



Noordhoek Environmental Action Group (NEAG)

NPO Registration Number 006-538 PBO Registration Number 9771758142

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Noordhoek Environmental Action Group (NEAG)

held on Tuesday, 28nd February 2023

at the Noordhoek Community Centre, Avondrust Circle, Chapmans Peak

Attendees		
1. Hazel Anderson	15. Sue Fourie	29. Dee Ramsay
2. Rob Anderson	16. Pat Furno	30. Kathi Sales
3. Glenn Ashton	17. Emile Furno	31. Rory Sales
4. Natasha Bath	18. Karoline Hanks	32. Peter Scholte
5. Brad Bing	19. Hilary Hardwicke	33. Siobhan Sleeney
6. Rein Buyze	20. Gwen Hewett	34. Ceinwen Smith
7. Sam Coll	21. Nico Kruger	35. Liz Smith
8. Alan Denchan	22. Mally MacCarthy	36. Isabelle Spies
9. Fabienne Denchan	23. Andrea Marais	37. Tom Spies
10. Aretha Du Rand	24. Marissa Massari	38. Magriet Vollaers
11. Alison Faraday	25. Murray McCallum	39. Patrick Wright
12. Richard Faraday	26. Tessa Olivier	40. Bronwen Wyllie
13. Patty Fennell	27. Karen Parkin	41. Bas Zuidberg
14. Jayne Forbes	28. Erwin Potgieter	

Apologies		
Trish Richards	Garth Richards	Zanna Zilbach

1. Welcome

The Chair, Andrea Marais, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

2. Committee

Andrea introduced the Committee members, who were all present, and thanked them for their time and effort serving on the Committee:

Dr Andrea Marais	Chair and Climate Change engagement
Dr Robert Anderson	Vice-chair and Chapman's Peak Nature Sanctuary conservation
Glenn Ashton	Environmental management, wetlands, and complex systems expert
Tessa Oliver	Aliens and Fire expert

Gwen Hewett	Editor, <i>Tread Lightly</i> liaison and advisor
Ceinwen Smith	Education
Rein Buyze	Education
Erwin Potgieter	Treasurer
Marissa Massari	Communications

3. Noteworthy activities

The Chair noted that both positive and negative noteworthy activities need to be mentioned.

Positive noteworthy activities:

- 3.1. *Chapman's Peak Nature Sanctuary (CPNS)*
Amongst other things, NEAG was involved in hosting open gardens and guided walks in CPNS.
It is also worth highlighting that Project Noordhoek removed a Manatoka.
- 3.2. *Noordhoek Wetlands: Houmoed*
An article was published in the peer reviewed journal, Psychology in Society on the wetlands in Houmoed. This focus area continues to receive media exposure.
A new beetle species was discovered in Noordhoek.
We buffered our legal team with support from the largest law firm in Africa, ENSafrica.
Members and supporters are encouraged to take action by forwarding pictures, names or other information should they become aware of transgressions in the Wetlands.
- 3.3. *Noordhoek Wetlands*
NEAG regularly engages with stakeholders. We discussed the wetlands with Cllr Alex Lansdowne and water with Lake Michelle. Glenn continues to represent NEAG on the Longbeach Mall environmental management committee.
We participated in snare removal with Project Noordhoek.
We are dealing with the ongoing impacts on the fringes of the wetlands such as dumping of soil and awaiting rehabilitation.
Due to our action, we managed to halt the spraying of glyphosate on our verges. Policy change is still needed.
- 3.4. *Beach area and Dunes*
Meetings with SANParks and the City's dune rehabilitation team were held to assess the degree of degradation. We have asked residents to keep to existing paths and to not create new ones.
- 3.5. *Education*
Biology and biodiversity with Rob, Rein and Ceinwen.
Collaboration between Call of the Wild and Noordhoek Montessori to develop a labyrinth in the Sanctuary, which was a successful awareness project that brought attention and beautification to a degraded area.
- 3.6. *Workshops and Meetings*
Workshops were held with the NRPA Ward committee and we met with the FSPCF.
Met with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of CoCT.
Talking Toads at CPV

Two climate change workshops were held and an online survey conducted.
 Attended a Baboon Management stakeholder meeting.
 Various other workshops and meetings were attended.

