



Minutes of the Melville Koppies Management Committee AGM
held on the 24th August 2024 at the Lecture Hut at 14h00

AGM: The AGM was held on Saturday 24th August 2024 at 14h00.

Present: See attendance register

Apologies: Barbara Shaw, Vaughan Russell, Tony Lelliott, Lis Jones

All present were welcomed to the AGM, and Wendy Carstens noted the Koppies Committee had been in existence since 1959.

- **Reading minutes of the 2023 AGM (Jenny Grice)**

The previous AGM was held on 2 Sept 2023. Comments noted in response to the minutes of the meeting included:

- There has been a decision not to open the Koppies as part of the Gardens of the Golden City this year as it proved to be a lot of effort with little reward.
- The Committee is still looking for additional guides, especially to help with School tours.
- There is now a YOCO machine used at the gate for visitor payments.
- Junkie Charity Shop manages to give about R1000/ month to the Koppies (items for sale with the number 4 has MK as the beneficiary) – please support them.

The minutes were adopted.

- **Annual report (Wendy Carstens)**

- The annual report is available on the website www.mk.org.za
- There are three permanent workers as well as occasional workers active on the Koppies. They are experienced with conservation and fire management.
- Rainfall measurements show a slow decrease over last 3 years, but there was also snow on 10 July 2023.
- There have been two controlled fire breaks, including the annual burn for Wits students. The remainder of fires have been uncontrolled burns but have been reasonably helpful in vegetation management.
- Protea trees have been attacked by insects – they are being monitored.
- Danny's CREASS team has been helping with various aspects (maintenance, repairs).
- A volunteer weeding group has been introduced, active on occasional Saturdays.
- There is a lot of effort needed with respect to publicity to get people to visit, including regular postings on Instagram and Facebook.

- There are many activities on offer on the Koppies such as hikes, walks, guided tours, treasure hunts, poetry sessions, bird ringing, photography, school groups.
- The monthly 8km Sunday morning group hikes were reintroduced and are very popular, including with young hikers.
- Numbers of recorded visitors:

2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
2553	2037	2379.

- It was noted that school groups are restricted to those that can afford buses, and also that there is a lot of bureaucracy (in government) for state school tours. Discussion included whether MK should try and facilitate more of these visits, for example by raising sponsorship (possibly from Department of Sports and Culture). A volunteer undertook to explore this further.
- Wits and UJ come often to the Koppies.
- Security is a major cost, including on Sundays. Melville Security Initiative is now funding Beagle Watch which is saving MK R2 000 - R3 000 – thanks were extended to the MSI. In general a lot of things get stolen such as bins.
- JHB City Parks did supply 2 day and 2 night-security guards. Then from 1 Aug the City unexpectedly brought new guards (and dogs).
- Publicity would be useful to lobby for the dogs from City Parks to be removed (they locked up all day in a cage, get taken out 2 or 3 times a day).
- MK is delighted to have won the Golden Shield Heritage Award as a 'preferred heritage destination'. The Award included a trophy and R30 000.
- MK has entered the ECO awards. About 20 people wrote references about the importance of the Koppies, making very enjoyable reading.
- Last year the AGM hosted a very engaging conversation between Lynne Maree and Pieter Dirk Uys.
- Sarah Charlton was seconded to the committee during the year.
- Wendy thanked all the committee members, and extended thanks to David Carstens, volunteer guide who conducts many guided tours.
- **Financial report (Wendy Carstens)**

There is approximately

- R45 000 in the current account
- R638 000 overall in deposits. Most of this is retained for pensions for the employees (and has been built from a large donation received some years ago).

Sources of income:

- Sunday visits – 38%
- Booked groups – 23%
- Private donations – 14%
- Corporate - 10%
- My School – 8%
- Junkies – 6%
- MK West – 1%

Expenditure

- Labour – 84%
- Security – 12%
- Maintenance, printing, insurance, website, bank charges etc – approx. 4%

- **Election of office bearers (overseen by Cllr Nicolene Jonker and Cllr Kyle Jacobs)**

The following were nominated and voted in:

- Alison Wilson
- Barbara Shaw
- Chrissie Carey
- Danyle Nunes
- Elsje Bonthuys
- Jenny Grice
- Lis Jones
- Mary Anne Farquharson
- Sarah Charlton
- Tam Scheidegger
- Tony Lelliott
- Vaughan Russell
- Wendy Carstens

Conservation employees were recorded as:

- Best Ndlovu
- Clement Ndlovu
- Joseph Kasonga
- Lucky Nyathi Mdluli

It was noted that former committee member Tony Nunes has retired to Mossel Bay, and that his contribution to maintenance and guiding will be missed.

Guest speaker

With the formal proceedings over Tam Scheidegger introduced speaker and pollinator steward Karen Dunn, who gave a very informative and entertaining talk on solitary bees.