

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2024
4 March 2025

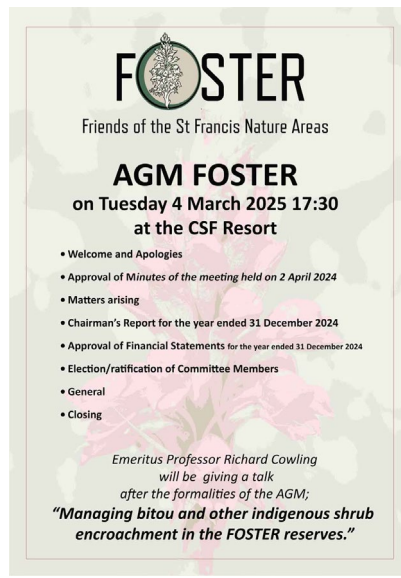
Details on most of the items reported here can be found in our website <http://www.foster.org.za>

Good Evening

Thank you FOSTER supporters for making the time to be here this evening, it is appreciated and we hope that both the feedback from our years activities as well as Richards talk will be of interest and value.



AGM 4th March 2025



Preamble

"Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land". – said Aldo Leopold American author, scientist, ecologist, forester, and environmentalist.

Often when walking one of the trails in the reserve to check on their state and if maintenance is required, I think about how fortunate we are that some people like the Cowlings and others had the foresight to form an organisation called Friends of the St Francis Nature areas and garner support for preserving nature areas in the St Francis area that today is known as FOSTER. If one stops to look, absorb and listen you realize that here is a place where there is harmony between nature and land.

Virtually alien free, St Francis Fynbos and dune thicket with an amazing biodiversity of plant and animal life straddling some 330 hectares with a well-developed network of paths and cycle trails that are the envy of many in the field of conservation.



Why then is it so difficult to increase our membership and to have the majority of our annual running cost covered in this way. With some effort we managed to raise just over R76 000 of the half a million Rand it takes to manage the reserves. Remember FOSTER receives no funding from local, provincial or national government. Apart from rubble removal, accounting fees,

website hosting and signage the money is used to remunerate the reserve management team which is money that flows into the community. Emily will take you through more detail in her finance report.

I would like to thank Richard, Emily, Trevor, Antoinette, Paul, Denis, Malcolm Gene, and Shirley, for their input and work as committee members, without a committed and functioning committee FOSTER would not be in the good shape that it is in today.



Our thanks also to those who support us in an advisory role, Errol Burman from Rotary and Si Cuneen from the Kromme Enviro Trust.



Unfortunately due to the Nicholsons decision to move to the UK during this year, we will lose the services of Paul who was amongst other things instrumental into turning the FOSTER Golf Day into a calendar highlight for our golfing community.

In terms of the various portfolios, I remain indebted to Richard Cowling for his ongoing advice and support and for continuing to oversee the management of the reserves. Emily Buchanan continues to keep a watchful eye over our finances as she has done for many years. Emily is ably assisted by Glenda Mudamaa who does the books, when not working at the local surgery.

Antoinette Grundling, our secretary, continues to do an excellent job and keep us on our toes whilst Trevor Gascoyne continues building our relationship with the cycle club and the Kromme Enviro-Trust.

Dave Bowmer, who has been involved with FOSTER since its early days and served as the reserve manager for many years, informed the committee towards the end of last year of his plans to retire gradually.



Fortunately, Dave had been collaborating with Themba Nyathi from Themba's Services on rubble removal and other tasks. Themba has also been overseeing the St Francis Alien Clearing Team. Dave has agreed to remain in an oversight role to coach and mentor Themba, facilitating a smooth transition, evident in the improvements seen in the Seal Point, Seal Bay, Irma Booyesen, and Cape St Francis Reserves. A great empowerment story.

We owe Dave a huge debt and are delighted that he is not lost to FOSTER and understand why he would want to step back from the daily grind and admin to focus on his other interests.

Slide

We also have Dave Bowmer to thank for the shipwreck display in the Anchor Garden at the entrance of Cape St Francis which sees continuous enhancements and improvements including finding and the displaying the cannon donated by the Cheetam family and the Elke M display. This remains a separate project outside

of FOSTER with funds and sponsorships raised to cover the costs.

Being situated at the entrance of the Irma Booyesen Nature Reserve however, there are synergies and many people going to the reserve stop at the shipwreck displays before proceeding into the reserve and vice versa.



We also ran a successful open day at the display on the 21th of December and were amazed by the number of visitors and the knowledge we gained from some of them.



We again took part as a stage in the Amazing Race fund raiser held in December organised by Rotary with funds raised for Hospice, using the shipwreck display and part of the Irma Booyesen reserve to add to the fun and to inform people of our activities. Thanks to Debbie Nicholson Properties for sponsoring the stop.



Special thanks again go to Wentzel Coetzer, from Conservation Outcomes, for getting the Irma Booyesen Flora Reserve formally declared as a Nature Reserve in terms of Section 23 of NEM: Protected Areas Act (No. 57 of 2003) by notice in the provincial Government Gazette. This covers the Irma Booyesen, Seal Point and Seal Bay Reserves, all we now require is the MEC signature on the proclamation document.

The land is owned by the KM which is responsible for its management will continue to be managed by FOSTER via the existing MOU and will then be replaced by the management plan. All protected areas/nature reserves/national parks are proclaimed in terms of this legislation. In this sense, all

have the same legal status. However, in terms of ecological diversity, our reserves can't compete with a national park, which must fulfil many requirements to be declared as such.



Our management plan a lengthy document of nearly 100 pages is also complete and ready for signature once the proclamation is finalised. This includes a 5-year budget, detailed plans as to how to manage the Reserve and outlines both the KM municipalities and FOSTER's roles and responsibilities.

The MEC should sign the document in the next few weeks, and we will then turn our attention to the Cape St Francis Nature Reserve which will be complex and onerous. The initial groundwork has already started.

Our committee members for 2025

The following people have agreed to stand for renomination and unless we received no other formal noninations. Therefore the committee is:-

- Richard Cowling
- Emily Buchanan
- Antoinette Grundling
- Matt Gennrich
- Trevor Gascoyne
- Gene Ritchie
- Malcolm Divine
- Denis da Silva
- Shirley Cowling

Advisory/Partnership Role

Si Cuneen
Errol Burman

Kromme Enviro Trust
Rotary

The portfolio committee members report:

Reserve and Fire-Reduction Management

Irma Booysen Flora Reserve and the surrounding network of state- owned reserves

Protected Area Management Plan (2025 – 2029)



Richard Cowling reports

FOSTER manages the Irma Booysen Flora Reserve, the Seal Bay Nature Reserve, the Seal Point Nature Reserve (all Municipal) and the (Provincial) Cape St. Francis Nature Reserve, which together comprise approximately 330 ha natural habitat. FOSTER's core management tasks are the removal of alien regrowth, removal of indigenous problem plants (mainly bitou) in key biodiversity areas, the maintenance of the path network (including litter removal), the maintenance of reserve signage, maintaining system of firebreaks, and keeping the tracks through the Irma Booysen Flora Reserve and in the Cape St. Francis Nature Reserve accessible for fire and other emergency services. In total, FOSTER spent R430 611 on reserve management during 2024. A massive thanks to the donors who have supported us this year (see above for details).

Here is how the money was spent:

1. Maintenance of pedestrian and cycle trails (39% of budget)
2. Maintenance of fire access routes/firebreaks (0%)
3. Control of problem plants: woody alien invasives (26%)
4. Control of problem plants: extralimital indigenous species (0%)
5. Control of problem plants: bitou and other indigenous species (28%)

- 6. Restoration of degraded areas (6%)
- 7. Erection of signage (0%)



The camera trap continues to be monitored, showing a big increase in reserve use as well as a healthy composition of fauna. A report on trends from 2015-2023 can be viewed at <https://foster.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Report-on-camera-trap-sightings-2015-2023.pdf>.

St Francis Bay Cycling Club, Kromme Trust and Other

Trevor Gascoyne reports:

FOSTER has continued to maintain and develop its strong relationships with the St Francis Cycling Club, St Francis Running Club and Kromme Trust.

The continuous engagement with the cycling community and our representation on their Cycling Trails Committee has led to an even more transparent and constructive relationship between the two parties. There have been minimal transgressions by cyclists riding on “non-cycling” trails and the cycling community calls each out if and when such incidents occur. The environmental awareness of the cycling and running community continues to grow and everybody has realised the “natural assets” that we have at our disposal for such activities. The signage in the reserves requires attention and quotes are being reviewed for their upgrade and/or replacement as a priority (we may also have a donor who is prepared to fund them). The annual visitors to St Francis are extremely complimentary of the quality of the trails and how much they enjoy them and a huge thank you is directed toward Dave and his reserve management team for the efforts made to keep them in excellent condition. The Cycling and Running Clubs continue to contribute financially towards the maintenance of the trails in the various

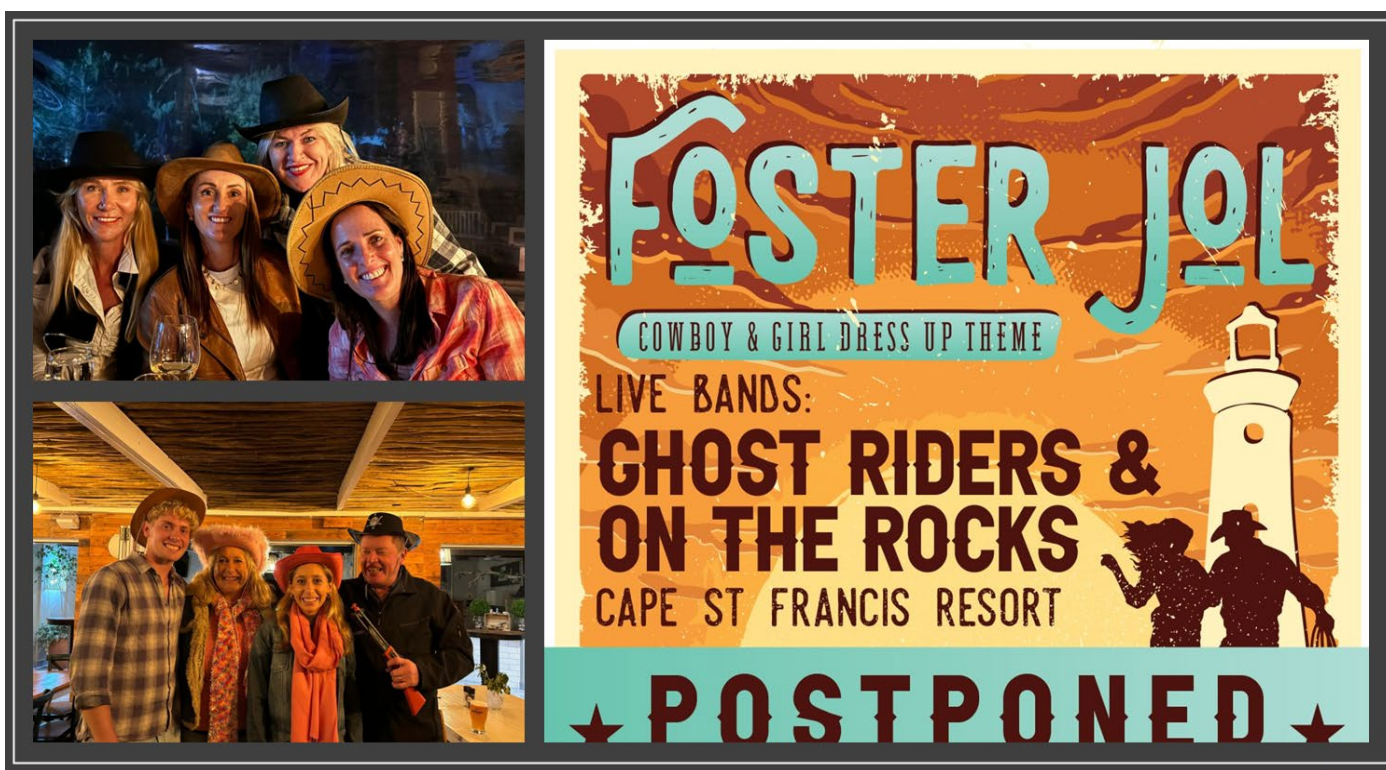


reserves and, once again, a special thanks go to them and their respective committees for the close working relationships between us.

FOSTER and the Kromme Trust have developed a strong collaborative relationship over the last couple of years and we share many ideas, improvement opportunities and approaches to managing our environment. FOSTER is actively involved in organising the regular beach clean-up activities with Kromme Trust and Rotary and we hope to see these (and other initiatives) develop into even bigger projects in coming years. Both Kromme Trust and FOSTER are represented on the recently formed St Francis Anti-Poaching group which is aimed at further protection of our precious fauna and flora.

Projects and Events

FOSTER Jol



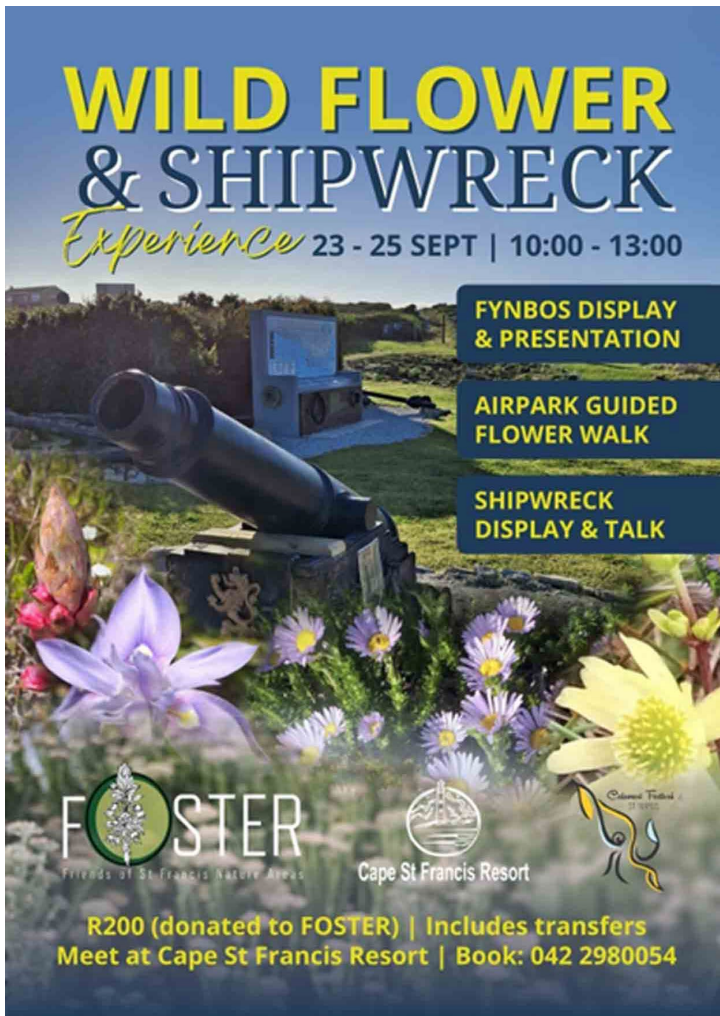
After having to postpone the Jol by a week due to the severe winter storm, Saturday turned into a beautiful day and evening which saw some 130 cowboys and cowgirls come and support FOSTER and give the night away to our two local bands **Ghost Riders** and **On the Rocks** after enjoying some sumptu

ous potjie's prepared by the resort chefs. A big thank to Anita and Jason from the Cape St Francis Resort for sponsoring the venue and as always supporting FOSTER, the staff as usual also went out of their way to ensure that a fun evening was had by all

Dave, Zep, Dylan and Jeff set the tone with their instrumental country and western songs which they had practiced to good effect in Dave's cold garage. Thanks for giving your time freely to FOSTER. Chris, Ryan, Margo, Ralph and Rudelle- you guys' literally rock and the dance floor was packed once you guys got started, encore after encore was requested until you eventually packed up. Rob did a great job as sound engineer too.

The FOSTER Jol has again become a Cape St Francis tradition and huge thank you to all those who attended helping FOSTER's funds used to keep the reserves and trails in the condition they are in.

FOSTER Wildflower and Shipwreck Event



Held in September in conjunction with the Calamari Festival, this event attracted a good following. Enthusiasts and families alike gathered to explore the natural beauty of the local wildflowers and learn about the region's maritime history. The event featured guided tours, educational talks and a stunning shipwreck display.

A big thank you to Dave Bowmer and Malcolm Turner for putting this together and Anita from the Resort for sponsoring the venue. Nexus Catamarans for sponsoring a vehicle and to Roydon for driving the groups to the Air Park and Margie Middleton, Caryl Logie and others from the Fourcade Group for hosting the walks in the Air Park kindly facilitated by Colleen Smith.

FOSTER Golf Day 5 November 2022



Last year's golf day was a game changer and set a new standard for the traditional end of year FOSTER Golf Day, as its format and name changed to the 2-day Golf Extravaganza incorporating both of our stunning golf courses with live music and a real vibe for the prize-giving's.

The event was well attended and was a successful golfing event organised by professionals, helping to raise some R50 000 in much-needed funds. The 2-day Golf Extravaganza was a testament to the community's support and the dedication of its organisers, who ensured that participants enjoyed not only the competition but also the vibrant atmosphere that accompanied the prize-giving ceremonies where numerous high value prizes donated by our generous sponsors were handed out.

A big thank you to Di Richardson and Debbie McCracken for relieving Paul and Trevor who had previously done an awesome job of this onerous but important task and convincing the following to contribute to the success of the day.

Sponsors of the holes and tee boxes: -

- Build It Hardware
- Alans Woodworks
- Stone Pine Holdings
- Cape St Francis Resort
- Calibre Security
- Sotheby's
- Kwik Elec
- Jess Peens
- Nolans Blinds
- St Francis Brewery
- Nevermind
- Pam Golding



St Francis Bay
GOLF CLUB
South Africa



St Francis Links

Thanks to the following for sponsoring prizes or making donations:-

- Jendamark
- Dave Willows
- Alistair Robertson
- PE Hotel Group
- CSF Resort
- St Francis Spar
- Nevermind
- Investec -
- Meridian Wines
- Craig Wilson
- Rambling Rose
- Bruce's
- Haywire Electrical
- Groundswell Holdings
- Tranquility
- Brady Family
- Blue Bottle Store
- St Francis Brewery
- Calibre
- Merle Peens
- Fynbos on Sea, Sedgefield
- Hogan family
- PGP
- A C Whitcher
- Sandy Coffey Photography
- St Francis Golf Club
- Links Golf Club
- 22 Eatery
- Nolan's Blinds
- Mauro's
- Pandy
- Kevin McNaughton
- Big Time Taverna
- Delish
- Design Hub
- Pro Shop PE
- Jes Peens Properties
- Trade Winds
- Spec Savers
- Build It Hardware

- Clint & Cath Hemple
- Kwikelec
- Charlinda
- Captain Kev
- Debbie Nicholson
- St Francis Safaris
- Grand Comores
- Albert Saunders Attorneys
- Fitch & Leeds

Marketing

Matt Gennrich reports:

Gaylord Nelson, an American politician and environmentalist, best known for founding Earth Day, which is now celebrated annually on April 22nd as a day to raise awareness about environmental issues said:-

"The wealth of a nation is its air, water, soil, forests, minerals, rivers, lakes, oceans, scenic beauty, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity... that's all there is. That's the whole economy. That's where all the economic activity and jobs come from. These biological systems are the sustaining wealth of the world."

Living in this beautiful part of the country we have a lot of that wealth around us, we have a river, the Indian ocean, scenic beauty, wildlife habitats, and biodiversity, yet so many people either take it for granted or if not seem to see it a part of their entitlement. Thus we continue to plug away and use our various communication channels to create awareness of what FOSTER does and why.



We have been able to build a good relationship with other organisations and local businesses as well as influential residents. Rotary is a good example; they are an amazing group of people and are able to raise large funds for our local community which fortunately also includes environmental projects. Our very generous anonymous donor continues to make his annual contribution to FOSTER, as well as funding the separate St Francis Alien Clearing Project. His group of friends and

he are responsible for funding a fair portion of our budget. Many thanks to them for their generosity. This has been one of the reasons that FOSTER has been able to embark on a step-change approach to our reserve management as outlined in Richard's report.

News from St Francis Today

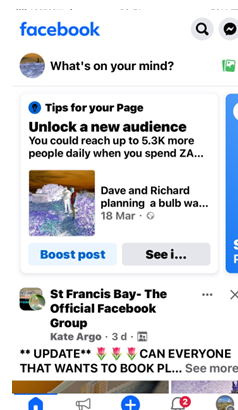
What's the difference between a Broker and Real advice?
Life is not a rehearsal, don't gamble with your future

WWW.CLIENTCARE.CO.ZA

042 940 9842
THE VILLAGE SHOPPING CENTRE
LYME ST, ST FRANCIS VILLAGE

Client Care
LIFE IS NOT A REHEARSAL, DON'T GAMBLE WITH YOUR FUTURE

Broker	vs	Real advice
Does most of the talking		Does most of the listening
Identifies problems		Identifies dreams
Advise on the money		Advise on the person
Dictates		Inspires
Transactional		Relational



20 February

[Wine on Water returns to the picturesque canals of SFB](#)
[Integrated Economic Growth Strategy – Kouga Municipality first Draft](#)

Once again, the support received from our local media, who always willingly carry any news submitted by FOSTER, has played a significant role in helping to increase the awareness of FOSTER and a big thank you to Craig Jarvis, the editor of *St Francis Today* and *Wildside Times* as well as Bev Mortimer from the *St Francis Chronicle* who readily carry our articles or announcements in their publication at no cost. Thank you for your generous support. We look forward to continuing and building on these relationships.

The ongoing importance of Facebook to communicate with our members and interested parties cannot be underestimated and we receive lots of likes and comments when we publish stories and can see their popularity by the large amount of hits that we get. The website continues to play an increasingly important role in our communication efforts. Please remember that the website also makes the payment of membership fees so much easier as it is an online process. So, if you have not renewed your membership, please do so after the meeting or tomorrow before you forget!

Our new WhatsApp Group is well supported and allows us to do quick updates and inform people about the work being undertaken in the reserves. If you would like to be on the group, please give your cell number to Antoinette after the meeting.

Hopefully we will be able to announce an exciting new fund-raising event being put on by two local entrepreneurs which will give great exposure to FOSTER as partner and beneficiary of the event.

Financial Report

Emily Buchanan reports:

Under the unflagging chairperson-ship of Matt Gennrich, FOSTER has managed to once again gather wide-ranging support and funding from the greater St Francis community which underwrites comprehensive care of our precious reserves. We can afford to not only clear aliens and to maintain pathways, but to also actively encourage biodiversity, for example through control of invasive endemic plants like bitou. As you can see from the income and expenditure sheet attached, our spend on reserve maintenance dominates all other spends. This figure is higher than Richard's (reported elsewhere) as it also includes year end 13th cheques as well as amounts paid for hiring machines, buying gravel, etc. Thanks to Dave for his able management. We welcome Themba Nyathi as a new manager for the team. Once again, we must thank this fantastic community for not only becoming part of FOSTER through membership but for their extra financial contributions. Some very large donations were made, mainly by people who care to remain anonymous, and those contributions allow us to contract local teams full-time and at fair wage rates. We also benefitted from *many* smaller donations. Members on average contributed 138 Rand more than the membership fee, which added up in a significant way. Please do remember we are a Public Benefit Organisation, and we can issue you with a tax certificate. Wouldn't you rather let your money help FOSTER, an efficient, transparent body working on an important cause, rather than paying yet more to SARS? Please note that you are allowed to deduct up to 10% of your annual taxable income. Our fund-raising events, which raise our profile and build morale, the Foster Jol and the golf day, raised 78,000 rand. Another notable, and noble, fund-raising effort was Brett Gascoigne's raffle and sponsorship of his Two Oceans run, which raised 18,400. Thanks to Glenda Mudamma for her bookkeeping help. We would also like to thank the resort for their constant support in providing venues and administrative assistance for events and for committee meetings. It is always a pleasure to be here. Please contact me if you have any questions or suggestions. I am happy to give you my phone number or email, or you can get hold of me via Glenda or Antoinette on info@foster.org.za.

Balance Sheet for year ending December 31, 2024

bank balances carried over from 2023:	R	94,957.01
income over expenditure:		+ 31,643.92
	R	<u>126,600.93</u>

bank balances ending Dec 31, 2024

FNB current account 62179531598:	R	1,223.00
FNB money market 62179527745:		118,452.34
payfast		6,925.59
	R	<u>126,600.93</u>

on behalf of FOSTER

.....
Emily Buchanan, treasurer

Income and Expenditure, financial year January 2024 - December 2024

INCOME:		
member's subscriptions:	R	75,600.00
donations:		389,899.96
interest on money market:		8,739.64
golf day:		48,020.00
jol:		29,955.39
TOTAL INCOME:	R	552,214.99

EXPENDITURE:		
reserve maintenance:	R	430,611.49
rubbish removal:		31,500.00
bookkeeping:		13,000.00
signage:		6,000.00
staff assistance (funeral):		23,200.00
jol expenses:		10,266.00
website:		2,480.00
accountant fees:		1,800.00
bank fees and app charges:		1,713.58
TOTAL EXPENDITURE:	R	520,571.07

INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE: R 31,643.92

On behalf of FOSTER,

.....
Emily Buchanan, treasurer

In Closing



Our Biitou control pilot project which was funded by Rotary proved to be a big success and we embarked on three more projects, again with the help of funding from Rotary for which we are very grateful, as well as two wetland clearing projects in the Seal Point and Cape St Francis Reserves. We will continue with our alien removal project and, of course, the regular maintenance of our trails and managing the fire breaks with the local fire department as we did last year. We also have some other ideas that we are working on and are aware that we also need to build a 'war chest' for the lean times.

Last year I concluded with this comment, I believe it is even more valid today so let me repeat it. What a privilege it is to be able to live in this part of the world, unless one travels regularly it is easy to forget what a special place this is and why our biodiversity and heritage are worth fighting for and saving for the long term. Standing at the two-bay lookout or one of the viewpoints of the Irma Booysen or just walking along a trail in the Seal Point or Seal Bay reserves one realises what it's all for and why we need organisations like FOSTER and its volunteers to keep what is rightfully ours for all our community."

I asked Chat GPT for a summary of why our biodiversity is important and got this summary: -

"The biodiversity of the St. Francis area is of utmost importance as it plays a crucial role in maintaining the health and balance of the local ecosystem. Preserving and protecting this biodiversity is essential not only for the well-being of the local ecosystem but also for the long-term sustainability of the region as a whole. By recognizing and valuing the biodiversity of the St. Francis area, we can ensure a healthy and thriving environment for future generations to enjoy".

Thank you.

Matt Gennrich
Chair: FOSTER