

**GREYTON TRANSITION TOWN
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Greyton EcoLodge
25 February 2015; 4.30pm**

MINUTES

Present:

Patrick Adams	Leone Rouillard	Thandi Michelle
Neil Boulton	Lisa Wilson	Janet Richards
Tony Davidson	Angora v Doorn	Caroline Wood
Di Dawes	Mike Haupt	Michael Ash
Jane Gaisford	Joe van Lierde	Nicola Vernon
Marie Hector	Shamila Lewis	Marshall Rinquist
Alex Jellen	Anne Landon	George Clipp
Marguerite King	Tim Quinlan	Riaan Karolus
John McGlashan	Margaret McCartney	Gareth Gessing
Anel Mostert	Diane Wallendorf	Riaan Strydom
Gerry Mostert	Gary J Corsico	Virginia Jansen
Liesel Naude	Rohan Millson	Walter Bakker

Welcome address by Nicky Vernon

1. Apologies

Joanna Dibden, Alfra Cox, Wray Whyte, Leo Venrooy, Jeremy Prins, Nan Walker, Gabby van Heerden, Tristram Wilson, Leonie Ash.

Kenneth Stucke, who was our guest speaker, sent his apologies for pulling out of the presentation.

2. Minutes of last meeting and Matters Arising

Peter Kershoff is taking the place of David Golding to work with local farmers re organic farming. GTT is not going to set up a campus with Communiversity, the gap year programme for matriculants, as we are already moving towards our own programme via our eco-crew activities.

Proposed by Annie Landon, seconded by Rohan Millson

3. Update on activities of GTT 2014 – 2015 and 4. Plans for 2015 – 2016

a. Hello and goodbye 2014

Farewell to Candice Mostert, former Programme Manager of GTT, now working with GreenPop in Zambia full-time. Also farewell to Matt Shim from Australia, who visited for three months as a volunteer via The Green School in Bali, and to the student interns from Han University in the Netherlands, Tomas and Thys; Floortje and Mieke who were also each with us for three months.

Welcome to Marshall Rinqest in his new role as Director of GTT and to Riaan Karolus, new staff member, to work with Marshall on the Eco-Crews and other projects. Welcome also to the most recent volunteer arrival, George Clipp, from the UK. Two more volunteers from the Netherlands plus one from the UK are arriving week beginning 16th March.

b. Eco-Crew

2014

GTT started the year with 80 children from six schools in eco-crews, learning about gardening, heritage, climate, permaculture and other environmental awareness issues. The eco-crews worked in conjunction with local groups including Greyton Conservation Society (hacking) and the Tourism Bureau (helped with Cape Epic). Humane education is being stressed... especially working with animals; how to look after them; building self-esteem and kindness. LR Schmidt Primary School is hosting a pilot study in HE.

Some Eco-Crew Projects:

- Clearing waste and building the green park
- Making Eco-bricks
- Planting trees and growing food – gardens at each school – kids enjoy “getting dirty”
- Trash to Treasure Festival
- GreenPop – planted more than 400 trees, mostly fruit trees but also some indigenous trees to support Greyton Conservation Society
- Environmental camps – 22 children went to the Leopard Trust in the Cederberg.

Many children are part of government feeding schemes and benefit from a healthy meal at the EcoLodge before embarking on their afternoon programme of activities.

2015

140 children and growing! The team encourages constant feedback from the children to get their input and make adapt the programme accordingly.

Humane Education

GTT is about to receive R120,000 from Humane Society International to roll out HE. Alexander Jellen was instrumental in winning the grant via Andrew Rowan, head of Humane Society International in New York who visited LR Schmidt Primer. This funding has allowed GTT to appoint Riaan Karolus to work with GTT on HE and on the swop shops. Schools which have implemented the programme report up to a 70% decrease in bullying.

Nicola Vernon has set up a farm animal sanctuary on Tabularasa Farm outside Greyton which will be available as a resource for the Humane Education programme and for local and other visitors.

Eco-Crew Future Plans

- Plant up to another 1400 trees via GreenPop, building a fruit forest around the village. Free food – fruits and nuts
- More camps
- More community gardens – especially at the EcoLodge
- Environmental cleanups, on streets and in river beds
- Natural building – eco-bricks
- Documentary film making
- Structured Eco-Ranger programme similar to scouts and guides with the compilation of an eco-ranger manual with badges of achievement for cooking, camping etc.

Food Security

2014

Farms, gardens and markets

Children and volunteers have been planting seeds, watering, harvesting the produce in the six school gardens, the Police Station, EcoLodge and Green Park community gardens. GTT has been supplying the local community with local organic produce from the community gardens and from local farmers who are slowly converting to organic. Outlets are the Saturday Morning Market and Wednesday table at Via's as well as OK Supermarket and a number of Greyton restaurants, including, of course, Pure Cafe.

