



13th Annual General Meeting of the South African Wetland Society
17 April 2024 16h00 – 17h30
Zoom Online Platform

No.	Agenda item	Actions
1.	Welcome Shaddai Daniel welcomed all to the 13 th AGM for the SAWS.	
2.	Attendance Register, Apologies and Proxies The attendance register is attached as Appendix A . Apologies: Amanda Austin, Bramley Lemine, Craig Cowden, Donovan Kotze, Doug MacFarlane, Fiona Eggers, Jaco Du Plessis, Jake Alletson, Kathy Taggart, Megan Hillier, Nicolene Cloete, Nicolette Vermaak, Salicia Gounden, Shaun Taylor, Sheraine Van Wyk Proxies: proxies were received from Kathy Taggart, Craig Cowden and Fiona Eggers (Appendix A).	
3.	Minutes & action items arising from previous AGM There were no additions and or changes to the minutes. There were comments related to some of the actions from Dr Alanna Rebelo, to which the team responded that these action items would be addressed during the Chair Presentation. The 2023 minutes were accepted by Dr Chris Curtin and seconded by Dr Michael Grenfell.	
4.	Matters Arising from previous AGM minutes The Society gave feedback on the following matters that arose from the 2023 AGM:	
4.1	<u>The 2022/2023 Financial report</u> The 2022/2023 Financial report that was presented at the NWI2023 was a draft report, since the Trustees discovered minor inconsistencies at a late stage and had to work post-AGM with the bookkeeper to resolve these. Since then, the report has been finalized, accepted and distributed. The Trustees had committed to compiling and distributing the Chair- and Financial Reports in advance to each AGM.	
4.2	<u>Provincial forums session at Indaba and forum engagement</u> A discussion arose at the NWI23 regarding the absent provincial forum sessions at Indaba and forum engagement initiatives. While the Society responded by saying that the provincial forum sessions at the NWI were removed after complaints about the session and were replaced by provincial forum workshops at the NWI, the Society did commit to hosting an online meeting/training session with Forum chairs. This has been actioned by SAWS, and a date is soon to be set with the Forums for this session.	Action: The Trustee responsible for the Provincial Forums to host an online meeting with Forum chairs
4.3	<u>SAWS membership renewals and reminders</u> At the previous AGM two members were uncertain whether they actually received notification about the AGM through the Glue-Up System. The SAWS secretariat did confirm that one of the members did indeed receive the communication, and the other member had in actual fact never been a member before, which explained the lack of communication.	
4.4	<u>Indaba frequency</u> The frequency of the NWI came up again during the previous AGM, whereafter the Society committed to distributing a survey to our community of practice to make a final decision on this. This is further discussed as part of the Chairperson's report below.	

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5.	Additions to agenda:	
5.1	No additions were made to the agenda	
6.	Presentation of the Chairperson’s Annual Report	
6.1	<p>The Chairperson’s AGM presentation, as well as the final Annual Report is attached as Appendix C. Below is a summary of the main points emanating from the Annual Report and presentation.</p> <p>6.1.1 Governance & Admin</p> <p>It was recognised that the strategic functioning of SAWS needed to be standardized in accordance with the SAWS mission, vision and objectives. As a result, 8 strategic goals were distilled, which were further refined and actioned through 5 portfolios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance, Finance & Administration • Communications & Information • Collaboration & Engagement • Capacity Development • National Wetlands Indaba <p>This resulted in the development of the SoP to guide the actions and conduct of SAWS.</p> <p>6.1.2 Collaboration & Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main aim of this portfolio is to provide support and initiate collaboration with the provincial forums. After extensive engagements, a fund to support the provincial forums was made available. This fund intends to increase its support base by co-hosting an event chosen by the forum. Unfortunately, SAWS did not receive any submissions/interest from the forums. The initiative will be available for the next financial year (2024/2025). Our focal point Trustee on this part of the portfolio is in continuous contact with the forums about this fund and to build relationships. This is also to set up the virtual meeting/training session, as committed to during the previous AGM. • Many of the Provincial Forums also hosted World Wetland Day events. • In 2023 the Society hosted a photo competition to generate content for SAWS webpages, marketing and social media platforms. 22 submissions were received and through a panel scored the submissions according to a set criteria. The following positions were awarded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2nd runner up – Pippa Schlegel ○ 1st runner up – Pieter Botha ○ Winner – Philip Frenzel • 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 potential collaborations and partnerships to improve cross-cutting practices, opportunities, and membership benefits. • The Society was represented by both a Trustee and a member at the Society for Wetland Scientists’ (SWS) 2023 Annual Meeting to present their work and research, which resulted in successful networking and engagements. • SWS approached SAWS to submit a proposal to host the next SWS Annual Meeting (2026). This would be the first international meeting held in Africa. SAWS collaborated with SWS-Africa and the WCWF to submit a proposal. <p>6.1.3 Communication & Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful webinar series was launched in 2023. Five webinars have been hosted thus far, reaching over 400 people. • A survey was launched with regard to branded clothing. The aim of this would be to increase funds into SAWS for the efficient and effective management of the Society, to provide an incentive for non-members to join, and to create a sense of pride with SAWS branded items. Findings showed that price range vs the type of items available for purchase vs quality of the 	

