



Wilderness Ratepayers and Residents Association (W.R.R.A.) Annual General Meeting, Wednesday 19 February 2025

Minutes

Agenda

1. **Welcome & Apologies:** Simon Jamieson, Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reminded those attending that the announcement and agenda with links to the relevant documents had been sent out in advance in the newsletter (29 January 2025) and were also available on the W.R.R.A website. Apologies were received from: Candice Hobday, Denton Goodford, Jan Moll, Margrit Roten, Ben Schuld, Geoff Pallister and Andre Joubert.
2. **Adoption of the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting, and matters arising therefrom.** There were no questions or comments and adoption of the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 21 February 2024 was proposed by Michelle Moll and seconded by Jan Heyneke.
3. **Adoption of the minutes of any previous General Meetings, if any, and matters arising therefrom.** (none)

Introduction of W.R.R.A mascot

Joletta Eichweber said that she would be introducing the new W.R.R.A mascot, Wilder. She commented that there are always challenges in the community and that Wilder would be the ambassador of fun. Wilder, the W.R.R.A Warrior, with musical accompaniment, then entered the room and was well received. Joletta advised that Wilder would be present at charitable and other community events as well as at school visits to raise awareness and promote W.R.R.A.

Town of the Year

Tracey Pretorius and Leon Brits gave a presentation on the Town of the Year competition that Wilderness is taking part in. The presentation covered the process for all stages of the competition. In previous years, the prize has been R1 million in marketing value from kykNET. The prize for 2025 is larger as it includes an additional cash prize of R1 million to be used for a nominated project which, for Wilderness, will be Save our Boardwalk. This was well received although there were comments that this should be the responsibility of SANParks. It was advised that SANParks had no funding available and that budgets had been cut by a third. Arne Witt asked what it will cost to maintain the repaired boardwalk as there is no point in restoring it and then letting it slide. Leon advised that the project would have to get to the tender stage and it would then be taken from there. Simon commented that the competition is a joint project with George Tourism with a contribution of R50,000 being made by them.

4. Chairman's Report

Simon introduced Lydia de Waal to present the Treasurer's Report to provide the financial background to the Chairman's Report that would follow.



5. Treasurer's Report and adoption of the Reviewed Accounts

Lydia talked through a number of detailed slides covering 2024 opening and closing bank balances and income statements for the year. She provided examples of specific portfolio income and expenditure during 2024 and answered questions about the increased expenditure from 2023 to 2024 relating to the environmental portfolio which she explained was due to a dedicated team doing alien clearing. She confirmed that the WIP and WAG portfolios were funded totally by donations and that no membership fees were allocated to these portfolios. The need for a paid Operations Manager for WIP and WAG had been identified in consultation with members. The appointment to this role took place in 2024 with the cost being equally funded from the WIP and WAG portfolios.

Lydia presented a slide with the projected funds we hope to receive for 2025 and how these would be allocated, specifically commenting on alien clearing, further commissioning of art work and a focus on public safety in specific areas. A proposal to adopt the reviewed accounts was made by Donald Goldfain and seconded by Dave Hill.

Simon commented that the strategy for expenditure was supported by members and the community. In 2025 we would be trying to be involved in more meaningful activities as an association and 'go big' over a period of time and after many consultations and discussions amongst the committee, it was decided to increase the membership fee to R1000 which we felt was reasonable. Lydia said, at this time in 2024, income from membership fees was R107,000 and, for 2025, at this point, income was R180,000. She confirmed there had been some resignations but also a number of new members.

Chairman's Report (continued)

Simon said he regularly was asked to explain WIP and WAG and answer questions as to why this work was not being done by the municipality. His answer to the question was that WRRRA chooses to do something about it and it is possible that commercialising the work would be considered. This year is the third anniversary of WAG which was started by residents Sharon Dold and Clint Bartlett as a medium to maintain and improve suburbs and the Greater Wilderness area funded by donations from residents. WIP covers the CBD and is funded by businesses and benefits tourism as well as residents. WRRRA provides a facility to manage WIP and WAG and Simon reiterated that the operations manager's salary is not funded by membership fees and that the operations manager donates his salary to charity. It may seem at times that WRRRA is begging for money but if contributions for WIP are down, we go to the businesses so that we can do the work. He commented that WAG had been able to donate R10,000 to ACT in 2024.

