

Dear Members

The rather cumbersome 'email AGM' has come to an end and there is a new committee to take the Conservancy forward into what is hoped will be a future sans masks and social distancing. Members have volunteered their time and energy to implement projects that make Pennington the special place that it is and I can only hope that the year ahead will be one of members enjoying time with each other and fostering a greater appreciation of our wonderful natural environment.

The 2020/2021 committee is a combination of old and new which is how it should be. We need new ideas and challenges to the status quo. To question and make suggestions to do things differently creates viable alternatives not previously contemplated. I am confident that the new committee will succeed in bringing an innovative vibrancy to the Conservancy and I wish them every success in the year ahead.

My congratulations to Ryne Ferguson, Neil van Zijl, Allan McLennan and Hazel and Geoff Stockill on fearlessly treading where most sane people would hesitate to venture and then to Claude LeRoy for being the cornerstone of Impithi administration and putting up with me for another year. Colette Carty has graciously agreed to concentrate her efforts on Impithi, and social media and I look forward to assisting her in introducing new ideas at Impithi. Casper Strydom was the saviour of the gardens at Impithi during lockdown when he organised the cutting of the grass and has volunteered to continue with this service in the year ahead. My grateful thanks to Gail Merry, Dan Pieterse and Albert Louw for all their support of Impithi during the past year.

For me, one of the most exciting outcomes of the AGM has been the establishment of the Project working group. This group will undertake projects at Nkomba, Makamati and the grounds around Impithi and other areas around Pennington. It is wonderful to have a group of volunteers getting involved and together making great strides in protecting and enhancing the natural beauty of the area. My sincere thanks to Engela and Chris Wehr, Linda and Steve Stead, Karen and Marcel Verleur, Peter Woolcock and all the other members who have volunteered their help. Illovo Sugar has undertaken to support this initiative and it should be an exciting year ahead for the group.

There are two other members of the conservancy that play pivotal roles in the administration. Allan Cooper who tirelessly oversees the accounts, and generally offers sage and considered advice that is gratefully appreciated and Arnoud Wienese, whose enthusiasm for new ways of doing things is contagious and makes the mundane activities of recording data almost enjoyable. It is largely thanks to Arnoud that we were able to undertake the AGM and do the voting.

Thank you to all the members who made suggestions and ventured opinions on various aspects of conservancy activities. I sincerely hope that the new committee will not only take cognisance of these proposals but make every effort to include them in projects planned for the year. With your involvement and support I am confident that the new committee will accomplish great things in the year ahead.

kind regards
Mike Lillyman