3.7. *Commenting on Applications*

We continue to comment on applications.
 Gave input into the equestrian EMP.
 We participate in various applications, often in collaboration with NRPA.

3.8. *Newsletters*

Lots of hours and planning go into putting the newsletters together and Andrea thanked Marissa for her dedication.

Negative noteworthy activities:

Dog owners not picking up and disposing of dog poo has become an epidemic. Not only is it disrespectful and offensive to other walkers but dog poo brings unwanted nutrients to the sandy soil of the strandveld.

4. **Finances**

Andrea reported that the financial position of NEAG is healthy and she shares the financial statements with the meeting.

Year Ended 31-Dec 2022	NEAG	ToadNUTs	Open Studios	TOTAL
Opening Balance 01-Jan 2021	64 781	14 854	7 400	87 035
Income	11 676	3 500	11 650	26 826
INCOME - OPEN STUDIOS			11 650	11 650
INCOME - MEMBERSHIP	4 700			4 700
INCOME - DONATION	6 548	3 500		10 048
BANKING - INTEREST	428			428
Expenditure	(11 613)	-	(19 050)	(30 664)
ACCOUNTING	(1 850)			(1 850)
BANKING - CHARGES	(4)		(3)	(8)
DONATION - PROJECT NOORDHOEKED	(7 000)			(7 000)
GENERAL	(2 144)			(2 144)
EXPENSES - OPEN STUDIOS			(9 202)	(9 202)
OPEN STUDIOS - EXPENSES			(9 845)	(9 845)
PROJECTS - NATURE SANCTUARY	(615)			(615)
TOTAL	63	3 500	(7 400)	(3 838)
Closing Balance 31-Dec 2022	64 843	18 354	(0)	83 197

5. **Polyphagous shot hole borer (PSHB) issue**

5.1. Rob gave a brief presentation on the PSHB, an invasive beetle from Asia that carries a symbiotic fungus that kills or damages many species of trees. It has probably been in South Africa since 2012, but was first found in 2017. It has the potential to do massive damage to our trees. So far 130 local host species have been identified. Of these, 48 species allow beetle breeding, 19 being indigenous). It has done massive damage in other places like California. In South Africa the worst affected trees are English oak, elders and plane trees. Infections have recently been identified in Cape Town.

- 5.2. Should you suspect an infection, Rob encourages you to do the following:
- Notify the Cape Town Invasive Species Unit
 - Avoid spreading the beetle – do not transport wood or firewood. Use local firewood.
 - Do not panic! Do not cut down trees unless an infection is confirmed. There are also indigenous borers that are not fatal.
- 5.3. A paper will be published soon that will indicate which trees resist the borer. Currently, it seems that most indigenous trees are more resistant than introduced species and often only some branches die.
- 5.4. For more info <https://greenpop.org/polyphagous-shot-hole-borer-beetle/>

6. Voting for EXCO 2023-2024

- 6.1. Rob mentions that Andrea is stepping down after 3 years as Chair but that she will remain on the Committee.
- 6.2. All other committee members are willing to continue.
- 6.3. Rob asks for nominations from the floor. None received.
- 6.4. Proposed and seconded that all committee members remain. Committee will elect a new Chairperson in due course.

