

## **WILDERNESS RESIDENTS AND RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2015**

Let it be said that during the time of Pieter Naude's chairmanship when he asked me to chair the committee meetings, I wasn't aware of what I was letting myself in for. Chairing a meeting is a relatively simple exercise if you are prepared, but nobody could have prepared me for taking on the role as chairman of the Association for the past year.

I have been very fortunate in having a dedicated, enthusiastic and hard-working committee. We did however "lose" Paul Nicholas during the year but it was only right that he took a step back from the committee to plough himself fully in getting well again. Paul is still "in the wings" as it were and is there to help whenever needed.

It was also the first time we have brought members on to the committee to run with certain projects for which they expressed more than just a keen interest.

Before reporting on to the various portfolios, nothing could have been achieved without our members' support and the relationships and cooperation that we have continued to build with our other stakeholders.

Our membership currently stands at a total of 333 members. Without doubt, the entire Wilderness population benefits from our efforts and we need to focus on getting into more and more homes in the coming year. It still amazes me to meet people who are unaware that the Association even exists.

Our relationships with SANRAL, SANParks remains on an excellent footing but the complete and utter lack of cooperation from TRANSNET resulted in us drawing on the resources of the George Municipality to help clear the overgrown sections of the line that made it unsafe for pedestrians to move between the village and Sands Road.

Needless to say, our regular contact at portfolio level with the municipal officials has ensured that when a job needs to be done, they are more than willing to listen and if at all possible, come to the party. The municipality doesn't have unlimited resources and we acknowledge this as they too have competing demands that need to be met. Suffice to say that I am of the opinion that if we didn't have these relationships, we would have not been able to get our roads re-surfaced, street lighting erected and maintained and burst water pipes repaired in no time at all and at all hours of the night.

We will continue to hold our annual "working breakfast" with these officials as it also gives them the opportunity to engage with us and build this working relationship. Perhaps the most important thing I have learned from these breakfasts is that a little "thank-you" goes a long way.

I must also thank our councillors Leon van Wyk and Marlene Viljoen for their wise counsel and being prepared to escalate issues within the Council and municipality when necessary.

And so to the portfolios:

**Environmental:** Chris Burlock took this on thinking that it would be easy. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of apathy from the general public but we do have a new and competent team at SANParks who are prepared to go the extra mile. Chris also managed the entire calendar project – with the objective of showing off what our Vision of Wilderness really is all about and how simply it can be achieved. Chris certainly leads by example as anyone who joined the alien hack team knows. Perhaps the most important project was that to find a workable and acceptable solution to the on-going problem of dogs on the beaches. The research of both successes and failures of various

approaches around the world led Chris to what we believe is a “win-win” that can be implemented relatively simply. However, if ever there was one area that divides us as a community, this has to be IT! With the cooperation of the municipality and SANParks, we hope to implement this soon but it will require a “give and take” from everyone. I appeal to everyone, whether you are a dog owner or not, to give it a chance and to abide by the rules. Only through mutual cooperation and respect for each other can we achieve a better place for both dogs and humans.

John Miller has also begun organising a series of public lectures and judging by the 67 attendees at the “Wilderness – more than just a pretty beach” lecture by Jonathan Britton of SANParks, these should not be missed.

**Town Planning:** George Markgraff and assisted by John Miller put together a guideline that can be used to review all the applications for departures that we receive. In most cases, the departures are not unreasonable from a WRRRA perspective as we would like to see appropriate development within Wilderness. We are also firmly of the view that neighbours of the applicant have the greatest responsibility to object where the departure will negatively affect their properties. We also rely on the Town Planning Officials to ensure that all building (including parking) and safety requirements are met.

I am pleased to report that together with other interested and affected parties, WRRRA supported the objection to the licencing and building of a waste disposal and recycling plant near Timberlake. We await the outcome of the objection which also had the backing of the George Municipality. The proposed development of Erf 2648 which has seen a lot of coverage in the press of late has also been reviewed with various aspects being objected to and re-emphasising that it is the Town Planning Department’s responsibility to ensure that all building requirements are met.

**Tourism:** Chris Boshoff, having been integrally involved in the industry kept us abreast of the developments in and around Wilderness. During the year numerous new guest houses came on stream and certainly raised the bar in terms of product offering in the area.

The Association also received R20 000 from the Municipality to promote tourism. We are guilty of not having “spent” this as yet as the Cheese Festival planned for 2015 has been postponed to this year and we are committed to supporting this Festival. Hopefully, once the Tourism Office within the municipality has stabilised, we will be able to work with them to ensure a coordinated approach and support the Annual Tourism Master Plan.

