

FRIENDS OF THE HELDERBERG

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2023 IN THE HELDERBERG ENVIRONMENTAL CENTRE

PRESENT: Committee: Mrs Penny Clifton-Smith (Chairman). Mr Steve Chadwick, Mrs Margie Humphris, Mrs Liz Lollo Mr Alistair Munday, Mrs Fay Rolando, Mr Adriaan Roux, Mr James Silberbauer, Mrs Hayley-May Wittridge, Mrs Muriel Rowcroft and 32 Members.

APOLOGIES: Mrs Freya Brett, Mr Peter Blaine, Mr and Mrs Roberts-Wray, Mrs Jennifer Macdonald, Mr Steve Mendes, Mrs Julie Peters, Mr Peter Horne

Mrs Penny Clifton-Smith welcomed all attending and declared a quorum.

1. MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 11 MAY 2022

The Minutes had been circulated with the agenda and were taken as read. The proposal to accept the Minutes was seconded by Mr James Silberbauer.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mrs Penny Clifton-Smith presented her report. She highlighted the fire which raged through the Reserve in June 2022. However the Reserve soon showed signs of recovery with displays of flowers. Many of our members worked with the Reserve staff clearing the burnt boardwalk and on the trails and within 6 weeks the Reserve could be re-opened to the public. Thanks to all involved.

Members of local hiking clubs raised funds which were used for trail maintenance and other members donated trees to replace a number of those which have had to be removed. A number of benches also needed to be replaced.

Membership has climbed to 5300 in the past year. Subscriptions are the main source of income for the Friends and various items have been financed for the Reserve including tree poppers and snake tongs. The ablution blocks, which were upgraded in the last financial year, required some repair work. The leaks in the roof of the Information Centre were fixed and the thatch on the kiosk was replaced. Our thanks to Alistair Munday and Adriaan Roux for their control of the finances.

The staff working in the office and the volunteers who man the Information Centre and shop are thanked for their loyal service. Thanks also go to James Silberbauer and his hack team. James has now been working with the hack team for 15 years. Various walks have been led by Jill Mortimer, Andreas Groenewald and Charles Britz and we thank them for their time and enthusiasm. Recently attendance at the walks has been erratic, perhaps due to inclement weather. Talks were arranged during the colder months which were well attended and it is hoped to arrange more this year.

Freya Brett continues to work with the Eco schools although many schools have dropped out, mainly for financial reasons.

The concert series was well attended after a break for a few years.

My thanks go to the Reserve Management and staff for their support and willingness to help visitors. I also thank the committee for their work and support. The current members are available for re-election.

Mr Steve Chadwick seconded the Chairman's report be accepted.

3. FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr Adriaan Roux presented the financial report. In summary he considered the finances were very satisfactory. He showed a series of slides showing the position as it was in 2020 and said it had taken 3 years to get back to the current position. Revenue had increased and expenses were well controlled giving a surplus of R609 125. There were no large discretionary payments this year.

Operating expenses amounted to R374 000 a 12% increase from 2020. The Cash Flows showed a net increase in cash and cash equivalents of R528 802 and together with the surplus at the beginning of the year the total at the end of the year amounted to R1 744 136.

Mr Steve Chadwick seconded the proposal to accept the Financial Report.

4. RESERVE MANAGEMENT

Mrs Hayley-May Wittridge said information about the Reserve is available in the quarterly reports and also the Friends' newsletters.

The Environmental Centre building was opened by the Mayor during the past year. Activities held included education programmes for schools which follow the school curricula, Social Development Activities for youth, aged, disabled and previously disadvantaged groups. Various business corporate lunches and weddings have taken place.

There is a lack of staff in conservation work. Interns have worked in the Reserve. A large part of the Reserve was burnt but the vegetation is recovering. The fire gave an opportunity to review trails and carry out rehabilitation and the Waboom Trail was begun. Many volunteers became involved in these and other activities and helping with clean ups and a team of trail volunteers has been started.

The polyphagus Shot Hole Borer beetles damaged many trees which have had to be cut down and the Friends have helped putting in new trees for which the Reserve is very grateful.

With various activities taking place such as the Easter Sunday service, sunset concerts and yoga classes there is a need to develop a proper business framework.

The Oak Café building needs repair and maintenance needs to be done before a formal tender process can take place. Mobile trucks are in place as a test to see how they work.

Thanks and plants were given to the following people: Penny Clifton-Smith, Alistair Munday, Peter Blaine, Muriel Rowcroft, Margie Humphris, Fay Rolando and Liz Lollo, the ladies in the

Information Centre, Steve Chadwick and the volunteers Ian van Breda, Heiri Wolfsenberger, Hannes Visser and James Silberbauer.

5. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

Mrs Hayley-May Wittridge was asked to conduct the election.

All the present members of the Committee were available for re-election. In addition Mr Rudolf Sattlegger and Mr Steve Mendes were nominated. The proposal that all the present members together with the additional nominees be elected was accepted. The members are: Mrs Penny Clifton-Smith, Mrs Freya Brett, Mr Peter Blaine, Mr Steve Chadwick, Mrs Margie Humphris, Mrs Liz Lollos, Mr Alistair Munday, Mr Steve Mendes, Mrs Fay Rolando, Mr Adriaan Roux, Mrs Muriel Rowcroft, Mr Rudolf Sattlegger, Mr James Silberbauer and Mrs Hayley-May Wittridge.

6. GENERAL

6.1 A suggestion was made that the Committee should choose two members to be awarded Honorary Membership in recognition of their contribution to the Reserve.

6.2 It was asked whether the issuing of Early Riser keys could be done at the same time as membership renewal. This would necessitate a change in the system. It was explained having a key is a privilege granted by the City of Cape Town and there is a limit on the number of keys to be issued. The Reserve is a public area and as such must be staffed and also the restriction on the number of keys and entry times is necessary to keep the Reserve itself undisturbed for periods. After further discussion it was agreed there is a need for more information to make the system more user friendly but the City would need to approve the way the system is run.

6.3 It was noted that the City is moving away from a cash system at the gate.

6.4 Other points raised included the use of social media to keep members informed about what is discussed by the Committee and how the funds are being spent. Members are encouraged to communicate their concerns and suggestions to the Committee.

In closing Penny Clifton-Smith thanked members for attending the meeting and invited them to stay for a drink and snacks.

Signed as a correct record