

MINUTES

73rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 19 March 2022
 Breakers Hotel Conference Centre
 11h00

ATTENDANCE

Honorary		
David Allan	Honorary President	
Office Bearers		Portfolios
Nicolette Forbes	Chair	Strategic Direction, Membership, Events, Marketing
Derek Robins	Vice-chair	Support to Chair
Mervyn Gans	Treasurer	Finance, Calendar Sales Tracking
Carron Dove	Secretary	Minutes
Portfolio committee members		
Jenny Norman		Activities Co-ordinator - Indoor & Outdoor
Ticky Forbes		Calendar Sales/Member Liaison/Atlassing
Rob Jamieson		Without Portfolio

1. WELCOME

David Allan, Honorary President, took the Chair as per the BeKZN Constitution and warmly welcomed everyone to the 73rd AGM. He advised that we had an exceptionally good turnout with 60 members attending and a further 29 proxies which made us well beyond quorate.

2. APOLOGIES.

103 Apologies were received with 29 written proxies, listed in Appendix A. These will be included with the minutes. An apology from the floor was received for Eleanor Russell.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 15 FEBRUARY 2020

The minutes of the previous meeting of 13 March 2021 had been sent to members and were available on the website. Copies were also available at the meeting.

The minutes were proposed by Stephen Davis and seconded by Jenny Norman.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising. David then called on Nicky Forbes to present her Annual Chair's Report.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Nicky delivered the Chair's Report which would be circulated to members with the minutes and will be available on the website. A short summary collated by the secretary is included here but the full report is available for download on the website.

Welcome and Introduction: Nicky mentioned that this was her 3rd Chair's report since taking over in 2019, after which the Covid pandemic turned things upside down. Despite this disruption the club has grown, not just in memberships but in action, interaction, and experience. 2021/2022 were both big years and our 2022 became our 74th year as a club and the name changes and new branding have brought a changed look.

Name change: The club launched the new name which is more representative of our geographical area and demographics and incorporates the greater Durban area. The logo was refreshed and produced in multiple versions to adapt to different applications. In addition our headline branding has also changed for our Zoom platforms. This is an important aspect to keep the club visible. We are in the process of branding the different activities both indoor and outdoor, in order for members to know what to expect from each event. Nicky mentioned some of the larger outreach events and programmes designed to raise awareness and link with our fellow NGOs.

NPO Status - Nicky made a special mention of Mervyn Gans, the club Treasurer, who had passed away in December 2021 and advised that an empty chair had been left at the main table, in his honour. It is thanks to Mervyn and his perseverance that the Club has gained NPO Status. This was just one of the many changes and efforts which were steered by Mervyn and we will miss him.

BeKZN awards for 2021: David Allan received the Gill Memorial Award while club members received three BirdLife South Africa Owl Awards, viz. Crystelle Wilson, Sithembiso Blessing Majoka and Nicolette Forbes.

Conservation efforts: Mouse-Free Marion campaign - R3.2m was raised at the Flock at Sea Marion Island cruise. There were 30 BeKZN members on board and between them 20 hectares were purchased in their personal capacities. The Club has donated over 32 hectares to the cause. Nicky thanked Steve Davis and Anneli Mynhardt for the consistent CWAC Counts. Arnia Van Vuuren (who unfortunately had passed away) was responsible for the Van Riebeek Park monitoring and this would be taken up by Steve Davis. Nicky also acknowledged David Allan who has been doing the monthly Durban Bay counts for over 23 years.

Color me Green Atlasing Challenge: Nicky advised that she is very proud of this initiative covering the 29 pentads in the eThekweni municipal area. Dave Rimmer won a two night stay for two people at Bonamanzi Game Reserve on the basis of his major contribution to the challenge which included 227 hours of Atlasing and 4090 individual records. There is a full report on the website and also more details in the chairs report

Activities - Nicky advised that Jane Morris had stepped down as events coordinator and that Jenny Norman had stepped into the role with aplomb. The year included 39 outdoor events and had 22 individual leaders leading walks. Trip reports were submitted after walks and are all available on the website. Nicky thanked Jane and the walk leaders for all their hard work and dedication. Jenny Norman added her thanks to all the participants as well and gifts were handed out.

A number of personal trip reports were provided by trips done by members, Rob McLennan-Smith with his wonderful Botswana trip, Nicolette and Ticky with their Kruger trip to get the Lesser Whitethroat and a number of others. Members are encouraged to provide these as they both teach and help other birders. Please ensure you chat to Jane about formats for these reports as she sorts this out before passing these to Nicky for website publication.

The year ended with the very pleasant solstice party at Beachwood mangroves with walks led by Steve Davis and Ticky Forbes.

Calendar 2022 - Nicky emphasized the lovely theme for the year, with the calendar being complemented by the "Birding" sticker and insert with contact details of our community guides.