In terms of achievements last year, Simon cited ACT as an innovation last year, based on huge concerns about fire, the likelihood of which is high. We are attempting to create a super fire break in the Seven Passes Rd where there are a huge number of aliens to be cleared. He commented on the work of the WRRRA Fire Forum that had worked on fire breaks in Langvlei Dunes and the successful Fire Expo held to increase awareness.

Further achievements in 2024 included community work with sports teams, house painting in Hts Village, assisting with the Touwsranteen gym, the Bloom upliftment



program, establishment of the educational Eco-Centre and involvement in the administration of roads, specifically Vanessa's role as the liaison with Sanral on the N2 project and Lydia's lobbying for repairs to the Seven Passes Road which has accelerated progress with this.

Commenting on the Development Diligence portfolio, Simon confirmed that all development applications were looked at, not with the intention to stop development, rather, to ensure it is legal.

Simon also mentioned WRRRA presence on social media and further updating of the website as well as Susan Burger's role and financial contribution to the art work at the beach which is beautiful and effective. He commented on the six WRRRA talks that had taken place and successful events such as the masked ball, giving thanks to Romy, that had raised R25,000 for ACT. He said that we want everyone involved to get things done and cited the efforts of individual residents such as Xeena and David Wallington in organising clean-up activities.

In terms of plans for 2025, Simon commented on enlarging our bank balance and achieving our aims through increasing fees and members. He said that we have lost some members but also gained a similar number of new members and advised that Cornell takes an active role in membership recruitment and getting WIP and WAG contributors. He then mentioned the community conversation held in September 2024 leading to the appointment of Roy in the role of municipality liaison which will be further developed in 2025 and also commented on Town of the Year and fire initiatives. He confirmed that what happens is down to the members and the committee.

John Miller asked for an update on the WRRRA NPO status. Lydia said that we had made the application to SARS but they had unfortunately made the wrong interpretation of our association. We have appealed and appointed legal representation so it is still a work in progress.

Dee Marcus expressed concern about the threat of fire and asked if there was something planned to formalise ACT in order to get donations in the way that WIP and WAG do. Simon responded that we are always appealing for donors so that we can employ people and get the job done bearing in mind the cost of having proper equipment and it all comes down to people's inclination to support a cause with some being seen as sexier than others.

6. Election of Executive Committee

Simon put a slide up that showed the 2024 committee members and portfolios and the current situation with committee members for 2025. He advised that he has had questions about this agenda point in relation to co-opting committee members and relayed his personal experience of getting involved and joining the committee as a co-opted member and subsequently his election to it as is covered in the WRRRA constitution. He confirmed that co-opting can be of a short or long term nature and may involve a specific project or portfolio.



He confirmed that he was leaving the committee and that the chair is elected at the first committee meeting after the AGM by the committee members. He described some of the qualities required for the role as being someone who is financially independent and an achiever who is passionate about the community. When getting questions as to why such and such person is on the committee, Simon said he would ask the questioner why he or she hasn't volunteered for the committee and, when he finds a volunteer, he embraces them because help is needed. He has therefore brought people onto the committee and members must trust his judgement.

Simon then confirmed those who are currently co-opted to the committee and their roles:

Clint Bartlett: has been informally involved in projects with the committee for some time but was unable to become a full committee member due to his contract with his employer but is now in a position to do so with specific responsibility for governance.

Mike von der Heyde asked what governance is and Simon responded, as an example, that this requires legal experience and that Clint had assisted us with revising the constitution. Clint also wishes to take on some of the social aspects by setting up a SME unit to increase employment opportunities, for example, the construction of baboon boxes.

