

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

15th February 2020

Mount Edgecombe Country Club Conference Centre

10h30

ATTENDANCE		
Office Bearers		Portfolios
Nicolette Forbes	Chair	Strategic direction, Membership, Marketing ads
Frankie Berghorst	Treasurer	Finances, Calendar Sales Tracking; Calendar Sponsors
Rosemary Cooke	Secretary	
Portfolio Committee Members		
Jane Morris		Activities Co-ordinator
Rob Jamieson		Habitat restoration
Virginia Cameron		Press Liaison
Members – a full list of members attending is attached as Appendix A		
APOLOGIES		
Office Bearers/ Committee		Portfolios
Adam Cruickshank	Vice-chair	Support to Chair, Sapphire Coast Birding co-ordination
Rosemary Cooke	Secretary	Minutes, overdue members
Arnia van Vuuren		Conservation
Members (apologies and proxies)		
An extensive list of apologies was received from members and the list is attached		
Proxies were sent through and carried on behalf of 65 members as reflected in the list.		

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

David Allan, BLPN Honorary President Officiating. David welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the wonderful turn out with 111 members present, 57 represented by proxy and a further 16 who had sent apologies. He then welcomed BLPN's special guests to the meeting namely Maureen Dixon wife of the late Tony Dixon, Jackie Bos wife of the late Herman Bos and Rosemary Johnstone representing Doone Village, Herman's place of residence. More details on all of this was promised for later on in the meeting. Last special guest, Mark Anderson CEO Birdlife, was welcomed and thanked for making time to attend and address the members after the business section of the AGM was complete.

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES – 16TH FEBRUARY 2019 AND ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA

The minutes of the previous meeting of 16th February 2019 had been sent to members at the end of February 2019 and were available on the website. These were skimmed through by

David on the screen to confirm the content. Nicky proposed that in Section 2 'Steve' be changed to Steve Davis. All the members present then accepted the minutes with one change by acclamation.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Two matters arising from the previous year's General session were briefly discussed and concluded:

1. The suggestion from Herman Bos that the club get someone to speak on the global insect demise had taken up and Dr Marlies Craig addressed the club on this subject at the August indoor meeting.
2. Some unhappiness was expressed with the Yahoo email service. This had been the communication platform for the club for at least 10 years and members have found it was less able to address the communication needs with many finding it difficult to see pictures or attachments. The Yahoo service was replaced with a Google Groups service very promptly after the 2019 AGM with the new service going live in March 2019. The benefits were obvious with a whole new way of communicating now being available and with graphics being easily received by members.

4. CHAIR'S REPORT

Nicolette Forbes delivered the Chair's report which will be circulated to members and included in the documents on the website AGM page.

Key points from the presentation are as follows:

- ✧ **Membership** - the club membership has increased significantly from 186 in February 2019 to 489 as of this AGM; receipt of invoices by members appears to be a problem and BLPN will discuss with BLSA during 2020.
- ✧ **Communications** – email and social media communications have been significantly changed with a better email group service and upgraded graphics for activity notices and increased social media interaction; the website is also undergoing revamps and changes.
- ✧ **Activities** – one major change has been activities for all members are now free (previously all outings and indoor meetings R20); the club is averaging 7 activities a month giving members a wide range to choose from and Jane Morris is thanked for her tireless efforts in getting walks and leaders for the members to enjoy.
- ✧ **Satellites** – Krantzklouf Birds, under Tessa White's steady direction, continues to host their popular morning indoor gathering every second month; and the new Sapphire Coast

Birding satellite under Adam Cruickshank is gaining momentum organizing indoor evening meetings every second month and walks for the members south of Durban.

