

PEARLY BEACH BEWAREA / CONSERVANCY

VOORSITTERSREDE BY AJV: 22 DESEMBER 2011/ CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT AT AGM: 22 DECEMBER 2011

Goeiemôre / Good morning

Baie welkom aan almal teenwoordig, spesiaal aan al ons lede, komiteelede en besoekers. Baie welkom ook aan ander belangstellendes en ons gasspreker, Chris Barnes, 'n slangkenner van Baardskeerdersbos, wat later aan julle voorgestel sal word.

I want to say a big thank you to every member of the Management Committee for all the hard work done throughout the year and all the positive support that I have received, I appreciate it very much. Furthermore I would like to thank Cllr Dudley Coetzee, our Ward Councillor and past Chairperson of the Ratepayers Association for his support during the past year. Many thanks also to Theo Coetzer, the newly elected Chairperson of the Ratepayers Association for his assistance and support. The 2 Associations have established a good working relationship in the past years, which can only be extended during the coming years to the benefit of everybody in Pearly Beach. A big thank you to Rob Fryer and his team from the Overstrand Conservation Foundation, now trading as Whalecoast Conservation, for valuable advice and support during the past year. I would also like to thank the Gansbaai Courant for publishing our monthly press reports. To the officials from the Gansbaai office of the Overstrand Municipality, your support and advice throughout the year is much appreciated.

I have been serving on the Management Committee of the then Pearly Beach Conservation Society since 20 December 2001, under the Chairperson of Andy le Roux, the founder member of this Society in 1992. I was elected as Chairperson on 23 December 2002 and have been serving since then in this capacity, a big honour and privilege for me. But today will be my last day in this position, as I feel that after 11 years it is time for new blood and fresh ideas.

Graag wil ek kortliks die volgende oorsig gee oor die hoogtepunte van die afgelope paar jare:

Pearly Beach Conservancy

To me the biggest achievement during my term of office was the registration of a Conservancy in Pearly Beach by Cape Nature on 20 December 2006 and the compilation of a comprehensive Management Plan for the Conservancy. The Conservancy was also registered as a Non-Profit Organization on 3 June 2010.

Herbarium

The Herbarium may be a very small wooden structure, but I believe that it serves as a show case for the vast expanse of our local fynbos. Both residents and visitors to the area benefit from the valuable information and advice on local and indigenous plants.

The planning of an indigenous garden, the planting of buffalo grass instead of kikuyu, water wise gardening, lists of indigenous trees in the area, are but a few of the valuable hints available in the Herbarium. The eradication of alien plants and the damage that they do to the indigenous fynbos veld as they invade and destroy our lovely vegetation, is also emphasized. The Herbarium also serves as an information point for tourists and visitors, as several tourism related brochures are available there.

Ek glo nog steeds dat die Herbarium die vertoonvenster van die Bewarea is en daarom wil ek graag vir Heilie Mostert en haar span ywerige en gewillige werkers baie, baie dankie sê vir hulle onbaatsugtige werk om te sorg dat die Herbarium elke dag van die jaar vir besoekers oop is. Ons weet hoeveel tyd en energie julle aan die Herbarium spandeer en waardeer dit opreg.

Indien hier vandag vrywilligers is wat ook graag by die Herbarium behulpsaam wil wees, kontak asseblief vir Heilie Mostert, aangesien hulp altyd benodig word. The Herbarium is playing a far more important role in the conservation, protection and restoration of all indigenous plant life of the Pearly Beach area than is visible when visiting the Herbarium for the first time. Your support for this project will be much appreciated.

Some of the Herbariums highlights can be summarized as follows:

Many of the indigenous plants in our area have been identified;

Heilie Mostert, the Co-ordinator of the Herbarium, was one of the finalists of the Overstrands Mayor's award for conservation in the Overstrand;

Approval from the Overstrand Municipality was obtained to establish a Fynbos garden on the same plot as the Herbarium is situated on.

The successful propagation of one precious bulb of a rare white *Brunsvigia* with the help of Jim Homes of Cape Seed and Bulb. He started this project during November 2004 and during 2010 6 bulbs were given back to us and so far all are doing well .

