



MIDLANDS HIKING CLUB

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

21 August 2012

MINUTES OF THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT 19:00 ON 21 AUGUST 2012 AT THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION IN HILTON

1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman confirmed that the attendance constituted a quorum and that the 20th Annual General Meeting of the Midlands Hiking Club could proceed. He thanked the 31 members present for their attendance.

The following apologies were noted:

Stella Wells, Harry Holderness, Teresa Whitfield, Christie Exall, Terry & Sandy Griffin, Libby Deysel, Brian & Marie Drury, Veronica Stander, Cheri & Doug Roland, Sunette Davel, Astrid Fraser, Graham Mannall, Annie Waterhouse, Marie-Chantal Peters, Chris & Gerry Dobson, Margaret Kirsten, Gay Tilbury, Kathy Tivers, Sue-Ann Netterville, Mike & Dallas Kirby, Paul & Lorraine Welch, Penny Purchase, Iris & Alvin Stevens, Peter & Anica Wedge, Merle Brett and Dave Coward.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 19 TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 16 AUGUST 2011.

The Chairman read out the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting and called for the adoption of the minutes.

Referring to 7.3 of the minutes, Keith Ashton clarified that he did not oppose the promotion of mountain biking activities, but in fact supported it. However he did not feel it necessary to amend the constitution.

There were no other comments, and with this amendment, the minutes were adopted; proposed by Chris Simpson and seconded by Bushy Kirby.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (as read out by the Chairman)

3.1 Acknowledgements

3.1.1 I am pleased to report that we have had a fine year and at the very outset I would like to acknowledge the commitment shown by all our committee members and leaders.

3.1.2 You will recall that when we were together this time last year we elected three new members to our committee. We also did a bit of a re-shuffle. Well I can report that Carolee, John, Chris and Brigitta quickly settled down with their newly allocated portfolios. We are not necessarily well-trained for the job neither do we all have the time available to provide an excellent service but we are committed and we are willing to do it for our club. To all the committee members I thank you. You have all diligently attended our bi-monthly meetings and you have delivered what was expected of you.

3.1.3 And of course equally important are our leaders. They have unselfishly made themselves available to lead our hikes. But it is not just the hike. Sometimes it involves quite a bit of preparatory work. Making reservations and organising the group can take up considerable time for the longer hikes and trails.

3.1.4 The valuable work done by our 9 leaders is very much appreciated, for without them the club could well become dysfunctional.

3.2 Membership

3.2.1 Membership fees become due on 1 August each year and our Club Constitution requires us to terminate membership when a member's fees are unpaid three months after due date, namely 1 November. It is not a pleasant task to have to keep reminding members that their fees are outstanding and then to finally be forced to terminate their membership. We don't like to terminate membership due to non-payment simply because it is not in the best interest of the Club. We would far rather keep our members. Nevertheless we also need to be fair to our paying members who continue to be consistently well disciplined and pay promptly. So we were patient up until May when we finally terminated the membership of 11 of our members.

3.2.2 So the year started off with the membership strength at 143 but regrettably we have ended the year with a membership of 137, a net decline of 6 members. We are however pleased to announce that despite the small drop in numbers we are recording higher attendance figures at our activities.

3.2.3 We of course extend a very warm welcome to our new members, some of which we are seeing quite regularly participating in our activities. We are encouraged by your enthusiasm and the energy you bring to our club, and we hope that you will continue to enjoy our variety of activities.

3.2.4 It is good to have positive growth in membership but more importantly it is the level of participation in our activities that really counts. Good attendance figures tell us that the club is in fact serving the needs of its members.

3.2.5 We thank those of our members who have paid their membership fees this evening and all those that will pay over the next few weeks. If you are paying by direct deposit into our banking account please do not forget to give us your name as a reference so that we can correctly record your fees as paid up.

3.3 Activities

3.3.1 In 2010 the management committee set up a framework that would ensure we provide a variety of activities that should cater for all the needs of our members. Our goals and actual activities for the year are summarised as follows:

ANALYSIS OF 2011/12 ACTIVITIES							
Activity	Frequency	Goal	Actual	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Social evenings	Bi-monthly	6	6	2	2	1	1
Day hikes	3 per month	36	33	9	7	9	8
Cave weekends	1 per month	12	11	3	3	2	3
Camping weekend	1per month	12	12	4	3	3	2
Night hike	1 per year	1	1	1	-	-	-
Climbing/tenting weekend	1 per year	1	1	1	-	-	-
Cottage weekends	8 per year	8	6	-	2	3	1
Long distance trails	2 per year	2	3	-	1	1	1
Educational	1 per quarter	4	3	1	1	1	-
	Total	82	76				

3.3.2 Last year we introduced the concept of educational activities to encourage the development of an awareness of nature. This year we arranged 3 educational activities and next month we have arranged for Pat McKrill to give us an entertaining show on snakes, and to advise us on the do's and don'ts. He is highly recommended for his presentation skills and humour. Please diarise 18 September and bring along R20. The club will be sponsoring this event because we believe the more we know about the habits of snakes and the more we understand their behaviour the better.

