

NATURES VALLEY RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Against the backdrop of the Coronavirus pandemic, the events of 2020 brought new challenges none of us was prepared for, changing the way we live and how we connect with each other. From the economic effects and loss of life brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic both here in South Africa and abroad to the Australian bush fires that killed a billion animals, other effects from the climate change crisis, the Black Lives Matter protests, and the contentious US election, 2020 was as sobering as it was defining.



Here at home the pandemic has obviously dominated the news and impacted all of our lives in many different ways whether you live in Nature's Valley, Kurland, Covie or Johannesburg and as I write this report we are now experiencing a second wave of virus infections which will undoubtedly impact upon the Xmas holiday season for all.



December 2020

Chairmans Report

2020 has also seen many property owners returning to Natures Valley to “work” from home” in safer surrounds and the Valley has been relatively busy for most of the year and, without wishing to tempt providence, there have been very few known virus infections in Natures Valley so far.

Meanwhile. local shops, restaurants and tourism related businesses have suffered greatly as has our own Natures Valley Trading Store. The store has remained open throughout the pandemic and our thanks are extended to Richard while we also extend our condolences to Richard and family on the tragic loss of his wife Robyn this year.

In memoriam

This year has also sadly witnessed the passing away of the following members.

Mrs Van der Wat

Alet Ellis (Erf 219)

Joyce de Bruin

Con Roux (Erf 387)

Ina Williams (Erf 275)

Shirley Levy (Erf 11)

Barry Woode (Erf 17)

Morne du Plessis (ex NV Superintendent)

Braam Deacon (Erf 278)

Rosie Dekker (Erf 192)

Molly Theron (Erf 439)

Bernard Marchant (Erf 198)

The NVRA, on behalf of all of its members, extends our sincerest condolences to the families of the deceased

Thanks for your support

Throughout this most difficult year, while Natures Valley has been a “lockdown haven” for many of our members, the Covid virus has placed many work dependent and vulnerable families in a dire situation. Special thanks then is given to those Natures Valley property owners and NVRA members who gave so generously to feeding schemes which have provided much support to the families of Covie and Kurland. Thanks also to our members who have continued to financially contribute to the NVRA during these trying times, your support is sincerely appreciated.

Notwithstanding the impact of the Coronavirus on municipal, business and personal activities, I am able to report that progress continues to be made towards maintaining the integrity of Natures Valley while protecting our members interests. In this regard I would like to thank each member of the NVRA committee and our co-opted committee members in providing much needed support and



advice in this my first year as Chairman of the NVRA. Thanks also to Annamarie who continues to provide great "front line" office support for the NVRA and to many of the visitors to Natures Valley.

Thanks also to our Bitou Superintendent, Marco Bernardo, who, together with his team, continue to make a real difference in maintaining our infrastructure in Natures Valley.

The Natures Valley Trust

We were very sad to see Dr Mark Brown leave the NVT this year but welcome Duncan Hay as Mark's successor and Director of the NVT. Duncan was previously the Executive Director of the Institute of Natural Resources and is an Associate Research Fellow at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Throughout the year, the NVRA and NVT have jointly undertaken Covid 19 fund raising efforts and continue to explore other initiatives where we can find opportunities to combine our resources and knowledge base for the benefit of Natures Valley and our respective members.

Arrivals and Departures

We welcome a new arrival in Kate Reynolds who has purchased Erf 46

There were no departures.

Municipal Matters

The Bitou Municipality, the Ward 1 Committee, the Bitou Ratepayers Association and the IDP Budget

A review of the November 2020 council meeting minutes shows that Bitou municipal debt has reached levels in excess of R340m, 97% of which is household debt and much of that is older than 4 months. The average debt repayment period for Natures Valley is 2.5 months compared to Kurland (38.7), Kranshoek (39) and Kwanokuthula (15.8). Kwanokhatula, Kurland and Kranshoek have a combined debt level of 50% of total municipal debt which is a reflection of the social pressures faced by these communities in an environment where the Municipality has no plan for debt recovery or debt relief other than cutting off services. 934 households in debt ridden suburbs had their services cut in August and many ratepayers in Natures Valley have experienced unusually high utility bills and were urged to lodge complaints through the appropriate channels. The Municipalities "intended" disconnections for September for Natures Valley was 31 out of a total number of municipal disconnections of 538. In November the NVRA issued a circular to all property owners advising how to deal with account errors in a manner that would avoid disconnection of services. Members are advised to make use of the advice given (circular can be located on the NVRA web site).

