

Newsletter 2014 March

WIP

The impression might have been inadvertently created that the Wilderness Improvement Program is aimed primarily at attracting (more) tourists to Wilderness. We wish to set the record straight on this issue. The purpose of the WIP is to create a safe, clean, friendly and attractive Village that will enhance the **experience of residents** and visitors alike. The predominant users of facilities in the Village, such as the shops, restaurants and service outlets, are residents and it is their concerns that are paramount. We want residents to feel safe, to be able to park easily, to enjoy a clean and attractive environment so that the Village will become the place they want to patronize. A natural consequence of this will be that visitors will find it attractive and welcoming as well, but this is the by-product of the program, not the main aim.

It was announced previously that the WIP program, and in particular the Village Ambassadors, would once again be taken over by WRRRA. We are very pleased by the positive response from the business community, which will guarantee the long-term financial sustainability of this program. In order to ensure that this program is well managed and delivers a high quality service it has been decided to appoint 4Front Consultants Les and Veronica Stephens to supervise the Ambassadors and handle the administrative side of the WIP. (You may remember that Les and Veronica were involved in the selection and training of the first group of Monitors.) Their initial appointment is for 3 months.

We wish to thank everyone who has voluntarily contributed so far to the successful implementation of this program, and in particular Gerf Coetzee, who undertook supervision over the very busy and stressful Christmas season.

RECYCLING

We have written to the Municipality regarding the unsatisfactory service to remove recycling. We will update you once we have their answer.

giptn

In response to our last newsletter, we received no negative comments regarding our stance on GIPTN, but a number of you responded very positively, which was an encouragement that we are moving in the right direction.

- I believe WRRRA is seeking smart compromises for the good of the whole Wilderness, not just the village, and that we'll soon look back and be thankful.
- My sense is that the WRRRA is as open and transparent as could be expected, and that you do a thankless job selflessly and in the interests of the community as a whole – thank you.
- I have always subscribed to a philosophy of positive engagement rather than conflict, as the latter always ends up with someone losing. This avenue should only be pursued as a last resort, so you have our full support. Keep up the good work.
- We as residents of Ward 4 have complete confidence in the committee and would like to thank you and your committee on the professional manner in which you apply yourselves to the various matters relating to the Wilderness and further afield.

The consultants and the Municipality have made available to us a copy of the proposed alterations to the road system in the Village to accommodate the GIPTN service. If you would like to see this proposal it will soon be available on the WRRRA website (www.wrra.co.za).

We have been informed by the Municipal officials in charge of the Public Transport Network that the contractor for the construction of the Wilderness infrastructure has been appointed. There is now an appeal period, followed by 14 days in which the contractor has to put in place their insurance for the project. Once this has been satisfactorily completed, regular meetings, to which WRRRA has been invited, will commence.

SAD NEWS

We offer our sincere condolences to Pearce and Maureen Johnston, a past committee member, whose eldest daughter was tragically killed in a cycling accident in Johannesburg on 23 February.

OTHER MATTERS

- Safety and security. You are asked to be vigilant and to report any suspicious behaviour or individuals to the local police station.
- One of our members drew our attention to a number of matters of concern, particularly in the residential areas – cats and dogs roaming free, people throwing litter out of car windows and speeding motor bikes. We believe that a lot more can be done on a personal level through respect for our environment to address these sorts of issues.
- Speeding on Waterside road remains an issue. Unfortunately it is not just visitors who are guilty, very often it is locals. We need to set an example of the sort of behaviour we expect and in that way encourage others to follow suit.
- SANParks has installed 5 CCTV cameras, two at the NSRI parking area, one at the Lagoon mouth, one at the Waterside entrance and one at Island Lake, with a view to improving security.
- SANParks has notified us that the entrance to Ebb and Flow from the N2 will be closed for three months for repairs, starting just after the Easter weekend. This means that the only vehicle entrance to the Park will be from the entrance next to the road-rail bridge on the back road through Wilderness.

MEMBERS' CORNER – if you have a concern or a complaint that you want to bring to the attention of WRRRA members, please write to us. We reserve the right not to publish, and also to edit material. But this is an opportunity for you to have your say – send material to the Secretary wrra@tiscali.co.za .

INITIATE, FACILITATE & MAINTAIN

The dilemma we are increasingly facing, as we roll out various projects within the WIP is the issue of maintenance and sustainability. As an example, the beautiful garden bordering on Leila's Lane and the parking stand was initiated by WRRRA as part of the WIP and made possible by residents who gave generously of their time and money. What was an attractive improvement, soon became overgrown with weeds and in desperate need of watering, until we intervened and employed a part-time gardener to restore the garden and maintain it from WRRRA funds. It is not WRRRA's garden and theoretically not our responsibility, but it is collectively "OUR" Village that we all hold dear and wish to see improved on an ongoing basis. The message we wish to convey to our members is that we will continue to improve Wilderness in support of the aim of WIP, but we will have to evaluate every initiative and project on the basis of the cost of sustainability. Where merited, we might from time to time access member funds to sustain a project like the garden on Leila's Lane where the promise of beauty and colour far outweighs the cost of sustainability.

WRRRA MEMBERSHIP

Up to now we have been sending our newsletters to all current and past members (those people who were WRRRA members but who have not paid their 2014 subscription). **As from April we will only be sending the newsletter, sms alerts and other information to paid-up members.** If you have not paid your R100 membership for this year, or are not sure if you have paid, please contact our Secretary, Vanessa Hau-Yoon wrra@tiscali.co.za .