

**NATURE SOCIETY (SINGAPORE)**  
**MINUTES of the 65<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
Held on Saturday, 25 May 2019 at Singapore Sustainability Academy

At the appointed start time of 10:00 am, only 11 members (excluding outgoing Exco members) were present and the start was duly delayed by 30 minutes to see if a quorum of 60 could be reached. In accordance with the Society's Constitution, the meeting commenced at 10:30 am with 22 members present, excluding 8 outgoing Exco members, and 4 other members who joined later:

**OUTGOING EXCO MEMBERS PRESENT**

Shawn Lum (President)	Morten Strange (Assistant Hon Secretary)
Ho Hua Chew (Vice President)	Goo Ee Lan (Assistant Hon Treasurer)
Peter Connell (Hon Secretary)	Stephen Beng (Member)
Bhagyesh Chaubey (Hon Treasurer)	Goh Si Guim (Member)

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Nick Baker	Liew Kai Khiun	Sung Mei Yee	Yong Jun Zer
Chua Leng Sim	Lim Kim Chuah	Bian Tan	Joseph Beh*
Foo Siang Heng	Evelyn Ng	Tan Kok Chiang	Han Yong Kwong*
Anuj Jain	Victoria O'Collins	Lester Tan	Jeannie A C Sim*
Gemma Koh	Ong Swee Teck	Tang Chong Wing	Bernie Tan*
Khong Chit Chong	John Rose	Sujata Tiwari	
Leong Kwok Peng	Albert Sin	Richard White	

\* arrived after 10.30 am.

**APOLOGIES** were received from: Tony O'Dempsey, Kerry Pereira, Albert Liu, Goh Ter Yang, Pandian Parthasarathy, Benjamin Szeto, Amy Lau, Tsang Kwok Choong, Tan Hang Chong.

**WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Shawn Lum welcomed all members present. He foreshadowed an agenda comprising eight items giving a full description of the Society's activities and accomplishments during calendar year 2018 and its plans for 2019 and beyond.

**1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Minutes had been previously circulated and were also available in hardcopy at the meeting. There being no comments or corrections from the floor, Nick Baker proposed a motion that the Minutes be accepted and Khong Chit Chong seconded the motion; members voted unanimously in favour of the motion. Regarding matters arising from the Minutes, the Treasurer reported under Item 3 that the suggestion of considering a move of the Society's premises from its current address had been discussed in the context of the 2019-23 strategic plan. This idea will be kept in view pending a sustained generation of annual surpluses by the Society, to offset the considerable one-time costs associated with any such move.

**2. PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The President's Report for 2018 (as in the Annual Report) was tabled by President Shawn Lum who briefly reviewed the main points. These covered the highlights of the Society's activities in 2018, the principles governing its future development in 2019 and beyond, and his thanks to the various parties who helped make the year a success – including the secretariat staff, the Exco members, Chairs of the

various Committees and Special Interest Groups (SIGs), volunteers, members and other supporters. He singled out Peter Connell, Hon Secretary, who is standing down from the Executive Committee this year, to express the Society's deep sense of gratitude for his hard work as Secretary for the past three years.

At the end of his presentation, Shawn Lum reminded the meeting of two important meetings scheduled for 2020 and for which the Society should prepare: the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Marseille, in June; the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Beijing, in October. He also referred to the distressing new research regarding the apparent impact of climate change on the global natural environment and the apparent imminent demise of many insect species in Europe and North America. Both of these recent developments imply that the Society has to re-double its efforts here in Singapore to protect biodiversity and natural habitats.

There being no questions from the floor, Liew Khai Khiun proposed a motion that the President's Report for 2018 be accepted and Khong Chit Chong seconded the motion; members voted unanimously in favour of the motion.

### **3. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer's Report for 1 January to 31 December 2018 (as in the Annual Report and supported by the Audited Financial Statements circulated at the meeting) was tabled by Hon Treasurer Bhagyesh Chaubey. He covered the principal finance-related activities in 2018, a summary of the financial position at end-December 2018 and income and expenses in the year, a more detailed breakdown of the main income and expense line items, and the outcome of his discussions of the annual results with the Finance Advisory Group.

He summarised the results as according well with the Society's twin guiding principles of prudence and sustainability: the 2018 net deficit of \$10k is acceptable in the light of the Society's total assets in excess of \$1.1 million. In answer to a question from the floor regarding the sustainability of the MNS/Panti project, he opined that, if the project is to continue over the long-term, a sponsor will have to be found to cover the out-of-pocket costs currently being covered by the project volunteers themselves.

Leong Kwok Peng proposed a motion that the Treasurer's Report for 2018 be adopted and Morten Strange seconded the motion; members voted unanimously in favour of the motion.

### **4. COMMITTEE AND SIG REPORTS**

Reports (as in the Annual Report) were tabled by the Conservation and Education Committees, and by the Fund-raising and Membership Working Group. Short presentations were made to the meeting by Leong Kwok Peng, Sung Mei Yee and Peter Connell. On fund-raising, there was a suggestion from the floor that recruitment of a paid fund-raising officer should be considered and the discussion centred on the likely risk/return ratio of such a move. The conclusion was that the overriding priority for the Society is to find someone with the appropriate skills and then determine how best to secure their assistance; the Treasurer asked all in attendance to keep a lookout for a suitably qualified person. In response to a question from the floor on membership, there was consensus that all attendees at NSS outreach events should be encouraged to become Society members if they have not done so already, and that all should download and start using the new NSS mobile app.