For the 2023 Calendar, Nicky advised that she requires a dedicated person to assist with the distribution and general logistics of production and sales. Nicky will continue with the layout and getting the calendar to print.

Obituaries The club has lost three active members, Arnia Van Vuuren who ran our conservation programme, Mervyn Gans - our Treasurer, who was also involved in the Kloof Conservancy and the Mountain Club and was our longest running member and finally Don Porter - a founder member of the club which he described as a "drinking club with a birding problem".

Committee - Nicky introduced each committee member and thanked all the Committee Members for their roles and noted the resignation of Lauren Calenborne. Nicky congratulated David Allan on his Gill Memorial medal and on his retirement this year although he is now apparently working harder than ever. David has agreed to stay on as our Honorary President. Derek Robins, based in Dubai, has agreed to continue as Deputy Chair. Nicky advised that we desperately need a Treasurer to take over Mervyn Gans' portfolio. Stephen Davis has agreed to take on the Conservation Portfolio. Ticky Forbes and Rob Jamieson had also agreed to continue as Committee members.

Nicky gave a special thank-you to Ticky for all his help and to her parents for their support, Dave Rimmer and Steve Davis for always being there and willing to help and noted a special thanks to Hugh Chittenden for his pictures for the calendar.

Nicky then handed out BeKZN buffs to all members present to thank them for their continued support and attendance at the AGM.

Membership - Nicky advised that club membership numbers are in dire straits around the country and that we need to encourage people of all ages and races to join.

David Allan thanked Nicky for all her hard work and her passion and energy and everything she has done for the Club.

6. TREASURERS REPORT

In the absence of Mervyn, Nicky presented the Treasurers Report. She indicated that she had worked closely with Mervyn up to November 2021 getting everything up to date. Details of the last few months were captured and finalised by the auditors, Diane McArthur. Nicky advised that Mervyn had been concerned about the amount of money in the current account early in the year and advised us to move a portion of this into a consolidated Investment account to take advantage of the better interest rate.

The Annual Financial Statement was available at the meeting and also for download on the website. In summary

- Total income was R168 781,00 which was slightly down on last year.
- Expenditure totaled R86 328,00
- Closing balance in the current account was R94 768,00
- Investment Accounts totaled R214 338,00 - R204 338 in one account and R10,000 in the other.

The Annual Financial Statements were proposed by Anneli Mynhardt and seconded by Crispin Hemson.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS.

David Allan proposed that we continue with Diane McArthur as Auditor for the new year. Acceptance was proposed by Nicky Forbes and seconded by Jenny Norman. Nicky indicated that she would confirm with Diane.

8. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS.

At this point the current committee stood down and David Allan took over as Chair. David listed which of the current committee members were prepared to stand again and advised that Dave Rimmer and Stephen Davis had agreed to join the Committee. The incoming committee members, Nicolette Forbes, Jenny Norman, Rob Jamieson, Carron Dove, Derek Robins, Ticky Forbes, Dave Rimmer and Stephen Davis were accepted by acclamation.

A plea was made for additional Committee members to fill various roles, especially Finance. The committee will reserve the right to co-opt additional members.

The Chair and other portfolio holders would be voted in at the 1st Committee meeting.

9. GENERAL

Crispin Hemson raised the issue of the UPL (United Phosphorus Limited) chemical spill and emphasized that this was a wake-up call as we were not prepared for this and the massive negative impact it had. Crispin wanted us to recognize the work that Nicky Forbes and Ticky Forbes have done around investigating this crisis and argued that we cannot look to Government to save us; we need people like us to be responsible.

Nicky advised that this disaster was on a scale never seen before. Approximately 6 000 tons of herbicides, fungicides and a variety of pesticides stored in the warehouse had spilled into the uMhlanga estuary and local marine environment resulting in the annihilation of both the fauna and flora of the tributary and the lower uMhlanga river and estuary as well as crayfish in the sea. Nicky has agreed to do this a presentation for the club on this event.

Preeya Daya raised the issue and possibility of encouraging youngsters to join the club and become active. Nicky welcomed this idea but stressed that we would need more volunteers to run with this. Preeya was invited to look into this and run with the idea. We would need to appoint a coordinator to run with this. Nicky also encouraged members to attend the Forum as there are people dealing with this very issue and presenting on this topic.

10. VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSURE

David Allan took the opportunity to thank Anthony Humphris for his assistance in organizing the boat and recruiting club members for the Durban Bay Bird Counts.

David then closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and emphasized how important it was to have a physical attendance again. No additional AGM business was raised, and David then closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 12:10

Record of post-meeting presentation and event:

Nicky reported on the **Photographic competition** in which 38 people participated. In total 244 pictures were submitted at an entrance fee of R25/photo which raised R6 100.00 for the club. Every entry into the competition was entered into the draw for the Swarovski binoculars which were won by Penny de Vries. Well done Penny and all the photo prize winners.

Signed: _____

CHAIR

DATE