Given the rising debt levels from poor revenue collection, which is itself a result of poor accounts management, the situation is likely to deteriorate amidst a background of an increase in poverty levels and tightening fiscal management from national and provincial government. Truly a gloomy outlook, which will require much oversight from the NVRA and our ward councilor in the forthcoming year.

Ward committee meetings where the committee representatives make recommendations and receive feedback from the Ward Councilor have not been very effective this year largely due to Covid related constraints. Ward committee meetings need to be reconstituted with the Ward 1 Councilor on a monthly basis throughout 2021. Out thanks to Francois Kruger who has served as the NV Ward Representative for the last four years.



Note that the municipal elections are currently scheduled to take place between the 3rd of August and the 3rd November 2021.

The Bitou Ratepayers Association

Due to the uncertain state of governance in the municipalities along the Garden Route, the various Ratepayers' Associations find themselves forced into taking a more active role in returning good governance to our municipalities. One way or another, the towns are faced with similar, if not identical issues and have formed an informal affiliation of Ratepayers' Associations (RPAs) and Homeowners Associations (HOAs) to open channels of communication in order to share experiences, knowledge and solutions. It will allow the associations to present a united front when having to deal with government at the provincial and national levels. The associations include: Plettenberg Bay Ratepayers' Association, Knysna Ratepayers' Association, Keurbooms Property Owners Association, Nature's Valley Ratepayers Association, Belvidere Homeowners Association, Leisure Isle Homeowners Association, Buffalo Bay Ratepayers' Association, Sedgefield Ratepayers' Association, and The Crags Residents' Association. Very little opportunity arose during the course of this year to meet as a collective largely due to Covid lockdown restrictions.

We intend to activate and participate in more regular meetings with the Association to counter the threat of a likely deteriorating service environment.

The IDP Budget

The Integrated Development Plan has gone through its third update to address the re-budgeting of expenditure for the years 2020/21, 21/22 and 22/23.

The NVRA has reviewed the proposed budgeted inclusions for Natures Valley and has raised a number of objections related to exclusions and deferrals of Natures Valley's needs and wants. The issues requiring attention in the course of the next rolling three-year period are addressed in this report but are summarised as follows;;

- completion of the ring main requiring a mini substation near Arum street (priority)
- repair of electrical metering boxes (priority)
- stormwater soak-aways for roads
- maintenance of Lagoon Drive (priority)
- Sewage Management System
- Upgrade (increase in capacity) of the water reservoir (priority)



Activities and achievements over the last 12 months

The BITOU MoU

In 2017 the NVRA signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate with the Municipality with respect to the effective and efficient management of services supplied by the Municipality to Natures Valley. The agreement will be subject to renewal after the inauguration date of the next Council (scheduled for 2021). The MoU addresses the following services provide by the Municipality and monitored by the NVRA

- **The Waste Transfer Station (WTS), Waste Management and Recycling**

The WTS has generally been operating satisfactorily throughout the year with the exception of mess caused by baboon raids which happen when residents/visitors deposit food in (and outside of) the recycling bins. We have now erected notices at the WTS asking residents and visitors alike to refrain from doing this. Please place food into black plastic bags and deposit the bags into the WTS (the brick building).

I have mentioned the importance of good waste management in the baboon management section of this report. In view of the baboon issues experienced in Natures Valley, this is a special plea to those property owners who rent their property to holiday makers or friends of the family to ensure that their guests obey these simple but necessary guidelines.

- do not leave refuse in plastic bags on the road verge - either place it in a wheelie bin or take it to the WTS and place it inside the brick enclosure. Don't place a bag next to the bin if the bin is full....this is not really a good idea unless you are a baboon!.....take it to the WTS.
- Make sure your wheelie bin is baboon proof or at least make an effort to baboon proof it (bungy cords etc)..... ideas for baboon proofing bins are many (Google please) and a man is the best person to think of one as he usually thinks more like a baboon than a woman does!

On a more formal note, Bitou Municipality is required to develop an Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP) as per the requirements of the National Environmental Management Waste Act 59 of 2008 (as amended). This IWMP must then be incorporated into the Bitou Integrated Development Plan (IDP). The Consultant GIBB has been appointed and is drafting the IWMP for the various municipalities along the Garden Route (7 in total). The NVRA has requested that Bitou propose suitable inclusions in the IWMP that would have the effect of introducing penalties to those people or organisations who, amongst other things.

