

DPVO Annual General Meeting

5 December 2022 6.30pm

Venue: Shift Espresso, Deer Park Avenue, Vredehoek
Apologies: Geoff Arbourne, Harriet Clift
Present: As per attendance register

AGENDA ITEM 1: Welcome and brief report on the year

Jo-Anne Friedlander, Chairperson

Following the closure of the DPV CAN in September 2020, administrators of that group and a few other residents worked on restarting Outreach activities. Discussions with DPVwatch chair/deputy chair led to agreement that this should be a separate entity (rather than a Watch portfolio). A mission, vision and basic constitution were drawn up for DPV Outreach which allowed the group to open a bank account, and also register as an NPO. DPVO started operations on 1 July 2022.

There were ongoing discussions with Streetscapes as DPVO wished to partner with them. Chantel Sampson, our fieldworker, started on 1 August 2022. She initially spent time introducing herself and the project to the local homeless community, often accompanied by two of her Streetscapes colleagues, Sibusiso Simama and Sicelo Mjari; later Rudie Basson joined them. She also responded to residents concerned about an individual sleeping on the pavement in Yeoville Road, and another person causing disturbance in Derry Street.

Two points learned: Neither the community nor Streetscape can summarily remove a person (City law enforcement officers can be called to assess situation). Also, a person who has been supported by residents for years is not going to move along or accept assistance after only one intervention.

Natalie Spires offered computer training to Chantel and the team. This covered basic computer skills (use of MSWord, Outlook and Excel) and email composition.

Soon after Chantel started, Streetscapes and other NGOs working with homeless people were advised that National Treasury had allocated a substantial sum of money for a new public employment programme. Proposals for the new funding had to be drawn up at very short notice. This meant that of necessity Chantel's focus shifted from being on our streets. Once the proposal was accepted, and the PEP programme put in place, she was again available in our area, with increased responsibilities.

The new PEP funding resulted in a dedicated cleaning team working in our area. The team operated from the third week of November 2021 until end June 2022. In that time, 1400 bags were filled (litter, debris from gutters, pavements, and parks). Residents engaged with the team, often supplying drinks and snacks. This gave both sides a comfortable contact space.

Unfortunately due to issues at the City, the proposal for the second year of funding was not processed and the programme came to an end, leading to retrenchments. (Subsequently, funding was received again and the programme resumed a few months later).

Point learned: it would be good to have a funding Plan B in future, ie. alternative sources of income, perhaps from produce from the gardens; Precious Plastics type recycling.

Events:

November 2021: Meet and Greet at Streetscapes' Rugley Road garden. Although not a large attendance it successfully drew people of Vredehoek to the garden, building awareness. Takings on the morning equalled an average month's takings! Jesse confirmed the support of the garden has continued since that event.

Taskings for 2023: Motivate for an electrical point for the garden. This would allow workers to boil a kettle/charge their phones. It would also give more flexibility, more opportunity for events. Also need the pavement to be altered to allow easy drive-in access.

March 2022 Inaugural public meeting at the Service Dining Rooms. There was a good turnout. Jon Hopkins from U-Turn was the guest speaker (on cost of homelessness in Cape Town). He highlighted the large amount of money spent by government, NGOs and the public, which needs to be spent smarter to make a bigger impact. Articles in the media generated a lot of interest in DPVO's initiative.

Mandela Day Drive: July 2022 (just after year end). The target was donations of household goods and toiletries for the Streetscapes workers moving into accommodation.

Soccer team: Dylan Heneck organised sponsored soccer gear for the Streetscapes team which came second in the league.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Run-through of financials

Hester Lamprecht, Treasurer

Hester presented our financial statements showing donations of R73,000, a significant amount for the first year of operation. Media coverage of the first public meeting resulted in DPVO receiving sufficient donations to cover the cost of a Auxiliary Social Worker course and our share of several months of Chantel's salary. People were inspired by Chantel's story and wanted to contribute. Most of the donations went towards DPVO's portion of her salary.

We will need another fundraising drive in the new year.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Homelessness survey results

Rudie Basson (Streetscapes) and Matthew Rightford

The survey project started in June 2022. Matthew is a psychology student with experience in data analytics. Kobo (an online app) was used to collect and analyse the data, with Gianna Maita's help. Rudie and Chantel were the driving force in implementing the survey, familiarising the team with the questions and process, and getting input for creating the actual questions.

Rudie: One of the objectives of the PEP project was to help people from the street to use a cell phone as a tool to find employment etc. Kobo was very handy for the practical part of what they set out to do but the interview team didn't use cell phones in the field because of safety. Once back at the office, they captured the data. Kobo doesn't require wifi or data to capture the data, but syncs with the cloud when one is online.

Some of the questions were triggering and emotional for team members and interviewees. High level of substance use and substance selling.

