15th Annual General Meeting of the South African Wetland Society
For the period 01 March 2025 to 28 February 2026
Thursday, 14 May 2026
Zoom Online Platform

No.	Agenda item	Actions
1.	**Welcome**	
1.1	Steven Ellery (Chair) welcomed all in the meeting at 16:05. He expressed his gratitude and support.	
2.	**Introduction of Attendees**	
3.	**Attendance Register, Apologies and Proxies** The attendance register is attached as ***Appendix A***.	
3.1	Apologies: Bramley Lemine, Simone Koert, Doug Marfarlane, Shaun Taylor, Michael Grenfell, Rian Pienaar, Christa Custers, Nancy Job	
3.2	Proxies: two proxies were received.	
4.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting (2025 AGM, 19 May 2025)**	
4.1	There were no corrections required.	
4.2	The 2025 AGM minutes were accepted by Williem Lubbe and seconded by Sashin Pillay.	
5.	**Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting (2025 AGM, 19 May 2025)** The Society gave feedback on the following matters that arose from the 2025 AGM:	
5.1	Action 1: The Trustee responsible for Collaboration Engagement is to coordinate an online meeting with all Forum Chairs. Steven Ellery stated this although much has been done, this item was not undertaken and will be carried over into 2026.	
5.2	Action 2: MD to raise the matter of interest investment strategy with the bank and report back to the Board. Steven Ellery stated that Marc de Fontaine did undertake a meeting with the bank.	
5.3	Action 3: Coordinate and host a separate online event for provincial forums, decoupled from the NWI, in the new financial year. Steven Ellery stated that the event did not take place as yet and will be carried over into 2026.	**Action 1: To engage with the provinicial foras through an online event.**
5.4	Action 4: Finalise and distribute AGM minutes. Steven Ellery stated that the previous minutes were circulated within the requested three months that it was requested in.	
5.5	Action 5: SAWS to resolve and redistribute the profit share accordingly. Steven Ellery and Marc de Fonatine confirmed that the financial report was finanlised and distributed. Furthermore, a bank account was opened for Eastern Cape Wetlands Forum.	

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5.6	Action 6: Distribute the corrected/complete Annual Financial Report to all members. Steven Ellery confirmed that the corrected and completed financial report was circulated.	
5.7	Action 7: Distribute document/flyer to members outlining the benefits of becoming a SAWS trustee. Steven Ellery confirmed that the information was circulated.	
5.8	Action 8: SAWS will consider the suggestions from the members. Steven Ellery and Marc de Fonatine stated that the discussions undertaken from this action can also be integrated into the conversations with the various provincial foras but confirmed that they were also taken into consideration within the cahir report.	
6.	**Additions to the agenda**	
6.1	Update on the SAWS/SWS survey and the current standing of the SWS affiliation. Steven Ellery stated that comprehensive feedback is included within the chair report, but a new MoU has been signed between SAWS and SWS. However, this has had an implication for fees. This prompted the SAWS SWS survey. The results concluded that benefits are valuable and that information and communication regarding the benefits derived from being an SWS affiliated organisation from SAWS was lacking. SWS has updated their website and with doing so, they have updated their back-end operations which did not align to how SAWS members accessed SWS benefits. As a result an email from SWS would have been circulated informing the members that their membership would be coming to an end. The issue on the SWS membership has not been finalized with SWS, as it is out of SAWS control but once finalized, it will be communicated with SAWS members. Bonani Madikizela: Where will the topic of the Provincial Wetland Foras within NWI space be discussed, as a result a number of members have been lost. Marc de Fontain proposed to add it as 6.2. Steven Ellery responded by stating that it was decided that the provincial foras be de-coupled from NWI. Shaddai Daniel reiterated that from a NWI workshop hosted in 2022/2023, the provincial foras themselves stated that they wanted their own platform and space for events as they found the NWI to be too technical. As a result, the Board of 2022-2024/5, held extensive conversations with all of the provincial foras to ensure that events and trainings could be geared towards activities within the provinces themselves. Kate Snaddon reminded the members that the NWI represents the hosting forum each year at NWI and thus provnicial foras become extensively involved and represented therein. For example, the programme committee this year is trying to pull in more practitioners whilst still maintaining the scientific knowledge. Steven Ellery expressed that SAWS is trying to assist the provincial foras with both leadership and purpose. Bonani Madikizela stated that NWI is becoming a science for society and we are missing the practitioners. However, Alanna mentioned that as practitioners us being present and active, have a role of integrating the practice and the science. It is not an us vs them situation, we are all one.	Action 2: Resolve the challenge of SAWS members accessing their SWS benefits
7.	**Presentation of the Chairperson's Annual Report**	
7.1	The Chairperson's report of March 2025 to February 2026 was presented by the Chairperson, Steven Ellery. The chairperson's report and presentation are attached as **Appendix B**.	
7.2	**Discussion of the Chair's Report** Jacky Jay: Thanks for the comprehensive report. It has been reported that the importance and influence of WWD events are large. Thanks to those who logged their events on the ramsar dashboard for previous years. The global importance of wetlands is definitely growing	