3.3.3 More recently we have introduced the beginners' hikes and we are pleased to report that they are being well-attended. For instance we have had 12 hikers at each of the last two hikes, and it is pleasing to note that even our very experienced hikers are enjoying a relaxing hike with the beginners.

3.4 Attendance

3.4.1 We have been maintaining records of attendance at our activities since last year so that we can get to know our members preferences, and to monitor trends. We have consciously increased the number of Saturday hikes because we thought that, maybe some of our members preferred not to hike on Sundays. We have also introduced Beginners' hikes and in time we need to know whether attendances are increasing.

3.4.2 Last year we achieved a combined attendance figure of 383. This is the summation of attendance at all of our activities. This year our attendance has risen to the remarkable figure of 568. I must point out that some of our activities are advertised in other hiking clubs and these figures include the visitors from other clubs.

3.4.3 We can also count persondays. This means that if 7 members attended a cave weekend over two days then we can record attendance as 14 persondays of activity. During the past year our overall attendance has been 822 persondays and if we have 140 members this means each member on average hikes six days a year.

3.5 Aims and Objectives for 2012/13

Our club Constitution defines the purpose of our club in five objectives. I would like to propose to our incoming Committee that we set ourselves a goal for each of the objectives.

Objective 1: Promote hiking and backpacking activities

Proposal: To focus on the 30 to 40 age group and establish a core of younger members to promote camping and hiking activities at venues suitable for young families.

Objective 2: Foster good relationships between hikers; and work with other similar clubs and associations

Proposal: To establish a link with another hiking club to share ideas; and do two activities together, one in their territory and one in ours.

A Free State based hiking club had recently contacted our club for some local hiking information and had invited our members to participate in their activities.

Objective 3: Train members in skills and competence for leading groups of hikers

Proposal: To promote the use of GPS's by arranging a GPS course, then introduce GPS-based activities.

Chris Simpson has proposed that we consider promoting the concept of 'geocaching' which entails finding 'caches' with the use of a GPS instrument.

Objective 4: Encourage the development of awareness of nature; and promote nature conservation

Proposal: To explore ways of strengthening our links with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Wildlands Trust, or similar nature conservation organisations.

Max Ramseier has been in contact with SAPPI regarding the opening up of hiking trails in the Karkloof district and we are considering entering into an agreement to abide by certain conditions relating to environment protection, safety and security.

Objective 5: Encourage the improvement of facilities and trails.

Proposal: To develop an association with SAPPI Forests or any other similar entity, and identify a project where we can assist as a group, to develop and improve a trail.

3.6 Management Committee and Leaders

3.6.1 You are reminded that your current management committee of 9 members as elected at last year's AGM are:

Chairman	Brian Henwood
Vice-Chairman	John Fourie
Secretary	Carolee Thompson
Treasurer	Kevin Knox-Davies
Club Activities	Chris Simpson
Newsletter Editor	Brigitta Simpson
Webmaster	Rod Hart
Member	Mark Nellist
Member	(vacant)

3.6.2 The committee has met bi-monthly on Club Night to deal with the management issues of the club. Attendance has been good and all committee members have carried out their duties in a responsible manner. Brigitta has done exceptionally well in transforming our newsletter into something a bit more 'punchy'. However we still would like to see more hike reports and more voluntary participation from our members.

3.6.3 The management committee has enjoyed the support of an enthusiastic group of leaders who never fail to respond positively to a request to lead a hike. Our regular leaders are Dave Sclanders, Keith Ashton, Bushy Kirby, Mark Nellist, Mary Clover, Christie Exall, Teresa Whitfield, Brian Henwood and John Fourie. The committee and leaders meet quarterly to compile the fixture lists and we try to provide an interesting variety of activities.

3.6.4 Chris Simpson and Kevin Knox-Davies have indicated that they would prefer to be relieved of their duties this coming year thereby creating two vacancies on our committee. On behalf of the management committee I would like to extend to Chris and Kevin our sincere appreciation for their commitment and constructive participation in our discussions.

3.7 Conclusion

3.7.1 As a committee we feel proud that we have served our club well by organising outdoor activities on virtually every weekend over the past year. We admit that some activities have been cancelled through poor weather or poor attendance but nevertheless our fellow members are showing their appreciation by supporting our endeavours and turning out in increasing numbers at our activities.

3.7.2 With the growing support of our members, and a goal-driven management committee we are confident that another successful year lies ahead for the Midlands Hiking Club.

