



MIDLANDS HIKING CLUB  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
28<sup>TH</sup> August 2013.

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT 18:00  
ON 28<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2013 AT THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION IN HILTON

**1. ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES**

The Vice Chairman confirmed that the attendance constituted a quorum and that the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Midlands Hiking Club could proceed.

He thanked the 31 members present for their attendance.

The following apologies were noted:

Brian Henwood, Rod Hart, Becci Borain, Kathy Tivers, Ron Hulley, Felicity Kromhout, Gay Tilbury, Astrid Fraser, Peter Wedge, Merle Brett, Chris Simpson. Iris and Alvin Stevens.

A minutes silence was held in recognition of the untimely death of Veronica Henwood, who was very dear to members of the club.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2012.**

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

Proposer: Pat Kirby  
Seconder: Chris Dobson.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (as read by Debbie Jager)**

**REVIEW OF OUR 2012/13 ACHIEVEMENTS**

**3.1 MEMBERSHIP**

*Being one of at least five hiking clubs in the Durban/Pietermaritzburg region, means that those with a desire to join a local hiking club have several attractive options. Some join two or even three clubs because it is relatively inexpensive and they then have a wide variety of activities to choose from.*

*We would always like to be the preferred option because as the saying goes, "the more the merrier". We started off the year with the membership strength at 137 after dropping by 6 members in the previous year. We have ended the year with the membership strength at 154. We are experiencing a slight increase in the participation of our members in club activities, and this is a good sign that we are serving their needs. However more feedback would be appreciated.*

*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.*

*We don't like to terminate membership due to non-payment and would far rather keep our members. Nevertheless we also need to be fair to our paying members who continue to be consistently reliable and responsible by paying their subscriptions promptly. We would encourage our members to attend the AGM where they can also pay their subscriptions before they forget.*

*It is encouraging to see that several new members that have joined the club during the year are participating in our activities quite regularly. We are encouraged by their enthusiasm and attendance, and hope that they will continue to enjoy our variety of activities.*

*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 HIKING ACTIVITIES

The management committee has set themselves goals for providing a broad range of activities. This assists with organising a balanced programme of activities that best caters for the needs of our members.

Our goals and actual activities for the year are summarised as follows:

ANALYSIS OF 2012/13 ACTIVITIES							
Activity	Frequency	Goal	Actual	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Social evenings	Bi-monthly	6	7	2	2	2	1
Day hikes	3 per month	36	30	9	6	8	7
Cave weekends	1 per month	12	13	3	4	3	3
Camping weekend	1 per month	12	6	2	1	2	1
Night hike	1 per year	1	1	-	1	-	-
Climbing/tenting weekend	1 per year	1	3	1	-	-	2
Cottage weekends	8 per year	8	12	4	2	3	3
Long distance trails	2 per year	2	1	-	-	1	-
Educational	1 per quarter	4	2	1	1	-	-
	Total	82	74				

We introduced the concept of educational activities to not only encourage the development of an awareness of nature but also to educate our members in other appropriate subjects of general interest. Although we set ourselves a target of four such activities, we only arranged two. Sixteen of our members visited the African Birds of Prey near the Lion Park in November and I am sure they were all fascinated by the display of several raptors. We also arranged a presentation by Rod Hart and Peter Rippon of how to get around our website; also what information is available and where to find it. They also demonstrated the link to facebook.

Our beginners' hikes are being well-attended. We have more recently introduced the concept of dog-friendly hikes after receiving several enquiries from our members. When we are hiking along local gravel roads or through plantations it is probably a good thing to be accompanied by dogs provided they are controllable and preferably on a leash.

Last year we achieved a combined attendance figure of 568. This is the summation of attendance at all of our activities. This year our combined attendance was 565.

### 3.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our club Constitution defines the purpose of our club in five objectives. I wish to report on the achievement of those objectives.

#### **Objective 1: Promote hiking and backpacking activities**

We have focussed more of our attention on the 30 to 40 age group and are aiming to 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**

We have established a link with the Free State Section of the Mountain Club of South Africa through Charlotte Augustyn, who is the chairperson of that club. Her email address is [charlottea100@gmail.com](mailto:charlottea100@gmail.com) and she can be contacted should you wish to know about hiking venues in the Free State. We will continue to arrange one or two joint activities a year in the northern Drakensberg so that our members can get together and share ideas and experiences.

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

In some recent hikes Annie Waterhouse has exposed us to the use of a GPS to locate geocaching sites.

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

We have made little progress with exploring ways of strengthening our links with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, Wildlands Trust, and similar nature conservation organisations. However Philip Grant is hosting a Wilderness Awareness Seminar in Underberg during October which should be of interest to our leaders.

**Objective 5: Encourage the improvement of facilities and trails.**

We made contact with SAPPI Forests in the Karkloof area but we have not yet identified a project where we can assist as a group, to develop and improve a trail. However John Fourie is assisting with the re-development of hiking trails at Blinkwater.

**3.4 LEADERS**

We cannot function as a hiking club unless we have leaders and I am pleased to report that we do not have a shortage of leaders. In fact we have a keen bunch of 12 leaders who are always willing to arrange and lead our activities. They are:

LEADER	CONTACT NUMBER	PREFERRED ACTIVITIES
Keith Ashton	082 846 6179	Cottage and camping weekends
Dave Sclanders	082 443 4287	Camping and caving weekends
Brian Henwood	082 655 6359	Day hikes and camping weekends
John Fourie	072 871 1252	Day hikes and camping weekends
Mark Nellist	082 826 2526	Day hikes and cottage weekends
Mary Nellist	083 700 6199	Day hikes and cottage weekends
Christie Exall	083 233 1998	Day hikes
Dave Coward	082 565 7546	Day hikes and long distance trails
Bushy Kirby	083 757 2660	Day & night hikes and camping weekends
Teresa Whitfield	082 374 1793	Hiking and camping weekends in Lesotho
Annie Waterhouse	072 095 8610	Day hikes
Sandy Miles	082 335 7367	Day hikes in the Durban area

The committee and leaders meet quarterly to compile the fixture lists and we try to provide an interesting variety of activities. The management committee has enjoyed the support of our enthusiastic group of leaders who never fail to respond positively to a request to lead a hike.

**3.5 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

For the sustainability of a club I feel it important that there is regular turnover of members on the management committee. New committee members bring with them new energy, different opinions and new ideas. However I also don't believe candidates should be bull-dozed into accepting election onto a committee for the sake of filling any vacancies if they are simply going to become observers without making a relevant contribution.

In addition, Committee members should not be re-elected to stand another year against their will or for the sake of keeping the committee intact. I can truly say that all our committee members have actively and enthusiastically participated in the management of our club, and for that they deserve a round of applause.

You are reminded that the status of the current management committee is as follows:

2012/13 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE		
POSITION	INCUMBENT	STATUS
Chairman	Brian Henwood	Stepping down
Vice-Chairman	John Fourie	Stepping down
Secretary	Carolee Thompson	Is prepared to stand down.
Treasurer	Sven Jager	Would accept re-election.
Club Activities	Debbie Jager	Would accept re-election.
Newsletter Editor	Brigitta Simpson	Would accept re-election.
Webmaster	Rod Hart	Would accept re-election.

<i>Membership Officer</i>	<i>Peter Rippon</i>	<i>Would accept re-election.</i>
<i>Member (without portfolio)</i>	<i>Mark Nellist</i>	<i>Would accept re-election.</i>

*You have been informed through the notice of the AGM that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman have indicated that they wish to stand down. This creates the opportunity to elect two new club members to the management committee. The other committee members have indicated their willingness to serve another term but most would not be averse to standing down if there are other members with a desire to serve.*

*We have received three nomination forms from members who have agreed to make themselves available for election to the committee, so we don't anticipate a problem with replacing those members standing down. They are all good candidates who I am sure will act in the best interest of our club and satisfy the needs of our members.*

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

*I am pleased to conclude that we have had another fine year and I would like to again acknowledge the commitment shown by all our committee members and leaders. They have unselfishly contributed to serving our members.*

*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.*

*I thank our new committee for making themselves available to serve our members and I trust they will be suitably rewarded by enjoying the support of our members.*

*I apologise for not being able to attend the AGM but you will know and understand that our family has suffered a huge loss with the sudden passing of our dear Veronica.*

*Brian Henwood  
Chairman: Midlands Hiking Club*

### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

**4.1** The Treasurer distributed a summary of the Annual Financial Statement for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013 and explained its contents. Accumulated funds amounted to R20 065.

Proposer: Andrew Templeton  
Seconder: Keith Ashton.

### **5. MEMBERSHIP FEES.**

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

Proposer: John Fourie  
Seconder: Kevin Knox-Davies.

Suggestions for spending the money were offered.

Carolee : spend on Christmas Party?

Brigitta : next AGM free?

**6. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS**

6.1 The Vice Chairman noted that Brian Henwood and John Fourie had indicated their preference to stand down. Carolee Thompson wished to stand down from position of Secretary but was prepared to stand in another position.

6.2 Neville Lee Chairman  
Proposer: Brian Henwood  
Seconder: John Fourie

Annie Waterhouse Secretary  
Proposer: Brian Henwood  
Seconder: Carolee Thompson

Carolee Thompson Vice Chairperson  
Proposer: Brigitta Simpson  
Seconder: Margaret Kirsten

6.3 The other members of the committee had agreed to make themselves available for re-election.

6.3.1 The new Committee 2013/2014 as follows:

Chairman	Neville Lee
Vice-chairperson	Carolee Thompson
Secretary	Annie Waterhouse
Treasurer	Sven Jager
Club Activities	Debbie Jager
Newsletter Editor	Brigitta Simpson
Webmaster	Rod Hart
Member	Mark Nellist
Membership Officer	Peter Rippon

6.3.2 The newly elected Chairman thanked the elected committee members for making themselves available to serve the club. Neville paid tribute to the previous committee members and especially to Brian.

**7. GENERAL.**

Brigitta presented prizes to competition winners.

Date change for hike: Mbona changed to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September  
John Fourie 's hike to Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September  
Happy Birthday to Bushy Kirby.

Next Club Social 17<sup>th</sup> September Dave Sclanders  
Christmas Party date to be announced

7.1 There being no further business the meeting closed at 19:15.