



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022  
at Tanglewood Country House, 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, Gugu Zuma, Wilma Yates, Stefanie Rijnvis, Kate & Garry Kelly, Michael & Shawn Corlett, Kat Herrington, Barry & Rose Downard, Martin & Coral Eweg, Julia & Johathan Invernizzi, Michael Goddard, Sally & Ian Field, Giles & Merrill King, Nirvanah Ramsaram (AEN)
- No Proxies were received

**APOLOGIES**

- Tom & Lucinda Bate, Hylton & Jenniferr Green, Jen Fly, Susi & Andrew Anderson, Rob & Sharon Barnsley, Barry & Jenny Hodginson, Jen Fly

**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 2021 Minutes**

Proposed: Ashley Crookes    Seconded: Gilly Robartes

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

- Annual Financial Statements (unsigned) were pre-circulated to all members. No changes are expected.
- Ashley presented a summary of the financial position of the DC according to the financial statements. Signed Audited Financial Statements will be loaded to our website in due course. In the unlikely event of changes, these will be ratified electronically.
- Bank Balance is R98,907 (R13,468 current account, R85,439 money market account).
- Ashley presented the detailed income & expenditure statement, clarifying all items.
- There were no queries or questions.

**Adoption of Treasurer's Report**

Proposed: Michael Corlett    Seconded: Kat Herrington

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

- Uplands River Conservation – explanation of the work being done clearing the Furth River. Our Conservancy values the expertise Andrew Fowler brings to our Conservancy, and thanks him for his input and involvement in projects of this nature.
- Refuse signage has been installed (except for Tanglewood site which needs to be finalised by the community). Education of local residents regarding re-cycling, types of refuse permitted etc is an ongoing task of the Committee.
- Alien invasive plants – 20km of road verge was cleared of AIPs by a private contractor hired by the Conservancy. There is good evidence of indigenous plants starting to come through. It is hoped that this project will be maintained by both landowners and the Conservancy (funds permitting).
- Two new trail cameras were purchased, and the old ones sold. This state of the art equipment is rented out to members via Gilly. Ashley made a plea for footage to be sent to him for inclusion in the Wildlife Sightings newsletter.
- Since the end of lockdown, the Committee made a commitment to hold at least one member activity per month. So far we have averaged two per month, which includes weekend morning events that have proven to be very popular.
- Efforts to increase membership have been successful, with many new names joining the Conservancy in the past year.
- The Committee have been provided with branded shirts and jackets to be proudly worn at internal & external events. It is being discussed whether to make these available for sale to members and/or the public, at a reasonable mark-up, to raise funds.
- Dargle Conservancy entered into a partnership with Amanzi Ethu Nobuntu, and Ashley asked Kevin Barnsley to elaborate:
  - Kevin expressed how fortunate we are to have Andrew Fowler of Uplands River Conservation on board. Andrew is one of only twelve “River Custodians” in the country.
  - The objective of the programme is to create employment, educate the local community and improve the status of the catchment.
  - Our Conservancy area covers the most beautiful and pristine section of the Umgeni catchment.
  - The most pressing problem in our waterways is silting.
  - The programme also entailed engaging with landowners to ascertain interest because they have to bear some of the cost.
  - The budget was challenging. Although the basic proposal comprised 90% state funding and 10% private landowner funding, we had to push the private % up to 30% due to extras we realised were necessary.
  - It was a daunting decision to make as the Conservancy has to put up initial funds.
  - Kevin concluded by pointing out the difference this programme has already made in the Dargle (an example being the removal of large gums that were blocking the view of Inshlosane!).
  - The contractor employed to manage AEN, Nirvanah Ramsaram, was introduced to the meeting and gave us a brief summary of the project from her perspective:
    - She started off by saying how this role has allowed her to grow as a person, and that she has learned so much. Being a nature lover she is doing what she is most passionate about.
    - There have been many issues with the staff, and only 3 of the original team remain. This is been the biggest challenge.
    - She expressed her gratitude to the Dargle Conservancy for giving her this opportunity, and especially to Kevin for his dedication and support.

- Nirvanah went on to explain the process and principles of the MiniSass test by giving a demonstration of the equipment used to measure the clarity and velocity of a waterway.
  - It was noted that the Conservancy have arranged for Jim Taylor, inventor of MiniSass, will be at Wana Farm (Robartes) this Saturday to conduct a talk and demonstration.
  - Kevin also mentioned that there is an indication that a rates rebate might be on the cards for landowners whose land and rivers are controlled to certain ecological standards.
- Ashley concluded his report by giving special mention to Iron Horse Productions (donation of R5000 ex. biking event), Carl Bronner (donation of R3000 ex. Regenerative Farming Day), Merrill King (ongoing sponsorship of meals at Committee meetings), Barry Downard (design of our posters and notices), Julia Invernizzi (donations from Spekboom activities). Sincere thanks to all!
  - Michael & Debbie Deutschmann of Tanglewood were thanked for hosting our meeting, and they are wished all the best for the future.

#### **Adoption of Chairman's Report**

Proposed: Kevin Barnsley    Seconded: Michael Corlett

#### **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE 2022/23**

- All existing members of the Committee made themselves available to stand for 2022/23, together with a new nomination (Michael Goddard – Proposed : Gugu Zuma & Seconded : Michael Corlett)
- There was a unanimous vote by show of hands to accept these members as officers for 2022/23.

#### **Adoption of Committee:**

Proposed : Martin Eweg    Seconded : Michael Corlett

#### **2022/23 COMMITTEE:**

Ashley Crookes, Jenny Goddard, Lynne Garbutt, Kevin Barnsley, Gilly Robartes, Stephen Lourens, Gugu Zuma, Michael Goddard.

#### **GENERAL**

- Michael Corlett questioned the Conservancies involvement with the HDLA. Kevin Barnsley advised that there is a close alliance. He also mentioned the current valuation roll being undertaken and explained briefly how agriculture & tourism are considered important pillars of the local economy. Formalities in this regard are being attended to by the new municipal leadership and we all need to be aware of the process.
- Barry Downard gave a vote of thanks to the Committee for their hard work
- Martin Eweg commented that according to SANBI, the life span of dams has been halved due to silting. We need to all be acutely aware of this.
- Jenny Goddard advised that new member signs are being ordered. Those members who have asked for them have been noted.

There being no further matters arising, the meeting was adjourned at 7.30pm.