



Noordhoek Environmental Action Group (NEAG)

NPO Registration Number 006-538 PBO Registration Number 9771758142

**MINUTES OF THE 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2021 @ 19:00
ZOOM**

1. WELCOME...and thank you for joining us this evening.

The format of this year's AGM is slightly different to accommodate COVID precautions. The AGM report was sent out before the live ZOOM AGM session to allow members time to read through the detail for the Q&A session.

The Zoom session was chaired by NEAG Chair Dr Andrea Marais and Vice-chair Dr Rob Anderson. Feedback was presented on achievements and the financials for the year.

2. AGM AGENDA

- Welcome and Rules of Engagement
- Chairperson's summary of NEAG achievements
- Portfolio summary feedback (Communication, Tread Lightly, Treasury)
- Special Thanks
- Voting for EXCO 2021-2022
- 2021 Membership
- Q&A
- Thank you and closing

3. RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- No interruptions
- Use the chat function for technical help
- Wait for the Q&A to ask questions
- Listen to one another

- Respect different views
- Keep your mic on mute unless speaking

4. APOLOGIES AND MESSAGES

- Joffy Mills
- Trish and Garth Richards
- NRPA: The NRPA would like to extend a big thank you to NEAG for their continued support in helping us to reach our goal of keeping Noordhoek this magnificent place to live and with the aim of reaching our Noordhoek 2030 vision goals.

5. WHO WE ARE

The [Noordhoek Environmental Action Group](#) (NEAG) is a non-profit organisation of like-minded people who support NEAG's aims, mission and vision. We focus on the natural local fauna and flora within the Noordhoek area and surroundings, and their relationship with the social and built environment occupied by Noordhoek's residents and local enterprises.

NEAG's aims are to protect and preserve the indigenous flora, fauna, wildlife, marine life and ecological systems of our natural environment and promote a holistic and mutually beneficial interaction with our human population for the benefit of all its residents and visitors.

NEAG is first and foremost an ACTION group that will not stand down on issues that compromise its values. Its mission is to act as custodians and take all necessary actions within the law to ensure the protection of this environment to sustain, preserve and improve it for the benefit of our descendants. Its members will critically engage with any activities that may have an impact on the natural or social environment, without fear, favour or preference toward the interests of any individual, commercial or institutional entity.

NEAG's vision for Noordhoek is to maintain the rural character of the valley as a mixture of natural, agricultural and residential areas with limited commercial activity. We seek a balance where all constituents are supported and protected to coexist harmoniously with minimal effect on the natural environment. This vision is fully supported by the [NRPA Noordhoek 2030 Vision](#).

6. 2020 COMMITTEE

- **Dr Robert Anderson** is a founding member of NEAG and has been on the committee for longer than he can remember. He has lived in Noordhoek for 43 years and seen a few changes, but is also pleased that the valley has escaped some of the awful developments that have raised their heads over the years. As a biologist he is most interested in biodiversity and in looking after as much of our natural habitat as possible. This is the only way humans can avoid breaking down nature to the point where our own survival is threatened. Our small Chapman's Peak Nature Sanctuary is one of his favourite causes.
- **Dr Andrea Marais** moved to Noordhoek 8 years ago. The sense of integration with nature here changed her path as she discovered her passion for conservation,

understanding the interactions between humans and nature, and the importance of quality biodiverse spaces for the well-being of both ecosystems and humans. Andrea is involved in the field of ecopsychology internationally and hopes to grow the field locally through empirical and practical work.

- **Glenn Ashton** is a PhD Candidate who has been involved in environmental activism and management for most of his life. He is passionate about Noordhoek, Cape Town and South Africa. His environmental work encompasses all spheres from local to international.
- **Ceinwen Smith** has always been intrigued by the natural world and immersion in wild places. This passion fuelled her study and teaching in the natural sciences, which have taken her to the Great Lakes in the US and to Antarctica. Since her return to Noordhoek two years ago she has been rediscovering its 'wildness' and beauty. As a scientist she is fascinated by the intricate and essential relationship between people and the natural world, and how we can restore our deep connection to it. She strongly focussed on engaging people in hands-on learning experiences in nature.
- **Tessa Oliver** is a project manager in the fields of fire risk reduction, climate change adaptation and natural resource management. She has lived in Noordhoek for well over a decade and dedicated much effort to ridding the valley of invasive alien plants and reducing its wildfire risk.
- **Gwen Hewett** has lived in Noordhoek all her adult life and is in awe of its magnificent beach, mountains, wetlands, its sprawling common, milkwood groves, and the rich variety of indigenous flora and fauna in all these different ecosystems. She is keen to see this precious area appreciated and preserved.
- **Andy Mills** is well known for her valuable community volunteer work not only for NEAG but also for On the Verge.

7. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The past year has been unprecedented in many ways and continues to challenge our work. We encounter myopic development approvals and destruction of the natural environment that place increasing pressure on the Noordhoek wetlands, biodiversity, ecological systems, and endangering local species. Being a NEAG volunteer has made me more aware of my own impact on nature and of the privilege of living between Table Mountain National Park, the Noordhoek wetlands and the Atlantic Ocean. It has also made me acutely aware of how quickly nature around us is dying 'by a thousand cuts' – an egg-carrying toad turned into roadkill on her way to one of the last breeding ponds; an owl dead from eating a poisoned rat; a caracal kitten snagged in a poacher's trap, a loggerhead turtle entangled in fishing gear. We cannot continue the current rate of environmental destruction when almost half of South Africa's ecosystem types are threatened. We see growing water security issues, climate change, and pollution that will place all communities in the Far South at risk in the future.

7.1 Development Challenges

Andrea spoke about the three major developments for which NEAG provided comments.

Although last year triggered much uncertainty due to COVID-19, we continued our work. As usual, environmentally challenging development applications took up a large portion of the

committee's time and resources. NEAG remains open to developments that are low in density, non-intrusive, appropriately located, and explicitly kind to the natural life that shares our environment. To this end, we unsuccessfully challenged the approval of [Houmoed Phase 1](#) which will further damage the integrity of the Noordhoek wetlands – a key area for biodiversity and water security – and severely compromise key breeding ponds of the endangered Western Leopard Toad. We are currently working closely with ToadNUTs as we consider going forward to high court for a judicial review. We have also continued to challenge the location chosen for a high-density school on Silvermine Road and have been working closely with the NRPA on the matter. We provided constructive comments on the development applications at Lake Michele, where our wetland expert Glenn Ashton proposed developmental guidelines to reduce the damage to the greater wetland system. These three developments, in their current form, will have a significant impact on animal life, wetland systems, and the sense of place in Noordhoek.

7.2 Tread Lightly Collaborations

Gwenn Hewett is the Tread Lightly liaison.

NEAG also focussed heavily on collaboration during 2020 and has agreed to be a holding space for the other independently run organisations that fall under the [Noordhoek 2030 Tread Lightly](#) vision, namely ToadNUTs, On the Verge, and Project Noordhoeked. Collaboration between these organisations and the NRPA has led to enriching and powerful strategies as we aim to strengthen relationships with SANParks, residents, and other organisations in the Far South. NEAG collaborated with KEAG and contributed physically and financially to get signs erected on Long Beach to educate the public about breeding shore birds and the impact of dogs on their survival. When lockdown brought great hardship to some of our surrounding communities, NEAG contributed to Noordhoek CAN and another feeding scheme because compassion, social justice, and education are connected to environmental conservation. Collaboration between NEAG and the NRPA has been hugely constructive. For example, we collaborated in a wetland clean-up on World Wetlands Day and subsequent wetland walks on both the Noordhoek and Masiphumelele sides. NEAG understands that environmental conservation cannot happen in isolation. The environmental threats we face in Noordhoek are mirrored in the range of challenges we see in the rest of the Far South, and throughout Cape Town and the Western Cape.

7.3 Meetings

Although meetings were limited during 2020, we participated in Ward Committee and FSPCF meetings where possible and relevant. Internally, the NEAG Committee continued to meet monthly via Zoom, ensuring our work continued. We also joined the monthly NRPA meetings where it was possible.

7.4 Chapmans Peak Nature Sanctuary

Rob Anderson spoke about all the work at the sanctuary.

Conservation remains a key focus area for NEAG and we were able to make several important improvements to the Chapman's Peak Nature Sanctuary, thanks to generous donations from a local resident and valuable input from Dr Donovan Kirkwood (a local resident and botanical expert). This 4-hectare area is home to endangered Cape Flats Dune Strandveld and Southern Coastal Forest, and now boasts new signage, a low rope-fence along one side, and informative labelling for many of the key plant species that characterise these unique veld types. The sanctuary was part of the *Noordhoek Open Gardens* event (see *On the Verge's* Report) and the tours led by NEAG committee members were well received. We are delighted that Project Noordhoek installed a dog-poo composting bin at the Sanctuary, where many residents walk their dogs. NEAG also plans to put up a Bat box donated by the Scarborough Environment Group and an Owl box donated by Andy Mills.

Ceinwen Smith spoke about her bird study and those that frequent the Nature Sanctuary. She shared some pictures she took and hopes to make it a viewing spot for bird enthusiasts in the future.

7.6 Alien Clearing

Rob Anderson spoke about NEAG's alien clearing activities.

NEAG obtained permits from the City to clear alien plants during lockdown, and removed more than 400 aliens, mainly rooikrans, from the large dune area between the beach and Willow Road, from tiny saplings to over 3-metre high trees. The adjacent land that falls under SANParks is still in need of urgent attention. Read more about alien invasives in our [Spring Newsletter](#).

NEAG wished to thank Gregg Oelofse for his help in getting us permits for the alien clearing work.

7.7 Wetland Management

After more than 5 years of pressuring officials about the degenerate state of the artificial wetlands at Long Beach Mall – which were installed at the insistence of Glenn Ashton to filter the waste water from the mall before it enters the Noordhoek wetland system – they are finally being cleaned out. This will involve dredging a significant amount of material which will be deposited on the car park opposite the wetlands so that it can break down into compost which can then be more easily managed than the many tons of wet material. Otherwise, the environmental management programmes of both Long Beach Mall and Sun Valley Mall are adhering to their stipulated conditions.

8. PORTFOLIOS

8.1 Communication

The communication portfolio was headed up by Ceinwen Smith.

NEAG put out two newsletters during the year, with articles on various environmental themes. As usual, these were almost all original articles by members and invited experts, and

received excellent feedback from readers. Be sure to look out for our pending newsletter to be released in the coming weeks with some exciting articles.

8.2 Tread Lightly

The tread lightly portfolio was managed by Gwen Hewett. This section was not spoken about in detail during the live AGM session.

8.2.1 Project Noordhoeked

[Project Noordhoeked](#) is an independent organisation run by Karoline Hanks and Felippo Faralla and falls under the Noordhoek 2030 Vision Tread lightly. The report below was put together by Karoline Hanks.

The key objectives of this voluntary non-profit organisation are to keep the beach and main roadsides clean, and create jobs. This project employs three young men from Masi – Edgar, Paul and William – on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. We are currently supported by R500pm from the Noordhoek Ratepayers Association and about 30 monthly sponsors who pay between R50 and R500 per month. Every cent goes to wages for our workers, petrol for the project bakkie and tools for alien clearing. Spray bottles were kindly donated by Robyn at the Katzenellenbogen nursery.

We recently added invasive alien clearing to our objectives, and included David in the team on Mondays and Fridays to clear Port Jackson from the wetlands. We are currently working on Cape Town City land (with their co-operation), and hope to soon move to SANParks land.

With funding largely from the San Michel Neighbourhood Watch, we recently spent 2 weeks clearing aliens from a large section of mountain behind San Michel. We employed a team of eight, further supported by generous daily donations of food and drink from the community. (Detailed reports are available to donors from Karoline on request.)

The dog poo composting bins were a big component of Project Noordhoeked. There were four bins, (three at the beach and one in the Nature Sanctuary at the start of the dog-walkers path, managed by NEAG). This project has removed over 1500 kg of dog faeces from the beach and the Common (without using plastic). The poo was turned into valuable compost. However, there were constant problems with abuse of bins by the public (soiled nappies, glass bottles, plastic bags, etc.), but we managed this as much as possible. The dog poo composting was managed at Karoline's home, where there is also extensive composting of the fruit and veg pulp from the Faith Juice bar at the Farm Village. This diverted around 200 kg or more per week from landfill. (Note: Very recently the bins were removed because the volume of inappropriate waste - the types mentioned above- made processing impossible.)

The large wire whale (Kakapo) was installed at the beach near the end of 2019. Beach walkers are encouraged to 'make their walk count' by using one of the reusable bags in a nearby box to collect ocean-borne plastic and place it in the whale. Since installation, we have removed about 60 bags of plastic and other beach litter from the whale. It is an important awareness tool and generates interest from passing walkers and tourists.

Earlier in 2020, we built a bench at the beach parking lot using 1 000 Eco bricks (500 kg of non-recyclable waste). The much-used bench is dedicated to a local resident who sadly passed away last year. In late 2020, we built another memorial bench using about 1200 Eco bricks for Pete de Bruin, a popular member of the Noordhoek Farm Village community. The second bench has a 'window' to show what it contains.

When COVID started in 2020, the project also contributed time and funds to help with the healthcare packs and food parcels for the Masi community.

We invite community members to become regular donors to [support our work](#).

8.2.2 On the Verge

[On the Verge](#) is an independent organisation run by Cathy Fish and Andy Mills and falls under the Noordhoek 2030 Vision Tread lightly. The report below was put together the On the Verge team.

Wow! What a year! 2020 was certainly not without its challenges, but we at On the Verge are proud to have achieved remarkable growth in this, our 10th year of working to keep Noordhoek beautiful.

With the kind support of our regular donors, plus extra donations from a few guardian angels, we were able to pay the entire team for the duration of lockdown and send them and their families regular food parcels. As soon as the hard lockdown was lifted, we started work immediately. Here is a summary of what the team has done over the past year.

Open Gardens event

This is the highlight of our year, and what an amazing event it was! Fifteen locals kindly opened their gates to the public to showcase the incredible gardens they have created and maintained. Guided walking tours of the Chapmans Peak Nature Sanctuary, which is mapped as a Critical Biodiversity Area, were conducted by NEAG volunteers. Visitors were treated to a visual feast of small gardens, large gardens, food gardens, indigenous gardens and even a viticulture garden (complete with wine tasting). We had record attendances and raised enough money to extend our team. Thank you to everyone who supported us!

Peachie's garden

In August, we were approached by Kim de Bruin and Karoline Hanks to create a memorial garden for Pete 'Peachie' De Bruin at the Farm Village. We planted two berms full of colourful flowering plants to represent his bright and happy personality, and two peach trees flanking a beautiful memorial bench built with eco-bricks by the Project Noordhoek team. It is a lovely space beneath two large oak trees, and we know Pete would have loved it.

Safe, open pathways

Over the years, On the Verge has cleared and maintained a number of greenbelt pathways around Noordhoek which are used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. We clear these greenbelt pathways regularly so they can be safely enjoyed by all. The paths include the horse path along Noordhoek Main Road, the access path from Main Road to the top of Sea Cottage

Drive; the path up Noordhoek koppie; and the walking path alongside Brookwood Stream between Silvermine Road and Main Road.

Silvermine Road pathway

Started before lockdown, this project had been a longstanding dream of Kathy's, and we are so proud to have finally created a safe, clear walkway along Silvermine Road. The path begins at Paddock Avenue opposite Noordhoek Manor and Silvermine Village, and continues for over 1 km to the junction of Silvermine and Opal Way. It took longer than expected but we are thrilled with the result. The entire path is flanked by staked poles, and we have planted a few filler shrubs and plants along the way.

Alien clearing

This is an ongoing challenge that we tackle nearly every week! The team has become adept at clearing large areas of Port Jackson, Spanish broom, stinkbean and many other invasive alien species. Three of our guys assisted the Project Noordhoek task force to tackle the huge swathe of Port Jacksons above San Michel. Exhausting but crucial work. Well done guys!

