



## The Hermanus Cliff Path Management Group

# 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Chairman's Report

February 2017

We have pleasure in presenting the **15<sup>th</sup> Annual Report** of the Cliff Path Management Group (CPMG) covering the twelve month period from March 2016 to February 2017.

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On the 24<sup>th</sup> January this year the Cliff Path Management Group (CPMG) celebrated 15 years of operations along the coastal cliff path section of the Fernkloof Nature Reserve. To mark the occasion a celebratory function was held at the Botanical Society Hall in Fernkloof at which the Overstrand council, Municipal Management and representatives of organisations who have supported and worked with the CPMG since its inception in 2002 were represented.

In a presentation highlighting some of the activities of the past fifteen years the chairman noted that it is gratifying to reflect that all of the original goals set by the CPMG in 2002, and many new ones since then, have been successfully accomplished. This could not have been possible without the support of over 240 private contributors, members of the Overstrand council and Municipal Management, the Fernkloof Advisory Board (FAB), the Overstrand Municipality's Environmental Management team and the Ward 3 committee. The CPMG has also benefitted from continued close cooperation with the Hermanus Botanical Society (Botsoc), Whale Coast Conservation (WCC), Hermanus Public Protection (HPP), Hermanus Ratepayers' Association (HRA), the Hermanus History Society (HHS), the Westcliff Residents' Association and the Hermanus Tourism office, each one helping to make it possible to meet our goals along the path and its environs and on Hoy's Koppie.

2002 to 2017: A summary of progress

- **11 197** metres of cliff path rebuilt (excluding 800 metres along Main Road in Eastcliff) .....at a cost of over **R3 million**
- **Alien free** coastal vegetation
- **5 boardwalk bridges** constructed to enable wheelchair use & to improve safety
- **Wheelchair-friendly sections** – over 9 kilometres of wheelchair and pushchair-friendly paths.
- **Piet-se-bos** walk upgraded including 4 boardwalks and signage
- **25 information signs** environmentally compatible

- **800 “Cliff Path Experience” DVD’s** sold
- **30 000 Cliff Path brochures** distributed
- **Hermanus Biodiversity Walk** established 2016
- **Cliff Path web site** developed
- **“Champagne Mile” Voice Map** created
- **Co-Management Agreement** concluded with Overstrand Municipality
- **Hermanus Cliff Path & Hoy’s Koppie** featured in local, national and international media, travel brochures, TV and radio

### **CPMG Projects – Completed & Planned:**

- Path Maintenance: During the 2016/17 year 107 metres of the path in the Eastcliff area were resurfaced in exposed aggregate concrete replacing worn and eroded laterite surfaces. However, due to an incorrect concrete mixture some of this section is to be resurfaced. A further three sections, one in Eastcliff and two in Voëlklip, are earmarked for upgrading during the coming year. Funding will come from a Ward 3 allocation and private donations.
- Extension of the Cliff Path towards the Proposed new Development: Redefining and rebuilding the badly degraded path from the eastern end of Piet-se-bos to houses above Scout Camp, including boardwalks over wetland areas, is another project on our to-do list once the tender for the new development at the old Camp Site is concluded.
- Piet-se-bos Recreation Area Upgrade: This project, that includes a new 181 metre long boardwalk around the perimeter of the Grotto recreational area and the re-establishment of a wetland along its northern edge, is still on the cards and will form part of a major Municipal development plan for the Grotto area.
- Benches and Bridges Condition Report:  
During November 2016 the condition of benches and boardwalk bridges from the start of the cliff path above the New Harbour (Scotsman’s Point) in the west to Grotto Beach in the east were assessed by members of the CPMG and its ‘Eyes and Ears’ volunteer team. The objective was to aid the municipality in identifying benches and other structures in urgent need of attention.  
**Findings:** a) Over 25% of all benches are partially or completely unusable and currently unsafe to use.  
b) The six boardwalk bridges needed servicing and re-treating. This was done by the CPMG in December prior to the holiday period. A detailed report with supporting photographic evidence was submitted to the Municipality in December. To date the Municipality have re-varnished all benches, but repair or replacement of damaged benches is yet to be completed.
- Sea Road to Mollergren Park section along Main Road: A movement to solicit public support and to take the necessary actions to complete the cliff path along this rugged section of coastline has recently been launched by an independent body known as “Cliff Path Action Group”. This is a private initiative and is not linked to the CPMG. The coastal section in question is outside the Fernkloof Nature Reserve coastal area and does not fall within the CPMG’s mandated area of activity (The CPMG operates only within the Fernkloof Nature Reserve

sections of the coastline unless specifically authorized by the Municipality to upgrade other sections, e.g. the Biodiversity Walk, Roman Rock and Fick's Pool/Hermanuspietersfontein sections)

