

MONUMENT PARKRUN AT AN END - FOR NOW

Pretoria, 31 January 2017. The popular Voortrekker Monument Parkrun, that has been taking place every Saturday over the last few of years, came to an end over the weekend of 28 January.

It is tradition that Parkrun members worldwide do not pay for the facilities they use and they run exclusively in public spaces where no fees are charged. Initially, the VTM supported this concept but the numbers of participants rose to such an extent over the last couple of years that the costs involved in hosting this event, no longer made any business sense.

As a result of the free-of-charge approach, the Monument had to absorb costs of an ambulance, additional security and cleaners. According to law, all events involving the public must comply with regulations as stipulated by the JOC (Joint Operations Committee) of the City Council. Approval for such events is only obtained if there are sufficient emergency services and additional emergency arrangements in place. Naturally, this has a cost implication. The VTM is a non-profit company that does not receive financial support from any governing body.

In order to try and come to some agreement, the VTM management and Parkrun organisers have negotiated with participants, requesting them to consider making a special donation to at least cover the costs - but to no avail.

After in depth consultation with the Parkrun organisers, the VTM was compelled to make a final decision at the end of the 2016 financial year to end the Parkrun. At a meeting held last week, the organisers assured the VTM that they understood the problem and that they had communicated it to their members.

Runners can however look forward to a new road race, MyRun, which will be launched at the Monument on 12 February in conjunction with Discovery. By participating, Vitality members can earn extra points. Participants pay the R15 heritage levy per vehicle and all the additional costs incurred are covered by the organisers as do all other sporting clubs using the facilities on site.

However, Cecilia Kruger gave the assurance that: "should the Parkrun concept ever change in such a way that runners are prepared to pay a minimum fee to run in a safe game reserve, with its own rules and regulations, we would definitely be willing to talk".

Enquiries concerning the new road race can be directed to Maryke Prinsloo at Maryke@myfitness.org.za or on 001 568 2774.

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