- ✧ **Calendars 2020** – 1200 calendars printed, 200 sponsors, gifts and donations, over 880 calendars sold. This is a significant income generator for conservation support and club administration and member functions. Crystelle Wilson and Hugh Chittenden are both thanked for making this possible during 2019.
- ✧ **Events & Outreach** – Six major events for members – 70th Anniversary (May), Sapphire Coast Birding Launch (August), Equinox Party for new members (September), Celebrating Seabirds Supper Talk and Pelagic (September), Big Bird Hunt (October), and our final meeting of the year the Bird Brain Quiz evening (December). In addition the BLPN committee participated in Kloof Conservancy's Pop up Kloof Open Gardens Event and the Botanical Society Indigenous Plant Fair as outreach events supplemented by tables at shopping malls in the north of Durban and Westville.
- ✧ **Equipment** – the purchase of a wonderful new digital project significantly improved the quality of the presentation graphics at meetings and events.
- ✧ **Conservation** – BLPN significantly increased their financial support of conservation projects with major contributions being to BirdLife South Africa by becoming a Conservation League Donor (R3,000); BirdLasser (R4,000), the Southern Banded Snake-eagle project (R10,000), Mouse Free Marion sponsorship of 10 hectares (R10,000) and some smaller donations to other local projects. Significant input to conservation also included the CWAC counts coordinated by Steve Davis and the increased atlas data being generated by club members.
- ✧ **Local Habitat restoration** – Rob Jamieson has made input to local areas of biodiversity importance including UKZN Westville Campus, M13 road reserve (10 kms) and adjoining natural areas/open spaces, Westville Trail grasslands, various Municipal parks in Westville, Glenholme Nature Reserve at Kloof, Kloof country Club, Biodiversity corridors/connectivity such as between Umbilo and Palmiet River Valleys and Wetlands/grassland at Camperdown. He and the chair will work to bring this under BLPN's portfolio for endorsement during 2020.
- ✧ **In Memoriam** – the loss of two club stalwarts, Herman Bos (October) and Tony Dixon (December) was acknowledged and commemorative certificates were presented to Jackie Bos and Maureen Dixon. The AGM was being held at the Mount Edgecombe Country Club partly as a tribute to Tony and the Club was thanked for their sponsorship of the venue.
- ✧ **Committee** – Nicky thanked the committee for their work and support during the year
- ✧

5. TREASURERS REPORT

Frankie Berghorst provided the meeting with a summary of the club's financial status. Copies of the Annual Financial Statements were available for viewing and the signed document would be uploaded to the AGM page on the BLPN website (www.blpn.org). Frankie reported very healthy club finances at the moment. The various functions and events and especially the increased membership and calendar sales had all served to increase the amount of money brought into the club and made it possible to firstly improve running of the club and secondly make increased donations to conservation projects possible as detailed in the Chair's report.

Some highlights:

- ✧ Calendar sponsorship was the highest over the past six years with all 13 months of the calendar sponsored and a total of 1 200 calendars printed. The money from the calendar sales was still rolling in so the financials did not provide a full account of the benefit as yet.
- ✧ KZN Birds which had been distributed electronically as an E-zine meant that costs previously used for printing and postage could be used to offset the costs of club activities for the members with some events also having food provided for participants.
- ✧ Donations for bird conservation were also significant increased and these had been detailed in the Chair's report but in summary a total of R 30,000.00 was donated to a variety of conservation projects this year.

6. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

David Allan called out the nominated office bearers and each of those nominated accepted their nominations and were in turn accepted by the members assembled by acclamation.

Outgoing committee members, Frankie Berghorst, Rosemary Cooke, Lesley Frescura and Arnia van Vuuren were thanked for their efforts by a round of applause. The incoming committee members, Rob Jamieson, Jane Morris, Virginia Cameron, Adam Cruickshank, Ben von Wielligh and Nicolette Forbes were accepted by acclamation. The committee would be deciding on and assuming rôles and portfolios at the first committee meeting scheduled for the 9th March 2020. A plea for additional volunteers for the committee, in particular members to fulfil the Secretarial and Treasurer positions, was made and members were invited to either raise their hands or make contact with Nicky at the end of the meeting. The committee will reserve the right to co-opt additional members.

[BLPN is very happy to report that Carron Dove stepped forward to take on the position of Secretary for the club and joins the committee as of the AGM].

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

Diane McArthur's appointment as the auditor for the club was accepted by the assembled members with an added note of thanks for her continued sponsorship of a page in the calendar as well.

8. GENERAL

No additional BLPN related AGM business was raised during the General section of the meeting.

David Allan again thanked the members and special guests and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 12h00

Signed: _____(Chair) Date:_____