

Village Monitors

We are pleased to announce that the Village Monitors are now operational! This is a significant milestone in the Wilderness Improvement Program, and is, at this stage, still a pilot project, running until the end of August. This is one of the most challenging and most visible projects we have tackled, and it represents tangible evidence that the Wilderness community, the business community and the WRRRA are working cooperatively to improve the general conditions in the village and the community. Hugh Pharaoh will be responsible for overseeing the Project for its pilot phase.

The Village Monitor Project has been made possible by generous financial contributions from members of the business community and the George Municipality, who provided R25 000 from the Ward Allocation budget. Two sets of uniforms have been supplied by Parks Board; others from the business community have committed themselves financially to the Pilot Project. In addition, R S Communications of George have made available on loan four short-wave radios to enable the Monitors to communicate with their supervisor and with Captain Boshoff at the Wilderness Police Station. As mentioned previously, training and supervision are being provided by Veronica and Les Stephens of 4 Front Consultants.

The Monitors are Zachwen Hardnick (Supervisor), Siphon Claassen (Monitor) and Jandre Appels (Monitor). They will each receive a monthly donation from the project funds, supplemented by voluntary gratuities from satisfied members of the public. During the first week they are on duty largely during the day as they are being monitored, as part of their onsite training. Thereafter the times they will be on duty may be adjusted based on experience and when the need is greatest.

Their duties as agreed on the contract, include:

1. Monitoring the movement of vehicles and assisting with parking.
2. Picking up all refuse and placing into black plastic bags provided.
3. Assisting visitors and tourists who need directions.
4. Ensuring that there are no other car guards trying to force persons to pay.
5. Acting as ambassadors of the Village and channels of communication with law and traffic enforcement agencies.

We would greatly appreciate your co-operation in helping us to make a success of this challenging, but critical project. Firstly, we ask you as the residents and ratepayers of Wilderness to support your official Village Monitors by not supporting the other unofficial so-called "car guards". Secondly, we would appreciate your comments and suggestions on how this project could be improved and sustained.

On Thursday an incident occurred when an unofficial "car guard" arrived in the village inebriated and proceeded to direct a motorist into another vehicle pulling out of a parking bay. He then went across to Milkwood Village where I personally had to rescue two sets of overseas visitors from being harassed by him. It is not going to be easy, but with the co-operation of all we can make it work.

Valuation Appeal Board

Members of the Valuation Appeal Board have been appointed and the members have met to sign documentation. They are presently setting up a timetable for hearings which should begin on 25 March. Wilderness has been prioritized, so those who objected to their municipal valuation should soon be receiving notification of when their objection will be heard. **It was emphasized again that people who have appealed their valuation must appear in person at the hearing otherwise their appeal has little chance of success.**

Touwsranten Primary School

Building has commenced on the Grade R classrooms at Touwsranten Primary. Consultants have been appointed to design an additional classroom block to reduce the present class sizes. It is hoped that this block will be completed in the next financial year. No plans are in place to build a new school (as originally promised).

Infrastructure maintenance

We are pleased that the Municipality has recognized that much of the infrastructure in Wilderness – electricity, water, sewage, roads – is in need of major maintenance and upgrading, and it is their intention to address this in the upcoming budget.

General Information

- There is still some advertising space available on the N2 wall. Interested B&Bs should contact Paul Nicholas.
- A decision has been taken to allow unrestricted access to the entire WRRRA website. This means that you will no longer require your unique password to enter the “Members only” section. This change should be made within a few weeks.
- Residents might be concerned that their WRRRA subscriptions are being used to fund Wilderness Improvement Program projects. This is not the case, as these projects are being funded from income derived from donations to the program and advertising on the N2 wall.
- Residents are requested to check their recent water accounts and query these with the Municipality if there are obvious discrepancies.
- If you have changed from manual to electronic billing with the Municipality, please check that the **Billing Department** has your correct email address.
- You are reminded that most car break-ins take place when cars are left unlocked and items are visible. You must check that your car is locked when you leave it, as there are electronic systems that allow prospective thieves to interfere with your automatic locking device – you need to check that the doors have in fact been successfully locked.
- If you are employing laborers, it is in your best interests to check their Identity Documents and to check with the Wilderness Police station to ensure that these are not any of the 450+ prisoners who are currently out on parole.
- Concern has been expressed about random road blocks manned by plain-clothes police officers. WRRRA has been given the assurance that in future all road blocks will be manned by **an officer in uniform**, who will then direct you to other officers who may be in plain clothes. However, these officers all carry identification, and you should ask to see this if you are in any doubt about the legitimacy of the road block in question.
- Many of you will be aware of the proposal to create a dump site for Sedgefield on Wilderness properties adjacent to the N2. The WRRRA, together with many other concerned and affected parties, has submitted strong, motivated objections to this proposal.
- WRRRA has been allocated a slot on Eden FM, when WRRRA can explain what they are doing and residents can phone in and ask questions. The first broadcast will take place on **Tuesday 2 April at 16:10** – please tune in!
- Clr Leon van Wyk requested that when people phone in to the Municipality they should ask for a reference number from the switchboard, so that their call can be logged.

Pieter Naude
(Chairperson)