



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 2nd June 2021 at Hebron Haven Hotel, 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. He explained that an AGM was not held in 2020 due to Covid lock-down restrictions, and asked that all present adhere to Covid protocol for the duration of this meeting

APOLOGIES

- Jen Fly, Kathy Harrington, Tim Baynes, Barend & Helen Booysen, David & Alvera Crookes, Kewen & Elsie Walden, Andrew & Susie Anderson, Gugu Zuma

PRESENT

- Ashley Crookes, Jenny Goddard, Lynne Garbutt & Isabel Verwey, Kevin Barnsley, Stephen Lourens & family, FreeMe representatives Wade, Tammy & partners, Lucinda & Iona Bates, Gail Wray & Frans Brooks, Allan & Christina Immelman, Barry & Rose Downard, Martin Eweg, Hylton & Jennifer Green, Gordon Fleet, Wyndham & Gilly Robartes, Julia & Johathan Invernizzi, Gill & Hannes De Bruin, Michael Goddard

PREVIOUS MINUTES

- As no AGM was held in 2020 due to Covid lockdown restrictions, there were no previous minutes to be ratified.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Ashley presented a summary of the financial position of the DC according to the pro forma financial statements. Audited Financial Statements will only be available in the next few weeks and will be attached to these minutes. The AFS will be circulated via email once received to obtain electronic feedback from members.
- Donations made up the majority of our income, and these will be detailed in the AFS together with a breakdown of how these funds were expended.
- Special mention made to St Andrews Church for generous donations to the Conservancy.
- Significant donations paid out included the FreeMe roof insulation, Upland River (Poort Stream rehabilitation – a video was shown reflecting the project result), food parcels to needy families during lockdown, funding of Dargle & Lions River Clean Up project, and food donated to the Howick SPCA.

Adoption of Treasurer's Report

Proposed: Gilly Robartes Seconded: Kevin Barnsley

SPECIAL REPORT BACK – Kevin Barnsley

- Kevin addressed the meeting, giving comprehensive background and reasons surrounding the projects and initiatives that were initiated during (as a result of) the Covid lockdown.
- Besides donations via the Conservancy, the local community rallied around the Lions River Clean Up project by leaving cash, food and refreshments at Thokans.
- Local businesses also assisted in supporting the effort.
- A particular success story is Bheki, for whom a brushcutter was purchased to get him started with small and steady little business. He is paying back for the brushcutter on terms, and funding his running expenses out of income received.
- Kevin explained how the Conservancy was then used as a vehicle to take the project further and into the Dargle Valley (P134 etc). The clean up of the area has made a huge difference to the environment as well as the aesthetics of our roadways.
- The Clean Up team was also employed to undertake a much needed tidy-up of the Dargle and Corrie Lynne school grounds prior to the start of the first term. The schools were also supplied with donated cleaning equipment/materials and various items of equipment. This was made possible by donations from individuals after a social media plea went out via the Conservancy.
- With much passion, Kevin enlightened the meeting about some of the extreme difficulties, challenges and social problems being experienced in our local settlement and township communities. There is a need for engagement with these communities in order to pave a win-win relationship for all residents in the area going forward. The outpouring of kind donations and other help is greatly appreciated and desperately needed to be sustained in the future.
- Kevin mentioned the Lions River Sports Field. AAM have already donated R15k towards restoring the fields, and the intention is to form a committee to maintain the grounds and ensure that the facility is well used.
- There is work in progress at Nxamalala, assisting the community in their crop and vegetable growing.
- The new Dargle Conservancy signage was kindly sponsored by Normandien.
- All future projects and initiatives will be directed through the Dargle Conservancy.
- Kevin ended by stating how excited he is about the future!!

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- Ashley presented his Annual Report, highlighting all activities, projects, and initiatives carried out under the auspices of the Dargle Conservancy during the past 2 years.
- **A copy of this report is attached for reference.**

Adoption of Chairperson's Report

Proposed : Jenny Goddard Seconded : Lynne Garbutt

COMMITTEE 2020/2021

- As no AGM was held in 2020, members were previously asked to electronically accept the existing 2019 Committee members retrospectively as elected officers for 2020.
- 22 affirmative responses were received via email, this being a quorum to pass the motion. A list of responders is available on request.

Adoption of 2021 Committee

Proposed : Mike Corlett Seconded : Michael Goddard

- All existing members of the Committee made themselves available to stand for 2021, together with two new nominations (Gilly Robartes and Stephen Lourens)
- There was a unanimous vote to accept these members as officers for 2021, and members expressed their thanks to the Committee.

Chairman	Ashley Crookes
Vice – Chairman	Kevin Barnsley
Treasurer	Lynne Garbutt
Secretary	Jenny Goddard
Education	Gugu Zuma
Education & General	Gilly Robartes
Wildlife & General	Stephen Lourens

Adoption of 2021 Committee

Proposed : Wyndham Robartes Seconded : Mike Corlett

GENERAL

- A few members questioned the geographical boundaries of the Dargle Conservancy. Ashley responded that this has never been strictly defined, but suffice to say it is a large area with the Dargle Valley at the epicentre. The Conservancy does, however, extend its influence and initiatives as far as Impendele the one way and Lions River the other, as and when deemed warranted. Constitutionally there are no boundaries.
- There was a question regarding the “powers of law” held by the Conservancy. Response from Barry Downard clarified that there is no legislation enabling any law enforcement. In terms of the Aims and Objectives of our Constitution (available on the website) our role is to engage with residents and encourage legislation. We are not the “police”, but can certainly be a conduit through which reporting of unacceptable practices or any actions deemed unlawful can be reported. The Conservancy, through it’s strategic links and alliances, will do it’s best to facilitate and assist in matters of concern to members.
- Hannes de Bruin raised the point about how murky the Umgeni River has become of late. Kevin Barnsley advised that it is critical for landowners bordering the river to be compliant, and this is something the Committee will take up. The feeling is that something upstream from the Dargle Falls is the cause of this deterioration. The state of the river has worsened enormously in the past 10 years. Wyndham Robertes noted that the survey undertaken by DUCT in about 2010 reflected that the river was in good health. This is unfortunately no longer the case.

- Mike Corlett and the staff of Hebron Haven were thanked for hosting our AGM and providing a delicious (yet reasonable!) dinner.

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