

THE FRIENDS OF THE STEENBOK NATURE RESERVE TRUST

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

held at the Leisure Island Country Club on Tuesday 12 December 2023.

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all the members at the meeting and introduced the trustees.

2. Apologies

The following apologies had been received:

James Botha

Andrew Johnstone

Peter Surgey

Bev Steele

Dennis and Jenni Boyd

3. Quorum

20 members signed the attached attendance register which constituted a quorum.

4. Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 13 December 2022 had been circulated with the Notice of Meeting and were taken as read and approved.

5. Annual Financial Statements

The Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2023 had been circulated with the Notice of Meeting.

In the absence of James Botha, the Treasurer, the Chairman commented that the revenue for the year amounted to R266 000 which was an outstanding achievement. Ingrid Meter reported that the response from members had been excellent. Subscriptions for the new year would be kept at R500. The grant from the Knysna Municipality had been duly paid during the year, and she was very pleased to report that their grant for the 2024 year had already been received. There were a number of other successful fund-raising activities during the year including the Leisure Island Festival, concerts and promotions. Ingrid thanked all those involved for their contribution and hard work.

Regarding the level of expenditure, the Chairman commented that expenses were all well controlled not only in respect of the maintenance of the Reserve but also all the marketing and communication efforts such as the newsletters and website which had become an integral part of the Reserve's activities.

A surplus for the year of R101 000 was achieved. Cash resources had increased to R325 000. The Chairman reported that the timing of expenditure on large projects had been fortunate and the budget for the next year reflects the more normal break-even situation.

The Chairman thanked James Botha for his enthusiastic and meticulous approach to controlling the accounting and financial affairs of the Trust.

After discussion, the Financial Statements were approved.

6. Appointment of auditors

The Chairman thanked MPK Chartered Accountants for their valuable service. They were appointed for another year.

7. Chairman's Report

The Chairman's Report for 2023 had been circulated with the Notice of Meeting.

It had been another very good year for the Reserve and the Chairman repeated his thanks to each of the Trustees and the members of the Management Committee and all the other stakeholders for making this happen and thanked all the Friends of Steenbok for their support.

8. Report by the Chairperson of the Management Committee

Margaret Richards's report had been circulated with the agenda.

In summary Margaret gave warm thanks to all who had contributed to a very successful year. The main stakeholders, LIRA, the Municipality, the Trust and SANParks had all keenly supported Steenbok's activities and projects.

Special thanks went to the members of the small Action Team whose role is to support the Reserve Manager, Diana Stromberg. Diana herself has been at the heart of every single venture, and every corner of the Reserve bears her fingerprints. Her passion and commitment are evidenced by the state of the Reserve, and she deserves our huge thanks. Ingrid Meter, a very active and dedicated team member, has ensured that our membership income has exceeded expectations, and in partnership with Sinetemba Mtwana from KM, personally piloted our KM grants for 2023 and 2024 through the municipal red tape. James Botha, our Treasurer, has tended the finances meticulously and is a wonderfully safe pair of hands. Dave Stromberg holds the Planning and Projects portfolios and his love for this Reserve is obvious in all he has contributed throughout the year. Barbara Krige has been our Minute taker, convened the Steenbok stall at the LI Festival and is always ready to lend a hand. Lexi Meier, our new young star, has introduced a new generation to the delights and importance of Steenbok through her Instagram and Facebook posts, and assists Diana in the Communications portfolio. Lexi also takes care of the Volunteer program.

Referring to her Report, Margaret apologized for having omitted to mention the SNR Newsletter, one of the most important outreach activities that SNR undertakes. Diana produced three outstanding editions during the year, which reached many Friends and interested people and shared the multitude of Steenbok activities and events of 2023. Margaret also thanked Peter Godsell and Peter Dieterich for the meticulous recording of rainfall in the Reserve which is always well received by all.

Margaret highlighted the major project of the year, the clearance and pruning of alien and invasive vegetation at Land's and Kingfisher Creek. This project was meticulously planned, all stakeholders were consulted (including homeowners from all properties adjacent to the area) and several experts advised the team and visited the site. The project was managed by Diana Stromberg, it took several months to complete and has been a great success. Delightful vistas have been opened through previously dense taibos, increased visibility has improved safety and reduced the risk of fire.

The main activities and achievements of the year have been recorded in her report, but Margaret mentioned the prominent role that the weather has played. The higher-than-average rainfall meant that there was a burgeoning of growth throughout Steenbok, and the maintenance teams had to work extra hard to contain this and keep the pathways clear and playing field mowed. The storms of

September left a spectacular lake which remained for many days, and the towpath and seawall received further damage. Thanks to Dave Stromberg's speedy intervention the damage has been repaired, and Diana has replaced many of the plants which succumbed to the salt water.

The Chairman thanked Margaret for her leadership, commitment, and hard work on the Management Committee.

9. Plan and budget.

The plan for 2024 had been circulated with the Notice of meeting. Margaret Richards thanked David Stromberg for his important input on preparing the plan. She recorded that Maretha Alant, a retiring senior SANParks member of the Management Committee, had stated that she was impressed with the very high standard of the plan and the way it was reviewed during the course of the year.

Turning to the budget the Chairman stated that a higher level of Revenue of R288 000 had been budgeted. Expenses would also be higher resulting in a break-even situation. Several projects including the possible revamping of the sprinkler system would be evaluated. It was hoped that the new signage in Kingfisher Creek would help prevent further damage to the paths and the saltmarsh.

After discussion, the plan and budget were approved.

10. Trustees

The Chairman reported that the 2 trustees nominated by LIRA are Margaret Richards and Craig Carter.

The current trustees elected by members, James Botha, Ingrid Meter, Brian Steele, David Stromberg, Diana Stromberg and Peter Surgey had all been nominated to serve for a further year and had accepted their nominations. They were reelected unanimously.

The Chairman proposed that Andrew Johnstone be elected as a trustee. Andrew has had a distinguished career in water and environmental consulting all over Africa. He has advised and assisted the Friends of Steenbok Nature Reserve since its inception. His election was supported unanimously.

11. General

Peter Dieterich stated that there were still a number of soccer coaching activities carried on in the Reserve, but it did not present a problem at this stage.

Dennis Boyd had submitted a proposal to ban bicycles on the brick paved pathways. This matter had been discussed at previous management committee meetings. Whilst it was considered that it would not be feasible to ban bicycles completely, notices and communication need to be improved to stress that pedestrians had the right of way and should not be inconvenienced or put in danger by cyclists. Doc Caldwell suggested that all bicycles using Steenbok and Leisure Isle should be equipped with bells.

The LICC was reportedly considering the erection of a padel court. The Club will be approached to ensure that the possible impact on the Reserve for example in terms of access and noise and lights is properly considered.

Confirmed.....Date.....