- do not dispose of waste (garden and other) on any land or water body unless authorised by law (this includes the dunes and the forest areas in Natures Valley!);
- do not place waste in a receptacle that is not approved or provided by the Municipality.

The NVRA will be working with the NVT to develop suitable educational media to assist property owners in establishing baboon management protocols for their own visitors throughout 2021.



- **Sewage**

Fortunately, there is not too much to report on this subject save to say that we will be attempting to formalise a concession with the Municipality to exempt property owners in Natures Valley from complying with regulations that have the objective of eliminating septic tanks. The exemption being subject to the presentation and approval of percolation tests for new builds or any extensions/modifications to existing builds. Commitment by the municipality to formalize this procedure for NV have been on hold for two years or more, mainly as a result of changing personnel

Public toilets (or the lack thereof) remains a real requirement at the entrance of Natures Valley and will be pursued during the forthcoming year

- **Water Supply**

We have experienced a number of water interruptions caused by failed artificial breaching of the lagoon mouth in the winter months which in turn has resulted in salt levels rising as far as the extraction point at the pump station. The NVRA is liaising with SANParks and Bitou Municipality to review and refine the environmental and operational requirements for emergency breaching as part of the Groot River Mouth Management Plan (refer to the Environment section below) in order to ensure that emergency breaching procedures are practical and comply with Environmental Management Plans.

The IDP budget included a provision for a new 1.5ml reservoir for Natures Valley. The planned expenditure was to be phased in amounts of R1m (20/21), R2m (21/22) and R5m (22/23) however the November 2020 Municipal Council meeting reflects an adjusted budget of R3m for the 21/22 budget year only, with a priority rating of 3!

The new reservoir is a priority for the Valley and planning and expenditure arrangements will be reviewed with Bitou.

- **Electrical Supply**

No progress has been made in completing the ring main and many of the electrical kiosks are in need of repair.

- **Roads**

Extensive re-surfacing of sections of all of the roads in Natures Valley has been carried out during the year and we hope this will continue to completion in 2021. Marco and his team have promptly re-marked the roads and speed bumps. The NVRA is in the process of clarifying with the Municipality exactly who is responsible for maintaining the paved section of Lagoon Drive in front of the Syndicate as maintenance and repair of this section of road is long overdue.

- **Built Environment**

Erf 130

The long-standing dispute over the lifting of restrictive title and rezoning of this property has reached the point where all four parties have agreed to the wording of a Settlement Agreement and signature



by the parties is expected in the near future. NV ratepayers will be advised of the details of the settlement following the signing and the agreement being made an order of court.

Local Area Spatial Planning and Zoning Scheme

A second draft of the Bitou Municipal Spatial Development Framework was issued for public comment in January of this year and the NVRA issued its reply in March 2020 with the main objection being the reclassification of the public open spaces which include the Fynbos reserve, Phyl Martin Park, the Wetland reserve and the Forest reserve as “potential strategic development areas”. Further re-drafts from the Municipality are expected in the 2021.

A draft of the Bitou Zoning Scheme By-law was initially issued for public comment late in 2019 and the NVRA response was submitted in Jan 2020. An important aspect of the NVRA response was the request that NV be considered an “overlay zone” in terms of the proposed Zoning Scheme, so that the title deed restrictions in Nv would be retained and respected. An updated draft is expected to be issued during the first half of 2021 which will require detailed review with regard to protecting the single residential status of Natures Valley as well as the protection of the public open spaces.

We will update all members when the drafts are re-issued for comment.

Building activity and the environment

As has been the case over the last few years, there has been a constant level of activity in the Valley for new building construction as well as extensions and ongoing repairs and maintenance. While builders in Natures Valley are generally very responsible and aware of the local environment, constant activity can result in a complacency and the lowering of good housekeeping standards. Consequently, the NVRA will shortly be circulating guidelines to homeowners requesting that any contractors employed by them maintain the minimum standards of health, safety, social and environmental behavior set out in the guidelines at all times.

Plan approvals

9 applications for plan approvals have been submitted in the year to date including one application for lifting of restrictive conditions of title to which the NVRA objected

SECURITY

• Fidelity-ADT Services

The security incidents recorded for this year are shown below. The following points are relevant.

