

# U3A STILBAAI

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT : 2019– 2020

### INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic closed down all meetings and gatherings of U3A Stilbaai for a large portion of 2020, but in spite of these restrictions, we managed to continue with some activities.

The most significant development of the year was approval of a motion that our financial year be changed from the previous July to June 12-month period, to coincide with a calendar year. This means that our year now ends on 31 December. As this transition was approved in June 2020, this report covers the period 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2020.

### MEMBERSHIP

Although U3A Stilbaai could not have meetings during 2020, our membership stands at 338 at the end of December 2020. Most of the new members who joined during the year, have recently moved to Stilbaai and are keen to join an organisation where they can get to know other people.

### FINANCES

Our financial statements are tabled separately, our financial position is healthy and it has not been necessary to increase membership fees.

Total assets on 31 December 2020 are R16 268.18, this includes the amounts in the various Funds. The balance for U3A Stilbaai excluding the Funds is R12 537.86. The Jagersbosch Fund has a balance of R1 808.88; the Bird Group fund has R999.44; and the Photography Group fund has R922.00. More details are in the Financial Report.

### MONTHLY TALKS

Over the 18-month reporting period we should have presented 16 monthly talks (meetings are not held in December), but the Covid-19 pandemic closed us down from March 2020 through to September. We had a meeting in October 2020, but a recurrence of Covid-19 resulted in the postponement of the November talk. There were thus only 8 monthly talks during the 18 months.

The monthly talks are listed below, information about the contents is available on our website.

July 2019	Richard Webb	The work and achievements of the U3A Stilbaai Photography group.
Aug 2019	Gustav Radloff	Land registration and land restitution.
Sept 2019	Jenni Sharkey	Emotional Intelligence: Can it be learned or improved?
Oct 2019	Phil Scheffer	Jazz: Wat en van waar?
Nov 2019	Dr Louis Hiemstra	Leonardo da Vinci
Jan 2020	Pieter Lategan	Undercover investigations by the South African Police
Feb 2020	Oliver Iltisberger	The Future of Smart Buildings
Oct 2020	Dr Deon Begemann	The Stilbaai Midge.

Our sincere thanks to all the speakers for the effort and dedication they put into preparing their talks.

During the Covid-19 lockdown U3A Cape Town organised Zoom talks and a few of our members participated in these on a regular basis. U3A Cape Town initiated various other programmes like quizzes to keep people busy during lockdown; several of our members joined these programmes.

### COURSES

Bird Identification for Beginners: The course offered 3 times a year by Johan van Rooyen to groups of 4-5 people are extremely popular and were fully booked for 2019; but only the first course in January 2020 was completed before the rest were cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.

### GROUPS

Hiking Group: The group hikes in and around Stilbaai, but the Covid-19 regulations prohibiting group gatherings meant that the group could not walk for most of the year. Walks were resumed in October/November, participants must practice social distancing. The current convenor of the group is Nico Steenekamp.

Bird Group: The Bird Group has its own section on the U3A Stilbaai website where more information about the group's activities is available. No meetings or bird watching walks were held during 2020, but the group launched some interesting projects to keep members of U3A Stilbaai busy during the lockdown period.

The first was a C-19 Bird Photo Album where members were invited to submit photographs taken of birds in (or from) their gardens during the Level 5 lockdown period from 27 March to 30 April 2020. At the end of this period 38 participants had submitted hundreds of photos of 96 bird species – all the photographs are on our website (under Projects in the Bird Group section).

This was followed by participating in the Virtual Museum project of the Animal Demography Unit at the University of Cape Town. Members submit photographs of birds and other animals to the Virtual Museum, all accepted photos taken in the Hessequa District and submitted by members of U3A Stilbaai are published in albums on the website (also under Projects in the Bird Group section). To date 18 participants had submitted photos of 247 bird species, 24 mammal species and photos of reptiles (7 spp), insects (2 spp) and spiders (5 spp).

Atlasing for the Bird Atlas project was suspended during the lockdown period, but resumed in October when restrictions were relaxed. In July 2020 Johan van Rooyen and Prof Les Underhill co-authored the second article in the scientific journal *Biodiversity Observations* about the Bird Group's atasing work in the Hessequa District; the article can be accessed on the website (under Activities on the Bird Group section).

Photography Group: The group meet every month, but Covid-19 restrictions meant no meetings for most of 2020, but a few of their members submitted photo's for albums published on our website – these can be viewed under Albums in the Photography Group section. Meetings were again held in October and November. Lawrence Barltrop and Richard Webb run this group.

Share Group: The group with Christo Prins as convenor had no meetings in 2020, but exchanged information by email on a regular basis.

Neuroscience Group: The group meets monthly, but meetings had to be cancelled for most of 2020. Convenor Jenni Sharkey teamed up with U3A Cape Town to present neuroscience discussions over the internet using Zoom. These proved to be quite popular with members from other U3A's all over South Africa also participating. Some of the videos used are available on the U3A Stilbaai website.

Astronomy Group: After a few star-gazing evenings in 2019 and one early in 2020, the group had to cease activities due to restrictions. There is a section for the Astronomy group on our website

Conclusion: Thanks to all the group leaders for the effort and time you put in to ensure the continuation of your group activities under these difficult and challenging conditions.

## **OUTINGS**

Several Historic Mountain Pass outings planned for the second half of 2019 had to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. No outings took place in 2020 because of Covid-19 restrictions.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Our thanks to Jagersbosch for the use of Die Waenhuis for our meetings.

Thanks to the Committee for their support and their hard work to ensure the success of U3A Stilbaai. Hella Döckel is retiring after more than 5 years as a member of the committee, a special thanks to her for her outstanding contributions, insights and hard work to ensure U3A Stilbaai's success.

In conclusion I want to thank you, our loyal members, for your support and enthusiasm. U3A Stilbaai is yours, without you we will not be here. Thank you all.

**Niel van Wyk**

**Chairperson: U3A Stilbaai**

31 December 2020