Vacant	Chair
Dr Robert Anderson	Vice-chair and Chapman's Peak Nature Sanctuary conservation
Dr Andrea Marais	Climate Change engagement
Glenn Ashton	Environmental management, wetlands, and complex systems expert
Tessa Oliver	Aliens and Fire expert
Gwen Hewett	Editor, <i>Tread Lightly</i> liaison and advisor
Ceinwen Smith	Education
Rein Buyze	Education
Erwin Potgieter	Treasurer
Marissa Massari	Communications
Vacant	Secretary

7. ToadNUTs

- 7.1. Alison Faraday gives a short presentation on the activities of ToadNUTs which recently monitored the 15th breeding season of the Western Leopard Toads. She says that they have noticed that what happens to amphibians, happens to us. If toads are not doing well, our environment is not doing well.
- 7.2. The 2022 breeding season occurred much later (6 – 14 Sep instead of in August), the latest since we started monitoring.
- 7.3. Alison shared some statistics:
- 55 alive; 0 dead
 - Male/Female ratio 1.7M : 1F
 - Three distinct periods of calling

- 7.4. Eight ponds bred:

CPV	Trout farm	Tikas Way	Daniel Dale
Corrag Farm	Lake Michelle	Sea Breeze	Seascape

- 7.5. Calling was reportedly heard from Village Lane
- 7.6. Numbers are declining
- 7.7. Lockdown was fantastic – less traffic – less frogs killed
- 7.8. Changing pattern of migrating toads counted:

Period	Average
2018 – 2022	246
2010 – 2017	558
2008 – 2009	201

- 7.9. How can you help:
 - Get involved
 - Create and keep the wild spaces in your garden
 - Place a rock on the top step of your pool so toads can get out
 - Log sightings at iNaturalist
 - Do not relocate toads.

8. Project Noordhoeked

Karoline Hanks gave a brief presentation on the activities of Project Noordhoeked.

Their big focus is still alien clearing but they continue their work in the following areas as well:

- Kakapo the plastic catching whale
- Cleanups
- Fundraisers
- Snare work
- Brookwood Stream
- White fronted plover cages: Awareness
- Single use plastic
- Release of Bob, the turtle
- Eco brick benches
- Composting space: Partnership with On the Verge.

Project Noordhoeked continues to receive media coverage and was recently featured on Cape Talk and in the Getaway magazine.

Karoline made specific mention of the friendly, committed and efficient staff employed by Project Noordhoeked.

9. Q&A Session

The Chair opened the floor for the Question and Answer session:

Tessa encouraged attendees to make use of Project Noordhoeked staff for clearing aliens.

Karen Parkin introduced herself and stated that she is available to assist NEAG on projects. She is an experienced plant practitioner, founder of Boskos and a former KEAG working team member who would love to be active again. Marissa will invite Karen to the next meeting.

[MM]

Rob invited those that have not yet joined NEAG as members to do so.

Rein invited people to get actively involved in clearing aliens as we are fighting a losing battle against aliens in our wetlands.

10. **Guest speaker: Dr Ian McCallum**

Ceinwen introduced Ian who is a medical doctor, psychiatrist and Jungian analyst. He published his new book “Living in two worlds” in November 2022. It is available on Amazon, Takealot and all good bookshops.

Some notes from Ian’s talk:

- He believes that it is now time for action. NEAG used to be the acronym for Noordhoek Environmental Awareness Group and he was pleasantly surprised that it has changed in the meantime to Noordhoek Environmental Action Group.
- He is a supporter of the concept of “rewilding”: lives are changed by spending time in nature.
- As an analyst and psychiatrist he regularly witnesses the parallel between his consulting rooms and wild areas.
- Human identity is impossible to define outside relationships.
- He believes that travelling 5000 km over 4 to 5 months to six different countries in Africa doing research has opened corridors of his mind.
- Concept of keystone species e.g. elephants, dung beetles and kelp forests. Elephants are the greatest tree planters in Africa.
- Although he doesn’t regard humans as a keystone species, he believes that we can become keystone individuals: those who give a damn, who look at the world through both eyes, who live with a sense of privilege rather than entitlement.
- The opposite of love is not hate, but indifference.
- Keystone individuals refuse to be defeated. They are hunter-gatherers of the values of wildness, spontaneity, patience, elegance – all that we admire in animals.
- Expect everything. Assume nothing.

Ceinwen thanked Ian for his insightful and inspiring talk. We were privileged to have him as our guest speaker and she encourages attendees to purchase his book.

11. **Closing**

The Chair confirmed that there were no additional questions or comments and closed the meeting.