

Minutes of the Friends of Socotra Annual General Meeting held at Berne, Switzerland on 29 October 2017

Present: Kay Van Damme, Dana Pietsch, Miranda Morris, Sabina Knees, Julian Jansen van Rensburg, Eike Neubert, Abdulrahman al-Eryani, Hugh Morris, Vladimir Melnik, Haifaa Abdulhalim, Abdalgamil Mohammed, Ella Al-Shamahi, Marco Livadlotti, Fatehia Al-Shamafi, Benjamin Carey, Lisa Banfield, Sebastian Büttrich, Nadine Schneck, Ulrich Joger,

Apologies: Sultana al-Qu'aiti, Alan Forrest, Dirk van Dorpe, Raquel Vasconcelos, Petr Madera, Fabio Attorre, Peter de Geest, Uwe Zajonz, Fareed Krupp, John Farrow, Sue Christie, Isam-Eldin Mohamed Ali.

Minutes of previous meeting,

The minutes from the 2016 FoS AGM were approved and no matter were arising.

The virtual committee meeting minutes for were approved. It was agreed to attempt to keep the date for the virtual committee meetings to the 1 March every year.

Annual report from Chairman.

KVD presented an update on the Cyclone relief projects that were undertaken by Ismael. These included the plot regeneration and mangrove project. He also mentioned that FoS was also represented at the GEF meeting in Jordan, where FoS activities were outlined. This was well received by all attendees including the local Socotri representatives and the Socotri governor.

FoS accounts and treasurers Financial report.

HM presented the FoS accounts and financial report (Appendix 1). HM mentioned that he and SK were working together on the finances this year and that the handover to SK would be then complete. HM mentioned that Tayf production costs had been reduced due to there being more call for electronic versions. HM also mentioned that FoS had also facilitated the handover for a large donation to Homhill. HM and KVD thanked Ismael for helping with the transfer of funds and ensuring that receipts for monies spent was all in order.

KVD mentioned that he, LB and HM would be involved in writing a report on how the monies for the cyclone appeal had been spent and send this out to donors and put on the website.

HM said that it would be good to spend the outstanding cyclone appeal monies this year. HA stated that much of the problem in spending monies on Soqotra was due to the lack of material, which made it difficult to complete projects in good time and that this could be reported to donors as reasons for the delay in spending of the cyclone appeal monies. SK proposed to accept the accounts and financial report, this was seconded by KVD and accepted by the committee in a unanimous vote

Ongoing and potential projects

Disabled school funding

MM reported on the potential of funding training two women on Soqotra to work with disabled children. This training would be carried out with the help of **Judith Arkis** and **Mahmoon**. This training was costed at approximately 1410 GBP for both women who would be based in Hadiboh and who would be receiving on the job training helping up to 13 children with special needs.

KVD proposed that this project be accepted as it is a very worthwhile project and training is a very important. HM seconded this and said that this was financially possible as a one off project.

The project was unanimously accepted by all members

It was also mentioned that it would also be useful to find out the extent of the need for disabled teaching and help on the island through a survey of other areas.

KVD mentioned that as it may be necessary to attract further funding it might be worthwhile to have a push for new members or try to attract funds through Goget funding.

BC mentioned it was also possible to get further funding in the UK, and that there are tourism potentials for deaf people meeting other deaf people in the world.

KVD and MM expressed their thanks to Matthew for all his help in bringing these projects to our attention.

Leaflets and Information Sheets

LB presented the leaflets that had been completed and printed. LB mentioned that in their current format that it would cost approximately 500 GBP to print out 50 leaflets.

Translations deemed to be most useful at this time were English, Russian and Arabic.

IM was formally thanked for his translations into Arabic.

JJvR was asked to take these leaflets to Soqotra and if there was time to take a series of leaflets in English and Arabic that would be printed by LB. KVD mentioned that it would be useful for these to be seen by the tourism manager **Mubarak**. MM said that it would also be important for these to be given to Matthew who would assist with their use, when they should be required.

HM mentioned that it would be good to have this sent to schools

AJ said that the schools would be happy to take material about Soqotra in English and Arabic and that it these would be useful for creating awareness with tourists visiting the island.

HM mentioned that it was possible to spend up to 500 GBP for the leaflets. KVD proposed that we spend this amount on printing and distribution of the leaflets to the island. This was unanimously accepted.

KVD thanked everyone who had been involved in the leaflets for all their efforts.

Support for International Vulture

KVD mentioned that Richard Porter had talked about an international vulture day that could be supported through FoS.

The committee agreed that this would be of interest for FoS to support but required further details. KVD to chase this up and report back to the committee on the details and how this would be possible.

KVD to speak to Richard Porter about this and thank him for the leaflets he has done.