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	<p>items must be in proportion. The survey also indicated interest in smaller more functional items, which will be investigated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the previous AGM, a survey about the frequency of the NWI was distributed. While the NWI is a flagship event for our community of practice, it is not a SAWS-owned event. Therefore, the full survey report will be made available to the wider community once it has been finalized. In summary, however, the results indicated that of 62 participants, 53.2% preferred an annual NWI. <p>6.1.4 Capacity Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Inventory of wetland tools which the Society compiled between 2020 and 2022, is still being maintained and has been updated. Our flagship SACNASP-funded Candidate Mentorship Programme has by now had three successful cycles, upskilling a total of 10 young natural scientists. The Society has received funding for another cycle (2023/2024). <p>6.1.5. National Wetland Indaba</p> <p>The 4-day conference was attended by 140 delegates and 30 students. There were delegates across South Africa as well as from other African countries. It was largely sponsored by SAWS due to the budget constraints given by the National Treasury.</p> <p>The National Wetland Award winners were as follows: Young Professional – Renée Grundling Skills Development – Dept of Forestry, Fisheries & Environment: EMI Unit Stewardship – Cilliers Blaauw & Trevor Pike Science & Research – Michael & Suzanne Grenfell</p>	<p>Action: Distribute the full NWI frequency survey report to the wider community once it has been finalized.</p>
6.2	<p>Discussion of the Chair Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Rebelo asked why, in the presentation, SWS-Africa wasn't mentioned? The Society apologised for the accidental omission, and another SAWS member (Dr Grenfell) responded in the chat that the distributed Chair Report did indicate that SWS-Africa was a collaborator – specifically thanking Dr Rebelo for driving the initiative. As per a discussion at the previous AGM, a comment was again raised about SAWS appointing the same conference organizer for the NWI every year. The Society responded (as is reflected in the 2023 AGM minutes) that SAWS is not responsible for appointing the Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) for the NWI; the LOC is, and the LOC appoints a PCO based on the proposals they had received. The NWI is not organized by the same PCO every year. A list of the previous Indabas and their respective PCOs can be found in the 2023 AGM minutes. Nevertheless, a request was fielded that the 2024 LOC distribute an open bid over the SAWS networks, for full transparency. The LOC members who were presented at the AGM agreed to this. Regarding the NWI survey, Dr Rebelo mentioned that when results are this close (53.2% preferring an annual NWI), it requires more scrutiny. She felt that the NWI Trustees need a bigger say in the NWI frequency. The Society responded that the survey results will be distributed once the report has been compiled. It will be available for interrogation, but it was agreed on by the Trustees that we will concur with the outcome of the survey which is for an annual NWI. The Society committed to getting the minutes out within 1 – 3 months of each AGM. Dr Malherbe asked when SWS will announce whether South Africa has been successful in the SWS conference bid. Dr Rebelo replied that there has been no communication about the outcome as yet. A Society member asked to confirm what the location and the hosting forum are for the NWI24, and the Trustees responded that it will be held in the Eastern Cape Province by the ECWF. The exact venue is still unknown but will be communicated in time. 	<p>Action: Finalize and distribute AGM minutes before July 2024.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding e-mail communication, Dr Rebelo suggested that sending emails only to members will not reach the wider community of practice (CoP). Marc de Fontaine responded that Glue Up does have a function to send to other members and we do use this function. But the Society needs to keep some things back as a benefit for members, and the Glue-Up costs are kept lower when there are some limitations on emails sent. We therefore have two lists – one for the paid-up members and one for the wider CoP. We also make use of other networks such as FEN and the Provincial Forums, etc. A couple of times a year an e-mail is sent to non-members to allow them to sign up or to renew their membership. Dr Malherbe mentioned that the Society risks losing members because of the decoupling from NWI, so we need to make sure that the Society’s image is shown at NWI. The Trustees agreed and mentioned that SAWS will be represented within and throughout the Programme for NWI 	
7.	<p>Adoption of the Annual Chair Report</p> <p>Adopted : Chris Curtis Seconded: Wynand Malherbe, Charlene Russel, Kate Snaddon</p>	
8.	<p>Presentation of the Annual Financial Report</p>	
8.1	<p>The SAWS bookkeeper, Mrs Janine Mienie, presented the Annual Financial Statements for the financial year March 2023 to February 2024. A screenshot of what was presented in the AGM (and the discussion that followed) is shown here below. The Annual Financial Statement is appended in Appendix B. Simultaneously it was noted that one of the main reasons for decoupling the AGM from the NWI is because previously, when the AGMs were held at the NWI in October of every year (which is 8 months into a new financial year), the period of financial year reporting was never aligned to the Chair Report and the activities of SAWS for the calendar year. Thus, it created confusion for members when interpreting the financial report, which was actually for the financial year prior to the current year. Decoupling the AGM from the NWI will result in the alignment to the Chair Report and the corresponding financial year and improve reporting.</p> <p>Comments received about the Financial presentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Dr Rebelo asked for clarification of the acronym CMP, to which it was responded that it stands for the Candidate Mentorship Programme that the Society runs on behalf of SACNASP. Not all CMP funds are immediately disbursed. Surplus funds from previous years are often carried over to the next CMP cycle. Dr Rebelo was uncertain about the NWI profit shown for 2024, as the NWI has not yet taken place. The Society responded that the 2024 column refers to the 2023/2024 Financial Year, which means the NWI profit is the profit from the 2023 NWI. Dr Rebelo asked whether the annual costs for the Glue-Up system are sustainable and whether the funds cannot be used for a part-time secretariat position. Marc de Fontaine responded that having the Glue-Up system meant the Society could get rid of our previous very time-intensive manual, Excel-based system. Glue-Up provides automated invoicing, messaging, webinar capabilities, zoom integration and more. Dr Malherbe suggested that the Society looks into a short-term investment to maximise some of the interest. The Trustees agreed that this is a good idea and will investigate. 	<p>Action: The Trustees to look into a short-term investment to maximise some of the interest from the bank account.</p>

