Rissik Street Post Office, the neglected Bez Valley farmhouse (oldest building in Joburg), the vulnerable Orange Grove Waterfall, the abandonment of the Metro Centre and its vital plans archive, and many other important heritage sites at risk – all of which are owned and/or managed by the City of Johannesburg and its various agencies.

It's been... a lot.

The Johannesburg City Library had been closed indefinitely. The Johannesburg City Library contains more than 1.5 million books.

Along the way I have been heartened by the support of like-minded civil society organisations, passionate individuals and the JHF's dedicated members – all of whom display a very special devotion to this city of gold, dust and dreams. However, when it comes to dealing with the City of Johannesburg's administration, the situation has been far more challenging.

To my mind, each time we have approached the City with a pressing issue, the response has been in two distinct

phases. The first is to deny, distract and delay. As in: thanks for your interest, we have the situation under control. Nothing to see here. Move along. This attitude might be understandable if the administration had a good track record of delivery, but they do not.

The second phase kicks in once the negative attention has become too much to bear and the City finally rushes into a usually ill-advised action plan, whereupon they seek congratulations for solving problems of their own making. This brings us to the latest chapter in the long-gestating crisis regarding the Metro Centre and the irreplaceable plans archive contained therein. To be clear, since the Metro Centre was suddenly closed in September 2023 with no warning or credible planning, the COJ has been alerted multiple times by multiple organisations that the records contained in the now-abandoned Metro Centre are at severe risk of loss, damage or destruction. They have also been told, in writing, that access to a functioning plans archive is a legal requirement for homeowners, property developers, estate agents and architects, etc. And yet, in two and half years there has been little to no progress in this regard.

Now, with mounting pressure being applied by the JHF, the Johannesburg Crisis Alliance and other stakeholders (not to mention the damning video material being distributed by a certain opposition mayoral candidate), the City has finally conducted a joint oversight visit to the Metro Centre and found that yes, indeed, there are “serious concerns regarding the condition in which files and plans are being stored”. This is hardly a revelation.

The City's latest media statement goes on to outline a plan to pursue “a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in consultation with National Treasury” and to facilitate the “appointment of a Transaction Advisor to undertake a feasibility study as part of the broader Office Space Optimisation Programme”.



21 March 2021 - Flo Bird makes a point to Mayor Dada Morero at the Joburg City Library

# OPINION PIECE

By David Fleminger (as published in the Daily Maverick of 3 May 2026)



24 January 2025 - David Fleminger addresses Summit-5 of the Joburg Crisis Alliance

This is all well and good, and we have also noted the City's promise to provide additional security and to “allow controlled daily access during designated periods”, but the process described is going to take a long time to conclude. What is going to happen to the disorganised and vulnerable plans archive in the interim? Large repositories of this nature need constant maintenance and upkeep or else they become degraded.

Furthermore, in our experience, the City of Johannesburg's appeal for PPPs when it comes to the redevelopment of heritage assets is based on unrealistic expectations. As the JHF, we have previously suggested potential solutions to various issues (often with offers of funding from private/corporate donors attached). These approaches have been either rejected with instructions to “stay in our lane” or made subject to onerous compliance regulations that are impractical and time-consuming. It is time for the City of Johannesburg to acknowledge that any PPP or donor-funded intervention comes with conditions in terms of collaborative decision-making, independent oversight and financial transparency. No reputable organisation or institute is going to hand over money with no strings attached – that's just not how it works.

To put it bluntly, if the City really wants to engage with private and philanthropic partners, they need to relinquish a degree of control and embrace the true spirit of collaboration by granting their would-be partners equal rights and mutual respect. Without this concession there is no way forward.

When it comes to the Metro Centre, the JHF continues to insist that the plans archive must be relocated and rebuilt in a safe and accessible location as a matter of extreme urgency. There is no more time to waste while waiting for feasibility studies and other arcane bureaucratic procedures to play out.

