



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 31st May 2023
at Hebron Haven Hotel, Dargle**

The meeting was chaired by Ashley Crookes, Chairperson of Dargle Conservancy (DC).

Ashley opened the meeting by welcoming all members and friends present and thanked everyone for attending.

PRESENT

- Ashley Crookes, Jenny Goddard, Lynne Garbutt & Isabel Verwey, Kevin & Linda Barnsley, Stephen & Michelle Lourens, Wyndham & Gilly Robartes, Michael Corlett, Shaun Corlett, Martin Eweg, Michael Goddard, Sally & Ian Field, Susi & Andrew Anderson, Barend & Helen Booyesen, Hylton Green, Andrew Fowler, Justin Willi, Lucinda Bate, Helen Steyn, Alison Cunningham
- Proxies received : Kandy Slater, Michel Faurie, Belinda Charlton, Kathy Herrington, Megan Volker & Calvin Jones, Mark Thompson, Barry & Rose Downard.

APOLOGIES

- Tom Bate, Jennifer Green, Jen Fly, Rob & Sharon Barnsley, Mike & Ann Weedon

PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Having pre-circulated the Minutes of the 2021 AGM to all members, these were taken as read.
- There were no matters arising.

Adoption of 2022 Minutes

Proposed: Michael Corlett Seconded: Shaun Corlett

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Annual Financial Statements (unsigned) were pre-circulated to all members. The AFS has since been finalised and a signed copy was available for inspection.
- New auditors were appointed this year (Robo Chartered Accountants). Their fees are more reasonable and final accounts were ready far quicker than in the past.
- Ashley presented a summary of the financial position of the DC according to the financial statements.
- The large amount received from AEN was all paid out in terms of the agreed project as previously detailed.
- Our new cameras are almost fully paid for.
- Uniforms purchased for Committee members was a one-off expense. The branded shirts & jackets have received positive feedback.
- Bank Balance is Rxxxxx (Rxxxxx current account, Rxxxxx money market account).
- All other items of income & expenditure statement were explained in detail.

- There were no queries or questions.
- Barend Booysen thanked Lynne and complimented her on the comprehensive yet easy to read set of accounts.

Adoption of Treasurer's Report

Proposed: Kevin Barnsley Secoded: Martin Eweg

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- Ashley called on Kevin who reported as follows:
 - Conservancies KZN held their AGM at Hebron Haven last year, and it prompted the Midlands conservancies to form a much needed communication platform for the purposes of sharing ideas & experiences, capitalising on collective thoughts etc. This is proving to be mutually beneficial.
 - At the CKZN AGM two members from Midlands conservancies were co-opted on to the Executive Committee of CKZN, being Kevin and Jacqui van der Westhuizen. Kevin reported that his appointment has proven to be most rewarding and worthwhile. Through this forum he was asked to give a presentation on Midlands conservancies to CKZN a recent meeting in Port Shepstone.
 - Kevin reminded the meeting that conservancies do not hold any legal powers, but rather represent the collective mindset of its members & the community to look after the biodiversity in the area. We are still dependant on the "old guard" of Ezemvelo to a large extent.
 - As Chairman of HDLA, Kevin advised that the association has adopted an all-inclusive working relationship with entities such as Tourism, Conservancies etc. This enables a sphere of influence on matters such as the Municipal Budget, and encourages a higher degree of taking ownership. There is even talk of the Municipality providing funding to associated conservancies.
- Ashley thanked Kevin for providing this information, and expressed the gratitude of the committee for his extraordinary contribution to ourselves and the community in general.
- The Litter Clean-up project, in conjunction with Midlands Conservancies, was not well supported in the Dargle. It will be repeated later in the year.
- Signage, paid for by ourselves together with an initial donation of R1900 from Tastebuds and poles sponsored by Dargle Poles, was erected on both sides of the Dargle & Umngeni Rivers. This was done after giving up waiting for Dept of Transport. We have committed to keeping the areas brush cut and clean. The intention is to add signage notating the sponsors.
- Alien Invasive Plant clearing continued on the P130, P132 and P134, with excellent results. As part of this initiative we donated R14000 to Uplands River/WWF/Pepsico project, enabling the completion of the important work they are doing in the catchment. An interesting video was presented, demonstrating the success of the project. (In answer to a question, Andrew Fowler advised that in the top 25kms of the uMngeni River alone, unlicensed woodlots of AIPs remove the equivalent of 1,296 Olympic sized swimming pools of water each year. This is the amount that could potentially be saved by rehabilitation.)
- ACTIVITIES:
 - Walks at Kilgobbin realised R3000 in donations. Ashley showed a video of the 12km guided trail, and thanked Bronner, Booysen, Barlow & Robinson families.
 - We celebrated Arbor Week by highlighting an indigenous tree every day for a week via social media platforms.

- We held a guided bird walk, a Poort Stream walk, well attended talks on various topics, and a snake education programme to local schools.
 - Hire of our Trail Cams has been popular, with fantastic sightings being recorded.
- Video & photographic footage of events and activities was shown, and the Chairman's full report.
- Ashley thanked Hebron Haven, specifically Michael, Shaun & Kirsty, for being the regular host of our events. He noted that Post Postino, the usual venue of committee meetings, will be sadly missed.
- We are most grateful to Merrill King for her continued sponsorship of the committee refreshments at our quarterly meetings.
- Barry Downard was thanked for the amazing work he does on the marketing posters for our events.

Adoption of Chairman's Report

Proposed: Shaun Corlett Seconded: Wyndham Robartes

ELECTION OF COMMITTEE 2022/23

- Gugu Zuma resigned during the year due to work commitments.
- Jenny Goddard has indicated she will not be available for re-election as she is moving. A replacement Secretary will be appointed as soon as possible.
- Michael Goddard is also moving and has resigned.
- **Ashley Crookes, Kevin Barnsley, Lynne Garbutt, Gilly Robartes & Steve Lourens** are all available for re-election.
- By a unanimous show of hands these 5 members were re-elected to the committee.

Adoption of Committee:

Proposed : Martin Eweg Seconded : Shaun Corlett

- **Michael Corlett** volunteered as a nominee to take up the Education portfolio

Proposed : Martin Eweg Seconded : Shaun Corlett

2023/24 COMMITTEE:

Ashley Crookes, Lynne Garbutt, Kevin Barnsley, Gilly Robartes, Stephen Lourens, Michael Corlett, + Secretary (Vacant)

GENERAL

- The Constitution currently requires a 40% quorum to vote at the AGM. It was proposed by the committee that this be changed to 25%.
- The Constitution currently mentions the "formation & maintenance" of the Dargle Nature Reserve. The Reserve has since been formed, and it was proposed to change the word "formation" to "extension"
- There were no objections to the proposed changes.

Adoption of Changes to Constitution:

Proposed : Jenny Goddard Seconded : Justin Willis

- Ashley reminded everyone about the “Rise of the Phoenix” talk coming up on 21st June.
- This year is the 20th anniversary of the Dargle Conservancy. An appropriate celebration will be planned.
- Membership fees of R300 per annum per family will once again remain unchanged.
- Michael Corlett gave a vote of thanks to the committee on behalf of the members.
- Jenny Goddard was presented with a gift in appreciation of her fulfilment of the role of secretary for 7 years.

There being no further matters arising, the meeting was adjourned at 7.45pm.