- The incidents described as Trespass, Loitering and Illegal fires, can be attributed mostly to one vagrant, E W from Covie, who has been a thorn in the side of Natures Valley for the last two years or so. The NVRA has held discussions with Plett SAPS and with the Department of Social Development with regard to options available for dealing with “loitering with intent” with no clear outcome. Action can only be taken when a crime is committed, followed by a charge being laid against the perpetrator. We have asked Fidelity-ADT and SANParks to ensure that he is monitored as best as possible when in the Valley and that he is removed if caught camping in the dunes or entering private properties.



- Many of the incidents of theft in the months of July through to October are petty theft incidents with some, in all likelihood, attributable to EW.
- Fidelity-ADT continue to provide services beyond their contractual commitments and have been extremely helpful in assisting with disrupting baboon raids and walking EW out of the town.

Month	Break in	Break in & theft	Trespassing	Loitering/ Nuisance	Lockdown infringement	Drone	Illegal fires
January	1	2	1	1			
February			1				
March	1	4		1			
April				1		1	
May					3		
June	1		6				3
July	1	2		1			1
August		1		3			
September	1	3	3				
October		2					
November							4
December			1				1
Total	5	14	12	7	3	1	9

• **Baboon Management**

As a result of many reports of aggressive baboon invasions, the NVRA in cooperation with Bitou Municipality, NVT and SANParks, have investigated a number of baboon management strategies to address the baboon invasion problem in Natures Valley. Extensive discussions were held with Overstrand municipality and 3rd party baboon management consultants to determine the best course of action. The following is a summary of the discussions and conclusions.

- The most significant contributor to the reduction of baboon raiding is good waste management. Without effective waste management any other remedy fails and/or is temporary.
- The attraction of high calorie human food for baboons must be removed to reduce the need to raid. Leaving food out in homes in full sight of raiding baboons encourages repeat visits (not rocket science)
- Baboon monitoring involving the use of teams of paintball armed baboon monitors has proven to be both expensive and of indefinite duration and is not suitable for the densely wooded surrounds of Natures Valley.
- Virtual fences combined with smaller monitoring teams has had positive results but requires tagging and/or collaring certain baboons and the setup costs are substantial together with ongoing management costs.



- Recent very negative media reports with respect to baboon management protocols related to the tagging, euthanasing or relocation of problem baboons in areas of the Western Cape has resulted in a need for a review of the roles and legal responsibilities of municipalities, baboon management forums and Cape Nature (as the statutory authority to issue permits) in the baboon management process.

In consideration of the above, the NVRA recommends that, with the support of Bitou Municipality, our efforts should rather be directed towards improving waste management in Natures Valley and owner/visitor awareness of the requirements for living in a baboon problem area. While this may be met with some dissatisfaction with some property owners who may wish for a more radical solution we are steadfast in this recommended approach and will be appealing for cooperation of all members and property owners in Natures Valley to go the extra mile in making sure that their families, friends and tenants contribute to the solution and not the problem.

Some of the measures to be implemented are;

- All bins at beach entrances, the shop and the lagoon parking area to be fitted with suitable baboon and monkey proof lids.
- Supervision of the waste transfer station during peak holiday periods will be provided 7 days per week
- Improvement of visitor's awareness of baboons through the use of appropriate educational circulars (to be designed and produced)
- Participating in a PhD research programme that studies the baboon spatial ecology around Bitou Municipality (Plett and Natures Valley) using citizen science data collection, together with "traditional" baboon counts together with a review of waste management bylaws (to commence in first quarter 2021)

ENVIRONMENT

The Contractual National Park Agreement

The NVRA in conjunction with SANParks and Bitou has held two Contractual National Parks (CNP) meetings this year which are designed to review the management of the beaches, beach ablution facilities, lagoon and its shoreline and the lagoon parking areas by SANParks according to the provisions of the management plan. SANParks continues to manage these properties competently.