3.7.3 Copies of the Chairman's report were distributed to the members present.

3.7.4 The adoption of the Chairman's Report was proposed by Chris Simpson and seconded by Bushy Kirby.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

4.1 The Treasurer distributed a summary of the Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 July 2012 and explained its contents. Accumulated funds amounted to R 14 703.

4.2 Pat Kirby pointed out a discrepancy in the reporting of income and expenditure on pages 2 and 4. This was acknowledged and would be corrected. BH

4.3 Mary Clover queried the drop in interest on investments from R 468 in 2011 to R 136 in 2012. It was noted cash at bank amounted to R 8 024 whereas the investment amount was R 6 653. Cash needs to be transferred to the fixed deposit account. This would be checked and corrected. BH

4.4 Dave Sclanders noted that the club had assets totaling R 14 753 and enquired what the club intended to do with the savings. Pat Kirby stated that historically this money was used to pay for deposits on bookings for hiking trails and camp sites. The Chairman stated that this valuable club asset should not be squandered and that the committee would welcome suggestions. Joan Templeton suggested the purchase of hiking equipment for the use of new members. Dave Sclanders suggested gas stoves and camping equipment would encourage new members to try camping and caving. There was a concern about care and safekeeping. These ideas would be discussed by the committee. BH

4.5 In view of the strong financial position of the club it was proposed that the annual subscriptions not be increased. This was unanimously agreed.

4.6 Copies of the Annual Financial Statements were distributed. Subject to further investigation and clarification the adoption of the Treasurer's Report was proposed by Christie Exall and seconded by Deena Marrimuthu.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

5.1 The Chairman noted that Kevin Knox-Davies and Chris Simpson had indicated their preference to stand down. There was also remained a vacant position on the committee.

5.2 The Chairman nominated Sven Jager for the position of Treasurer. He was a professional accountant and had indicated his willingness to stand for election. There were no other nominations and his election for the position of Treasurer was proposed by Dave Sclanders and seconded by Kevin Knox-Davies. The Chairman thanked Kevin Knox-Davies for his 3 years of service on the committee.

5.3 The Chairman nominated Debbie Jager who had a nursing background. She had agreed to make herself available for the Activities portfolio. This includes compiling and maintaining the activities schedule, assisting with facilitating club activities and maintaining attendance records. There being no other nominations Debbie Jager was proposed by Mary Clover and seconded by Carolee Thompson.

5.4 The Chairman confirmed the vacancy for the Membership portfolio. Several candidates had been approached to assist with membership issues, to follow up and assist new members with information and to encourage younger members. Mary Clover nominated Peter Rippon who responded that he was maybe too new to the club. There being no other nominations it was agreed to discuss this further at the next committee meeting. BH

- 5.5 The others members of the committee had agreed to make themselves available for re-election. Their re-election was proposed by Keith Ashton and seconded by Mary Clover.
- 5.6 The Chairman confirmed the 2012/13 committee as follows:

Chairman	Brian Henwood
Vice-Chairman	John Fourie
Secretary	Carolee Thompson
Treasurer	Sven Jager
Club Activities	Debbie Jager
Newsletter Editor	Brigitta Simpson
Webmaster	Rod Hart
Member	Mark Nellist
Member	(to be confirmed)

- 5.7 The Chairman thanked the newly elected committee members for making themselves available to serve the club and congratulated them on their election.

6. GENERAL

- 6.1 The Chairman confirmed that he had two boxes of historical club records. He appealed for one of the senior members to scrutinize the documents for disposal or archiving.

- 6.2 Dave Sclanders stated that the Leaders spend a lot of time and effort in organising hikes and it was disappointing when members cancelled at the last minute. He appealed to members to show more commitment, especially as it often meant higher travelling expenses for the other hikers. The Chairman suggested that this be mentioned in the newsletter to make members more aware of the impact. It was noted that all contact numbers are on the fixture lists. BS

- 6.3 Day hikes need to be confirmed by the Wednesday and weekend hikes at least a week before. Bushy Kirby stated that by being a member one should be committed to the club and to all the fellow members, and should act responsibly.

- 6.4 Joan Templeton suggested that the Club Nights start at 18.30 and that members be encouraged to bring a finger supper for a 'bring & share'. It could be on the lawn, weather permitting. Carolee would find out from the Church secretary whether this was permissible and it would be discussed at the committee meeting. CT

- 6.5 Brigitta Simpson reminded members of the photo competition in the newsletter. The mystery persons in the photo were Margaret Ashton and Christie Exell. The winner was Mark & Mary and they were handed their prize of a Lindt chocolate. She reminded members that there was another competition in the latest newsletter.

- 6.6 Dave Sclanders congratulated Rod Hart for the Club's excellent website. Rod stated that there are about 6 hits a day on the site and that he enjoyed receiving the hike reports with photos.

- 6.7 The Chairman thanked all members and those of the committee for their support and attendance, and invited everyone to a finger supper sponsored by the club and prepared by Veronica.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.15.