



## Report from the Chair 2020

An ancient Chinese proverb says 'may you live in interesting times' we are indeed living in such a time. Little did we think at the time of our last meeting on February 13th that we, along with the rest of the world, were about to be hit with this terrible pandemic. More than enough has been written and said about Covid and I have no wish to add to those words, but it is impossible to ignore and has affected all our lives.

The Waterberg is essentially reliant on tourism - photographic, hunting, archeological and cultural and our many lodges and guest houses have been hard-hit by the ban on both inter-provincial and foreign travel. With the local travel ban lifted it is encouraging to see the flood of Gautengers and others, desperate to travel, filling many of our lodges. In this regard Ken Maud and his team at Waterberg Tourism have been instrumental in keeping the message alive even when no travel was allowed.

Although we have been unable (or thought it unwise) to hold 'live' general meetings the Exco has continued to operate via Zoom and we held our first actual meeting on October 2nd with some members still joining via Zoom - we've had to learn a new skill, the protocol of zoom meetings!

At our sole live general meeting in February our speakers and subjects were as always diverse and interesting, Michelle Thompson from Welgevonden on the much talked about title 'Hotbirds', as fascinating as it sounded, Jessica Babich bringing us up to date on STWR's involvement in the rhino protection Tusk meeting in Kenya and WBR chair Lesiba Masibe along

with consultant Gavin Fleming from Kartoza on the vital matter of extending the Biosphere boundaries to include such important sites as Nylsvei and others.

With no other live meetings, there were presumably no speakers - not so, and special thanks go to Marilize Greyling with help from Marjorie Aucamp, Judi Groenewald and Reilly Mooney with tech assistance from Brad Algar, who spent a lot of time and effort putting together really interesting video presentations which went out to members.

With no meetings since February WNC secretary Sue Walker has kept things going with a stream of communications. Without her continued efforts we would all be in the dark, well done Sue.

Our Teaching the creche Teachers programme has been very successful and of great benefit to the Leseding creche teachers who participated, some of who have gone on to further their own education via special government courses. We feel that this programme has done as much as it can and we would like to thank the Waterberg Academy for the use of the school, and teacher Suzette van Dyk and her assistant Rhina who have done such an outstanding job. The WNC is however still committed to supporting education projects, more specifically conservation education and in this regard it is encouraging, even exciting, to see that the Waterberg Academy under the direction of new head Vernon Rorich is moving in this direction and we are looking to work with them and others in the future.

During the year the WNC made donations to the following:

Teaching the Creche Teachers (much abbreviated)

Adventures with Elephants

Lapalala Wilderness School

Waterberg Welfare Society

Membership numbers have remained constant at 89 paid-up memberships.

At the last AGM the following were confirmed as EXCO members:

Brad Algar, Jessica Babich, Greg Canning, Moji Kitse Marilize Greyling, Sue Jarman, Nikki McCartney, Solly Nkhumane, Peggy Parham, Sue Walker and myself. Subsequently Vernon Rorich joined.

Regretfully, Greg Canning and Solly Nkhumane have resigned, Greg is moving away and Solly has work pressures which preclude him from having time to participate. We wish Greg all the best in his new venture and Solly, the door is always open. We would like to thank both Greg and Solly for their important contributions. The rest of the EXCO remains the same.

After 6 years Sue is stepping down as secretary and after almost 5 I am stepping down as chair. However we both wish to remain involved and the EXCO has agreed that we should still serve on the committee. The committee is currently in discussions to fill both posts and their decisions will be announced in due course.

I would like to thank, you, the members, for your support, without you we couldn't exist, and the EXCO for their work in these difficult times. I stress again that this is a total team effort. Thanks team, and thanks for listening to me --- again. Please wear your mask and stay safe.

Robin Taylor Chair

November 2020.