Reports (as in the Annual Report) were then tabled by each of the seven Special Interest Groups (SIGs): Birds, Butterflies and Insects, Jalan Hijau, Marine Conservation, Nature Ramblers, Plants,

and Vertebrates. Short presentations were made to the meeting by Lim Kim Chuah, Anuj Jain, Sung Mei Yee, Stephen Beng, Bian Tan and Nick Baker on behalf of each SIG.

The reports and presentations summarised activities during the year and provided an opportunity for the speakers and contributions from the floor to identify areas where additional volunteer assistance is currently needed. The priorities identified include fund-raising, IT and membership skills for the Exco, a candidate for the vacant Chair of the Butterfly and Insect Group, and more attention to both green and brown issues associated with climate change and deteriorating habitats – possibly through Jalan Hijau.

At the conclusion of the discussions, Goh Si Guim proposed a motion that the Committee and Special Interest Group Reports be accepted and Morten Strange seconded the motion; members voted unanimously in favour of the motion. The Annual Report including reports from committees and groups and the Financial Statements for 2018 are all available in full on the NSS website under the About Us tab.

#### **5. ELECTION OF THE 2019-2020 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EXCO)**

By the due date prior to the meeting, a single nomination was received for 8 of the 9 positions specified in the Society's constitution:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Name of Nominee</b>	<b>Proposed by</b>	<b>Seconded by</b>
President	Shawn Lum	Tony O'Dempsey	Margie Hall
Vice President	Ho Hua Chew	Alan Owyong	Leong Kwok Peng
Hon Secretary	Morten Strange	Margie Hall	Tony O'Dempsey
Hon Treasurer	Bhagyesh Chaubey	Goh Si Guim	Shawn Lum
Asst Hon Secretary	Evelyn Ng Mui Khim	Ho Hua Chew	Alan Owyong
Asst Hon Treasurer	Goo Ee Lan	Leong Kwok Peng	Shawn Lum
Member	Goh Si Guim	Goh Ter Yang	Albert Liu
Member	Albert Liu	Goh Ter Yang	Leong Kwok Peng

Since no positions were contested, the above members were duly elected to serve on the 2019-2020 Exco. On behalf of the incoming Exco, the President thanked the three newly elected members – Morten Strange, Evelyn Ng and Goo Ee Lan – for agreeing to serve.

#### **6. ELECTION TO THE FINANCE ADVISORY GROUP**

Members of the Finance Advisory Group serve for three years; each year one member steps down and another member is nominated from the floor at the AGM. Trixie Tan (2017-2020) and Yip Yew Chong (2018-2021) continue to serve but Albert Sin (2016-2019) had completed his three years and stood down. He was warmly thanked for his services by the outgoing Hon Secretary and made a statement expressing his appreciation for the expanded role accorded to the Group by the current and immediate past NSS Treasurers. Peter Connell was proposed by Nick Baker as the incoming third member and agreed to stand; the nomination was seconded by Anuj Jain. As there were no other nominations, Peter Connell was unanimously elected.

#### **7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS**

Hon Treasurer Bhagyesh Chaubey opined that Robert Tan Partners PAC had served both effectively and efficiently as the Society's external auditors for the past four financial years. Leong Kwok Peng proposed a motion that Robert Tan Partners PAC be re-appointed as external auditors for the 2019

financial year and Liew Kai Khiun seconded the motion; members voted unanimously in favour of the motion.

#### **8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business had been notified by the deadline prior to the meeting, so the outgoing Hon Secretary asked if there were any matters which members would like to raise informally. Anuj Jain alluded to the earlier discussion of the need for fund-raising skills to be available to the Society and suggested approaching a former NSS staff member who had considerable success in raising funds for the Society in the past. The President welcomed the suggestion and agreed that it should be followed up, while reiterating that the modalities of recruiting such assistance could only be addressed once a suitable candidate was in sight.

#### **CLOSURE OF THE MEETING BY THE PRESIDENT**

Shawn Lum reminded the meeting that the Festival of Biodiversity was in progress at HDB Hub in Toa Payoh and encouraged members to attend. He also welcomed Christal Tang, a first year student in the Bachelor of Environmental Studies programme at NUS, who is currently working as an intern with the Society and had helped with the AGM logistics. Finally, he announced the formal launch of the new NSS membership app, and urged all members to download and start using it on their mobile phones.

He closed the meeting by expressing his particular thanks to the permanent secretariat – Joe Lim, Kerry Pereira and Sung Mei Yee – for their continuing hard work and dedication to the success of the Society’s activities. He also expressed pride at the quality of all the Exco and Council members that the Society has been able to attract and thanked all members present for their attendance and continued support.

The meeting ended at 13:00.

*Minutes prepared by Peter Connell, vetted by Morten Strange*