- The Hermanus Biodiversity Walk continues to attract visitors and residents as an informative and educational asset of the town. Funding is now available for the additional ± 50 metres of wooden safety railing above the high embankment eastwards from in front of the Windsor Hotel and construction will be completed before end-July 2017. The introduction of indigenous vegetation species to replace aliens such as statice, lavatera, nasturtiums, cannas and kikuyu met with only limited success due to a lack of availability of water in its early growth stages. We are now looking into planting alternative indigenous ground cover.
- Signage: a) A number of small direction signs have faded beyond legibility and will be replaced in 2017/18. b) Attention will be given to making the re-entry point at Mollergren Park more obvious.
- Litter: Accumulated jetsam from trawlers and passing ships washed up along the high-water mark combined with litter washed down through storm water pipes and discarded by the public, is another major problem, particularly along the Biodiversity Walk coastline. The Municipality has conducted clean-ups from time to time, as have CPMG volunteers and community-minded people like Jan Cilliers and the Westcliff Residents' Association and Antonio Da Silva-Swart and others, but a dedicated team is needed to keep the CBD sections of the coast and cliff paths free of litter and funding for such a team is being sought by the municipality.
- CPMG Web site: The CPMG now has its own web site [www.hermanuscliffpath.co.za](http://www.hermanuscliffpath.co.za) and an e-mail address [info@hermanuscliffpath.co.za](mailto:info@hermanuscliffpath.co.za). The website is a work in progress and will be improved upon and added to during the coming year and beyond.
- VoiceMap "Champagne Mile" Walk: The self-guided VoiceMap walk along the "champagne mile" section of our coastline on Marine Drive has received fewer 'hits' than hoped for and the app will need to be publicized to a greater extent during the coming year.
- Co-Management Agreement with the Overstrand Municipality: A working agreement between the municipality and the CPMG, finalised late in 2016, will be ratified by end-February.
- Alien Vegetation: Pending the finalization of the above co-management agreement alien clearing along the coastline was suspended for most of last year. Nevertheless CPMG member, Frank Woodvine and his team were very active in December 2016 and January 2017 in the CBD, Eastcliff and Voëlklip areas. We are grateful to our Eyes and Ears volunteers and members of the public for their input in identifying and locating alien species. Alien clearing is ongoing.
- Tree Planting: As in previous years, indigenous trees were planted in Piet-se-bos during International Harbour Week by the CPMG, members of its Eyes and Ears team and learners from local schools. A clean up was arranged as part of the Mandela Day activities. This will continue into the coming year and beyond.

- Coastal Vegetation Care: Under contract to the Municipality bi-annual cycles are conducted to trim overhanging vegetation and treat invasive kikuyu grass either side of the path.
- Cliff Path Brochure: Sponsored by the De Chatillion Collection the Cliff Path brochure has been updated and 20 000 copies of the new version have been printed and are being distributed through the Whale Coast Hotel the Hermanus Tourism Bureau, B&B's and some restaurants and other outlets. They are also available from CPMG committee members.
- Security: HPP report that the CCTV surveillance cameras installed by them and the municipality in December 2015 in the CBD, including the Biodiversity Walk and other key points, are now all fully operative and proving effective in identifying crime and potential criminal activity. We are particularly grateful to HPP for the doubled up patrols along the cliff path during the recent festive season as a result of which zero incidents were reported during this busy period.
- "Eyes and Ears" volunteer programme: We thank those members who have provided regular feed back on litter, vandalism and alien vegetation. We note and have conveyed to the Municipality a report that there are insufficient litter bins at some key viewing sites resulting in an accumulation of litter and many cigarette butts at these points.
- "The Cliff Path Experience" DVD: A few copies of this DVD are available at a reduced price of R50. Please contact the chairman (details below) should you wish to purchase any.
- "Drone's Eye View of the Cliff Path" DVD: A key promotional objective in 2017 is to replace the 2007 "Cliff Path Experience" DVD, mentioned above, with a new "Drone's Eye View" DVD as a joint project with Charl De Kock of the De Chatillion Collection.
- Historical Sites Project: A joint project between the CPMG and the Hermanus History Society is set to commence this year and roll out over the next few years. Points of specific historical interest to residents and visitors will be identified – for example where Bill Selkirk caught his record-breaking shark; the centuries-old milkwood trees at Piet-se-bos; the Khoi Khoi and San peoples' midden sites; and so on – and a brief description will be mounted on a small, discreet plinth similar to those erected by the History Society in Swallow Park and at the Wasbakkies near Hermanuspietersfontein.
- Transgressions: The number and extent of encroachments by homeowners illegally extending their properties into the coastal sections of the Fernkloof Nature Reserve has increased enormously. Large areas of indigenous vegetation have been destroyed and replaced by plants that do not naturally occur along the coast, even fruit trees. They have been reported to the Overstrand Environmental Management Services through the Fernkloof Advisory Board with a recommendation that perpetrators are fined and their names made public. We await follow up by the EMS and Law Enforcement.
- Liaisons: We continue to report back regularly to the Fernkloof Advisory Board and the Ward 3 committee. Contact with HPP management, the Sector 3 Police Forum, the Hermanus Ratepayers' Association and Botsoc continues as necessary

