

# **FWG Annual General Meeting Sat 11<sup>th</sup> June 2005**

## **Minutes**

**Present:** Ann Bannister, John Flynn, Lisa Porter, David Warren, Jane Bisby, Janet Kirk

**Apologies:** Maarten, Martin, Karen (Nov 2002 expedition), David Brandman

### **1. Review of Minutes from Inaugural AGM July 2004**

- Accepted as an accurate record of the meeting (all in agreement).

### **2. Reports from Officers:**

#### **Ann Bannister - Review of progress over last twelve months**

- Membership extended from 6 to 11 people. A Canadian who has not yet been to Wechiau also wants to join. Ann will explore how this person heard of FWG.
- Basic website established.
- Maintained contact with WCHS.
- Negotiated with NCRC for them to be a financial conduit, monitoring and reporting back to FWG.
- Agreed scholarship process with WCHS and NCRC.
- Registered as a charity with UK Inland Revenue, allowing recovery of tax from donations from UK residents.
- Raised the required £1000 to enable FWG to register as a charity.
- Raised sufficient funds to sponsor the first student starting Sept 05 for 3 years, with the possibility of further students for 2006 and 2007.
- Commenced discussions with Talawona school for financial support.

#### **John Flynn – Financial Report**

- (See Spreadsheet)
- Current balance £1000.85p.
- Only spent £7 approx, which has been on bank charges.
- By 2008 outgoings exceed incomings – this urgent action to rectify.
- Due to proposed business banking charges by HSBC from 14/6/05 it has been decided to switch bank accounts to one with minimal bank charges (all in agreement).
- Alliance and Leicester may currently be the best option, however it is unclear as to whether they have ceased offering the bank account we require. The meeting resolved to delegate John to investigate and organise the opening of the new bank account at a bank that can provide the best interest rate and with no bank charges (all in agreement).
- It was agreed that one transfer per year should be made to Ghana to keep associated costs to a minimum.
- Janet has a Ghanaian friend who may be able to advise on money transfers – Janet will contact him.

- John will contact EW to see how they transfer their funds to Ghana (re their new Ghana project) and for advice. Maybe they would allow our funds to be transferred with theirs?
- Ann proposes that we send out £100 asap for the first student and £100 for the materials for the Talawona school, (all in agreement).
- David W proposed that we now offer monthly direct debits to members – eg £10 per month would mean an extra student per annum could be sponsored by FWG (all in agreement).
- David W also suggested that members are invited to donate a larger amount and that the annual membership fee should be £10 minimum (all in agreement).
- It was also suggested that sponsored events could be arranged by members in order to fundraise (all in agreement). Ann raised £50.50 for FWG by doing a sponsored walk.
- Ann will amend the website with new membership fee suggestions and direct debit suggestions.
- Once our new FWG bank account is opened, a Paypal account will also be opened to allow for international members outside the UK to transfer funds and membership fees to FWG at reduced costs. (The bank charges for our new Chinese member were excessive).
- The accounts have been audited by, John Guest, a retired businessman.

### **Lisa Porter – Ideas for the development of FWG**

- Ideas for the development of FWG to be presented later in the meeting.
- 3. Action Plan (See action plan form for details)**
- The action plan was distributed before the AGM for comments from members as per guidelines. The only comment was from Alex who agreed with FWG decision not to give £100 to SMB investment trust fund.
  - 1 - Everyone in agreement with FWG applying for charity registration within UK. Ann will apply on behalf of FWG in June 05 in order to enable registered status by September 05.
  - 2 – It was decided that providing a network of skills to Wechiau would be fantastic (Jane suggested a butterfly or archaeology expert to advise, Anne suggested cultural experts needed to record data now, before the area is influenced by tourism), but is largely impractical and beyond the means of FWG. It was agreed that this point could be dropped from the action plan.
  - 3 – It was agreed that sending materials to Ghana would be too expensive, therefore funds should be sent instead, to enable materials to be bought in Ghana.
  - 4 - It was agreed that funds for the first student should be sent mid July in preparation for September 05. FWG are awaiting details of how to transfer the funds.
  - 5 – Website. Ann has created a basic website restricted to 30mb. John will email Klass again to see if he can help. Lisa will also explore with her brother who works in IT, and explore creating a free to run website with more than

30mb of space. Ann will email Donna re originals of WCHS newsletters, in order that they use less space on current website.

- The website is now registered on Google and Yahoo search engines, so FWG now appears on searches for Wechiau.
- 6 – FWG are already working with other agencies such as EW, NRCR, WCHS, Calgary Zoo. There could be a possibility of extending the contact with SMOAT through Janet.

