

Minutes of the Friends of Soqotra 11th AGM
23rd September 2012
Senckenberg Museum, Frankfurt, Germany



Present:

Kay Van Damme, Lisa Banfield, Uwe Zajonz, Vladimir Hula, Salvador Carranza, Raquel Vasconcelos, Petr Madera, Samuel, Irena Hubalkova, Katja Setzkorn, Abdul Karim Nasher, Wolfgang Schneider, Fareed Krupp, Eike Neubert, Rebecca Klaus, Mohammed Amer, Miranda Morris, Ahmed Saeed Suleiman, Bohdana Rambouskova, Sabina Knees, Abdulrahman Al-Eryani, Klaus Werner Emrich, Fouad Naseeb Saeed, Hugh Morris, Diccon Alexander, Dana Peitsch.

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1. Apologies for Absence

Roderick Dutton, Rowan Salim, Sue Christie, Hana Habrova, Julian Jansen Van Rensburg, Martin Coree, Salwa Barkwan, Isam Edin Mohamed Ali.

2. Minutes of the AGM 2011

The Minutes of the 2011 AGM were approved.

3. Matters Arising from the 2011 Minutes

Item	Follow up	Update
Website		
Transfer of domain and hosting; redesign the website, review what needs to be changed, modernise the logo and generally update the website. Incorporate some of the SGBP website into the FoS website, if possible.	Dana Pietsch; Bohdana Rambouskova	Some contributions still outstanding; website almost complete. See page 5 for further details.
Statements and general wording for website	All committee members	
Updated bibliography, Archaeology and History	Julian Jansen van Rensburg	
Updated bibliography, Geology and Environment	Kay van Damme; Dana Pietsch	
Updated bibliography, Anthropology	Miranda Morris	
Updated bibliography, Linguistics	Miranda Morris	
Updated bibliography, Plants	Lisa Banfield	
Updated bibliography, Marine	Uwe Zajonz	
Updated bibliography, Birds	Richard Porter	
Updated bibliography, Animals	Kay van Damme; Eike Neubert	
Updated bibliography, Development and Tourism, grey literature	Uwe Zajonz; Bohdana Rambouskova	
Arabic translation for website	Isam Edin Mohamed Ali	
Liability Insurance for FoS	Hugh Morris	
Contributions and submissions to Tayf	Julian Jansen van Rensburg	Many contributions received.

Item	Follow up	Update
Remove SCF and the SCDP logos from Tayf	Sue Christie	Actioned.
Look into getting Tayf sent from Makullah to Socotra	Salwa Barkwan	Actioned. This made the printing of the Arabic copies of Tayf much cheaper and also facilitated the getting of copies to Socotra. Thanks go to Salwa for arranging this.
Prepare Poetry for Tayf	Miranda Morris	In progress.
Proof reading of website	Lisa Banfield Miranda Morris	Awaiting final text.
Solar Steam pump	Hugh Morris; Nick Jeffries	Not likely to happen in the near future.
Write proposals, chase ideas to seek funding from GIZ for urgent biodiversity matters on Socotra	Kay van Damme	Emergency funding is not forthcoming from GIZ. Cannot be promised in the near future.
Address letters of concern to UNESCO, EPA and Socotra, etc...	Kay van Damme	Letters sent.
Linked In and possibilities of Facebook page	Lisa Banfield	An experimental Facebook page will be set up once the new website is complete and up-and-running.
Frankfurt Meeting, dates and ensuring time enough to get funding, visas and flights for Soqotri attendees	Uwe Zajonz; Kay van Damme	Several Soqotri and Yemeni colleagues were in attendance. Their presence was greatly welcomed and thanks were expressed to GIZ for providing the funding.
Changes to constitution and contacting Charities commission	Hugh Morris	Changes to constitution made and new draft has been submitted to the Charity Commission. No confirmation as of yet.

4. Chairman's Report

It's generally been a quiet year. There have been a number of emails asking for information on travelling to Soqotra. An article about Socotra was published in the National Geographic including interviews with 2 FoS Committee Members - copies were brought and distributed at the AGM. Kay Van Damme was requested to write a chapter for book on the 40th anniversary of UNESCO – it is due out next month.

5. Treasurer's Report

Hugh Morris submitted a detailed financial report (see pages **Fehler! Textmarke nicht definiert.**-13). In summary, there have been few outgoings in 2012 due to the lack of projects reflecting the low number of FoS members visiting the island. FoS received a bequest of £2000 for which it gives thanks. Tayf 8 proved much cheaper to produce due to printing of the Arabic copies in Mukullah as arranged by Salwa Barkwan.

