



12th Annual General Meeting of the South African Wetland Society
25 October 2023 17h00 – 18h30
National Wetlands Indaba – ATKV Buffelspoort, North-West Province
and
Zoom Online Platform

No.	Agenda	Actions
1.	<p>Welcome Shaddai Daniel welcomed all to the 12th AGM for the SAWS.</p>	
2.	<p>Attendance Register & Apologies The attendance register signed at the Wetland Indaba is attached as Appendix A, in addition an attendance register will be taken from the zoom platform. Apologies: Marc de Fontaine, Steven Ellery, Charlene Smuts, Charleen Russell Proxies: proxies only received from Jacky Jay and Philip Frenzel through Shaddai Daniel Three aspects need to be voted on in this AGM: 1) Chairmans Report 2) Financial Statement</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes & Matters Arising from previous AGM There were no additions and or changes to the minutes. The 2022 minutes were accepted by Dr PL Grundling and seconded by Kate Snaddon</p>	
4.	<p>Additions to agenda:</p>	
4.1	<p>Frequency of the NWI will be raised.</p>	
5.	<p>Report on Progress this past year It was requested by the Chair to start with the financial report before proceeding to the chair report. There were no objections to this.</p>	
5.1	<p>Presentation of the Annual Financial Report A draft Annual Financial Statement for the year March 2022 to February 2023 was presented, as the Trustees discovered minor inconsistencies at a late stage and will work Post-Indaba with the bookkeeper to resolve these. A screenshot of what was presented in the AGM (and the discussion that followed) is shown here below. The final Financial Statement is appended in Appendix B (and a description thereof in the Chair Report which is appended in Appendix C).</p>	

South African Wetland Society NPO

Unaudited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2023

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2023	2022
Revenue			
Membership fees received		30 388	25 106
CMP Income		78 000	108 000
Donations received		-	50 000
Sponsorships received		-	6 000
	4	108 388	189 106
Other income			
Profit from Indaba		13 064	18 526
Interest received		10 334	5 441
		23 398	23 967
Operating expenses			
Accounting fees		-	(8 941)
Auditors remuneration	6	(1 016)	(4 500)
Bank charges		(483)	(206)
Board meeting expenses		(12 140)	-
CMP expenses		(51 504)	(60 471)
Marketing expenses		(25 476)	(575)
Sponsorships		-	(4 200)
SWS Annual membership		(13 620)	(9 091)
Travel - local		-	(250)
Website hosting		(31 790)	(3 100)
		(136 029)	(91 334)
(Deficit) surplus for the year			
Other comprehensive income		(4 243)	121 739
Total comprehensive (loss) income for the year		(4 243)	121 739

Shaddai explained the main revenue and expenses categories that must be noted:

- Annual membership fees are up. This is thanks to the Glue-Up system that now produces automated invoices and reminders of payment to members. We are expecting this figure to be even higher in the 2024 financial year, as we have seen a significant increase in membership during 2023 (new financial year).
- However, the Glue-Up system and website was expensive to purchase and set-up, and also requires an annual maintenance fee (see the “Marketing” and “Website hosting” categories). We do believe, however, that the expense is worth it.
- The Mondi, WRC, DFFE, and SACNASP sponsorship and donations were not included, as these income streams are allocated for the Indaba and was offset against the NWI expenses incurred. We are working with the bookkeeper to change this way of cost allocation for the final Financial Statement.
- Accounting fees are down as we are no longer expected to do annual audits, and SAWS has therefore moved from a large company doing our books and audits to a lady who can produce our Annual Financial Statements, Reviews and Tax Returns for us. This has decreased our financial management expenses considerably.
- The Board meeting expenses were high, as with each Board turnover we try to get the Trustees together for a one face-to-face meeting and strategic planning session.

Comments received during and after the AGM:

Financials were not up to date - unprofessional and not sent in advance. Comments cannot be made based on a presentation.

Action: The Trustees to compile formal Chair- and Financial Reports and distribute to members after the NWI. This will be instituted on an annual basis.

5.2 **Adoption of the Annual Financial Report**

Proposed by:
Seconded by:

Was not accepted due to the financial report being incorrect.

