



NATURES VALLEY NEWS

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Dear NVRA members and friends

We are finally rid of the year of the lockdown and hope that 2021 heralds at least the beginning of the end of the Covid virus though as you read this newsletter, winter is just around the corner and vaccines may be around another corner so mask up and keep your distance. Remember how the second wave reached us and peaked during December and January holiday season? Holidaymakers came to the Valley to escape the

restrictions at home, only to be confronted with the Garden Route being declared a hotspot with alarmingly high Covid infections. This created all kinds of challenging situations for visitors and residents alike. Local businesses such as guesthouses, shops and restaurants were deeply impacted and incurred huge losses and beaches (and our lagoon) were closed, which obviously created a lot of frustration but also opened other possibilities. More people were walking the streets of the Village and the hiking trails were filled to capacity. The usual events such as the carols by candlelight, Father Xmas at the lagoon, and the traditional church bazaar had to be cancelled all resulting in a very different Nature's Valley holiday experience, but still charming and busy as always.



SANParks and Bitou Municipality were faced with a very different challenge in managing restrictions imposed on towns and resorts. The curfew and lockdown regulations had to be managed with law enforcement and we would like to convey our sincere thanks to them for the sensitive way in which this difficult job was performed. Our thanks also go to Marco Bernardo and his team, the lifeguards (for the limited time they were here) and to the ever-innovative Natures Valley Trust who reorganised their normal Xmas events schedule and provided some virtual alternatives.

Changes at Bitou Municipality

Bitou's maybe, maybe not Municipal Manager," who was dismissed in 2012 for serious financial misconduct, was illegally rehired in 2019. The appeal (lodged by Plett RPA) hearing was held on 16 September 2020 in the Labour Appeal Court.

As matters stand, the appeal was upheld and it has, once again, been confirmed that Ngoqo's appointment by the council was unlawful and his employment since February 2019 was unlawful. We await the outcome and news of his replacement.

New Bitou senior appointments for the posts of Chief Financial Officer (Mphumlele Dyushu), Luvuyo Ntoyi (Director of Engineering Services) and Misiwe Mpahlwa (Director of Corporate Services) were announced in January 2021.

The draft Zoning Bylaw (2021)

In February, Bitou Municipality issued notice of a public participation process for a draft zoning bylaw which has the objective of simplifying property zoning categories in the various wards in support of the Spatial Development Framework. The draft zoning bylaw in its current form does not adequately address the property rights of owners in Natures Valley. The NVRA has registered its objections and made proposals to the Municipality as to how best incorporate the various conditions of title enjoyed by property owners in Natures Valley. A copy of the submission can be found on the NVRA web site.

The Bitou Spatial Development Framework which guides the zoning process is currently being updated and will be issued for public comment in or around April this year. This is an important document for Natures Valley property owners and will be rigorously reviewed once presented.

Easter Holidays in the Valley - Issues requiring your attention and support if you are in the Valley

- **Honeysucker service for conservancy tanks.**

Marco, our Superintendent encouraged owners during Dec-Jan holiday season to book the honey sucker service in advance of your conservancy tank overflowing! Those of us who followed his advice spared ourselves a lot frustration. A conservancy tank has a limited capacity, and you should be able to estimate when the honey sucker service would be needed. Please arrange this before the Easter holidays with Bitou and Marco.

See the last page for details of the honeysucker procedure and current fees and make sure that tenants are also aware of it.

- **Pets in the Valley**

We are concerned about the growing number of cats seen in the Valley. Cats cannot be contained and are natural hunters. The bird population of the Valley is very important to all owners and is under threat because of the cats.

We are also concerned about dogs that are not controlled and that are walked without leashes in our streets and at the lagoon and on the beaches. There are clear signs at the entrances to beaches about dog rules and we appeal to owners and visitors to obey these rules. Poo bags are available at certain points and we try to provide enough bags, but dog owners must always carry their own bags to collect the dog poo. This must be done in the Village and along the beaches and other public spaces.

- **Camping in Natures Valley**

Camping is prohibited in the Valley. Title deeds of owners specifically state that no camping or caravanning is allowed on private premises. Please make sure that visitors who rent houses are aware of this ruling and if camping facilities are necessary then owners should make use of the SANParks camp site or other official camp sites in the locality.

Waste Management

An integrated waste management plan and the case for recycling

Bitou Council recently approved an initiative to minimise municipal waste, and also proposed the cleaning up of massive accumulations of illegal dumping sites within the residential areas of all seven wards of Bitou Municipality.

A Bitou Integrated Waste Management Plan for 2020-2025 will be available for public comment in April.

We will review it and keep you informed as to its content.