Roy Marcus: as previously mentioned, Roy is our Municipal Liaison Officer.

Leon Brits: was involved in the fire expo and now in Town of the Year. He is doing what interests him and may also take on ACT.

Charl Jacobs: owner of WDF. Initial relationship with the community was somewhat controversial but has changed over time and Charl has backed away from active involvement in the business. (Charl was asked to stand up at this stage so that people could know who he is and did so). Charl has supported philanthropic enterprises and is particularly interested in education.

Vanessa Hau-Yoon: Vanessa is a local estate agent who was previously WRRRA Secretary and has come back into the fold as the WRRRA and community liaison contact with Sanral for the N2 upgrade.

Referring to the slide of the committee, Simon confirmed that he is resigning as Chairman, also Jackie as Secretary and Balvindra who has been involved with the eco-centre, environmental and planning applications and now needs some time off for personal issues.

Simon said a decision needs to be made about the co-opted members.

John Miller said he would like the co-opted people to speak for a minute about what they can bring to Wilderness. Simon reiterated that he and his judgement should be trusted.



Mike von de Heyde commented that there are 12 positions shown on the chart but not a dedicated person for community/social development. Simon responded that he has tried to find someone for this portfolio for the last 18 months with no one coming forward and asked if Mike could suggest anyone. Mike said the role should be listed on the slide.

Joletta proposed acceptance of the new co-opted committee members and Simon suggested this be put to the vote. Jan Heyneke commented that the focus seems to be on the co-opted members but that all committee members need to be voted in. He also suggested, in the interest of continuity, that the constitution be changed back to require that committee members be voted on every 2 years rather than annually.

Arne Witt stated that he can't vote if he knows nothing about the co-opted members and Jan Heyneke supported this view. Simon confirmed that he had provided a description of each of the co-opted members and their areas of involvement with the committee.

Voting then took place with all of the current committee members being voted in. This was followed by voting for individual co-opted members with each being elected either unanimously or by a large majority.

7. Any other business of which due notice has been given by a member to the Secretary in the form of a formal motion not less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the meeting. (none received)

8. General

A member from the floor asked how many fully paid members there are at the moment and the response given was 230 with membership fees still in the process of payment. At the end of 2024 the membership numbers were 350.

A query was raised by a member from the floor about the disparity between the funds received versus the number of members with the answer given that some members are paying fees on a monthly basis.

Roy Marcus commented on the sensitivity of the issue of the common and said that there was a group of three representing Constantia Kloof Conservancy, Waleaf and WRRRA who are working together and expect some positive outcomes. Jan Heyneke stated that removing restrictive title conditions seems to be pressing forward to which Simon responded that this was not a matter for the AGM and needed a separate meeting with the community to debate. Jan said it feels like running into a brick wall and we need the community to discuss and get involved.

Lauren Waring advised that there is no development application in relation to the common and the previous application from The Girls restaurant had been concluded.

Andy Pedrick commented that if there are volunteers for the committee the members should be able to trust the chairman. He also pointed out the need to engage with the municipality and hold them to task as necessary.



Nikki Jackman made the point that Simon should be acknowledged for his service as chairman.

A member from the floor commented that in some ratepayer associations there was an interface with security providers with people amenable to sign up for membership when they sign up or renew their security contract. He also commented in relation to the boardwalk that wood is difficult to maintain and that artificial materials would be better for maintenance. Simon commented that Cornell is involved in facilitating donations of benches to the community and that many of these are constructed with artificial material.

A member from the floor gave thanks to Balvindra for his work on the environmental and planning portfolio and expressed concern that this vacancy is filled.

Another member from the floor mentioned the allocation of funds and said that people want WIP and WAG but we should get buy in and funding from members and suggested the new committee should consider this. Simon commented that it is often hard to get conversations with people and that meetings are arranged but get poor or no attendance.

Lydia thanked Simon, Balvindra and Jackie for their contributions and wished them all the best for the future.

The meeting closed at 19:40.