Action: The Trustees to compile formal Chair- and Financial Reports and distribute to members after the NWI. This will be instituted on an annual basis.

5.3

Presentation of the Chairperson’s Annual Report

The Chairperson’s AGM presentation, as well as the final Annual Report is attached as **Appendix C**.

The new Board of Trustees were introduced. A total of 11 Trustees, which includes 3 co-opted Trustees.

Gov, Finance & Admin

The final amendments of the SAWS constitution from the 2022 AGM was briefly shown again to remind members which changes they approved in 2022. As a result of the amended Constitution, the Society has now received their NPO status.

A strategic framework and plan to underpin and guide the Society’s activities and priorities was developed in early 2023. From these, workplans were developed against which progress in each portfolio can be measured. Internal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were developed to inform and guide decision-making among the Trustees.

Communication

A new membership management online system (Glue-Up) was developed and implemented in September 2022, which has seen an increase in membership from 104 in October 2022 to 146 (including the Trustees) in October 2023:

- Students – 22.
- Ordinary – 79.
- Premium (Ordinary + Journal) – 29.
- Retired Persons – 5

The Society is engaging through the social media platforms for the following:

- Job vacancies
- Training opportunities
- SAWS benefits
- Surveys

Various surveys were conducted to help the Society understand their current and potential membership base:

- A survey regarding the appetite for branded clothing/items (in a discussion after the Report, the attendees’ opinions were obtained on the most suitable clothing items. Attendees were in agreement that shirts, hats, and socks are the best items to start with.)
- A survey to provincial forums with regards to outreach/NWI engagements with them.
- A survey with regards to the appetite for a webinar series or dialogue platform.
- An NWI frequency survey was submitted after the Indaba.

A successful webinar series was launched in 2023. The following speakers were invited to present:

- Dr Donovan Kotze: “Using Wetland Assessments to Inform Ecosystem Management and Rehabilitation”
- Prof Fred Ellery: “Expect the Unexpected: Lessons from Research in southern African wetlands”
- Derril Daniels (DWS): “Water Use Authorisation and Legislative Requirements”

The series drew 433 attendees across the 3 webinars, of which only 173 were members. The attendance of 260 non-SAWS members generated a combined profit of R6 050.00 for the Society.

The Society has been maintaining the relationship with SWS, SACNASP and EAPASA but will be continuing to engage with EAPASA, ECSA and SACNASP this year to investigate