Sadly, in the recent past, tourism has been dealt a serious blow through the much-reported muggings of holiday makers. Robust action from all stakeholders is needed if we are going to nip this in the bud.

**Services:** John Miller has had his hands full this year dealing with sewerage spills, burst water mains and keeping the light on. We acknowledge that the infrastructure is old and that it possibly hasn’t had the maintenance that is needed. Despite this, the Integrated Development Plan also seemed to allocate resources into fixing rather than maintaining. The good news however is that the main water supply along Waterside Road has been identified as critical and by mid-year, this 1,2km stretch should be completely replaced.

Two security lights were erected at our request to cover the parking area behind the Mini Mart and just as was the case with the new light erected at the police station, were set to shine right into the adjacent houses! Fortunately, these problems were both remedied without much delay. Just on

that point, we would obviously love to have light fittings that are more aesthetically attractive and even energy efficient, but these come at a cost so there really isn't a choice.

**Roads:** Sue Ledger volunteered to take on this portfolio from Les Wahl. Just as Sue was getting her feet under the desk we received the sad news of the passing of Jacques Quinot, the senior road engineer and the force behind the Go George public transport system. WRRRA has worked with Jacques for many years and this was indeed a great loss to everyone who worked with him. With the Go George infrastructure almost complete, the first "nightmare" for us came in the changing of Leila's Lane into a one way street. Enough said! Despite the odd local who still insists on going the wrong way, it has helped to ease the traffic flow in the area.

Kingfisher Close has also received a lot of attention both from the George Municipality as well as Eden District Municipality. Getting two authorities to talk to each other is not easy and my thanks to Peter Mundell for his input, support and understanding. We will get there eventually!

Several roads including the notorious 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, the main thoroughfare to the yacht club have also recently been resurfaced and moves are afoot to address the dirt roads in the Langvlei area.

The N2 is due for an upgrade this year and we have given input to SANRAL on where this needs attention. In particular, especially over the season, the entrance to the village from the N2 was chaotic. The entrances to North and South Streets will receive particular attention as will all N2 access points in bit 60 kmph and 80 kmph zones .

**Safety and Security:** Ian van Rooyen keeps a close watch on developments, especially in the CBD where the on-going problem of vagrants and undesirables is cause for concern.

This past season, perhaps the most significant contributor to safety and security was the enormous visible policing and law enforcement presence that Wilderness has ever experienced. This was made possible through the very generous donations from our members, so much so that we were able to fund extra SAPS trained neighbourhood watch officials at every entrance to the beach.

Couple this with a large contingent of municipal law enforcement officers from the municipality, the large crowds that we experienced were well controlled, alcohol abuse was minimised and we celebrate that we did not have a single drowning on the beach over that time.

Regular police community forum meetings are held and the attendance at these has increased enormously in recent months.

**Communication:** The monthly newsletter is almost entirely the responsibility of Donald Goldfain. Donald has kept these light-hearted but interesting and informative – not always easy to do. Members have commented so positively on this and that it is the best way to keep everyone informed. Thankfully, we haven't had too many power outages of late but our SMS system is there to be used whenever needed. Technology is something that we all have to live with and "go with the flow" at least to some extent and Doug Wilcox has made an enormous contribution with the development of our new web site. Last month, the web site had 2 700 "hits" – a clear indication that it is putting Wilderness and WRRRA in particular on the map. Doug has some awesome plans to get Hugo Legatt's font of knowledge about all things Wilderness onto the web in the next few months.

**Wilderness Heights:** Ronnie Board and John Miller have tackled this very tricky matter with great tenacity. WRRRA holds the view that the current conditions in which the people of Erf 329 find themselves is unacceptable – poverty, crime and grime are the order of the day. Recently, after an engagement with the Western Cape Provincial Government officials, we are assured that this problem will be addressed - we just don't know when and how. In the interim, WRRRA is continuing to engage the various stakeholders in order to find a solution that best meets the needs of all who are affected.

**Finance and Administration:** No organisation can run effectively or efficiently without these two “unsung” heroes of WRRRA. During the year Niel Viljoen transferred our bank account to Nedbank and their on-line banking facilities has made a world of difference. The old account will be closed soon. One only has to look at the financial statements to get an indication of just how many transactions are dealt with on a weekly basis and our appreciation also goes to Ronnie Board for certifying the Annual Financial Statement.

I'm sure I don't have to remind you that Vanessa Hau-Yoon has been a long standing member of this committee and possibly the only person who doesn't seem to “tire”. Vanessa's personality is a breath of fresh air and when you're about her, nothing is ever too serious – important yes, but never serious. Often such a thankless task but she does it so willingly.