The substantial increase in membership fees is due to current members paying their subscriptions rather than an increase in the number of members. Since the last AGM FoS gained 10-15 new members and lost 3 or 4. Since the beginning of 2012 £558 was received in subscriptions. A call for projects was made.

Balance end of 2011 = £6242.51.

6. Tayf

A message was read from Sue Christie editor of Tayf regarding the late submission of articles (see Appendix iv) – articles are often sent late which causes extra work. It was agreed that from now on articles need to be sent by the middle of March or will not be included in that year's edition of Tayf.

Senckenberg approved the use of abstracts from the preceding workshop and symposium in the next Tayf depending on the permission of the authors.

The issue was raised as to whether a major article would be included in the next Tayf. No ideas were forthcoming.

Feedback was requested from Mohammed Amer on the process of distribution of Tayf to Socotra and the interest in it by the islanders. He said that Tayf is important for getting news on current research to the island. The process is easier now they are being printed in Mukullah. He sees no need to send English versions to the island. Copies of Tayf 8 were sent to schools, and government agencies in Qalansiyah as well as Hadibo. It is known that copies can be collected from Mohammed Amer in Hadibo. Mohammed said that making it free is much more successful than previously (copies were only issued to members who had to pay 1000 riyals to join). Mohammed expressed his thanks to those that produce Tayf. He said that the content is interesting to the people. 500 copies are enough for now but we might need to send more in the future.

A discussion followed regarding the content and impact of Tayf. Some were of the opinion that the articles in Tayf 8 were too scientific or technical and would not be of interest or understandable by people on the island. Others felt that it was important to inform Socotra of current scientific research. It was suggested that a different version could be produced for the island but this is not thought to be feasible given the extra work it would entail. The English and Arabic versions should be exactly the same. It was decided that only a selection of abstracts of interest will be printed in the next Tayf instead of all the abstracts.

It was pointed out that Tayf is primarily a newsletter for FoS members and is not intended to be a newsletter or information service for the island. It was also pointed out that FoS relies on feedback from the island regarding the content and impact of the articles in Tayf; if there is little interest or impact then FoS cannot justify the expense of distributing the newsletter for free on the island. The Socotris in attendance could not say whether there was any reaction to the article in Tayf 8 on the dangers of overfishing, for example.

The Socotris in attendance suggested holding meetings in which articles in Tayf could be discussed and agreed to give feedback to FoS on the impact of Tayf articles.

It was emphasized that FoS is very happy to receive articles from Socotris for inclusion in Tayf and again made a request for articles. Fouad said he had tried to submit an article but it had not appeared in Tayf because it was sent to the wrong person. It was suggested by Ahmed Saeed that reports of meetings held at EPA could be submitted to Tayf.

It was agreed that Miranda would send an email to Ahmed Saeed and Mohammed Amer as a reminder for Tayf articles. Fouad will write an article about sea cucumbers. Any articles by Socotris can be submitted to Mohammed Amer who will forward them on to Miranda.

It was agreed that FoS would continue to send 500 free copies of Tayf to Socotra but this will be reviewed against feedback from Socotra on the impact of Tayf's articles.

It was suggested that the current cost of translation of Tayf was too expensive and could probably be got cheaper elsewhere. However given the previous problems with getting quality translations on time it was felt that the current arrangement should remain.

The issue of whether only electronic copies should be distributed was raised. Hugh said members are given the option as to whether they want an electronic copy.

Fareed Krupp requested an English and Arabic copy which was agreed. This is available to others on request.

7. Website

Dana gave an overview of the website history and the process of creating the new website. It was made using html to enable easier editing, and not CMS (which might cause problems if the system breaks down). No further changes will be made to the basic structure (which was approved by the committee members) but more information can be added and is welcomed.

Dana ran through the different sections of the website. Several people still need to send their updated bibliographies and other information they agreed to provide.

Dana requested everyone to send pdfs of any papers without copyright that can be included in the website. Also links, summary information of research projects (half a page to a page) and photographs were requested. If photographs of people are submitted they need to have given permission for their use.