Many thanks to Hanco Poolman, who's been a star volunteer, running or helping out at every Wednesday and Saturday market for the last year

Pure Café

Thank you to Thandi Poole who ran the café during 2014 and welcome to Walter Bakker who has transformed the Café with a new look and is providing wonderful vegan meals – demonstrating that eating less meat can be a rewarding and tasty experience.

2015

Organic farming

Continuing to work with local organic farmers expanding both organic growers and local markets. GTT is also to establish a PGS, Participatory Guarantee System, [with help from Charl Pienaar from Paarl], to establish a small-scale organic certification system.

Animal Agriculture

Animal agriculture's impact. A WorldWatch 2009 paper states that animal agriculture is responsible for 51% of green house gas emissions. GTT will not shy away from this fact and will encourage and inform about eating more plants and fewer animals – with the added bonus of less animal suffering.

Fruit Forest and Community gardens

Expand fruit forest with GreenPop and Eco-Crews, develop more community gardens and encourage and support residents to grow more vegetables in their gardens.

Waste reduction

2014

Upcycling workshops

Monique Fagan held a number of upcycling workshops during the year, sponsored by GTT, with women's groups and community organisations.

Swop shops

Children and adults in need collect clean, dry recycled waste and earn vouchers to exchange for food, clothes, stationery. Two have opened so far, one in Genadendal, one in Caledon; others to come in Villiersdorp and Riviersonderend. Food donations from Shoprite Checkers. Many thanks to ChicMamas for all their support, supplying second hand clothing. Large, positive impact on environment has been seen with much less waste littering the streets. Around 700 kgs waste is collected from Genadendal alone, by around 120 beneficiaries. Funded by the Industrial Development Corporation.

Plastic bag-free Greyton.

We want to be a model for the rest of the country in banning the single-use bag. Phase 1 began on 3 July 2014, introducing the long-life bag and holding promotional activities including a Check Out Challenge for local cashiers. Activist Hayley McLennan of the Two Oceans Aquarium came to give a presentation on plastics' effects on ocean wildlife to shop managers/owners. Two Oceans give constant support as part of the national Rethink the Bag campaign, even sending up a man in a penguin suit (literally) to run a day of promotions in the shops.

Greyton Green Park

There has been no activity with regard to processing garden waste to woodchips because of the loss of the Cape Nature chipper (no funds from Cape Nature to run it). The two men working there have been kept on via private sponsorship to produce compost and look after the Green Park.

Trash to Treasure

A festival was held during the 2014 year on what was, up until then, one of the hottest days on record. As a result we had a poor turnout and are looking at a different format for 2015.

2015

- Mentor the four existing swop shops until end of year. Open swop shop in Greyton and expand high end waste sources. GTT members made some suggestions: Sasko in Worcester supplies bread locally, Langeberg tin factory in Ashton, Montego in Malmesbury. Suggestion of 'Plastics to Oil' by Neil Boulton.
- Festival of Sustainability with Greenpop – fixing dates now.
- Press on with second phase of single use plastic shopping bag free Greyton. Local seamstresses to make long-life bags from parachute material (check out Ripstop from SA Military who dump old parachutes).

Positive promotions will take place including dolphin insert saying 'thank you' in each long-life bag, pledging not to use single use bags. Continue working with children who can help change mindset of parents.

- Continuing rehabilitation of dumpsite and growth of Green Park. Finish eco-brick outdoor classroom.
- Possible transfer station being established by municipality which will greatly increase recycling.
- Promoting reduce * reuse * recycle.
- Continue with compost and biochar and raise funds to buy our own chipper.

Renewable Energy

2015

National Eskom tie-in still not available which causes problems raising funding because no credit is available for solar energy fed into the grid. A new resident, Gareth Gessing, offered to advise on solar and other energy projects. NV is working with Biotherm Energy who built the Klipheuwel Wind Farm outside Caledon. She has been appointed as a trustee of the community trust which owns 5% of shares in the Wind Farm. Biotherm are willing to work with GTT to consider logistics and finances around installation of solar panels on the roof of Emil Weder High School and Greyton EcoLodge.