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	<p>South African Wetland Society NPO Unaudited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 29 February 2024</p> <p>Statement of Comprehensive Income</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Figures in Rand</th> <th>Note(s)</th> <th>2024</th> <th>2023</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="4">Revenue</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Membership fees by EFT</td> <td></td> <td>21 310</td> <td>18 770</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Membership fees by online</td> <td></td> <td>36 713</td> <td>11 618</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CMP Income</td> <td></td> <td>57 175</td> <td>78 000</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>4</td> <td>115 198</td> <td>108 388</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Other Income</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Profit from Indaba</td> <td></td> <td>40 983</td> <td>22 635</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Interest received</td> <td></td> <td>12 637</td> <td>10 334</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>53 620</td> <td>32 969</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Operating expenses</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Auditors remuneration</td> <td>6</td> <td>(5 500)</td> <td>(1 016)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bank charges</td> <td></td> <td>(357)</td> <td>(483)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Board expenses</td> <td></td> <td>-</td> <td>(15 217)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CMP expenses</td> <td></td> <td>(17 367)</td> <td>(57 998)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marketing expenses</td> <td></td> <td>(7 755)</td> <td>(25 476)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Postage and courier</td> <td></td> <td>(549)</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Software and Online systems</td> <td></td> <td>(55 791)</td> <td>(27 500)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student support - Non NWI</td> <td></td> <td>(2 800)</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SWS Annual membership</td> <td></td> <td>(2 579)</td> <td>(13 620)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Website hosting</td> <td></td> <td>(3 593)</td> <td>(4 290)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(96 291)</td> <td>(145 600)</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Surplus (deficit) for the year</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other comprehensive income</td> <td></td> <td>72 527</td> <td>(4 243)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total comprehensive income (loss) for the year</td> <td></td> <td>72 527</td> <td>(4 243)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Figures in Rand	Note(s)	2024	2023	Revenue				Membership fees by EFT		21 310	18 770	Membership fees by online		36 713	11 618	CMP Income		57 175	78 000		4	115 198	108 388	Other Income				Profit from Indaba		40 983	22 635	Interest received		12 637	10 334			53 620	32 969	Operating expenses				Auditors remuneration	6	(5 500)	(1 016)	Bank charges		(357)	(483)	Board expenses		-	(15 217)	CMP expenses		(17 367)	(57 998)	Marketing expenses		(7 755)	(25 476)	Postage and courier		(549)	-	Software and Online systems		(55 791)	(27 500)	Student support - Non NWI		(2 800)	-	SWS Annual membership		(2 579)	(13 620)	Website hosting		(3 593)	(4 290)			(96 291)	(145 600)	Surplus (deficit) for the year				Other comprehensive income		72 527	(4 243)			-	-	Total comprehensive income (loss) for the year		72 527	(4 243)	
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9.	<p>Adoption of the Annual Financial Report</p> <p>Proposed by: Faeza Fortune Seconded by: Kate Snaddon, Wynand Malherbe and Alanna Rebelo</p>																																																																																																									
10.	<p>Discussion of additions to the Agenda</p> <p>No additions to the agenda were made.</p>																																																																																																									
11.	<p>Closure</p> <p>Shaddai thanked all the attendees for a very fruitful AGM.</p>																																																																																																									

Compiled by: Lulu van Rooyen (SAWS Secretary)

Date: 13 May 2024

Accepted by: Shaddai Daniel (SAWS Chair)

Date: 23 May 2024