



**Friends of Soqotra 2019 AGM Minutes**  
**28<sup>th</sup> September 2019**  
**Palermo Botanic Garden, Sicily, Italy**

**Opening and Committee Election** (points 8-10 of agenda)

Hugh Morris explained that the Chair has resigned and the Vice Chair is not present so we needed to elect a new Chair and Committee members at the start of the AGM. Read out the list of the current Committee and 5 people were invited to join in advance:

- Haifaa Abdulhalim
- Petr Maděra
- Eike Neubert
- Martin Rejžek
- Tullia Riccardi

Current committee were re-elected  
New members listed above were elected  
Kay Van Damme was elected as Chair  
Miranda Morris was elected as Vice Chair  
Sabina Knees was re-elected as Treasurer  
Lisa Banfield was re-elected as Secretary

The full Committee is therefore (19 members, in alphabetical order):

- Haifaa Abdulhalim
- Isam-Eldin Mohamed Ali
- Fabio Attorre
- Lisa Banfield (Secretary)
- Salwa Barkwan
- Peter De Geest
- Hana Habrová (Tayf editor)
- Sabina Knees (Treasurer)
- Petr Maděra
- Vladimir Melnik
- Hugh Morris
- Miranda Morris (Vice Chair)
- Eike Neubert
- Dana Pietsch (Webmaster)
- Martin Rejžek
- Tullia Riccardi
- Kay Van Damme (Chair)
- Dirk Van Dorpe
- Raquel Vasconcelos

Sue Christie will resume as Tayf editor but is not on the committee.

**1. Apologies**

Fareed Krupp, Peter De Geest, Dirk Van Dorpe, Alan Forrest, Hana Habrová, Samuel Lvončík, Sue Christie, Julian Jansen Van Rensburg

The committee expresses its condolences for the unfortunate passing of Dr Wolfgang Schneider, long term supporter of FoS and excellent researcher for the Arabian Peninsula.

## **2 & 3 2018 AGM minutes and matter arising**

Print-outs of the minutes were passed around and approved/adopted as it is by the general assembly. No matters arising.

## **4 & 5. FoS Annual Report & Ongoing projects (see also separate reports)**

- a. Environmental awareness activity in Ayhaft (April 2019) and Noged with Yemen Foundation of Renaissance and Development. Aimed to promote awareness on environment and waste management. Presentations in Soqotri to support heritage of language. Focussed on the link between clean air and water and human health. Rubbish collection activity at the wadi where the local people collect their water was carried out. FoS materials were used as part of the awareness raising. Total cost of the project was 388 USD (KVD).

A point made about the “teacher’s fee” (70 USD) – discussion about whether we should pay these. It depends on the policy of the implementing institution, for example, IUCN and the Regional Centre of ARC-WH have a policy to not pay people that are already working for government or other institutions. Others (Abdulraqeb Al-Okaishi) thought that if it is extra work they should be paid a nominal sum. FoS needs to be consistent and transparent. Needs to be discussed further and a policy made. KVD to ask Mohamed of the Yemen Foundation of Renaissance and Development to specify the “teacher’s fee” in the financial breakdown and what it actually is – it may be school’s rent for the use of the rooms and materials.

- b. Mangrove restoration in Ghubbah. Started 2017 and re-funded this year. The project is run by a local association with local teachers and schools. Small nursery was constructed to grow mangrove seedlings; seeds were collected in Shuab/Neet. The project makes sure to use a policy of more durable materials and less waste. Growing seedlings in the built nursery failed; too much work to keep them alive. Now planting directly in water with protection from crabs using plastic buckets which will be reused after moving the seedlings into its final locations. Now 83 mangrove plants growing. Will remove the plastic when they’re big enough almost after 2 years upon experts’ advice. Total cost of project so far is 2,421 USD. FoS expresses thanks to Haifaa, ARC-WH and Ismail for collaboration on this project (KVD).
- c. Momi vegetation regeneration plot. Village planted Boswellia after the cyclones but they failed. Built a fence with support from the Regional Centre and FOS which has allowed natural regeneration. Some plants regenerating naturally. Planted Aloes and also some seeds collected from the local area. Total cost of project is 3,000 USD (KVD).
- d. Connect2Socotra. New awareness raising project in collaboration with UNESCO Office for the Arab Gulf States and Yemen. Invitations have been sent to associated institutions for them to participate. Several activities are being carried out in Palermo (KVD).

- e. UNESCO year of indigenous languages. After request from UNESCO to KVD, Miranda Morris and Janet Watson wrote a description of the six endangered Modern South Arabian Languages (which includes Soqotri). A mailchimp on the subject was sent to all FoS members and posted on FoS facebook page (MM).
- f. Darwin-funded book, Soqotra: Heritage and Future. Arabic copies were delivered to Soqotra when book was originally printed in 2009. At the 2018 Bahrain FoS AGM various Soqotrans reviewed and liked the book but asked for the style to be changed to be aimed at primary school children (5-10) and teachers. Abdulkarim Nasher and Ali Mahroos have identified teachers to be trained how to use the book and the power-point presentations. Professor Christie will be contacting experts for 10 simple bullet points per subject for children, with more detailed explanations for teachers. GEF has the funding for this. (MM). The Yemeni Government represented by Minister of Fisheries and the Governor of Socotra shows great interest in this project.

Suggestion to teach kids the names of trees etc in Soqotri. Response: the original book had a glossary with Soqotri names at the back and these will be included in the re-write. At the time the book was being written, there was a reluctance to have too much Soqotri in school but opinions have changed, eg Soqotri is now accepted as an official second language in Yemen.

- g. Eco-camp. Ecosystem Restoration Camp is willing to provide expertise if required (PDG).
- h. Soil restoration project. No progress/postponed (LB).

## **6. FoS accounts and Treasurer's Financial Report and Membership (SK)**

- See separate treasurers report.
- Report given for 1.1.2018 to 31.12.18
- Subscriptions increase 1,082 GBP to 1,702 GBP, probably due to the large number of attendees meeting in Bahrain.
- Total income = 1,774 GBP and total project expenditure = 1918.03 GBP.
- Balance shows 7,745 GBP but now less than 5,000 GBP due to expenses spent since 31.12.18.

## **7. Virtual Committee Meeting (22.6.19)**

- Print-outs of the minutes were passed around. No matters arising.

## **8-10 Elections - Covered under point 1.**

## **11. Tayf**

- Overview given of what Tayf is with a presentation of the last Tayf (2018).
- Apologies for the delay in production.
- Sue had resigned but Sue and Hana have agreed to finish the 2019 Tayf.

## **12. Website**

- No points.

**13. Engagement with FoS members and the public** (see also separate report)  
(KVD, LB)

- Overview of facebook posts and interaction plus examples were given.
- 45 posts from last AGM – 60-1,700 people reach; average 680 people.
- Breakdown of characteristics of people who follow the page (gender, age etc).
- Examples of mail sent to FoS members via mailchimp were shown. Information and data that can be collected from mailchimp re member interaction was shown.
- Suggestion that mailchimps could also be sent to non-members to be discussed.

**14. Proposals for new projects**

- New leaflets proposed on:
  - o Molluscs (Eike)
  - o Hydrology (Fabio)
  - o Caves (Peter)
  - o Marine life. Especially keen on dolphins and whales. Possibly more than one leaflet (i.e. one on certain key fish, shark and whales; one on non-fish, as shellfish, squid, sponges, corals etc.) (Fareed? Haifaa will communicate with possible experts on this field)
  - o Walling on Soqotra (Vladimir and Julian?)
  - o Rock art (Julian?)
  - o History (?)
- Need to discuss who/how this will be followed up.
- Haifaa also volunteered to translate future leaflets into Arabic.
- Open invitation was given for further proposals.
- Focus this year on following up on ongoing projects: Connect2Socotra, mangroves in Gubbah, plot in Momi.

**15. Any Other Business**

FoS decision-making process

- How to select projects and make decisions. A new procedure was proposed (to be discussed further and voted on):
  - o Should be costed then passed through the treasurer
  - o Put to the committee. More than half of the committee should respond. More than half of those responded have to be in favour.
  - o Haifaa offered to draft a template for project proposals.
  - o Need to discuss how we will objectively select different projects and how we can offer support to those implementing projects.

SK expressed thanks to Hugh Morris for his years as FoS treasurer.

Trustees

- UK charity commission rules. Trustees remain as per last AGM but Alan Forrest was never registered. He is deciding whether he wants to remain as a trustee.

Signatories

- Sue Christie, Sabina Knees, Hugh Morris. Julian to be removed.

New Members

- A welcome pack / message is required. Need to discuss who/how.
- Still need to follow up on the members that joined in 2018.

#### Messages from Soqotri NGOs

- Soqotra Wildlife Association – Soqotri led initiative with nature activities and nature education activities eg celebration of environmental days.
- Soqotra Soccer League – asked for support (basic kit or any kind of support).
- Yemen Foundation Renaissance and Development – Joint awareness activity with FoS (see above). A video message was shown. Awareness activity re environment, rubbish waste, plastic, for children in Noged (34 students). Gave thanks to FoS and everyone who supported the initiative.

#### Internal FoS Communication

- Any official communication to/from FoS should be shared as a minimum among 4 core committee roles – chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer.

#### Special publication on Socotra (FA)

- Special publication focused on Soqotra will be published in the journal Rendiconti Lincei.

#### Abdulraqeb Al-Okaishi

- Cyclones – short report to government of Yemen re the impact of the cyclones. How they can manage it.
- Need enforcement and activation/modification of the zoning plan. Response (KVD) is working on this and welcomes feedback.
- Suggestion of project looking at sustainable management of natural products.
- Mendel Uni is training 7 students, 6 MSc and 1 PhD. Requests that other universities/institutions train 1 Socotri student.

#### **16 Venue 2020**

- Mendel University, Czech Republic.
- Petr Madera requests to suggest dates (last weekend September?).

#### **Actions Arising**

- Discuss and approve a consistent policy for if, who and how much we pay to Soqotri involved in implementing FoS projects or initiatives supported by FoS (all).
- Vote required to formally approve the proposed system for voting on future projects and other committee decisions (LB).
- Drafting of agreed new leaflets (FA, EN, HA).
- Drafting of template for proposing new FoS projects (HA).
- Discuss and approve a policy for establishing and reporting on FoS projects (all).
- Discuss how to manage FoS membership database and a welcoming procedure for new members (SK, LB, all).
- Follow-up on welcoming new members from 2018 (SK/LB).
- Follow-up on the teacher's fee paid as part of the environmental awareness activity in Ayheft (KVD)

## FINANCIAL REPORT

AGM Palermo, September 2019

Accompanying the Accounts for 01/01/2018 – 31/12/2018

The accounts for 2018 are in the same format as previous years (with notes relating to individual items). Figures below in [ ] are those for 2017.

**Income:** In 2018 subscriptions rose by £620.94 to £1702.98 which is 57% more than 2017. Other income during the year comprised £68.17 in donations and £3.55 in interest giving a total income of **£1,774.70**.

No further donations were made to the *Cyclone Chapala Appeal* in 2018.

**Expenditure:** The sum from the *Cyclone Appeal* (£1918.03) remaining in the FoS accounts from 2017 was actually spent in 2018. No other projects were funded during the year.

The Website Domain is not an annual expenditure but payment of £450.32 was made to Dr Dana Pietsch, Website Manager in August 2019 to cover 2018.

The principal costs are for the annual production of *Tayf*. The cost of printing and distribution of *Tayf 14* (£432.79) was also reimbursed in 2019 and therefore does not appear in the accounts for 2018.

The total costs for translation of *Tayf 14 and 15* were paid in 2019 the final costs for printing additional copies of *Tayf 15* are still to be confirmed. However, only 200 were printed for the AGM in Bahrain 2018 comprising 100 copies each in Arabic and English. The costs for printing these 200 copies was £787.60.

At this point we still have to decide if more are to be printed to send to members. We also need to fulfil our Library obligations of 6 copies each of English and Arabic.

The insurance premium for 2018-2019 (£254.60) was paid in 2018 but not reimbursed until 2019.

Whilst the Auditor has been paid £25 for auditing the 2018 accounts this will not appear on the accounts until 2109.

No admin costs were paid in 2018.

Although the end of year balance in the account was **£7,745.78**, this sum included money still due to be paid out for the translation, production and distribution of *Tayf 14* and 15.

Dr Sabina Knees

Treasurer, *Friends of Soqotra*

26<sup>th</sup> September 2019

**FRIENDS OF SOQOTRA (UK Charity Number 1097546)**

Accounts for **01/01/2018 to 31/12/2018**

<b>BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNTS ON 01/01/18</b>		<b>£7889.11</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
31/12/2018	[01/01/2017 to 31/12/2017]	01/01/2018 to
Membership subscription (A)	[£1082.04]	£1702.98
Donations Cyclone (B)	[£0.00]	£0.00
Donations	[£85.00]	£68.17
Interest	[£3.69]	£3.55
<b>Totals</b>	<b>[£1170.73]</b>	<b>£1774.70</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Projects (C)	£0.00]	£1918.03
Website Domain (D)	[£0.00]	£0.00
Tayf costs (E)	£1190.57]	£0.00
(Tayf 13) (E)		
Insurance Premium (F)	[£505.10]	£0.00
Auditor's fees (G)	[£75.00]	£0.00
Admin. Costs (H)	[28.40]	£0.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>[£1799.07]</b>	<b>£1918.03</b>
<b>BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT ON 31/12/18</b>		<b>£7745.78</b>

Accounts audited and original signed by Sally Rae

## Notes accompanying the accounts for the year 2018

(A) £1702.98 is 57% more than 2017.

(B) No further donations were made to the *Cyclone Chapala Appeal* in 2018.

(C) The sum from the *Cyclone Appeal* (£1918.03) remaining in the FoS accounts from 2017 was actually spent in 2018. No other projects funded in the year.

(D) The Website Domain is not an annual expenditure.

(E) The total costs for translation of *Tayf 14 and 15* were paid in 2019 the final costs for printing additional copies of *Tayf 15* are still to be confirmed.

The cost of printing and distribution of *Tayf 14* (£432.79) was also reimbursed in 2019 and therefore does not appear in the accounts for 2018.

(F) The insurance premium for 2018-2019 (£254.60) was paid in 2018 but not reimbursed until 2019.

(G) Whilst the Auditor has been paid £25 for auditing the 2018 accounts this will not appear on the accounts until 2109.

(H) No admin costs were paid in 2018.

N.B. Although the end of year balance in the account was **£7,745.78**, this sum included money still due to be paid out for the translation, production and distribution of *Tayf 14* and 15.

SGK, September 22nd, 2019