

PEARLY BEACH CONSERVANCY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Pearly Beach Conservancy, held at 10:00 on Wednesday 17 December 2014, in the NG Church Hall, Pearly Beach.

PRESENT: 38 Members.

1. OPENING AND WELCOME: The Chairperson Jason Stonehewer welcomed everyone and the guest speaker Ernst van Jaarsveld in particular. Dominee Henri Basson opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. APOLOGIES: Carol Conner, Vernon Potter

3. CONFIRMATION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES: Confirmation of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held 17 December 2013: proposed Gerald Henrici, seconded Heilie Mostert

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES: Not matters were raised.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT: Jason Stonehewer presented a summary of the happenings in 2014 by means of an engaging slide presentation. He particularly lauded the collaboration between the Conservancy and the Pearly Beach Ratepayers Association. He reported that the membership number had risen to 84. The number of donations received was higher than ever before at around R 7000. Some of the donations were made anonymously. He thanked everyone who had given to the Conservancy. Furthermore, he commended the fact that the Fynbos Garden had come a long way under the tutelage of Heilie Mostert. With her guidance, hundreds of new species have been planted. Furthermore, she has labelled the plants individually. She is assisted by a small team of dedicated volunteers who help her pick, record and display Fynbos specimens and keep the Fynbos Centre clean. Steve Peck and Gerrie Boerssen were thanked for crafting the signage. Steve erected the plinths (for the bird posters), which were sponsored by the Municipality, and Vernon Potter created the sundial. Steve was also thanked for erecting the new insect "hotel". It is hoped that this haven for insects will increase plant pollination. New taps have been installed thanks to the Municipality. The Fynbos Centre/Garden and Village Green have provided the venue for the Conservancy X-mas market 2013 and the Ratepayers PB Affaire (twice in 2014).

The Coastal Path has been upgraded by the Conservancy with the approval of the Municipality, provided that no damage was done to the surrounding vegetation. The Caring for Coast workers were instrumental in this project. Furthermore, members of the public took it upon themselves to help with the cleaning work. They were thanked in particular for taking responsibility for their environment.

Fifty new Oystercatcher signs have been donated by Impressions. These signs are intended to make the public aware of breeding sites on the beach. The boards feature the Chairman's phone number for any reports or questions.

Fishing line bins have been erected by the Dyer Island Conservation Trust and are being emptied on a regular basis. The contents are weighed and this information is being recorded for scientific purposes.

The tortoise awareness campaign motivated by Neilia Muller, which was initiated last year, is ongoing.

The "battle" continues against illegal kelp collectors who are destabilizing the dunes. Kelp collection is a potentially sustainable industry, but needs to be done correctly.

Furthermore, the new plot clearing policy, which allows only hand clearing, has come into force. Transgressions need to be closely monitored and documented (evidence gathered).

The Caring for the Coast team were presented with Christmas cakes as a token of appreciation for all the hard work that they have accomplished in Conservancy projects over the year (Fynbos Garden and Coastal Path, etc.).

Jason thanked Gerald Henrici for his outstanding contribution to conservation in Pearly Beach. Apart from creating four benches and their bases for the Fynbos Garden, Gerald also oversaw the maintenance of the benches along the coast and spearheaded the repair of the steps at the whale viewing spot and the planting of 20 new Milkwoods along the main road. He also resolved the problem with the irrigation system for the trees. Even though he had given notice of his resignation as Treasurer of the Conservancy by the end of 2014, he has decided to stay on in this position in the interim. The search for a new Treasurer continues. Applications are welcome.

Heilie, Steve and the Coastal Care Workers were also singled out for commendation.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT: Gerald presented the books audited by Villet & Pitzer and the budget for 2015. Elrina will send out the balance sheet for 2014 and the budget for 2015 to the Members in January. Gerald proposed that Villet & Pitzer be thanked for auditing the books.

7. CONFIRMATION OF THE MEMBERSHIP FEE: The Members at the meeting agreed that the annual subscription should remain at R30.00 per single member and R50.00 per household.

8. ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: The following committee members were re-elected: Jason Stonehewer - Chairperson; Elrina Versfeld - Vice Chair; Gerald Henrici - Treasurer; Membership Secretary - Beatrice Bollmann; Secretary – Susanne Fuchs; Heilie Mostert; Anneke Potgieter and Irna van Zyl. The Chairman thanked them all individually for their particular contribution to the Committee. Two new members were elected, Steve Peck, and another member (Piet), and warmly welcomed.

9. GUEST SPEAKER: Jason welcomed the guest speaker Ernst van Jaarsveld. The speaker congratulated the community on their conservation work in the field of coastal flora, which is evidently not well documented to date. He gave an entertaining talk on the background of Fynbos and its ecology and on the history of plant collection and the establishment of Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden. He also answered questions about waterwise gardening and stressed the importance of botanical gardens for our overall wellbeing.

10. DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS: One of the attendees wanted to know about the best way to stop the spread of Rooikrans. The speaker stated that mechanical clearing was favourable, but that biological control was preferable. Another question referred to pin cushion planting. The speaker explained that these plants do not tolerate phosphates. Therefore, they much prefer mulch over fertilizer. The last question was about oleander planting. Even though this plant is a treat to indigenous vegetation and quite toxic, double varieties have been cultivated, which do not reseed. The speaker also addressed the issue of plant poaching (e.g. Cycads) which is causing considerable losses with regard to scientific research. Efforts are now underway to implant micro-chips in these threatened plants for identification purposes.

11. CLOSING: Jason closed the meeting by praising the work of the Kirstenbosch founders and their foresight in conserving something that we enjoy today and will continue to appreciate in the future. Furthermore, he thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the donors for their generous gifts.

JASON STONEHEWER

Chairperson

Date: