

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

1. Introduction

The Annual General Meeting of the Trust is being held later than usual because of the delays caused by the ban on meetings in terms of the Covid regulations. In order to get the meeting held before the end of March 2021 (6 months after the year-end) it is to be held on a virtual basis.

Keith Hollis would have chaired the AGM had it been possible to hold it last year, but unfortunately for health reasons Keith resigned at the trustees meeting held in November 2020. Keith had been Chairman of the Trust since 2009 and I would like to thank him on behalf of all our members, Friends, and other stakeholders for his commitment over the past 11 years. Together with Roger Voysey, he has ensured that this fabulous tranquil reserve has been nurtured and protected for the benefit of Leisure Island residents and visitors from all over the world.

Roger Voysey resigned as a trustee in April 2020. It is difficult to find words to thank Roger enough for his vision and dedication. The protection of the Northern Shores of Leisure Island was Roger's passion. He organized and drove the initial substantial fund-raising efforts and managed to get founding members to finance the basic capital expenditure required being the paved pathways, the board walks and the layout and planting of indigenous trees and shrubs. It was a monumental effort to get approval for this expenditure from the various stakeholders and took a number of years to achieve. After this, there was a necessity to maintain the impetus and Roger founded the Friends of Steenbok Park Nature Reserve. Our thanks must also go to so many Friends of Steenbok who worked tirelessly with Roger over the years in the continued development and maintenance of the reserve.

As you know, Roger's efforts have previously been honored in a small way by naming Roger's way. This was a particularly appropriate idea as it is the link between the 2 erven making up the reserve, namely the Steenbok grasslands, wetlands and indigenous gardens to the east and the beautiful Kingfisher Creek to the west side. We hope to see this link made more attractive with the planting of trees at the east entrance to the walk.

2. Trustees

My thanks to all the trustees who served during the year, freely giving of their time and expertise.

LIRA nominees, Kerry Evans and Peter Surgey, were appointed trustees in March 2020. Since then, Kerry has also been chairperson of the management Committee which manages the affairs of Steenbok Nature Reserve in terms of the agreement between LIRA and the Knysna Municipality. Unfortunately, Kerry resigned from her Steenbok responsibilities in February 2021 as she has had to deal with some other urgent issues in her life which have impacted negatively on her ability to continue with her Steenbok roles. We thank her for her hard work and ongoing keen interest in the preservation of the reserve.

I am delighted that Craig Carter, the vice-chairman of LIRA, has agreed to be a trustee in Kerry's place.

I was appointed a trustee in November 2020 to fill the vacancy due to Keith's resignation.

3. Financial position

The audited financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2020 are attached.

My thanks to our treasurer James Botha and our auditors, MPK Chartered Accountants for their valuable services.

The Trust is in a sound financial position. Income of R197000 resulted in a surplus after expenses of R16000'. This was after having to bear an abnormal loss of R30000 which arose from our bank account being fraudulently hacked. Efforts are continuing to try to recover the amount stolen.

For 2021, the budget per the management plan is income of R193000 and expenses of R177000. The actual results to date show that donations received are only slightly short of budget. The income tax certificates have been issued to all donors.

This past year has seen huge demands placed on all of us for the support of many, very needy and worthwhile projects, so it is satisfying that our Reserve has managed to largely retain the support of so many Friends.

Expenses are below budget at this point in time due to the effect of the lockdown.

A copy of the detailed management plan is available on request.

4. Management issues

As mentioned above, the management of Steenbok is the responsibility of a hard-working Management Committee appointed in terms of the agreement between the Municipality and LIRA. A special mention must be made of Diana Stromberg who served on this committee for over 5 years much of the period as the Deputy Reserve Manager with Roger Voysey. She put an enormous effort into looking after many aspects of Steenbok and brought innovative ideas in many areas including the newsletters and website. She also spent many long days in the Reserve in all sorts of weather attending to maintenance issues. Thanks to the representatives from the Knysna Municipality, SANParks and LIRA as well as Charles Breen for representing the Trust on the Management Committee and to all those "Friends" who have contributed enormously with their time and energy. I urge anyone who would like to be involved in the ongoing management of Steenbok to contact Craig Carter on 0826530402 or email him at criggles@gmail.com.

In what has been a most extraordinary period when the Reserve was closed for long periods at a time without any maintenance allowed at all, it has been rewarding to see how quickly it has recovered. In the last few weeks, it has been wonderful to see how many people are again enjoying the tranquility and beauty of the northern shores, a privilege that has been denied to us for most of the last 12 months. The website and newsletters have been maintained at a high standard and hopefully members have been kept well informed of what has been happening.

The process of trying to get Steenbok promulgated as a Nature Reserve has been going on for years and has been arduous and frustrating. It is most disappointing to report that it has still not happened. The 2 erven concerned remain zoned as public open space which does not afford us the protection we desire. LIRA's representatives on the Management Committee have undertaken to continue to progress this matter as hard as they can.

Brian Steele

15 March 2021