

January 2014 Newsletter

As we start 2014 we wish all our members a happy and prosperous New Year. By all accounts the holiday season was a bumper one, with the many visitors enjoying the sunny weather and the various attractions that Wilderness and the surrounding area has to offer.

It was noticeable how busy the Village was over the festive season, and the Village Ambassadors had their work cut out ensuring that the refuse bins were emptied up to three times a day, so that the Village stayed clean and attractive. Directing visitors, answering queries and assisting with the often-congested parking kept the four Ambassadors very busy. But their positive impact on the Village was clearly evident, and reinforces our commitment to ensuring that this program continues.

We also are very aware of the excellent job done over the busy holiday season by the various Departments and officials responsible for law enforcement, beach cleanliness, traffic control and infrastructure maintenance. Despite the large number of people on the beaches and in the Village, particularly over New Year, there were relatively few incidents and general control was better than in previous years. We want to thank all those officials involved.

Report on AGM

The AGM was held on 18 December, and was well attended, despite the forced change of venue. An extensive report on the year's activities was presented (available in full on the WRRRA website), and discussion focused largely on the achievements of the year as well as the proposed temporary bus terminus opposite the Karos Hotel. The meeting expressed appreciation to the Committee for all that they has achieved via the Wilderness Improvement Program.

Sadly Pearce Johnston announced his retirement from the Committee where he has served with great enthusiasm for seven years, taking charge of the demanding portfolio of Electricity, Water, Sewage and Refuse. His experience and specialized knowledge will be sorely missed, but he has graciously offered to assist during the transition period. George Markgraaff was elected to the Committee, with the remaining Committee members being unanimously re-elected.

TOURISM

As I am sure many of you are aware, the management of tourism in Wilderness, which falls under the George Tourism office, has left much to be desired over the past few years. With the resignation of the Head of the Tourism office, Levona Ferris, we have to establish a new inclusive working relationship with the Municipality. We hope that the Municipality will adopt a tourism strategy that will do justice to the tourism potential of Wilderness. We will be engaging directly with the Director of Strategic Services, Mr Walter Hendricks, in this regard.

KEY INITIATIVES FOR 2014

While WRRRA will continue to work in the interests of all its members and respond to issues as they arise, a number of key initiatives have been identified which we believe have the potential to significantly improve Wilderness as "the place to be". These include:

- Establishing the Village Ambassadors on a long-term, financially viable footing
- Working with the business community in a structured manner to achieve the goals of the Wilderness Improvement Program
- Ensuring that George Integrated Public Transport Network (GIPTN) is implemented as per the agreement reached with the Municipality
- Ensuring that the old Karos Hotel is not allowed to deteriorate further and that a workable solution for its future is found
- Facilitating better communication and cooperation with the informal communities within Ward 4

PORTFOLIOS FOR 2014

There is no change to the portfolio allocation for this year, with the exception that George Markgraaff will be taking over Town Planning as soon as he recovers from the effects of a serious fall experienced over the holiday season. We wish him a speedy recovery.

With the resignation of Pearce Johnstone we do not have anyone to take charge of the portfolio of **Municipal Services** (Electricity, sewage and refuse). In the interim, you are asked to deal directly with the Municipal Departments responsible:

- Electrotechnical Services – Kevin Grunewald (044 874 3917)

- Sewage – George Rowe (044 801 9358)

We need to fill this important committee portfolio of Municipal Services, and we are therefore looking for a volunteer – ideally someone with an engineering or appropriate technical background. If you are interested, or you know of someone suitable whom we could approach, please contact our Chairperson, Pieter Naude (082 554 8104).

VEGETATION AND POWER LINES

Concern has been expressed that the rapid growth of vegetation in close proximity to overhead power lines can contribute to power outages when we have storms or high winds. If you are aware of this problem in your area, please contact the Director Electrotechnical Services – Kevin Grunewald (044 874 3917; kevin@george.org.za)

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

In order to remain a credible organization we need to have to have as many members as possible. Please ensure that your membership has been paid for the year and try to recruit friends and neighbours for the Association. For membership details please consult the WRRRA website (<http://wrra.co.za>) or contact Vanessa Hau-Yoon, the Secretary (082 895 6317; wrra@tiscali.co.za).