

November 2013 Newsletter

Wilderness Improvement Project

As the year comes to end it is good to reflect on what WRRRA, with your help, has managed to achieve. The most notable achievements have been in the CBD, where the Wilderness Improvement Program has seen significant progress. The Village centre has been our focus because this is the gateway to Wilderness, the most visible indicator of the "health" of our Village.

So it is encouraging to note that not only have a number of projects been successfully executed, but a new enthusiasm for making Wilderness "the place to be" has been evident with WRRRA members, supporters and the business community all assisting in various ways.

Before the year end the bridge into Milkwood Village will boast attractive planters filled with flowers, and the Municipality have recently resurfaced the entrance to the Village at our request. The Village Ambassadors, now managed by the Greater Wilderness Business Forum, continue to provide security in the Village, maintain a clean environment and assist visitors requiring directions or information. I am sure all residents appreciate their value when shopping or relaxing in the Village.

We are hoping to host a visit before the end of the year from the George Municipality MANCO, to show the Mayor and Councilors what has been achieved by the WIP. We believe that the lessons learnt can be applied to other areas and other municipalities.

Cooperation with Municipal Officials

Another focus of 2013 has been to encourage a more cooperative relationship between WRRRA, residents and Municipal officials. To this end a brunch was hosted on 1 November at Selinas, attended by WRRRA Committee members and 12 senior officials from the Municipality. The cooperative spirit was very evident, and a number of outstanding issues were discussed before the group walked around the Village to see first-hand what the WIP had achieved.

The issues of tourism and the George Integrated Transport System and its effect on Wilderness were also discussed, and progress was made. It was agreed that WRRRA would issue a joint statement with regard to GIPTN, in conjunction with the Directorate of Civil and Technical Services. This joint statement will be sent to you in the next few weeks, and will clarify the way forward.

On the tourism front WRRRA has proposed to the Municipality that WRRRA members stand in for the officials operating the Tourism Office on one afternoon a week, in order to enable these officials to get out of the office and explore Wilderness, meet the owners of the various hospitality establishments and visit the attractions and activities in the area. In that way WRRRA will enable them to perform a better service to Wilderness. To make this happen we need at least 2 volunteers. We would ask anyone who is willing to assist by volunteering their services to "man" the office on one afternoon a week, to please contact the WRRRA secretary, Vanessa Hau-Yoon, wrra@tiscali.co.za.

Safety and Security

All of you will be aware of the vicious attack on Pieter Naude and his wife, Charmaine, that took place recently. We are pleased to report that Pieter is nearly fully recovered, although both are receiving trauma counseling. This attack has highlighted an aspect of residential security that will be a major emphasis for 2014. For too long Wilderness residents have disregarded issues of security on the basis that Wilderness is a relatively crime-free area. Sadly, the situation has changed and measures need to be taken which will ensure that Wilderness residents remain safe and secure in their own homes and residential environment, without creating gated and fenced communities so at variance with the natural beauty of our

region. At present Pieter is coordinating discussions between police officials, security companies, technology providers and other parties who might be drawn into this program. We will keep you informed as this develops.

You are reminded that there is a Police Forum on the last Monday of every month at the Fairie Knowe Hotel at 17:00. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Membership drive

We were disappointed to discover that our membership in 2013 declined compared to 2012. We don't believe this is because of dissatisfaction with WRRRA, but rather is the result of the administrative change-over that took place at the end of last year. We have embarked on a drive to increase our membership – not to derive more income but to ensure that we represent a higher percentage of Wilderness residents and to ensure that more people receive information via our newsletters and the recently-launched sms information service. We have also removed all restrictions to the WRRRA website, which means that you can access all the information without requiring a special password. **If you know of friends or neighbours who are not WRRRA members, please encourage them to join.**

Mayoral Imbizo

The George Local Municipality will embark on Service Delivery Imbizo Sessions. These sessions form part of the broader Executive Mayoral Outreach Programme, whereby the Municipality report on important service delivery issues. These sessions will also afford the public a platform to engage with the Executive Mayor, the rest of the municipal leadership and officials on matters pertaining to service delivery. The date for Ward 4 (Wilderness, KleinKranz, Touwsrante, Hoekwil, Glenwood) is **Monday 25 November, in the Touwsrante Community Hall, starting at 19:00.**

Blue Flag Beach

The process of having part of Wilderness Beach accorded Blue Flag status is well underway. This is being managed by Vernon Gibbs-Hall of Eden District Municipality, who are financially supporting this initiative, together with Salinas Restaurant.

Signage in the Village

The Municipality has issued letters to everyone who has a sign in the Village to register their signage to ensure that they are legal. Illegal signs will be removed by Municipal officials.

Projects for 2014

With your help and support, we wish to embark on the following projects for 2014:

- Village Monitors/Ambassadors
- Wilderness Improvement Project continuation
- George Integrated Public Transport Network and Wilderness terminus
- Home safety and security
- SMS alert implementation