HM mentioned that this should be followed up with haste to be included in the next Tayf.

Collaboration with the ARC WH

HA and KVD proposed a partnership agreement between FoS and ARC WH, when working on projects on Soqatra.

HA would send a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to FoS by 9 November 2017. This agreement with ARC WH would be checked by KVD, LB, SK and JJVR, who will then be taken to the committee for a final vote.

LB mentioned that projects selected and worked on by FoS and ARC WH should be looked at the experts.

HA said that these projects should also have reports generated, or a booklet devised in order to allow everyone to know what has worked and what has not worked and why.

KVD finally thanked HA for allowing FoS to work together with Ismael while he is still in the employ of ARC WH.

Cyclone appeal

Mangrove activities.

HA stated that FoS and ARC WH should work together with the replanting of mangroves, which would also see the ARC WH help with further funding.

It was proposed that the planting of seedlings should take place at Shoub and possibly Diham, where it could also be integrated with schools. DP mentioned that Diham may be difficult as there are problems with camels eating the mangroves.

HA mentioned that it would be imperative to work with experts to ensure that the mangrove restoration project works.

LB mentioned that this restoration project should target areas where the mangroves were damaged during the cyclone specifically or in areas where it will help mitigate against further problems.

The committee all were in favour for working together with the ARC WH during this project and by having the ARC WH help with facilitate getting money for this project to the island.

Boat repair

MM mentioned that there had been training in boat repair on the island but that this had now ended. MM proposed that this would be a useful project to chase in the future. KVD seconded this and stated that **Malik** was still interested in reinvigorating this project, especially as it now lies dormant due to lack of GIZ funding. Enquiries to be made as to the costs and what would be involved in reinvigorating this project.

Tayf

New editor

The committee officially thanked SC for all her work through many years of looking after Tayf, and her help with FoS.

KVD proposed having two people take over the editorial of Tayf, a scientific editor and someone to help with design.

AF, LB, HH were proposed by JJVR and KVD. This was seconded by MM and unanimously agreed upon by the committee.

Article series

JJvR proposed that there should be a number of regular columns in Tayf for people, who would write a short brief on a specific idea, topic, etc... each year.

DP agreed to a series on Soqotri soils.

JJVR agreed to do one on history and archaeology of Soqotra.

EN agreed to do one on molluscs.

MM agreed to do one on the Soqotri language

SK agreed to do one on plants.

AM agreed to do one on ecotourism

VM agreed to do one on the folkloric traditions on Soqotra.

LB agreed to do one on members' experiences on Socotra.

HA proposed Ismael for several articles.

SK stated that while it was useful to have Tayf as an electronic resource, hardcopies would still be needed for the British library.

SK thanked for organising the ISBN for Tayf.

Mailchimp

JJvR proposed that Mailchimp be used in correspondence with members. This was seconded by EN. JJvR to send a test to committee members to allow them to come to a final decision.

FoS Meeting 2018

UJ proposed Braunschweigen, Hanover.

HA proposed that we hold a meeting at Bahrain.

The committee unanimously that the meeting be held in Bahrain to allow for a greater chance of Soqotri attendees. The dates agreed with HA were 25 - 27 October 2018.

MM mentioned that to encourage the Soqotri's to present their work abstracts should be in English and Arabic. Agreed unanimously.

The Executive Committee for 2017 - 2018:

Fabio Attore, Lisa Banfield, Salwa Barkwan, Sue Christie, Peter De Geest, Hana Habrova, Mohamed-Ali Isam-Eldin, Dirk Van Dorpe, Julian Jansen Van Rensburg, Sabina Knees, Vladimir Melnik, Hugh Morris, Miranda Morris, Dana Pietsch, Kay Van Damme and Raquel Vasconcelos

The Election of Office Bearers of the new Executive Committee

DP stood down as vice chair. The committee expressed their thanks to DP for all the efforts she had put in during her time as vice chair.

MM proposed JJvR as vice chair, this was seconded by KVD. The committee were accepted this unanimously.

JJVR to remain as secretary until a replacement can be sought.

The rest of the committee remains.

HM mentioned that an honorary position for FoS be organised for people that had done outstanding work during their time with FoS. HM proposed MM for the first honorary position, this was seconded by JJvR and agreed on by the committee unanimously.

JJvR proposed that the committee members provide a list of their role and responsibilities, which could be used to ease the transition of new committee members. JJvR also proposed that the committee members also draw up end of the year reports.

The Election of Trustees of Friends of Socotra

Alan Forrest, Lisa Banfield, Sue Christie, Julian Jansen Van Rensburg, Sabina Knees, Tony Miller, Hugh Morris, Miranda Morris, Dana Pietsch, and Kay Van Damme