

Minutes of the Wilderness Ratepayers and Residents Association's Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday 19 February 2020 at the Wilderness Hotel and Spa at 18:00.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Acting Chairman, Pierre Durant, welcomed all present and thanked them for attending and for their interest in Wilderness. He requested that any issues that required voting be limited to members only. Apologies were noted from Denise Richardt, Andre Joubert, Candice Hobday, Erna van Wijk, Andy and Shirley Pedrick, John and Kris Neville, Bob and Lynne Davidson, Dirk Ackerman, Andre Hacquebord, Dee and Roy Marcus. He took the opportunity to remind people that if they have not been receiving our newsletters and other email notifications to look at providing an alternative email address as there are problems with certain service providers, e.g. MWEB and IAFRICA blocking MailChimp mail outs.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting and matters arising therefrom

Adoption of the minutes was proposed, seconded and approved with no matters arising.

3. Amendments to the constitution

No amendments proposed.

4. Chairperson's Report

Pierre stated that the Chairperson's report had been sent to members with the announcement of the AGM and that he would therefore just provide a brief summary of the year and then move on to discussions about the way forward.

Safety and Security: The purpose of this portfolio is to provide a way for communication and focus. There have been some unfortunate incidents in the village and this is a very active portfolio to ensure everything possible is done to avoid any recurrence. There have been a number of awareness initiatives and Ian Willis will speak briefly about the areas he believes require focus in 2020.

WRRRA Fire Forum: this body chaired by Andre Hacquebord, represents the 7 area fire management units of the Greater Wilderness area, creating an effective communication system between the FMUs, facilitating disaster planning, providing a voice with the fire department and other bodies and facilitating awareness and education of the public. As Andre was unfortunately unable to attend this evening, Dave Hill would provide an overview of future activities.

Public Talks: these have been very successful and well attended by both local residents and those from further afield. John Miller manages this portfolio and is always interested in finding new and interesting topics so your suggestions are welcome.

Development Diligence: WRRRA is registered as an interested party and the Municipality requests WRRRA comments or objections on all environmental and town

planning applications. Going forward we will publish a list of all applications to WRRRA members. We also liaise with the municipality in relation to services of which there were some problems last year. The Municipality has been very successful in working with us and we would like to thank them. There are many responsive and qualified people who ensure we receive the services we need from George, as well as ensuring that timely and effective maintenance is done.

Wilderness Improvement Programme (WIP): The main WIP initiative is the village monitors. The monitors are not empowered to be directly involved in law enforcement but they provide a constant set of eyes in the village, contributing to keeping our town clean and safe. Another aspect of WIP is the provision and siting of bins – this may not be noticed on a day to day basis but you only have to travel around other areas of the southern coast to appreciate what we do here. Pierre said that the danger in living in a small town like Wilderness is complacency. He shared some of the content of a recent article in the Knysna Herald where a Knysna resident wishes back to a time when Knysna was a lekker town before the urbanization that it has experienced. In a sense this cautions us to keep a close eye on how Wilderness develops and make conscious decisions as residents, taking the opportunity to recognize what we have here in Wilderness and make sure we do not lose it.

He then moved the focus of the presentation to future plans and activities. Dave Hill spoke on future projects planned for the WRRRA Fire Forum including the talk on 8 April when we will get speakers along to untangle the legislation. He asked members for questions in advance, to be sent to the WRRRA fire forum email address so that the speakers are prepared to give informed and comprehensive answers. He highlighted the Fire Festival and Expo in May; the purpose of this is to create greater fire awareness, raise funds for firefighting equipment as well as being fun and informative.

Ian Willis gave an overview of the current challenges faced in relation to Safety and Security and suggested the way forward. He advised that the satellite Police Station is responsible for a huge area and is undermanned. The area covered has traditionally been a low crime area and was de-manned in 1994. The national ratio of police to population is currently 1:383. In Wilderness at best the ratio is 1:1000 and at times can be 1:9000 depending on number of officers on shift, shift changeovers and vehicle availability. Ian stated that we cannot continue to rely on the status quo and need a cohesive, active community including potentially developing Neighbourhood Watch initiatives.

Pierre then highlighted some of the upcoming public talks arranged for 2020. He went on to mention some additional plans for the future such as a WIP re-launch, engaging with people and businesses to find new projects for WIP and the need to hear from members.

He described the committee as WRRRA members who are volunteers and here to shape things. He announced that there were some committee changes, Shiralee and Niel resigning and that there is also a need for an informed and dedicated

environmental portfolio head to cover a large component of what goes on in Wilderness as it is important that we are an informed and educated community. A new style newsletter has been designed and the website will also be relaunched. The committee has been slightly restructured, with more focused portfolios allowing for a greater participation of volunteers inside each portfolio workgroup.

5. Treasurer's Report and adoption of the Reviewed Accounts

This was circulated with the Chairperson's report and Niel was available to answer any questions from members. There were no points raised and adoption of the accounts was accepted by the members.

6. Ratification of Annual Subscription

It was proposed that the Annual Subscription be increased to R220 per household for 2020. This proposal was carried with no objections.

7. Election of Executive Committee

It was confirmed that the election of the following committee members was required:
Chris Burlock – re-joins the committee with responsibility for Communications
Pierre Durant – co-opted to committee in 2019 for Environment/Vice Chair
Andre Hacquebord – WRRRA Fire Forum
These committee members were elected.

Pierre confirmed that some committee members have stepped back from the main committee but are still assisting in sub-committee roles.

8. Other business of which due notice has been given

Hugo Leggatt spoke about the upcoming centenary of the founding of Wilderness (1921) Ltd. and gave an early history. He suggested that some thought be given to an appropriate way of recognising this particularly in light of area tourism. John Miller suggested a new portfolio could be created to cover history.

John spoke about his portfolio of Development Diligence and the frequent applications received from the municipality (excluding building permits) and that these are taken seriously and subject to a review, and the decision made whether to comment or object. He stated that the original portfolio was called planning but had been upgraded to Development Diligence to take account of the amount of development going on in this area. John talked through some of the key points of the Development Diligence policy and guidance that he had developed previously and said that he would ensure that the policy was posted on the website.

Pierre commented that tied with this, we have been engaging with various environmental groups, including professional groups and invited Arne Witt to speak. Arne confirmed that there is concern worldwide about loss of species and habitat and this should be addressed by everyone, as well as loss of biodiversity affected by chemicals amongst other things. He asked if we are going to stand up and fight this in Wilderness or sit by and look, stating that once you lose it you will never get it back

and said this is an area where everyone can contribute and get involved, be eyes and ears. The plan is to look to form a bigger group, similar to the Fire Forum, to get more people involved. Pierre confirmed that the greatest danger here is complacency.

9. General

There were no questions or comments from the floor.

Pierre thanked all who had attended the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 18:50

Signed

Chairman

Date.....

DRAFT