- Public Relations: The CPMG is grateful to *Hermanus Times* and *Village News* for their ongoing support and coverage of our activities.
- Dog faeces: Thanks to Whale Coast Conservation and the Hermanus Ratepayers' Association 'Doggy Doo Bag' dispensers have been installed at a number of key sites along the cliff path.

### Summary of Finances:

Since inception in 2002 contributions to the cliff path programme amount to **R3 164 854** - 62% from private contributions, 36% from the Municipality and 2% from DVD sales and bank account interest. Total expenditure over the same period on cliff path upgrading and alien clearing, etc. was **R3 116 859**. The balance of R47 995 in the CPMG's Investec account will be used for projects in 2017/18

### 2016/17 Income and expenses:

#### Income –

Overstrand Municipality (Ward 3)	R 60 000
De Chatillion Collection (brochure sponsor.)	R 15 000
Private donations .....	R 7 000
Capitalised interest on Investec account ...	R 3 805
DVD sales .....	R 80
	<u>R 85 885</u>

#### Expenditure –

Path/Bridge maintenance.....	R 72 512
Boardwalks maintenance .....	R 5 916
Web site development .....	R 5 040
Labour .....	R 2 085
Brochure printing .....	R 15 000
	<u>R100 553</u>

The CPMG does not seek membership subscriptions, nor does it levy any fees for its voluntary services, but still depends on donations from the community for projects not budgeted for by the Municipality.

Contributions are always important. They can be made by cheque to **Investec Bank** and sent or handed to the CPMG chairperson or a committee member listed below. (*Note: Please make out cheques to **Investec Bank** and NOT to the Cliff Path Management Group*) OR Electronic transfers (EFT's) can be made as follows (please advise CPMG of donor name for our records & so that we can acknowledge):

Bank: **Investec Private Bank**

Branch number: **580105**

Account name: **Hermanus Cliff Path Management Group**

Account number: **5000 211 5857**

## The Cliff Path Management Group:

- The Group has met regularly on alternate months and less formally on other occasions through the past year. The varied expertise of individual members gives the CPMG exceptional balance and strength and they are well represented on committees or as members of other civic and environmentally related bodies: Ward 3 committee (Cllr. Kari Brice – Chairperson and David Beattie), the Fernkloof Advisory Board (David Beattie vice-Chairperson and Kari Brice), the Botanical Society (Giorgio Lombardi, Frank Woodvine and Anina Lee), Whale Coast Conservation (Anina Lee), Hermanus Municipality (Lauren Rainbird), the Sector 3 Police Forum (Kari Brice, David Beattie) and the Hermanus History Society (Werner Zybrands, David Beattie). Committee members also work with associated organisations on specific projects.

The CPMG committee has remained unchanged in 2016/17. Their support and the time and effort that they have contributed to ensure that the Cliff path remains a key feature of Hermanus, is greatly appreciated. Neville Green, Biodiversity Manager, Overstrand Environmental Management Services represents the EMS at CPMG meetings. His input and counsel is immeasurable and we extend our special thanks to him.

Your questions, suggestions and offers of support are always welcome and can be addressed to any of the CPMG committee members listed below.

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Environmental Management Neville Green [ngreen@overstrand.gov.za](mailto:ngreen@overstrand.gov.za)

David Beattie – Chairperson

February 2017

The Hermanus Cliff Path Management Group mission:

*To drive initiatives that will environmentally conserve, enhance, maintain and secure the Cliff Path section of the Fernkloof Nature Reserve, from the New Harbour to Grotto Beach (Piet se Bos) including Hoy's Koppie, for the safe use and pleasure of the residents and visitors to this coastal community.*