The Groot and Sout River Estuary Steering Committee

The Western Cape Government has now formally issued a Groot (Wes) River Estuarine Management Plan (v5) (EMP) developed by the Consultant Royal Haskoning BV. The EMP is a lower-level plan of the Garden Route National Park Management Plan and sets out the strategic objectives and management priorities for the river and estuary from which we derive so much benefit and enjoyment. The responsibility for managing the plan rests with SANParks however the Western Cape Government has strongly recommended that the existing CNP structure be used under the auspices of an Estuary Steering Committee (ESC) comprising of SANParks, Bitou Municipality, NVRA and the NVT be retained to co-manage the Groot (Wes) estuary going forward. The ESC will also fulfil the role of an Estuary Advisory Forum (EAF) for both the Groot (Wes) and Sout (Oos) River estuaries



Two ESC meetings have been held in 2020. Future meetings will report on monitoring of pollution levels, breaching methods and frequency, fish population and flora and fauna monitoring. It is expected that reports will be produced on a bi-annual basis.

SANParks Breaching report - January 2019 to October 2020

The Groot River Mouth Estuary Breaching Report for the period between January 2019 and October 2020 will be made available on the NVRA website and is summarised as follows

2019 - 5 breaches of which all 5 were artificial breaches

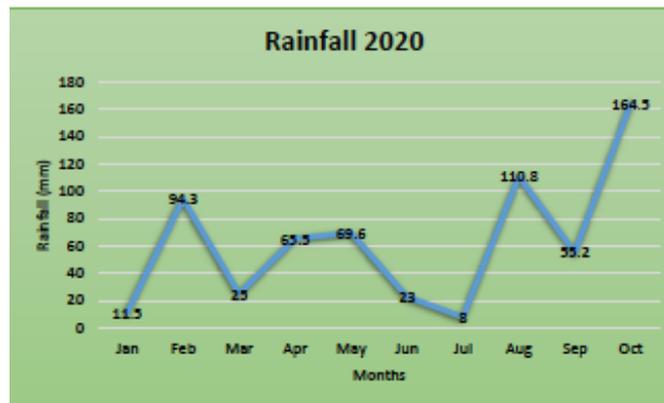
2020 - 11 breaches of which 4 were natural breaches and 6 were artificial. Further natural breaching occurred in November 2020.

Artificial breaching occurred due to high salinity levels in all cases in 2020 whereas the 2019 breaches were due to excessively high-water levels.

Monitoring of breaching conditions will be an ongoing process feeding into the review and development of the mouth management plan.

Rainfall

The rainfall record for the year is provided by SANParks



Fire Prevention

No fires have occurred local to Natures Valley in 2020. In March, a fire occurred in the Soetkraal area north of the Craggs and was monitored by SANparks and MTO in spotter planes. I am happy to report that the level of coordination between our local Craggs FMU teams, SANParks Tsitisikama FMU and MTO was extremely high and very professional and extinguished the fire in 3 days. One other fire occurred near Monkeyland in July and was quickly extinguished by our local Craggs FMU and Bitou Fire dept. The Southern Cape Fire Protection Association (SCFPA) has coordinated extensive controlled burning in the Spitzkop area, the Lottering plantations at Boskor and our local Craggs FMU has coordinated extensive farm fire break permitting throughout the year. Members should take some comfort that we are surrounded by teams of people that give of their time freely to protect our property. The NVRA and thereby their paid-up members are members of the SCFPA and receive the benefit of their activities.



A final request in this section - when you trim branches on your property please ensure that you remove the dead branches from the Valley and dispatch them to the municipal transfer site at Kwanokhutula in Plett

Dogs

As a dog owner and lover, I am embarrassed at the amount of dog poo seen on the grass verges in the Valley and on the lagoon shoreline. How difficult is it to purchase poo bags from PAWS or any pet shop and keep a stock at home? - So, as a courtesy to other residents please pick up your dog's poo and place it in a bin and if you see someone who ignores their dog's effort of relieving itself then put on a brave face, point out the error of their ways (the owner not the dog) and ask them to pick the stuff up (you can run after that).

In all seriousness we need to make an effort to accept some personal responsibility to keep the Valley clean. You can do this (and thankfully some people do)!

Invasive Aliens – sword fern

Swathes of sword fern are developing on many properties in Natures Valley. This is a category 1b invasive alien invader plant and should be removed by property owners. This plant has the ability to spread rapidly and form dense infestations which outcompetes and replaces indigenous vegetation and transforms natural habitats. Property owners who have sword fern infestations on their property are kindly requested to implement a removal plan with gardeners who should ensure that the plants tubers are removed (not just the leaves) and disposed of at the municipal landfill (not in the forest!)