#### **4. Other Topics for Discussion / Action**

- It is believed that EW have issued a circular email to previous Wechiau volunteers about FWG due to the small response we have had.
- It is also thought that whilst emails have their uses (eg - easily able to forward to other people thus spreading the word), that a personal phone call may be what is required to convince some ex-volunteers to become involved with FWG.
- Janet has contacts at SMOAT charity. They have previously made a one-off donation to Wechiau via Janet, and may be interested in supporting FWG. Janet will contact SMOAT via letter, possibly to be followed with an email from FWG.
- Janet will contact Marie Claire magazine. Marie Claire sent Kate Humble on an expedition to Wechiau and Ghana and produced an article about the area.
- Application forms have been agreed upon with WCHS/NCRC and Donna is organising the selection of a student (Ann).
- Queries re the selection committee were raised – Ann is awaiting clarification from Donna.
- FWG are investigating financially supporting a teacher. David W is investigating this possibility.
- 2 differing lists of costs for sponsorship. Andy Murphy's initial estimate was £450. However more recent contact from Ghana indicated £100. It is believed that £450 related to private boarding school, and £100 relates to state school costs.
- NCRC state parents should contribute towards boarding costs.
- WCHS are also looking at sponsoring a student. It is believed that the FWG and WCHS scholarship schemes should be similar if possible, to facilitate harmonious relationships, and equitable opportunities.
- Janet will contact George Alagiah (BBC Africa correspondent and book author) by letter about FWG. This can be followed by a FWG email. Info regarding George can be viewed at [http://www.primeperformers.co.uk/phppages/fullProd.php/George\\_Alagiah/79](http://www.primeperformers.co.uk/phppages/fullProd.php/George_Alagiah/79) and at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/newswatch/ifs/hi/newsid\\_3220000/newsid\\_3223900/3223966.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/newswatch/ifs/hi/newsid_3220000/newsid_3223900/3223966.stm)

- Lisa suggested a FWG logo, and an official sponsorship form be designed containing the registered charity number (once obtained), in order to validate the fundraising efforts. Jane (an artist) will design some logo's.
- Lisa suggested a FWG newsletter once we have news – ie registered charity status, first student starting their education. Lisa will explore this.
- Jane will email group photos to Ann to upload onto website. Janet will also try to locate a group photo from her expedition to Wechiau.
- Lisa suggested a press release once the first student starts their education and registered charity status is achieved. The target groups for the press release were agreed as: EW, Calgary Zoo, WCHS, local papers (in officers/trustees own areas), Marie Claire (due to previous interest in Ghana), Kate Humble (due to experience at Wechiau via EW).
- David and Jane have had previous contact with Kate Humble via email (as Kate was at Wechiau at the same time as them). David will try and get in contact with Kate again to inform her about FWG.
- Lisa will see if she can find the Kate Humble / Wechiau newsreel weblink and email this out.
- John will also contact EW to re-distribute email about the achievements of FWG once student starts and charity status achieved.  
Lisa suggested posters / list of FWG contacts for organisations such as EW.  
Lisa will work on this.

## **5. Review of Constitution**

- No.8 & 9 – it was agreed that one meeting a year (the AGM) for members would be held, but an extra meeting could be held during the year if necessary. FWG also recognise that a meeting could constitute various formats: a conference call (Lisa will investigate), an on-line meeting, as well as a face-to-face meeting, allowing the scope for international meetings.
- No.11 (2) – the quorum was agreed as a minimum of 3 members, in order that decisions are made equitably.
- No.14 (1) – It was agreed that the chair should have the casting vote as long as there were more than 3 members at a meeting.
- No 15 (6) – It was agreed that a minimum of one meeting per year of officers and Trustees was the most practical option – see 8&9
- No.16 (1b) – (network of skills to be provided) this point was removed as per previous discussions.
- No 18 (7) – the quorum for Trustees shall be three
- No.26 (3) – this point was removed, as FWG is an international charity, with many international members, who will obviously not have a UK address.
- The amended constitution was then agreed and signed by the officers.

## **Annual Election of Officers**

- **Chair:** Ann resigned, and was proposed for the post of Chair by Jane, which was seconded by John. **Ann was re-elected as Chair.**
- **Secretary:** Lisa resigned, and was proposed for the post of Secretary by David, which was seconded by John. **Lisa was re-elected as Secretary.**
- **Treasurer:** John resigned, and was proposed for the post of Treasurer by Janet, which was seconded by Jane. **John was re-elected as Treasurer.**

- **Vice-Chair:** Rudolfo has not been contactable for some time, and it is believed that he is either away travelling to other countries, or may have gone back to Argentina. Due to the fact that all of the meetings have been and are likely to be held within the UK, this causes Rudolfo obvious difficulties in attending meetings. It was felt that for this year an alternative Vice-Chair should be sought. Janet was proposed for the post of Vice-Chair by John, and seconded by David W. **Janet was elected as Vice-Chair.**

#### **Election of Trustees**

- The legal responsibilities of trustee were discussed.
- Ann, Lisa, John, David and Janet were all proposed and accepted as trustees.

#### **Next meeting:**

- Will be arranged as and when necessary.

#### **FWG Contacts from other Organisations**

Paul Bier – bird expert

John Mason – NCRC

Donna – Calgary Zoo

Alex Assesse – Phd student very involved with WCHS

#### **Abbreviations**

IR = Inland Revenue

SMB = Sanctuary Management Board (at Wechiau)

WCHS = Wechiau Community Hippo Sanctuary

NCRC = Nature Conservation Research Commission (Ghana based)

FWG = Friends of Wechiau

SMOAT = St Mark's Overseas Aid Trust

UK = United Kingdom

EW = Earthwatch