The maps of Pearly Beach are still for sale and an example of this map is also on display in the Herbarium.

Clean Marine Project

Birdlife Walker Bay, Birdlife Overberg and our Society have established a very successful working relationship and our Society is proud to be part of this team. Warren Rutherford is the local co-ordinator of this project. The whole beach front has been divided into 5 zones and each zone is allocated to either an individual or a group of people. It is their responsibility to regularly clean their stretch of beach. If anybody is interested to help with this worthy project, please speak to Warren.

Halfjaarlikse nuusbrief

In 'n poging om beter kontak met lede te maak en hulle meer op hoogte te bring met al die aksies wat gedurende die jaar plaasvind, word 'n halfjaarlikse nuusbrief, bykomend tot die November-nuusbrief uitgestuur. Weens verhoogde posgeld, is dit egter nie moontlik om die nuusbrief te pos nie en word dit net per e-pos, asook in die Herbarium, versprei. Daar word vertrou dat hierdie aksie u ondersteuning sal geniet en daarom 'n vriendelike versoek om seker te maak dat ons u e-posadres het.

Plot clearing management

During the past year the Conservancy has met several times with officials from the Gansbaai office to discuss the procedures according to which vacant plots are supposed to be cleared. The wording of the standard letter that is sent out to plot owners requesting them to clear their plots has been amended as we requested. It is rightfully stated that all alien vegetation needs to be removed, but the stipulation that all other vegetation, excluding protected species, must be cut down to a height of 50 cm is still mentioned in the letter. We fully support the need to have all aliens removed, but if other plants are pruned to the extent that it does not constitute a fire hazard, the owner cannot be forced to cut all fynbos down to a height of 50 cm. We further want to encourage all our members to spread the word that plots need to be cleared by using environmentally friendly methods, bushes should be cut down by hand and not by using a bush cutter or other mechanical tools.

Benches along beach front

During the past 15 years that this Society, now the Conservancy, has been in existence, a number of benches have been erected along the beach front and maintained by us. Regular maintenance work on the benches is done. As a result of the stormy weather the footpath from Harbour Road up to the old caravan park has been swept away and plans will have to be made to perhaps re-position this path.

Groenstrook

Die projek om die groenstrook voor die dorpsgebied (Erwe 163, 164, 165, 166, 645 en 1893) se sonering van openbare oopruimte na privaat natuurreservaat sone 3 te verander, geniet nog steeds aandag. Dis 'n poging om die bewaringsstatus van hierdie ongerepte natuurlike fynbosveld te verhoog. Die SDF (Spatial Development Framework) is in die afgelope jaar hersien en die betrokke erwe is met die hoogste bewaringsstatus, naamlik Natuurbewaringszone, in die dokument aangedui.

New developments

At present the Management Committee is keeping a close eye on all new developments that are under discussion. The role of the Conservancy must not be seen as being against development, but as that of a Conservancy that wants to make a meaningful contribution at the planning stages of development to ensure that all new developments take into account all possible measures to guarantee sustainable development.

Fishing line bin

With the help and support of Brenda Walters of the Dyer Island Conservation Trust three bins for the recycling of fishing line were erected on the beach. We hope that all anglers and beach walkers will help us to pick up the pieces of fishing line and to deposit them in these bins. The bins will be cleaned weekly by staff of the Overstrand Municipality, who will weigh all the fishing line and will compile statistics of the fishing line recovered from all the beaches in the Overstrand area. I trust that everyone will help to clean our beaches of fishing line. This will ensure that the number of birds, penguins, dolphins and seals that get entangled in fishing line, and sometimes also get killed, will be minimized in our area.

Uitroei van indringers

Ten einde 'n sigbare en daadwerklike bydrae tot die uitroei van indringers te maak, wil ek graag 'n uitdaging tot alle lede rig om deel te neem aan ons projek om 'n openbare oopruimte aan te neem en om terselfdertyd die rommel in die aangrensende strate op 'n gereelde basis op te tel. Die idee is dat lede die naaste openbare oopruimte aan hulle huis aanneem en hulle is dan verantwoordelik om slegs die indringers, hoofsaaklik Rooikrans, Port Jacksons en Manatokas op hierdie erwe uit te roei. Baie dankie vir die lede wat hulle alreeds tot hierdie projek verbind het – julle bydrae tot bewaring word opreg waardeer.