Verge of the Month

Instead of running the Beautiful Verge competition over the course of the Open Gardens event, we have decided to rather award the Verge of the Month to a homeowner who has made an effort to beautify their verge or public space adjacent to their property, and so contribute to the beauty of our gorgeous Noordhoek. We are constantly amazed and delighted by the efforts of people to beautify their surroundings. Keep it up, Noordhoek!

Extended team

Due to the huge success of the Open Gardens event, and thanks to a generous endowment from our late friend and On the Verge partner Nisan Bloch, we have been able to extend our team to eight men. This means we can offer regular, stable employment to two additional men from Masi and surrounds. Our team now comprises Bernard, Johannes, Wilson, Mike, Mava, Lloyd, Lucky and David. The team is supervised by volunteers Kathy Fish, Joy Nightingale and Andy Mills. Remember to give us a wave or a hoot if you pass us on the roadside each Wednesday!

Donations of plants and equipment

We were so grateful to receive many donations of plants and equipment over the year. Thank you to everyone who donated aloes, gazanias, vygies, rocks, poles, pots, mulch and even a weedeater! We often joke that we should call ourselves On the Scrounge as we are thrilled to accept and reuse almost any garden equipment. Your junk may well be our treasure so, please, keep offering us your offcuts and cuttings and leftovers. We cannot always use everything we are offered but we always appreciate your kindness!

Sponsors

On the Verge exists entirely due the kindness and financial support of you, the Noordhoek community. Thank you so much to everyone who supports us via debit order each month, and to those who contribute once-off donations whenever they are able. All of your money goes to paying our team of eight wonderful men with a small amount left to maintain our

equipment and provide uniforms. Please consider supporting us, if you don't already. We can't do this without you!

Bank details

Noordhoek Common Association
ABSA 632005
Account 9295969715
Reference (NB!!): OTV and your name

8.2.3 ToadNUTs

[ToadNUTs](#) is an independent organisation run by Alison Faraday and Suzie J'Kul and falls under the Noordhoek 2030 Vision Tread lightly. The below report was put together by Richard Faraday.

The 2020 Toad Migration

The annual spring migration gives us a chance to assess the size of this endangered population, a significant source of food for many local predators, and thus a key indicator of the status of our local ecosystems. As the toads move to and from the breeding ponds, the migration also affords a window to try to protect the species – and thus the local ecosystem balance – through efforts to prevent roadkill.

The 2020 toad numbers counted were well below the high numbers of 2016 and 2017 and the annual average since ToadNUTs started recording numbers in 2008. However, they saw a reasonable increase compared to the very low numbers of 2018 and 2019. The percentage found killed by cars in 2020 was also below the annual average, partly due to the lockdown and curfews (see below).

The number of toads on the road and the percentage dead in 2020 compared with the past five years and the average for the past 13 years (2008 to 2020):

Year	Number alive	Number dead	Total number	% dead
2020	314	55	369	14.9%
2019	209	31	240	12.9%
2018	203	63	266	23.7%
2017	657	74	732	10.2%
2016	584	91	676	13.6%
Average (2008-2020)	366	76	442	17,1%
Lowest (2009)	140	33	173	19,1%
Highest (2013)	605	129	734	17,6%

The 2020 migration started slowly at the end of July and the first mass migration to the ponds occurred on 2 August. Toads could be heard calling in many ponds in Noordhoek over two nights, and in some ponds over the next few nights. Large numbers of toads were found on the road over the following 10 days as latecomers reached the ponds and then left again. A much smaller second migration started on 23 August and activity on the roads peaked over

the next two days, with calling from a number of Noordhoek ponds on those nights. Most toads left the ponds over the next few nights although a few were found on the roads in late August and even early September.

9. Treasury

Tessa Oliver was the treasurer, and our finances runs by calendar year. The financial report was accepted at the AGM.