An indication of just how much Bitou spends on garbage disposal every year is illustrated by the fact that just on un-budgeted plant hire to deal with garbage, an additional R 37m had to be spent last year, but what exactly it was spent on has not been adequately explained to yet. A study from Aurecon Consultants on waste minimisation showed that 40% of recyclable materials land in household black bags. At least R 4m will be spent on taking that 40% out of the garbage stream. The blame for that cannot be laid at the door of the municipality, because it is squarely in each individual's control how they deal with the garbage they generate in their home.

The recycling bins in the WTS are there to be used and the material is sorted and consolidated in the Plett Industrial area where it is dispatched directly to recyclers. If necessary, we can increase the frequency of emptying by the contractor or obtain more bins but please let's recycle as much as possible.

In addition to recycling, good waste management practices assist in effective baboon management. Most owners and visitors are very cooperative and make sure that domestic waste is disposed of in a responsible way. Waste should never be left outside in plastic bags or in bins that are not tightly secured. Wheely bins should only be put outside on Fridays when waste will be collected. However, the best option is to take your waste personally to the WTS (Waste Transfer Station). New sign boards have been erected at the site which clearly show where the waste bags must be thrown through the sliding door into the building and where the recyclables should be put inside the bins. Unfortunately, it often happens that someone just drops a box or bag of rubbish next to the recycling bins instead of throwing it inside. Food should never be left outside of the main waste building and should not be placed inside bins for recyclables.



The recycle bins have recently been secured so that baboons cannot enter them. Nevertheless, no food residues should be deposited in them. The photos show how the recycle bins have been effectively made baboon proof. Thanks to Marco

Garden waste -

Garden waste must not be dumped anywhere in the Valley and definitely not at the Waste Transfer Station. And also not along any of our beautiful entry passes and roads. Greenish organic waste can be disposed of at the waste processing facility just outside Plettenberg Bay on the N2.

Refuse dumping in the road verges - The number of plastic bottles, tins and plastic bags along our roads seem to be increasing. We want to appeal to all road users, including hikers, joggers, and cyclists not to throw anything along the road and to help keep our Village and the surroundings clean.

A list of contractors who help with the disposal of garden waste is available from Annamarie Kovacic in the NVRA Office.

At all the entrances to beaches and to the lagoon, the round concrete bins have been fitted with attractive baboon-proof rotating lids. These new lids have been very effective and look neat and clean. We want to thank our chairperson, Dave Owen for donating these bin lids. We really appreciate the gesture Dave!



Baboons

Statistics gathered through WhatsApp observations since the end of December with respect to baboon activity in each zone of Natures Valley are shown in the pie graph below showing the larger percentage of baboon activity in the eastern half of the Valley and some decline in the number of house invasions since the December holiday period

Figure 1: Nature s valley Grids most affected by Baboon activity (refer to zone map below)