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	so we hoping to go even bigger for 2027. The theme for 2027 is innovations for action for wetlands! Around the discussions around the provincial foras are good, especially with mapping. It would be beneficial to have the established provincial foras to provide their success recipes on how their foras are kept going. Alanna Rebelo: Commended the good report. SAWS and SWS Africa Chapter have been working closely specifically representing the members in Africa and it's a positive collaboration. Alanna also expressed the concern of fatigue, which begs for the opportunity of integration and collaboration. Alanna has made herself available if there are any challenges with the SWS membership benefits.	
8.	**Adoption of the Annual Chair Report** The Chair's report was adopted by Williem Lubbe and seconded by Donovan Kotze.	
9.	**Presentation of the Annual Financial Report**	
9.1	The SAWS bookkeeper, Mrs Janine Mienie, presented the Annual Financial Statements for the financial year March 2025 to February 2026. Janine began with an overview of the Statement of Financial Position (also referred to as the balance sheet), followed by Revenue and Expenses, Changes in Equity, and ended with the Statement of Cash Flows. The Annual Financial Statement is appended in ***Appendix C.***	
9.2	**Discussion of the Financial Report** Alanna Rebelo wanted an explanation on marketing items. Janine van der Berg stated that for marketing, there were two line items, the hats and the website. Alanna also stated that it would be interesting to know about the profit gained from the hat sales. Bonani Madikizela questioned the validity of the non-audited financial statement vs the auditors remuneration. Marc de Fontaine stated that this fee is the amount paid to Janine for the statement to be generated, at a reduced fee to SAWS. It is not necessary for our books to be externally audited. Jacky Jay: Are there any implications for NWI2026 since there was no profit made for NWI2025? Marc de Fontaine: NWI 2025 did not make a profit. The amounts that were put upfront by SAWS was made by NWI and thus paid SAWS back and thus SAWS broke even. Additional upfront funds that were expected to bolster the NWI 2025, were not received at the last minute, resulting in the conference breaking even. Kate Snaddon stated breaking even is not seen as a negative. Well done to SAWS and the hosting province. Alanna Rebelo: There is a massive dependency on SAWS with the provincial foras not being able to move forward. The model needs to be re-assessed. Provincial and National Bureaus are available for funding opportunities for conferences. Many are unaware of these opportunities and thus do not make use of them. Marc de Fontaine acknowledged this and stated that if we plan NWIs 3 years in advance, it could benefit us in terms of unlocking funding potentials but this needs to be discussed. Marc de Fontaine further responded to the comment made by Alanna regarding the website fees. SAWS is responsible for two websites as well as vital search engine plug-ins. SAWS will re-visit the viability of these but it does show valuable back-end information.	**Action 3: SAWS to review the viability of the use of the search engine plug-in functions.**
10.	**Adoption of the Annual Financial Report** The Financial Report was adopted by Williem Lubbe and seconded by Kate Snaddon.	
11.	**Introduction of the new Board of Trustees**	

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	Stevel Ellery introduced the largest and youngest Board of Trustees in recent years, who started serving from September 2025.	
12.	**Closure** Steven Ellery thanked all in attendance and closed the meeting at 17:38.	

Compiled by: Shaddai Daniel

Date: 14/05/2026

Accepted by: Steven Ellery (SAWS Chair)

Date: 23/06/2026