**Wilderness Improvement Program:** Although this program ought to be run by the business community, WRRRA (and more specifically Pieter Naude) as the “mastermind” behind this program, has assumed responsibility for its implementation. I can say without a shadow of doubt that was it not for the Program, Wilderness would not be the place it is today.

WRRRA has ensured that all of the WIP projects are not funded from WRRRA member contributions but only income received from advertisements on the “Wilderness Wall” at the garage and on-going monthly contributions from business, restaurants and some B&B's.

The most important facet of the Program is the Village Monitors. During this year and learning some very hard lessons from the past, we decided to opt for more “mature” monitors. As much as this was supposed to be a “hand up” for younger unemployed people in the community, their lack of reliability at critical times meant that we could either not fulfil our mandate or had to resort to extreme measures to keep the program on track. This move has been largely successful with only one “casualty” during the year. We were able to employ additional monitors over the Season as well as well as car guards for the Leentjies Klip parking area, a dedicated monitor for Sands Road as well as a monitor to chaperone visitors from the village through the subway, across the railway line to Sands Road. This increased visibility had a very positive impact on the overall safety in the village.

The Village Monitors' responsibilities are to ensure that the village is clean and safe. They do not have the training nor authority to deal with vagrants, street vendors etc. This remains the responsibility of municipal law enforcement and the SAPS. In order to deter the inflow of undesirables into the village, they act as car guards – an important part of helping to keep the village clean, safe and friendly.

A major project for the year was the police station in 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. A new wall and gates were erected (funded from the George Municipality Ward Allocation), the clearing of the overgrown

trees and vegetation which were making the area unsafe, the provision of a small but effective parking area and general maintenance of the building.

Other projects undertaken this year were the re-planting of the flower boxes, on-going maintenance of the gardens and surrounding areas and keeping the parking area safe and controlled.

My sincere thanks to Vanessa, Deidre Marcus and in particular Ian van Rooyen and Dawie Ackerman for the day to day management and supervision of the Village Monitors and gardeners.

**Conclusion:** I have tried to highlight just a few of the many activities that your committee has been involved with during the year. It is simply impossible to list them all but most have been covered in the newsletters.

It remains for me to thank the Committee for the hours and hours they have sacrificed in the interest of the Association but above all, keeping our Wilderness looking and feeling how we believe it should be and just hope that we have measured up to your expectations.

**Neville Ewing**  
**Chairman**

Wilderness Ratepayers and Residents Association

Receipts and payments for the 12 months ending 31 December 2015

	2015	2015	15 months	2014
Notes				
Receipts		39492		25475
Interest 32 day extension a/c	3092		3357	
Subscriptions	36400		22118	
Payments		<b>32138</b>		<b>33990</b>
Bank Charges	3791		5001	
Communication (SMS messaging)	9000		7365	
Cost of Meetings (AGM, Committee, George Municipality	12000		11114	
Donations				
SPCA ( Audit )	0		600	
NSRI	1190		1190	
Out of Pocket Expenses	280		2393	
Postage & PO Box Rental	339		452	
Printing & website	1938		475	
Secretarial fees and revision of members database	3600		5400	
Surplus		7354		-8515

Wilderness Improvement Program

Projects	Income	Expenditure	Net	
Additional security during Dec/Jan	2	19815	7300	12515
Calendars	3	13975	10950	3025
Monitors (3 26 028 received from George Mun. )		203467	189790	13677
Parking		36940	39340	-2400
SAPS charge office		20928	38046	-17118
Wall advertising income	4	40134	23885	16249
Wilderness Marketing ( Received from George Mun. )		20000	0	20000
Net Surplus of projects				<b>45948</b>
Consolidated Surplus WRRR and WIP				<b>53302</b>
				<b>-4653</b>

Statement of funds as on 31 December 2015

2015	2015	2014	2014
<b>Opening funds</b> at 1 January 2015		92301	(10ct 13) 96954
FMB Current a/c	38134		46144
FNB term deposit	54167		50810
		53302	-4653
<b>Consolidated Surplus WRRR and WM</b>			
Closing funds at 31 December		145603	92301
INS Current a/c	16262		38134
NB term deposit	57259		54167
Nedbank	72082		
Notes			
1. Members	333	36400	
Honorary	8		
Renewed subscription for 2015 R 100	10	100	1000
Renewed subscription for 2015 R 150	233	150	34950
Renewed subscription for 2016 R 150	3	150	450
Renewed subscription for 2015 in 2014	25		
WIP members	54		

2. Further payments will be made in January 16

3. 42 Calendars in stock on 31-12-15

4. Expenditure includes upkeep of gardens and various smaller projects. Surplus is used to finance shortfall of other projects.

Certified correct

R C Board  
SAIPA 3054

Date 20 (A 2000