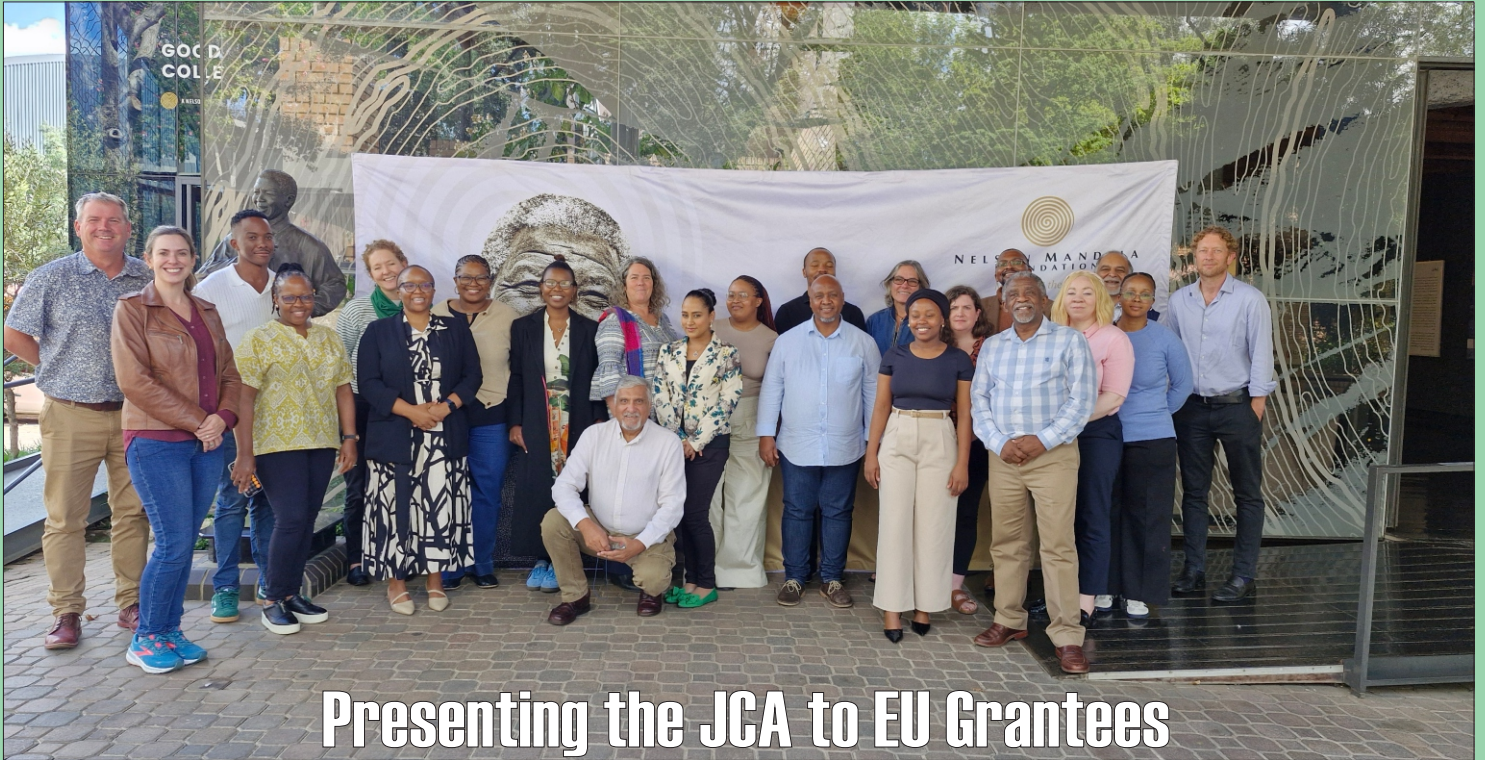
Looking back at all that has transpired since that fateful conversation with Flo Bird at Northwards in 2023, I am reminded of the Greek myth of Sisyphus, the king who angered the gods and was cursed with an eternity of rolling a heavy rock up a hill only for it to roll back down every time he neared the summit. But as frustrating as the process has been at times, we have had considerable successes (such as the reopening of the City Library following a public protest campaign) and I have personally learnt a lot, for which I am thankful.

Mostly, I have been encouraged by all the people and organisations who are committed to making Joburg a great city once again. I firmly believe that with the right people in our corner, we can achieve our goals for the common good of the city we love. I only wish it weren't this hard!

*David Fleminger is a freelance writer, director and chairperson of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation – an independent, self-funded, volunteer-led organisation that seeks to promote and protect our city's invaluable heritage resources. For more information about the JHF and the work it does, visit [www.joburgheritage.org.za](http://www.joburgheritage.org.za)*



# JCA ACTIVITIES



## Presenting the JCA to EU Grantees

The Joburg Crisis Alliance (JCA) attended the European Union's Enhancing Accountability Programme Annual Grantee Meeting held at the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Johannesburg on 24 March 2026. The gathering brought together civil society organisations to reflect on transparency, electoral integrity and accountable local governance. During the meeting, the JCA delivered a

presentation outlining its ongoing community campaigns and grassroots mobilisation efforts across Johannesburg. The alliance shared insights on strengthening civic participation, improving accountability mechanisms and empowering communities to engage more actively in local governance and service delivery processes ahead of the upcoming local government elections.



## The JCA Libraries Activists Campaign Group

The activists team driving the campaign to reopen community libraries that remain closed, and the need to have the City open libraries on Saturdays which will improve access for students and workers. From Left to Right are Nokuthula Khwela (JCA Media Officer), Shaazia Ebrahim, Melvyn Petersen, Yasirah Madhi and Mike Roussos.