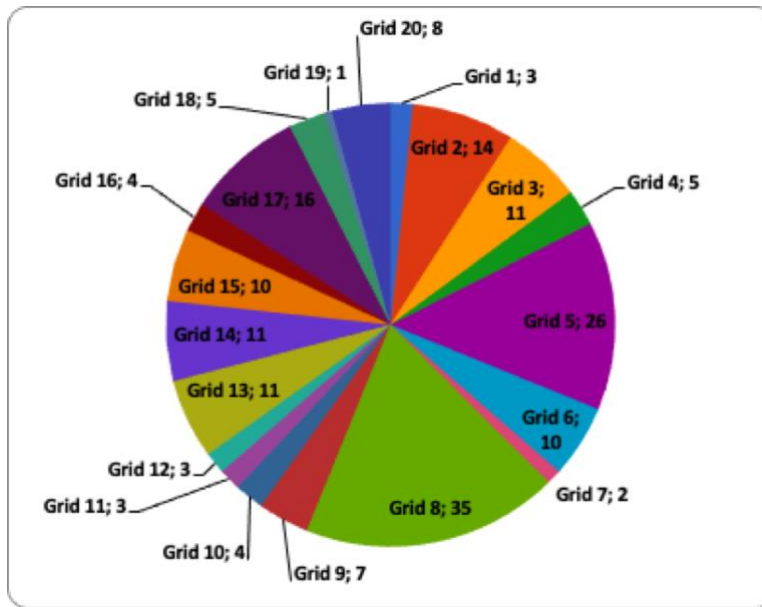
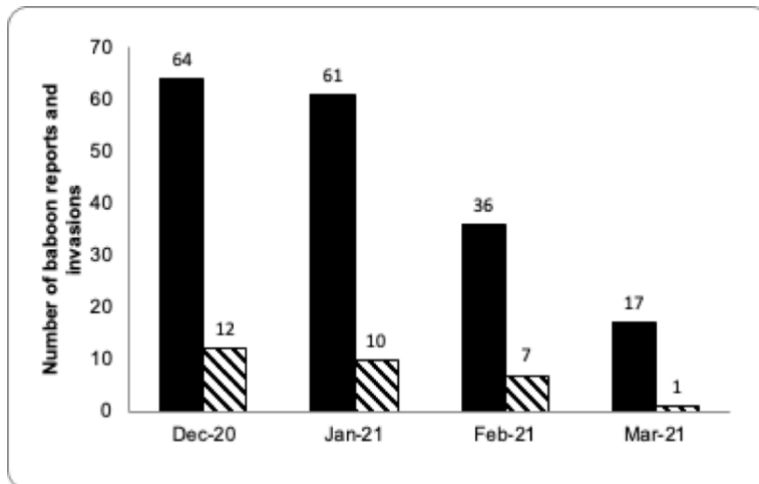
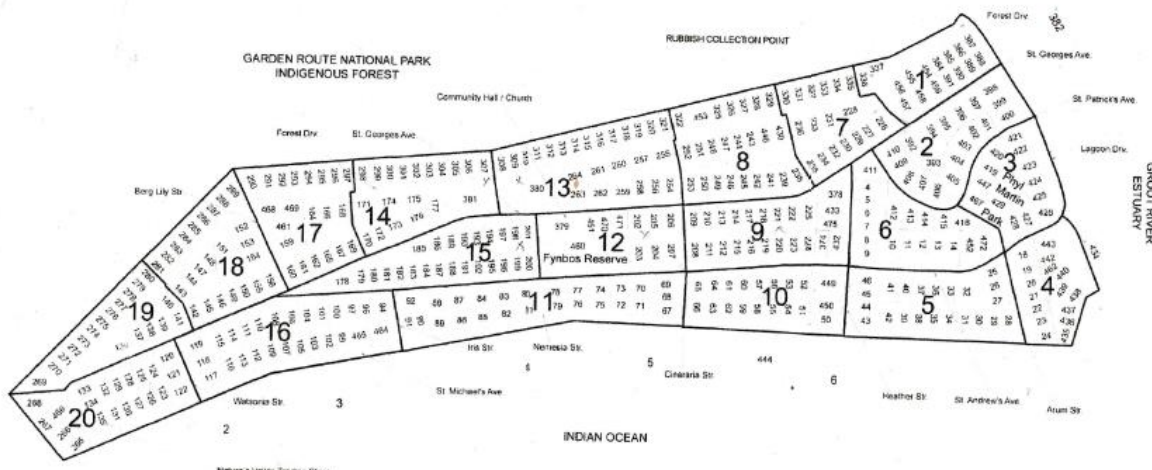


Figure 2: Number of baboons reports (Solid black) and baboon invasions (Stripes) for each month from December 2020 to March 2021. Note: March is not a complete month – data presented only up until 8 March 2021





Very recently the body of a young female baboon was found on a currently unoccupied erf in Forest Drive, she had been shot while carrying her infant.

Living in an area with baboons has its challenges and managing baboons in Natures Valley is certainly not straightforward, however this type of intervention is unacceptable and illegal.

The Nature Conservation Ordinance prohibits the hunting, without a permit, of baboons within a public place in the area of jurisdiction of a local Authority (which Natures Valley is viz Bitou Municipality). We have informed CapeNature and the local authority about the incident. Cape Nature are investigating the case and we call upon residents to please provide any meaningful information they may have regarding this incident either openly or in confidence, by phone or email to the NVRA.

Security

We are fortunate to have a permanent security presence in Natures Valley in Fidelity ADT due solely to the high percentage of homeowners (75%) who have signed contracts with the company.

The agreement which we have with Fidelity ADT makes provision for the response unit to attend to general security issues in the community, such as baboon invasions and any other emergencies. However, Fidelity ADT can only enter properties where a contract has been signed with the owners, and calls from contracted members will always receive priority above any other situation.

We would like to call on all homeowners who are not yet members to consider signing a contract with Fidelity ADT. They deliver a reliable and effective service and with a higher number of members a more comprehensive service can be provided to the Valley as a whole.

During the Xmas holiday period there were a number of very unfortunate security incidents which resulted in a number of suggestions for improving security both in the short and long term. Subsequently, a broader approach to all property owners to provide suggestions for improvement was initiated and a number of replies received. A position statement on security in the Valley including a summary of suggestions/recommendations made by property owners will be circulated to property owners.

Invasive alien vegetation and planting of indigenous trees

We have noticed some very positive responses to our plea for the removal of all alien vegetation. Sword-ferns have been removed on some properties in Forest Drive and we hope to see other owners follow this example. We would also like to encourage owners to get rid of the many Eugenia trees in the Valley. These trees are a threat to the indigenous forest and the fruit attracts the baboons.