<p>potential collaborations and partnerships to improve cross-cutting practices, opportunities and membership benefits.</p> <p>Members were reminded that they can claim 0.1 CPD points for attendance of the AGM.</p> <p>Capacity Development The Inventory of wetland tools which the Society compiled between 2020 and 2022, is still being maintained and has been updated.</p> <p>The SACNASP mentoring programme is continuing. Another round of funding has been allocated to the SAWS, although the Society is still waiting from the final SLA from SACNASP. Once this has been signed, a call will be announced requesting mentee and mentor applications. Members were encouraged to volunteer their time to become mentors to develop capacity of young professionals.</p> <p>Discussion: <u>Provincial Forums</u> Bonani Madikizela raised the topic of Provincial Forum representation at the NWI. He mentioned that the provincial forum sessions at the NWI have disappeared. He asked whether it could be considered to sponsor members of the provincial forums to attend the NWI. The Society responded saying that an intervention like this will only be possible with additional sponsorship, as the Society is too small to take on such sponsorship. The NWI is already carrying the costs of the students in attendance (with some help from sponsors such as SACNASP). Lulu van Rooyen also responded saying that the provincial forum sessions at the NWI was removed as people always complained it was tedious and uninteresting. It was replaced in 2019 by a provincial forum workshop, which was well received. This did not take place at this 2023 NWI as a survey that was circulated to the Forums indicated a lack of interest in such an event at the NWI (possibly because many governmental officials who lead the forums were unable to attend the 2023 NWI due to the national budget cuts). The provincial Forums did indicate a preference for an online event.</p> <p><u>SAWS membership</u> Mr Madikizela also requested reminders about annual membership be sent, as he is unsure whether he is a member or not. He also stated that he has not received notices of the AGM before the NWI. Lulu van Rooyen responded saying that she will check whether Mr Madikizela is, or ever was, a member. If he has been a member before, he would have received reminders to renew as the system is automated. If he has never received reminders, it means he has never been a SAWS member, and he needs to complete his membership application. He wouldn't have received AGM notices if he isn't a paid-up member.</p> <p><u>Conference organizer</u> Mr Madikizela also asked how a conference organizer is appointed for the NWI, as he feels the procedure is not very transparent. Shaddai Daniel noted that SAWS usually goes with a three-quote system, and it is important to mention that we usually don't get more than two quotes for service providers at a time. For the 2023 NWI, the three-quote system was not applied, and this was due to a decision made throughout our experiences over the last five years. Trustees and the Local Organising Committee (LoC) are volunteers, this was the main reason as to why SAWS felt the need for a conference organiser, which was supported by the 2023 LoC. Organizing the conference takes time and resources and is too much for volunteers to manage in their spare time. The conference organizers change almost every year. In 2019 it was Royanda Projects; in 2020 there was no NWI (just a one-day celebratory event which was managed by Kruger and Associates); 2021 and 2022 2022 was VetLink; and 2023 was Kruger and Associates.</p>	<p>Action: The Trustee responsible for the Provincial Forums to host an online meeting with Forum chairs</p> <p>Action: LvR to check whether Mr Madikizela is/was a member.</p>
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	<p>Pit-Louis Grundling added that if government provide sponsors, they need to know if the systems are in place, and the LOC needs to be accountable.</p> <p>He agreed with the use of conference organisers especially since SAWS trustees and the LoC are volunteers and that if the members feel strongly about having a permanent SAWS paid employee or have people dedicated for the organising of NWI, or even have the provincial forums at NWI, then the members must look at ways to fund this.</p> <p>Mathabiso pointed out that NWI is cheap due to the sponsorship from SAWS. However, the Society at large needs to be stronger to take the weight off the Trustees and LoC, as they are volunteers. She also stated that that people cannot be forced to attend NWI because of the economical status.</p> <p>She also raised the fact that some members are slowly being separated from the main frame. As much as the provincial forums want to attend and learn, the level and direction that SAWS is taking is too academic. A need to capacitate is required and money cannot be a problem. The provincial forums need recognition, but we are not addressing implementation.</p> <p>Despite this, Mathabiso mentioned that she will be back at the next NWI and she would be presenting on some of the work the provincial forum is involved with.</p> <p>In response to this Shaddai reminded the members, especially the provincial forums about the funding call that SAWS had put out as well as the lack of communication received from the provincial forums. However, it was well received that a representative from the provincial forum was taking the initiative to present work being carried out at the next NWI to showcase the provincial forums. Furthermore, Shaddai agreed that the provincial forum sessions will be brought back into the programme for NWI 2024.</p>	<p>Action: SAWS to engage with all the provincial forums</p>
5.4	<p>Adoption and secondment of the Chairperson’s Annual Report</p> <p>Proposed by: Kathy Taggart Seconded by: Barbara Weston</p>	
6.	<p>Discussion of additions to the Agenda</p>	
6.1	<p>NWI frequency and fees</p> <p>The discussion of whether the NWI should be held every year was raised again, as well as whether the NWI was good value for money.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - De Wet Botha commented that October is a very busy time of the year, and that this time slot clashes with other conferences. - Wynand Malherbe mentioned that if you don’t have it every year you lose the network, and you lose students - Nacelle Collins mentioned that when Working for Wetlands stopped, many governmental officials stopped attending. Other attendees disagreed, as the NWI still does get many officials under normal circumstances. - Alanna Rebelo mentioned that it is a discussion worth having as it is a lot of work for a Society consisting of volunteers. 	<p>Action: A survey on the frequency of the NWI, as well as a post-NWI survey was compiled and circulated after the NWI.</p>
7.	<p>Closure</p> <p>Shaddai thanked all the attendees and reminded them of the Gala Dinner starting at 7pm.</p>	

Compiled by: Sashin Pillay and Lulu van Rooyen

Date: November 2023



Accepted by: Shaddai Daniel (SAWS Chair)

Date: 26 March 2024