Buitengracht Street – 25 to 30 shacks. The community were very happy with their neighbours (Bo Kaap) and weren't using any of the services offered in the city centre. It would be interesting to find out how they were getting on.

Sanele joined Streetscapes last year and has progressed to assistant supervisor. He has been on the streets since he was 9. Cyclical, on and off the streets. Turned to drink to block out the pain. When he took the opportunity offered by Streetscapes it changed his life. He helped with formulation of questions that people would be open to answering and building trust with the respondents. Really enjoyed being part of the survey.

Matthew: The interview team consisted of 8 to 10 people. The survey contained a substantial number of questions and it took skill to get through all of the questions with the 93 people who participated. All respondents signed a consent form.

Question from Francine: Did the team repeatedly go to a site to address the transient nature of the community to make sure data accurate?

Rudie: eTV Park, Virginia Park and Stroompie had repeat visits – confident data is accurate. They didn't know Buitengracht people very well. Lower Stroompie – District Six near Good Hope Centre too dangerous.

What are the next steps for the survey: depends what and when needed. This should become an annual benchmark.

Of the 93 people interviewed, 35 sleep in the DPV area.

A precis of the results pertinent to Devil's Peak Vredehoek interviewees:

- Most of them are in the 35–59 years old category; 71% male, 29% female
- 14% have a disability (eg. Asthma, stroke)
- 41% left home to look for work (people had multiple reasons for leaving home: poverty, breakdown of family structures, substance abuse and violence were contributory factors)
- Most people live on the street for multiple reasons, including losing their jobs and therefore not having an income, having nowhere to go, substance abuse, gangsterism etc)
- 69% had been a victim of crime themselves (theft being the most common); 29% had been assaulted
- Most of the homeless people sleeping in our area felt that their relationship with the housed community was satisfactory.
- 91% were looking for work – of these 69% had some work experience, which ranged from a trade to the hospitality industry. Recycling and parking cars were the biggest sources of income.
- The three NGOs rated highly were Service Dining Rooms, Ladles of Love and the Hope Exchange. Souper Troupers was also highly rated by a small sample of respondents.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Streetscapes report back

Jesse Laitinen and Chantel Sampson

Chantel reported back on her work with DPVO and introduced Hilma, who supervises the cleaning team.

Jesse: Introduction to PEP and why it's important: Social aspect and political issues are being addressed by this. What actually happened when the second year funding proposal was not submitted, the City did not just dump the programme. Homelessness isn't a local government mandate – there's no plan or budget for it. Due to an administrative error, it appeared that the project wasn't successful because R0 spent. There is a risk for government officials and departments with programmes such as these.

Jesse pointed out that the survey results that Rudie and Matthew reported mirrored the findings from the full programme:

- 667 homeless participants – work offered to participants includes cleaning streets, public gardens, parks and beaches; picking up disposable needles; window washing; bin services to businesses, safety monitors; parking attendants; recycling and outreach. Teams work across parts of Greater Cape Town from the Atlantic Seaboard, through City Centre to Southern Suburbs and Cape Flats.
- 100 people in the first phase for Streetscapes
- 14 NPO partners: Partnerships are important.

The PEP baseline survey

- The main reason people leave home is to look for work. The majority of the participants have some work experience (81%); 28% between 1–3 years; 28% five or more years.
- Homeless people don't like shelters as they are too institutional. Once people have work, they transition from the street or safe spaces to more permanent accommodation.

- Substance misuse in the programme much diminished; adherence to health treatments improved.
- Work and income vs shelter and rehab – motivation for changing their lives grow the longer they are in the programme; participation in recreational activity improves

What's the road ahead?

PEP approved until June 2023; if programme does well, then funding will cover a third year. PEP should reach between 30 and 50% of homeless people: there is scope for increasing the numbers. The next round would need to be more fair and a more competitive process. Hoping stipends will increase and start making a real difference.

Question from Dylan: What is the process for people getting off the street through the Streetscapes programme?

When people get off the street first, they go to a wet house and form goals, see how they can get rehabilitated. Need proper support. City supports – grants and aids. House mothers, house responders, interventions, social workers etc.

Residents pay R850pm from their stipend for rent. In a more permanent house (ideally no longer using) they pay for transport and food too.

AGENDA ITEM 5: Open to the floor: general discussion ensued.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Thank you and close

We would like to thank everyone who has supported the initiative with donations, both financial and in kind.

Streetscapes for being willing to partner with our community

The DPVO team for their professional input/skills and time.

Kingdom Hall: Zac, Jan and Chris to giving us access to an electrical power point on their premises.

Eclipse Print for sponsoring some of our print items

Tuffy Bags for a donation of a bale of rubbish bags

The Crazy Store for sponsoring the soccer team's shirts

Service Dining Room for hosting our inaugural meeting

Lincoln and staff at Shift Espresso Bar for hosting our first AGM

Meeting closed approximately 20:15