

DARGLE CONSERVANCY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 22nd May 2019 at The Cairn of Old Kilgobbin, Dargle

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

Ashley opened the meeting by welcoming all members present and thanked everyone for attending. He also welcomed Alan Briscoe who attended as an observer on behalf of the Beaumont Eston Conservancy.

APOLOGIES

- Brenda Grant, Gugu Zuma, Tim Baynes, Robin & Sharon Barnsley, Nikki Brighton, Brian & Marshene Lewis, Jen Fly, Nerissa Card, Garth Johnstone .

PRESENT

- Ashley Crookes, Jenny Goddard, Lynne Garbutt & Isabel, Pauline Holden & Ian King, David & Alvera Crookes, Tom & Lucinda Bates, Chris King, Barry & Rose Downard, Mike & Anne Weeden, Chris King, Kat Herrington & Wayne Lourens, Barend & Helen Booysen, Lunga Tshangisa, Gilly & Wyndham Robartes, Nola Barrett, Katie Robinson, Ian & Sally Field, Martin & Coral Eweg, Alan Briscoe, Carl Bronner, Josh Field, Antony Mitchell.

MINUTES OF 2018 AGM

- Minutes of the 2018 AGM had been circulated prior to the meeting and made available on the DC website, and were taken as read. No comments or reservations were noted and there were no matters arising.

Adoption of Minutes of 2018 AGM

Proposed : Barry Downard Seconded : David Crookes

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Ashley presented a summary of the financial position of the DC according to the audited financial statements, and pointed out the main items of income (R47,309) and expenditure (R23,276). A profit (R24,033) was retained.
- Having already been made available on the DC website, the audited Annual Financial Statements (AFS) were taken as read. No objections or questions were raised.

Adoption of Treasurer's Report

Proposed: Gilly Robartes Seconded: Barry Downard

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Unfortunately no data projector was available, so Ashley read through the highlights of the DC activities during 2018/19, summarised below and a full copy of which is available to be viewed on the DC website: <http://www.dargleconservancy.org.za/docarchive.php>

- The Umgeni River Project, including work on the Furth River, continued in the past year with great progress made through the efforts of the NFFC (Natal Fly Fishers Club). Unfortunately there are no further funds available from the previous sponsor, WWF.
- The Dargle River Project remains an ongoing project. Additional funding was raised by Spekboom Tours (Julia Colvin) who donate 10% of their Dargle tour profits to this cause. Alfred Zuma and his team are paid by the Conservancy to clear invasives, with impressive results.
- With herbicides no longer being available to riverfront property owners from DUCT, the meeting was asked to please approach the committee with any alternative ideas/sources.
- Education activities included the Inhlosane Spring Walk led by Gugu Zuma and Ashley Crookes. Thanks are extended to Mt. Park Guest Farm for access to the trail and the most welcome teas and eats. Proceeds from Inhlosane climbs via Mt. Park are donated to the Conservancy.
- Member communication has been extended to include a “one-way” Whatsapp Group. Members were asked to request their name be added if they are not already included.
- Barend Booysen was thanked for his ongoing Forest Walks, and the donations the Conservancy receives from these monthly events. At Barend’s request, the committee will advertise the walks more regularly.
- Sincere gratitude to Carl Bronner for enabling DC talks and meetings to be held at Old Kilgobbin tonight and over the past year due to the unavailability of Tanglewood on occasions. The new owners of Tanglewood have indicated their willingness to host future Conservancy functions once renovations are complete.
- Summary of other activities/talks/events during the past year are detailed in the attached presentation, and included the Otter, Vulture and Elephant talks.
- The Trashion Show, brainchild of Gugu Zuma, has grown over the years and is now a large event held in Howick and run by Nikki Brighton. As previous sponsors, especially when the show was Dargle based, the Conservancy has taken the decision to limit future donations to the specific needs of local (Dargle & Corrie Lynn) school children partaking in the show.
- A donation of funds to FreeMe in support of the falcons injured in a storm was enabled through the proceeds of the Harcourts Midlands Open Gardens hosted by members Alvera Crookes and Helen Booysen, together with the proceeds collected at the Otter talk. Our thanks to Alvera and Helen.
- The Conservancy continues to support Frack Free SA. Oversight of applications, objections etc are managed by Brenda Grant, environmental attorney who volunteers her service for this and all other related issues.
- Ashley Crookes is doing his best to keep up regular Wildlife Sightings/Dargle Diaries newsletters, although they will now be seasonal as opposed to monthly. More regular postings may be viewed on our Instagram and Facebook pages.
- The trail cameras are being rented out to members, although it is proving to be a rather difficult task to get them back!
- The Conservancy committee (or VOLUNTEERS as a preferred description) are not always able to arrange regular talks and events despite efforts. The community and members are therefore requested to provide input around ideas and suggestions which the volunteers will gladly facilitate and fund. There are also likely to be local residents who can give a talk on interesting topics, and we need these people to come forward.
- EDUCATION will be the focus of the Conservancy in the coming year, and ways to improve environmental awareness in our two local schools will be pursued. Some thoughts already being investigated are the purchase of TVs and DVD players. To this end, members with any appropriate DVDs are asked to kindly donate/lend them for this purpose. Water education programmes are also a good option and will be investigated.

- Ashley thanked Barry Downard for producing our posters and artwork which is much appreciated.
- Lynn Garbutt has fortunately agreed to stay on as our Treasurer. All volunteers, helpers and providers of professional services were named and thanked for their commitment to the Conservancy.

Adoption of Chairperson's Report

Proposed : Jenny Goddard Seconded : Lynne Garbutt

GENERAL

- Ashley requested that DC purchase our own projector for use at future events
- Jenny Goddard expressed the appreciation of everyone to Ashley who, despite his busy schedule, will continue in the role of Chairperson.
- Barry Downard said he fully supports the focus on education, and suggested that networking with the Midlands Meander Education Programme would be effective.
- Barend Booysen also mentioned that Julia of Spekboom Tours would rather donate Garlon (herbicide) for purposes of alien control.
- Barend confirmed that the DARGLE NATURE RESERVE has been formally proclaimed (4 properties). The next step is to extract the benefits from this proclamation. Work in progress. Ashley asked Barend to please keep the Conservancy updated.
- Helen Booysen questioned whether anyone had sighted Cape Parrots for the annual count. Unfortunately no-one at the meeting had any sightings to report.
- Helen suggested that the Samango monkey research currently being undertaken in the Dargle could be the subject of a future talk? It was agreed that this was a good idea.
- Lunga Tshingisa, newly appointed manager of NCT in the area, introduced himself and explained his role. He was welcomed by all.
- Alan Briscoe introduced himself. He stated that the Dargle Conservancy has an exceptional reputation and believes other conservancies could learn from us. He expressed his wish that our two conservancies join forces in various events and function. This idea was welcomed.

COMMITTEE FOR 2019

The current Committee (Volunteer) members were unanimously re-elected to office "en masse":

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|---------------------|----------------|
| Chairman | Ashley Crookes |
| Secretary | Jenny Goddard |
| Treasurer | Lynne Garbutt |
| Development | Brenda Grant |
| Education | Gugu Zuma |
| Member | Pauline Holden |
| Agriculture Liaison | Robin Barnsley |

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