One of our owners has taken the initiative to plant a few indigenous trees on the sidewalk at the corner of Arum and St Michaels. Planting of indigenous trees in the Valley is encouraged however owners who wish to plant trees on verges are urged to discuss and agree the location with Marco our Superintendent before planting.

Owners who are uncertain about the identification of specific plants and who might want some help with the removal of alien species can contact us. A booklet with information about alien plants is available at the office or the NVT office for R 75 and is also on our website.

Rainfall in the Valley

We have experienced pretty low rainfall since December. January (45mm), February 22mm and 6mm up to the 8th March.

NATURES VALLEY RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION (NVRA)

If you have not already done so, please support the Natures Valley Ratepayers Association (NVRA). A contribution of R1000 per year is suggested but any support is welcome and higher amounts are also much appreciated. We have many essential projects on the go at any time, particularly in connection with ensuring satisfactory services from Bitou Municipality and the preservation of the charm and simplicity of this beautiful environment. This requires frequent contact and meetings with various Bitou and SANParks officials, obtaining legal advice where necessary as well as supporting the provision of casual labour for Valley maintenance from time to time.

OUR BANK DETAILS: NVRA, Standard Bank, Plettenberg Bay, Branch no. 050714, A/C No. 082609217

Contact Annamarie Kovacik 044 531 6699 or office@nvra.co.za for further details.

Web site

We would like to invite all our readers to visit our website at www.nvra.co.za and to give us feedback on the accessibility and effectiveness of the website. We are very grateful to Roy Parkhurst who manages the website on behalf of the NVRA, but any ideas about the usefulness of the website would be welcomed.

Owners Contact Details

Please make sure we have your correct contact details and please inform us of any changes to your e-mail address or phone number so that we can keep you posted on events and happenings that may concern you as an owner.

Contact numbers, emails and WhatsApp admins

Should you want to discuss any Valley issues the following phone numbers may be of use.

A full list of committee members and a large amount of other useful information is on our website <http://www.nvra.co.za>.

Dave Owen	083 444 2726	CHAIRMAN, NVRA
Annamarie Kovacic	044 531 6699	OFFICE MANAGER
	office@nvra.co.za	
Marco Barnardo	044 531 6757	SUPERINTENDENTS OFFICE, PHYL MARTIN PARK
	mbarnardo@plett.gov.za	
NVT	044 531 6820	NATURES VALLEY TRUST
	info@naturesvalleytrust.co.za	

Emergency phone numbers

POLICE	044 501 1900
ADT	086 121 2341
ADT vehicle	083 290 9085
AMBULANCE	10177
NSRI/ Sea Rescue	044 533 2744

WhatsApp messaging

There are a number of WhatsApp groups used for various purposes which you can ask to join.

The main ones are the following:

NV Security Group managed by Annemarie Kovacic, NVRA Office, 079 308 5610

To keep owners or residents informed on or reporting of security issues such as burglaries, suspicious looking persons or vehicles in the valley, crime incidents, etc. Not for emergency callouts by ADT, who do in fact get these messages but for which their contact numbers should be used. Also, the Fire Risk situation and occurrence of fire in or near NV will be reported here.

NVRA-Bitou managed by Paul Erens, Committee member NVRA, 082 556 1112

For reporting or asking about anything concerning non-urgent Natures Valley Matters such as fire precautions, damage to roads, traffic issues, fallen trees, street markings, waste removal or sewage problems and rainfall.

Baboon Alert managed by Kellyn Whitehead, NVT, 082 559 1137

This useful site can keep you informed of baboon movements and activities in NV. Reports on baboon activities by all participants are much appreciated and serve to warn us of their approach.

NV Valley Chat managed by Lynn Oberholzer, 072 194 9579

This WA is used mainly by permanent residents to inform each other of various social events and happenings.

Bitou Honeysucker Tariffs (1st July 2020-30th June 2021)

You must process the payment first, then send/take the PROOF OF PAYMENT to Bitou customer care in Plettenberg Bay or the natures valley office (office hours Monday to Thursday 07h30-16h30, Friday 07h00-13h30) to book the truck; the fee is as follows;

Honey sucker tariffs 01/07/2020 till 30/06/2021

Monday to Friday – R579.60

Saturday – R869.40

Sunday & Public holiday – R1159.20

Banking Details:

NEDBANK – Plettenberg bay

ACC: 1089913974

Branch code: 198765

REF: 10840861 (Erf number as well)

Email proof of payment to: Mbarnardo@plett.gov.za

Note that the truck will only come out to your property once you have made the payment.

Customer care: 044 501 3028

086 124 8686