FINANCIAL

Income

R209 214 had been received for the year to 30 June 2020, of which contributions for the 2019/20 year were R204 605 received from 183 owners (46.2%) of which 67 had paid more than the requested R950. Other income comprised R14 for printing and Interest of R4 595.

The comparative figures for the twelve months in 2019 were R238 045 received in total of which contributions for the 2018/19 year were R234 650 from 231 owners (58.3%) of which 144 had paid more than R850, other Income R1 235 from plant sales and printing; Interest of R2 160.

Compared to the previous year, the total received for annual contributions was less by R30 045 (-12.8%) than in 2018/19. The numbers of owners who contributed were 48 less (-20.8%). The reduction in contributions received was partially due to the covid-19 lockdown, which meant that owners did not come to the Valley over Easter; the negative economic effect of covid-19 on some owners and the fact that only one reminder letter went out in mid-May.

Expenses

Expenses were just 2.3% over budget R 149 836 to R146 444 and almost the same as the previous year 20018/19 R148 019. During the year a chain saw was purchased for Marco for R 4 441 and R 3 483 was paid to Plan Practice for assistance with the NVRA response to the updated Bitou SDF.



Legal Fees.

No Legal fees for Erf 130 have been paid in the year, R 75 000 was budgeted. It is hoped that the matter can be brought to a conclusion in 2020/21. On that basis legal fees of R75 000 have been budgeted in 2020/21.

Covie Christmas Party. This year's party (2019) cost R3 379 compared to R 2 829 the previous year. There is R 5 562 cash on hand for future Christmas parties.

Cash balance

As at 30 June 2019 the cash in bank was R 97 055 and at 30 June 2020 R 156 432 which is an increase of R 59 377 for the year.

Contribution

We take the opportunity once again, to thank those who support the NVRA financially. The current recommended contributions to the NVRA is R1000 for the year ending June 2021. If you have already contributed for the financial year ending in June 2021, our grateful thanks. If not, we trust we can rely on your ongoing support and note the NVRA's banking details below.

Banking details:

Account: Nature's Valley Ratepayer's Association

Account No: 082 60 9217

Bank: Standard Bank

Branch: Plettenberg Bay

Branch Code: 05 07 14

When making payment please include your name and Erf no. as a reference and if possible send a confirmation of payment to the office at office@nvra.co.za. Please remember that we do not send out receipts for internet payments, but they are available at the office on request.

NVRA COMMITTEE FOR 2021

As Chairman, I wish to thank the current committee members and co-opted members for their commitment during the past 12 months, as well as Annamarie Kovacic for her support in administering the NVRA.

The Full NVRA Committee currently consists of the following members:

Dave Owen - Chairman (LAC), Doug Blaine (LAC), James Martin – Deputy Chairman and Treasurer (LAC), Peter Harpur (LAC), Paul Erens (LAC), Julian Muller (LAC), Francois Kruger (LAC) and Conrad Wiehahn.Libby Spies (LAC)

LAC (Local Action Committee) refers to those members who are "local" and able to attend meetings regularly and deal with day-to-day matters.



December 2020

Chairmans Report

Messrs. Owen, Blaine, Martin and Muller have indicated that they are willing to stand for re-election.

Paul Erens, Peter Harpur, Francois Kruger and Conrad Wiehahn have advised that they will not be available for re-election. Libby Spies has resigned from the committee. Paul Erens has kindly agreed to be co-opted to assist with security and building plan approvals and Conrad Wiehahn has offered to continue assisting with municipal planning matters when required as a co-opted member. We thank them all for their service and contribution over the years and to Paul for the time given as the previous Chairman of the NVRA. Your support has been much appreciated.

New Nominations:

Nominations for committee members are requested as set out in the AGM Notice and members are urged to join our committee and assist in protecting the well-being of our Valley. Nominations may be submitted by email to davidowen1425@gmail.co.za

IN CONCLUSION

I sincerely hope that the efforts of the NVRA over the past year have contributed positively to your investment in Natures Valley and the preservation of a unique holiday and retirement destination for you and your families.

On behalf of the NVRA Committee, I wish all owners a peaceful Christmas, and that you and your families remain healthy and virus free. We wish you well for 2021, stay safe, wear your mask in public, avoid crowds and visit the Valley as often as time permits.

Yours Sincerely

Dave Owen

Chairman