Year Ended 31-Dec 2020	NEAG	ToadNuts	Open Studios	TOTAL
Opening Balance 01-Jan 2020	38 010	-	-	38 010
Income	192 385	60 800	6 000	259 185
DONATION - GENERAL	114 348	50 300		164 648
DONATION - GENERATIONS	46 050			46 050
DONATION - HOUMOED	26 850	10 500		37 350
INCOME - MEMBERSHIP	1 032			1 032
INCOME - TSHIRTS	3 120			3 120
BANKING - INTEREST	985			985
INCOME - OPEN STUDIOS			6 000	6 000
Expenditure	(153 598)	(42 880)	-	(196 478)
EXPENSES - TSHIRTS	(4 600)			(4 600)
GENERAL - REFRESHMENTS / STATIONERY	(1 019)			(1 019)
GENERAL - VENUE HIRE	(310)			(310)
PROJECTS - BEACH SIGNAGE	(2 500)			(2 500)
PROJECTS - GENERATIONS	(65 230)	(26 630)		(91 860)
PROJECTS - HOUMOED	(62 250)	(16 250)		(78 500)
PROJECTS - NATURE SANCTUARY	(9 925)			(9 925)
DONATION - PROJECT NOORDHOEKED	(1 000)			(1 000)
DONATION - MASI FEEDING	(5 000)			(5 000)
WEBSITE	(1 500)			(1 500)
MEMBERSHIP - FSPCF	(200)			(200)
BANKING - CHARGES	(64)			(64)
TOTAL	38 787	17 920	6 000	62 707
Closing Balance 31-Dec 2020	76 797	17 920	6 000	100 717

10. SPECIAL THANKS

We know we have a tough year ahead. I would like to thank the NEAG committee for their passion, dedication, and support. On behalf of the NEAG committee I would also like to thank our members for their support over the past year in the form of e-mails, donations (some anonymous) and discussions. Thank you to the NRPA who provided us with significant support, and we look forward to working even more closely with Brad Bing's amazing team of volunteers. Thank you to Andy Mills and Cathy Fish for all the work they do with On the Verge, Alison Faraday and Suzie J'Kul from ToadNUTs for continuing to protect a flagship species from possible local extinction, and to Karoline Hanks and Felippo Faralla for the work they do with Project Noordhoeked. All these volunteer organisations are working together in their own unique way to protect our natural spaces and support our biodiversity.

11. VOTING FOR EXCO 2021-2022

- Tessa Oliver is stepping into the new position of NEAG Alien and Fire expert and as such the position of treasurer is vacant.

- Ceinwen Smith is stepping into the new position of Education while maintaining her role in Communication. As such the position of secretary is vacant.
- It is with a very heavy heart that we say goodbye to Andy Mills, who is leaving the NEAG committee.

Nominations for the NEAG Committee for 2021-2022 are:

- **Chair:** Andrea Marais
- **Vice-chair:** Rob Anderson
- **Communication and Education:** Ceinwen Smith
- **Environmental management, wetlands, and complex systems expert:** Glenn Ashton
- **Aliens and Fire expert:** Tessa Oliver
- **Editor, *Tread Lightly* liaison and advisor:** Gwen Hewett
- **Treasurer:** (Erwin Potgieter - temporary)
- **Secretary:** (vacant)

All the proposed members were voted in by a majority vote.

Ceinwen Smith nominated Rein Buyze to assist with her education portfolio – it was accepted.

The position of secretary remains vacant.

12. 2021 MEMBERSHIP

Ceinwen spoke about membership.

She ask new and existing members to complete the membership form to ensure we have your correct details and can keep you updated on all of NEAG's activities (<https://forms.gle/tz6BS9bZL31veywEA>).

Membership fee remains R50 p/a.

13. QUESTION AND ANSWERS

- **Rein asked whether school kids could help put the owl and bat boxes up**
Rob discussed the procedure and indicated that he will be in touch with Rein on the way forward that could involve the kids.
- **Tessa asked if the kids could make drawings about the Nature Sanctuary that could be used as marketing material.**
Rein agreed that it would be a good idea and that it is possible.
- **Rob wanted to know the status of the meeting Ceinwen was having with the Funda Fynbos project to look at a wetland circle in Noordhoek, and perhaps using the Common.**
Ceinwen indicated that she would follow up and set-up meetings where required.

Meeting closed at 19:30

Quorum was achieved

MINUTES SUBMITTED BY:
Andrea Marais (Chair)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AM.' with a stylized flourish.

MINUTES APPROVED BY: Rob Anderson on 09 March 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Anderson' in a cursive style.