

## **Chairman's Annual Report March 2024 – Feb 2025**

### **Ken Flugel**

We record the sudden passing of our Treasurer, Ken Flugel, and express our sincere condolences to his family. Since 2018 Ken kept our accounts impeccably. He is greatly missed.

### **Environmental Officer's Reports**

The Executive Committee was presented with detailed reports on the many and varied activities performed by our teams during the past year.

These reports make interesting reading but are too voluminous to be recorded in the annual report. The sections below provide a summary of the year's activities.

### **Administration**

Many thanks to Arthur Rump for stepping into breach and acting as Secretary – Treasurer during the transition to our new accountants, P.W. Harvey & Co.

There is a lot of “red tape” involved with running a Non-Profit entity which would appal our members if they realised what goes on behind the scenes.

During the year, the ZC took occupation of 8 Edinburgh Drive, Amsterdamhoek. Finally, after more than half a century, we have a headquarters from which to operate.

### **Infrastructure**

Vehicles and boats are necessary for the ZC to operate efficiently, and of course they do require maintenance. Many thanks to Peter Seen and Vian Wilken who keep the veteran Curlew II on the water, and to Carl Welgemoed from NMBM who looks after Whimbrel like a baby.

Our vehicles and the trailer take a hammering, and consideration must be given to replacements in due course.

Many thanks to those members who have assisted with there own vehicles from time to time.

### **Education**

The renovated Motherwell Community & Enviro Hub serves not only as a recycling function, but now also as an educational centre. Apart from the teaching carried out on the banks of the Estuary, in the Aloe Reserve and at the Motherwell Stormwater Canal, the Hub hosts a variety of events through the year and is expected to become busier than ever in the future.

Many thanks to Jenny Rump for her guiding hand in growing the use of the Hub for the benefit of many hundreds of Motherwell children.

As usual our grateful thanks to our Head Educator Patricia Ntabeni, Educator Shirley Towa and Assistant Zoliswa Ntabeni for all their hard work in our Masifundisane Project which involves taking a bus load of 65 learners and teachers from Motherwell, Kwazakhele, Coega and Swartkops schools for a hands-on lesson once or twice a week – depending on funding. We also thank most sincerely Orion Engineered Carbons for assisting us financially and for providing sandwiches once a week to feed the hungry learners. ZC provides juice and sandwiches made by the teachers for the other lessons.

Last year Swartkops Primary won our ZC Eco Schools Competition. This aims at consolidating what was learned at Masifundisane lessons and encourages learners to apply what they learned to their school by keeping the grounds and toilets clean, recycling and growing their own vegetables.

The ZC Buhlebendalo Enviro Club has continued to do admirable environmental work under the leadership of their founder Patricia, assisted by Shirley and Zoliswa. The highlight of their year is always the Winter Training Week, held at the Hub which culminated in a march through the streets of Motherwell with banners about saving the environment accompanied with singing and chanting to the sound of a traditional drum.

### **Litter Picking**

Many Thanks to Femke and Kester and the hard-working team of Dolly, Casey and Tony for keeping up the never-ending battle against the plastic scourge – not to mention other types of garbage we certainly don't want in the Swartkops. Special mention must be made of their clearing out of the Motherwell Stormwater Canal litter traps where they climb in and manually remove the most ghastly rubbish before it spills into the canal and finally the estuary.

Well over 80,000 bags have been collected since 2017. That is an appalling statistic!

### **Recycling**

The ZC keeps the flow of recyclable items flowing to the Hub through its monthly collection in Redhouse, Bluewater Bay, Amsterdamhoek and Swartkops. This needs to become a priority for the Metro, once competent management is re-established.

### **Fund-raising**

The Conservancy needs to focus on revenue for wages and salaries. We are most grateful for the Metro Grant-in-Aid without which we could never manage. It cannot, however, be spent on emoluments, which is just as well, as payment of the grant is erratic!

We are extremely grateful to our donors, whose contributions are shown in the financial statements.

### **Public Relations**

We all agree that the Conservancy needs an upgrade to our PR profile and this is being investigated with the aid of local experts.

The association with external bodies such as the Perseverance Business Association and the Sustainable Seas Trust is being strengthened, which will hopefully result in additional resources being made available to the ZC

### **Estuary Management Plan**

Until we have a competent municipality, we cannot expect the Swartkops Estuary Management Plan to be implemented. However, Femke attends meeting of the forum which does what it can to further the cause.

### **Wetlands**

Repairs were made to the retaining wall at the upstream end of the old salt pan near the site of the demolished pump station and currently the situation is under control but will need further work in due course to strengthen it against the inevitable major flood. The salt pan now serves as a wetland as wastewater from the Motherwell Canal flows into it and not straight into the estuary. It is home to lots of birdlife.

**Frank Collier**