EcoLodge

During the year GTT successfully bid for the lease for the Zebra Moon backpackers and Janet Ravenscroft was invited to reprise her former role as manager of the establishment. The building is gradually being refurbished and will ultimately be transformed into a model of sustainability. From the start the EcoLodge has been a success and attracts all sorts of groups wishing to enjoy the peace and beauty of Greyton. GTT have promised, in the lease, to focus on education and environmental awareness. Key aspects of the activities of the EcoLodge are:

- Affordable accommodation
- Backpackers, mountain bikers, eco-tourists, families, groups, schools, charities, churches, pilgrimage
- Eco-crew base of operations and home for GTT interns and volunteers
- Permaculture garden
- Community events and gatherings – several terrific music evenings: Tony Cox, Jimmy Andersen, Guy Buttery, Steve Newman, Hinds Brothers, UCT Choir, Steve Fataar, Errol Dyers, Simon von Gent Band, David Knowles, Jane Gaisford, and Splynta with David Miller doing Herman Charles Bosman on 15 March.

2015

Continue to work on improving the building. NV to engage with Dept of Public Works who own the building, to see if a contribution could be forthcoming for structural works.

- More music and other events for the community
- Workshops in sustainability, creating a transition town, environmental awareness, permaculture
- Biking, hiking events
- Yoga retreats
- Model garden and sustainable systems such as rain water harvesting, grey water reticulation

- Film shows
- Speakers
- THE eco-tourism destination

Employment Creation

2014

Greyton Transition Town directly employs two full-time posts. GTT also runs the EcoLodge, employing three full-time people and some casuals. GTT supports and/or mentors Pure Café, Pure Home, Sparkle, Greyton Natural Builders, Greyton Green Park Management and Greyton Property Management which together employ 17 people full time. With support from outside consultants, GTT is setting up 20 different co-operatives, which will be mentored for at least 2 years. The Co-ops are applying for the Co-operative Incentive Scheme award which enables them to receive grants of up to R350,000 of which R70,000 must be spent on mentoring and training. This scheme has the potential to create at least 150 jobs.

2015

GTT will focus on developing and supporting the co-operatives to write business plans, produce financial projections and apply for CIS funding. GTT may act as a Secondary Co-operative, managing those aspects of the scheme which are better centralized, for example, vehicle pools, book-keeping and marketing expertise.

HOUSING

2014

During 2014 GTT worked with a local resident in need of housing to see if it would be possible for him to help design and build his own house. Local architects Luis Ferriera da Silva and Lorrence Keyser, worked with Riaan Strydom and plans were produced.

Riaan made a brief presentation about his life in Greyton and his need for housing. As well as working hard as a skilled permaculture gardener, he has helped to raise youngsters at risk turning their attentions towards music. He is vocalist with The Country Conquerors, the only Afrikaans reggae band, who write original songs that educate and empower youth. At least fifty other good, hard-working people are living in appalling circumstances and it is hoped that Riaan's example will inspire and motivate other members of the community to help themselves, with support from GTT.

Further housing is being planned and GTT has been contributing sustainability, low environmental impact and natural building suggestions with support from a team of pro bono professionals. However, the community is not yet ready for such a development so an inspiring example is needed. A divided community is a shame upon us all and GTT will work on a one by one basis until such time as the whole community gets behind the eco-village. A charette – a weekend-long communal visioning process – would be most beneficial to map the road forward.

Achievements

Congratulations to MR for being named a UN Ambassador for Sustainable Communities and to NV for being elected a trustee of the new Caledon wind farm community foundation.

5. Treasurer's Report

Latest financials are attached, produced in a highly professional manner by new GTT treasurer Janet Ravenscroft. Following approval by members present, these are to be sent to Gerhard Volschenk in Caledon and the finished accounts will be sent to all members and attendees. Rohan Millson proposed that the financials be approved, seconded by Jane Gaisford. Michael Ash proposed that the Treasurer's Report be approved, seconded by John McGlashan.

It was agreed to appoint, once again, Gerhard Volschenk as the GTT professional accountant for the year 2015. Proposed by Nicola Vernon, seconded by Janet Ravenscroft.

NV will send financials and narrative report to the Dept of Social Development.

6. Election of Members to serve on the board for the following year:

During the year board member Careen Bernstein moved to Cape Town and Sunnye Collins stood down to create time for her new home schooling venture. Marshall Rinquest can attend board meetings but no longer has a vote as he is now Director of GTT. To maintain our minimum requirement of board members, during the year we co-opted Reduan Strydom, representing Heuwelkroon. Reduan has been a very effective volunteer for GTT and brings lively debate to our board meetings. His election to the Board was proposed by Annie Landon, seconded by Jane Gaisford. Janet Ravenscroft was also co-opted as Board Member and Treasurer. Janet is a highly skilled book-keeper and has much experience of keeping accounts for NPOs and commercial organisations. Her election to the board and role as treasurer was proposed by Virginia Jantzen, seconded by Riaan Strydom. Rohan Millson has stepped forward to take the role of Secretary.

7. Any Other Business

There being no other business the AGM was declared closed with grateful thanks to the members present for such a good turn out. The next AGM will take place within the first three months of 2016.