Additional points:

- The website will have a joining section with the ability to pay using Paypal.
- A summary of the website will be made in Arabic – it will not be possible to translate the whole website and all future updates and additions.
- It was proposed that only FoS members should be allowed to download papers and new Tayfs (for the first six months after publication) by using a password. This can be considered for new Tayfs for 6 months after publication. Otherwise everything available and open-access will be accessible.
- It was requested that a list of contacts/all FoS members be included on the website. Agreed that there will be a project list with contacts and institution list with contacts but not a list of all FoS members.
- It was pointed out that most journals have pre- and post- approved drafts to be put online without copyright restriction so we can also include those papers.

Diccon offered to modernise the FoS logo for free as discussed previously. It was suggested to make the logo more interesting with addition of animals etc but the logo should not be changed radically so as to remain recognizable. Diccon will make 3 new designs which will be open to a vote by members of the committee along with the existing logo.

8. Projects

As several ideas for potential projects were presented which took time to discuss it was agreed that from now on a call for projects would be made before the AGM so they can be discussed in advance. Projects for 2012/13 were not decided upon at the AGM. A call for additional ideas was made – **proposal should be submitted to FoS for all projects, including those discussed below, by 30th November**. Projects will be decided upon by the members of the committee through email discussion. Projects can also be submitted following visits of FoS members in February as needs arise.

£500 was taken to Soqotra by Hana Habrova for Dr Salem to carry out mobile clinic missions. He would like to continue to look for early cases of TB. FoS can contribute to this project again if agreed.

The solar pump project proposed by Nick Jeffrey is not likely to happen in the near future so funding is not currently required.

Relating to the soil erosion project in Homhil, funding will be needed for Adeeb's nursery to water the Boswellia cuttings in Homhil in addition to materials for further plantings planned for Spring 2013. Dana will provide a proposal with costings.

Fouad Naseeb requested FOS to fund the next phase of the turtle monitoring project. The local community was paid 250,000 riyals per month this year during egg-laying season to monitor the turtles and prevent turtle hunting. This was previously part of the SCDP project. When the project expired the number of turtles hunted increased dramatically. FoS has an agreed limit of £200-500 per project and

does not have enough funds to pay for a whole year's project. The amount is not due until May 2013 – it was decided to reconsider closer to the time if funding from elsewhere (eg GIZ) is not forthcoming before then. However FoS could still not fund the whole amount so requested Fouad to look for match funding from elsewhere.

Possible funding of the production of an invertebrate guide by Vladimir Hula and others.

There have been requests made by tourists, tour guides and campsite owners for small information leaflets about Soqotra for (potential) sale for tourists.

Diccon presented to a small group before the AGM mock-ups of cards using his art work that could be produced on behalf of FoS and sold on the island. All agreed that this is still a good idea. Diccon also brought several laminated copies of the Socotra maps. Some were purchased by FoS members to cover the costs of lamination. 3 copies were presented to A Abdulrahman Al-Eryani , Dr Saeed Alkhuzai of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage and Uwe Zajonz of the Senckenberg Research Institute and Nature Museum Frankfurt, the host of the 2012 meeting, as gifts from FoS.

9. Election of FoS Committee and Office Bearers

It was pointed out that the FoS constitution (section 7) states that “a member of the Committee shall cease to hold office if he or she: ... (sub-section e) is absent without notice from three consecutive meetings of the Committee”. FoS currently has several such Committee members and it was discussed whether these members should be removed to make way for new and potentially active members. In the event only one addition to the Committee was made so this was not necessary, however the issue of non-active members will be discussed further between now and the 2013 AGM. The maximum number of Committee members allowed is 16 but it is not a requirement to have that many.

Bohdana Rambouskova was elected to the Committee in place of Nick Jeffries. There were no other changes and the Office Bearers remained in post.

The re-elected Committee, for 2012-2013, is therefore as follows:

Kay van Damme – Chairman
Miranda Morris – Vice Chair
Julian Jansen van Rensburg – Secretary
Hugh Morris – Treasurer and Membership Secretary
Sue Christie – Tayf Editor
Lisa Banfield – Communications Officer
Dana Pietsch - Website Manager
Diccon Alexander
Salwa Barkwan
Martin Coree
Roderic Dutton

Hana Habrová
Issam Eldin Mohamed Ali
Sabina Knees
Bohdana Rambouskova
Rowan Salim

10. Any Other Business

Previous to the AGM it was agreed for Lisa to look for a FoS representative in the UAE.

It was requested that at future AGMs sufficient time is allocated for questions following presentations with round table discussions following each session.

The suggestion was made to create a proceedings issue of this year's presentations but due to the high standard authors would probably prefer to publish to rated journals.

It was pointed out that FoS needs to make sure that it does not discourage people of a non-scientific background from attending the AGM and giving presentations.

Request that checklists are added to the website. They can be added by sending them to Dana.

Diccon has a high-resolution copy of the FoS Socotra map that can be supplied to anyone who wants it.

11. Date and Venue for Next AGM

Sapienza University, Rome. Depending on whether their project is funded which will be confirmed within the next month. Will link it to a meeting of small island states which is being held there at the same time.

Lednice, Czech Republic. Have a project that can support the conference – funding is confirmed. There is also a possibility to fund some people from Yemen/Soqotra.

FoS thanks both parties for their offers but decided to accept the offer from the Czech Republic as Czech Republic as the Czech members had already kindly offered to host the AGM (last year in Bern) and the funding is secure, possibly including funding for Yemeni and Socotri attendance.

Provisional dates - Friday 13th – Sunday 15th September 2013.

12. Closing Remarks

Thanks were expressed by Abdul Karim Nasher on behalf of himself and our Yemeni and Soqotri colleagues who were given the opportunity to attend the meeting.

Congratulations were given to this year's host for a very successful symposium and the organisation of the whole meeting as a whole.

Thanks were given by the FoS Committee to all the attendees of the symposium and AGM.

Meeting adjourned.

Appendix iv: Message from Tayf Editor Sue Christie

2012 Tayf: FoS Newsletter

EDITING AND PRODUCING THE TAYF NEWSLETTER

Time: around 100 hours, spread over some 6 months. (The Editor has a full-time, demanding job). This is not ideal, and the Editor would prefer to concentrate on it over the Christmas and Easter breaks. Otherwise the next chance for her to work on it is the week of the July holiday, but this should be reserved for the final checking of Tayf so that it is ready in time to promote the September AGM.

Language: An Editor must be a fluent English speaker, ideally a native English speaker. Many of the contributions are written by people whose first language is not English and these can require considerable editing.

Design: the Editor uses Publisher. This is relatively straightforward today, but there is a problem when it comes to converting it to a PDF: it is a large file and needs an advanced version of Acrobat to “pdf” it. This process has to be repeated each time any alteration, however small, is asked for, and since the Editor doesn’t have the capability on work or home computer to do this, it involves asking someone else at work to take time from their job to do it for her.

Printing: this requires a high-powered photocopier to achieve decent colour as well as producing A3 (i.e. not the normal ‘home printer’).

Arabic version

Translation: This is done by Isam Eldin who is a delight to work with editing and proofreading: The Editor’s computer must be able to manipulate Arabic. Ideally the Editor would be able to edit /proof the Arabic, but since this is not possible, it is done by Miranda.

Final checking and proofing: It is simply not feasible to circulate a copy to each and every author (there can be over 20), since to succeed it would depend on each author responding quickly and accurately, and in the Editor’s experience this is unlikely, and would only serve to delay matters even further.

THE MAIN PROBLEM IS TIMING.

None of the tasks above are onerous in themselves, the real problem is timing. The Editor has to have all the articles before she can even start on the layout. Once received, text is first edited, and then put into rough pages, but the final layout depends on the final size of all the articles, tables, pictures etc.

WHAT WOULD MAKE EDITING OF THE TAYF NEWSLETTER MORE EFFICIENT AND LESS OF A NIGHTMARE:

(i) Getting all articles to the Editor before the Easter break, i.e. in March. This would make it possible to have the Newsletter ready for final checking and completion in July. Between March and July the English version has to be finalised and then sent for translation, which takes some time.

(ii) Contributors not expecting immediate response from the Editor and instant action on requests for changes, responses to submissions, etc.

(iii) People not promising articles that they then don't send: the Editor leaves a 'space' for each promised contribution and then if it does not materialise this 'space' has to be filled with something.

(iv) People not asking to make changes once the Editor has completed the layout.

(v) Contributors not expecting to have exceptions made for them. Apart from the agreed single major article for the Newsletter, all contributions are one single page maximum. This is not a minor matter: whereas whole pages can relatively easily be moved around, moving and adjusting whole pages-plus-a-few sentences is a very much more complicated matter.

(vi) Pictures are very useful: apart from giving the Newsletter a more attractive appearance, they also help with the problem of filling in gaps etc. when completing the layout.

BUT

(vii) All pictures must be clearly labelled: the file name for the picture should be suitable for the caption which will appear with the printed picture.

The Editor would also welcome help with chasing up people who have said they will submit material (e.g. papers from the AGM).