

# Friends of Soqotra 2022 AGM Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

**Name of Association:** Friends of Soqotra (UK Charity Number 1097546)

**Type of Meeting:** Executive Committee Meeting (AGM)

**Date and Time of Meeting:** 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2022, 18:30 – 19:30 UK time (UTC+0)

**Venue:** virtually via Zoom

## 1. Attendants and Apologies

The AGM was opened by the Chair.

Attendants included FoS committee members joined through the online meeting platform (Zoom).

FoS members present (only Executive Committee Members) included Raquel Vasconcelos\* (RV), Kay Van Damme\* (KVD), Haifaa Abdulhalim\* (HA), Petr Maděra\* (PM), Hana Habrová\* (HH), Eike Neubert\* (EN), Miranda Morris\* (MM), Francesca Pella\* (FP), Mark Thomlinson\* (MT), Fabio Attorre\* (FA), Rowan Salim\* (RS), Vladimir Melnik\* (VM).

Apologies were received by Dana Pietsch (DP).

The agenda is attached as Appendix 1.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

## 2. Executive committee meeting and supporting PPT Presentation

### Communications and Outreach

#### Tayf

The English version of the issue 18 (2021) of Tayf has been printed in full colour. The costs were covered by Mendel University. Suggested by HA, the deadline to translate the issue 18 in Arabic, was June. MM remarked that it would be better to look for a professional translator, to accelerate the publication process; HA pointed out that the translator needs to be high-qualified and also possesses a general knowledge of scientific topics, a background that often a professional translator doesn't have, and that she would continue the translations and if necessary, look for an alternative. The magazine was distributed in Soqotra (March 2022), together with Issue 17, in English and Arabic (Oct 2021, March 2022). The Arabic version of the Issue 17 was brought to Samha Island as well. Moreover, older issues were brought to Socotra (March 2022), mainly left in public school libraries (for details, please see the paragraph "Education and awareness").

The end of June was the date mentioned as deadline to translate the Issue 18 in Arabic. The Issue 19 of Tayf is going to be designed and assembled soon. A special extra issue, about *Boswellia* spp., is planned to be published together with the next Tayf. DP suggested to avoid the double publication, proposing to publish the special issue separately; PM ensured that the *Boswellia* publication, which the cost of it and its translation in Arabic will be entirely covered by the *Franklinia* project, will be informative and targeted

on the Socotra general public. The committee members were asked to express if they prefer that the Boswellia issue could be an independent “extra” publication or a supplement issue to Tayf 19, the majority voted for the second option.

## **Website**

The website page was updated with some news, the minutes of the AGM 2021, the committee new members’ profiles, and the Issue 18 of Tayf. Some of the members outlined troubles using the PayPal links. During the discussion how we can update the website, DP remarked that she had not received a proposal yet. For the website update and redesign, she is suggesting using a free website programme (WordPress). DP gave her availability to present a plan for the next AGM, and she added that a graphic designer could provide a significant support on the website renew process. All the members voted and agreed with the proposal, yet that a professional designer should be appointed.

## **Social Media**

KVD reported that 20 posts were published since 1 Oct 2021 (ca. 3/month) on Facebook, 1,440 people expressed like the FoS page, which is followed by 1,487 people, mainly from the Arab Region. Each post was seen by 100 and 1,200 views (boosted posts reached 8,000 – 10,000 views), on average 400 views per post. The FB page of FoS never received negative feedback.

## **Archive**

No updates or activities were reported, besides Martin Rezbek overview per year (publication list). It was remarked the necessity to write a copyright agreement before creating a photo archive.

## **Core**

### **Finances**

MT reported the income received in 2020 (£1148) and in 2021 (£1698). At the consequence, the status of accounts, at end of 2020, was £4791, while it was £6515 the following year.

MT confirmed that the account of 2020 has been filed and guaranteed that the account of 2021 will be filed soon. He showed the settled arrears from 2020 and 2021, which they are correlated to projects (e.g. Grant to al-Khair association), administration (e.g. Mailchimp, Insurance) and new project support (\$500 to Al-Tamek Mangrove project). The status of accounts, updated to 24 April 2022, is £6279.

The treasurer reminded us that the institutional membership fee is \$100, while the personal is \$40 (€35; £30).

Nine members stopped or paused automatic PayPal in 2021. The reasons why they opted for this choice could be: they wanted control over automatic spending; the payment card option was not updated; they chose stopping deliberately. Seven people, who had stopped in earlier years, re-started.

## **Governance**

KVD reported that MSP resigned. He added that the privacy policy draft has been finished.

## **Membership**

The current number of members is 26. The memberships that expired in 2021 are 30, 22 the previous year. There were 37 people that didn't renew their membership before 2020.

FP suggested to contact the 22 (2020) and 30 (2021) members and give the option to pay one membership year or give a donation to include all the period not covered by payment. FP suggested a new membership for students (£20) and the possibility to establish a lifetime membership. MM agrees with the possibility to send a personalised email to each member, illustrating the possible choices.

## **Projects, Grants and Science**

### **Mangroves**

The mangrove project is carrying out with EPA/ARC-WH, implemented by *Al Tamek* Association. The project was planned through meetings with ARC, EPA, *Al Tamek* and supported by two visits on the site (Oct 2021, April 2022) and 500 USD for more trees. The agreements were renewed. The site and the project development were the main topic of the MSc thesis of HA. For the possible future developments, new mangrove's sites were explored. KDV reported that the local association wishes to carry out more awareness activities with local schools.