Way forward

This is your Conservancy and the success or failure of this Conservancy will depend largely on inputs from you as members. Please feel free to contact any of the Management Committee members with suggestions or proposals to promote the actions of this Conservancy. We still publish monthly press releases in the Gansbaai Courant about conservation issues and trust that the publicity will be to the benefit of the Society. We have also drafted an information letter with the heading, Pearly Beach – Beautiful in its Own Way to welcome new residents to our area. Copies of this letter have been given to all estate agents and we trust that they do distribute the letter to everybody making enquiries at their offices. Exciting news during the past year was that together with the Pearly Beach Ratepayers Association, we have established a web page for the Conservancy, so please visit it regularly to keep up to date with what is happening in Pearly Beach. The Black Oystercatcher posters were also reprinted and are still displayed all over the beach area to remind residents and visitors to be on the look out for the nests of these highly endangered birds. We trust that the Eastern side of the Agulhas National Park will also soon be developed and opened to the public. We will virtually be neighbors and I trust that many of the Pearly Beach residents will offer their services as Honorary Rangers to this Park.

Overstrand Municipality

As in the past, we have a good working relationship with especially officials from the Gansbaai office and the following issues were addressed:

The rezoning of Erf 159, corner of Central and West Street, from service usage zone to single residential zone was refused after we had submitted comments to this effect;

The zoning of the green belt was again forwarded for discussion by the Ward Forum;

Several negotiations regarding the Noorkapper development and the contravening of the subdivision stipulations were held;

Plot clearing;

The removal of kelp from the beaches was addressed;

The cleanliness of the whole area, especially the sidewalks.

Fire Watch

In co-operation with the Pearly Beach Ratepayers Association we are still busy to investigate the possibility of establishing a group of volunteers in Pearly Beach under the name Fire Watch. These volunteers will be registered as reservists, will receive basic training, as well as the necessary protective clothing, and a trailer equipped with a water tank and pump. The idea is that this group will be the first to respond to any calls regarding a fire in the area. They will assess the damage, call for further help if necessary, and ensure that the occupants are safe, etc. To be able to have an active Fire Watch in Pearly Beach, we need the names and contact details of volunteers, preferably permanent residents, and I urge people to register, as this service will be of great benefit to all residents and property owners in Pearly Beach.

Bootlanseerplek

Die Hengelklub het uiteindelik dit reggekry om Blouwaterbaai amptelik as 'n bootlanseerplek geregistreer te kry. Op die oomblik blyk dit egter dat die Hengelklub nog nie die administrasie rondom die beheer en lansering van bote en voertuie heeltemal in plek het nie en ons vertrou dat die reëlings binnekort uitgestryk sal word.

Hacking party

No official hacking party was organized during this year, but please remember that the onus is on everyone to do alien clearing wherever you see aliens, whether on Council or private property. We will have to join hands to fight this battle against aliens in order to be successful.

Bantamsklip

Although the Conservancy has never expressed itself against the use of nuclear energy, the possible development of a nuclear reactor at Bantamsklip is a major issue for the whole area. We have attended all public meetings in this regard to ensure that our comments of every public participation process have been recorded. At present there are two very active groups in our area, namely the Strandveld Tourism and Conservation Association and the Save Bantamsklip campaign. We are on the mailing lists of both organizations as we want to stay informed of the latest developments.

Bedankings

Baie dankie aan elke Bestuurskomiteelid vir die getroue bywoning van vergaderings op Saterdag, vir elkeen se insette en ondersteuning. Spesiaal baie dankie vir Beatrice as sekretaresse en Gerald as tesourier. Baie dankie aan elke lid vir julle getroue ondersteuning en ek vertrou dat julle weer as lede vir die volgende jaar sal aansluit sodat die Bewarea as 'n span kan verseker dat Pearly Beach se unieke karakter vir die volgende geslagte bewaar sal kan word.

Baie dankie.