### **Indigenous culture and Language**

VM reported to have recently visited some archaeological sites in Socotra. He summarised his journey in very remote archaeological sites, reporting that some of them are damaged. VM outlined that he suggested 20 sites of archaeological interest to JvR (an archaeologist working in Socotra), but no protection, investments or other management actions were taken. He recommended to put signs, to increase awareness, and to start an open discussion with the local communities.

MM provided a contribution on Socotra culture, article that will be published in Tayf 19.

### **Other FoS projects**

As potential additional activities of 2022, the creation and printing of awareness brochure about mangroves were mentioned. *Al Tamek* asked 200 USD for extra activities with the mangrove topic. Other possible alternative actions could be preparing awareness materials on other topics, starting a collaboration with the Socotra Sea Turtles Association and specific initiatives focused on Socotra's wetlands. HH pointed out she will focus on mangrove awareness activities.

### **Education and awareness**

During the Socotra mission in March – April 2022, several Tayf issues were distributed:

a) Bilingual: 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008

b) Arabic: 2003; 2009; 2012; 2013; 2020

c) English: 2021

The copies were handed in several places: English School Hadiboh, Qarah, Woman Association, Keybani, EPA, others left in Socotra for further distribution.

The following seminars were organised: School of English, Hadibo (30<sup>th</sup> March); Women Association, Hadibo (5<sup>th</sup> April); meetings with NGOs supporting grant applications, Hadibo (4<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> April); meeting with *Al Tamek* Association chairman, mangrove project site (9<sup>th</sup> April).

More details to follow in the AGM in Rome (2022) with public attendants.

### **Next meeting**

The next venue will be in Rome, September 2022. The hosts will be La Sapienza University and the Botanical Garden of Rome. Among FoS, the organisation committee will be composed by FA, DJM, KVD, FP, PM. The organisers in Rome without FoS membership will be Dario La Montagna and Michele De Sanctis.

### **Any Other Business**

FP introduce the idea to organize a stand to introduce the FoS Charity to the participants of an English rural fair in the UK, in July. The committee express a positive opinion about it and votes a go.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Friends of Soqotra Online Committee Meeting**

**26<sup>th</sup> April 2022**  
(Skype)

**17:30 – 18:30 UK time**  
**18:30-19:30 Central European Time (CET)**  
**19:30-20:30 Yemen time**

### **Agenda**

#### **1 - Objectives**

The subcommittees are sharing the information about news and activities that they are carrying out since the last AGM (September 2021), highlighting the development of the planned engagements for this year, such as the Friends of Soqotra (FoS) Conference and AGM.

#### **2 – Timetable**

|                            |                                                                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Type of session</b>     | Plenary, online                                                                     |
| <b>Session focus</b>       | Meeting of the FoS Committee Members & Summary of the activities of the Charity FoS |
| <b>Duration</b>            | One Hour                                                                            |
| <b>Meeting Chair</b>       | The meeting is chaired by the Chairperson, minutes/notes by Secretary               |
| <b>Online meeting link</b> | Skype (Skype name: francescapella1). The meeting could be recorded.                 |
| <b>Time (BST)</b>          | <b>Subject</b>                                                                      |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 17:30-17:35 | <b>Welcome Remarks + Apologies</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 17:35-17:50 | <p><b>Communication and Outreach</b></p> <p><b>Tayf</b> (FoS Newsletter). Lead: Hana Habrová. Other: Haifaa Abdulhalim, Kay Van Damme</p> <p><b>Website</b>. Lead: (Dana Pietsch). Other: Luca Malatesta, Tullia Riccardi, Kay Van Damme</p> <p><b>Media &amp; Social Media</b>. Lead: Kay Van Damme. Other: Tullia Riccardi</p> <p><b>Archive (Photo/Bibliography)</b>. Lead: Martin Rezjek. Other: Petr Madera, Vladimir Melnik, Dirk van Dorpe</p>                                                                                |
| 17:50-18:00 | <p><b>Finances, Budgeting and Fundraising/Donations</b></p> <p><b>General Finance</b>. Lead: Mark Thomlinson. Other: Francesca Pella, Haifaa Abdulhalim</p> <p><b>Governance/Policies (incl. Privacy) and Regulations/Ethics</b></p> <p><b>General Governance</b>. Lead: Kay Van Damme. Other: Francesca Pella, Fabio Attorre, Raquel Vasconcelos</p> <p><b>Membership (Engagement, Updates, Membership Admin)</b></p> <p><b>Membership</b>. Lead: Francesca Pella. Other: Haifaa Abdulhalim, Mark Thomlinson, Kay Van Damme</p>     |
| 18:00-18:10 | <p><b>Projects, Grants and Scientific Research</b></p> <p><b>Mangrove Project</b>. Lead: Haifaa Abdulhalim. Other: Samuel Lvoncik, Fabio Attorre, Petr Madera, Kay Van Damme, Martin Rezjek.</p> <p><b>Indigenous Culture &amp; Language</b>. Lead: Miranda Morris. Other: Haifaa Abdulhalim</p> <p><b>Grants</b>. Lead: Francesca Pella. Other: Eike Neubert, Kay Van Damme, Haifaa Abdulhalim</p> <p><b>Other Projects &amp; Links (nature)</b>. Lead: Kay Van Damme. Other: Francesca Pella, Haifaa Abdulhalim, Eike Neubert.</p> |
| 18:10-18:20 | <p><b>Conferences/Meetings/AGM</b></p> <p><b>Meetings and Events</b>. Lead: Kay Van Damme. Other: Francesca Pella, Fabio Attorre, Petr Madera, Tullia Riccardi, Luca Malatesta.</p> <p><b>Education/Awareness materials</b>. Activity on Socotra (Tayf)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 18:20-18:30 | <p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p><b>Closure of meeting</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |