



Minutes of the 88th Annual General Meeting of BirdLife South Africa held at 14h30 on Thursday 27 April 2017 in the Teatro San Carlo, MSC Sinfonia, Atlantic Ocean

1. PRESENT:

Chairman of the Board, Roger Wanless, CEO, Mark D. Anderson, Honorary President, Colleen Downs. Board Members: Linda Hart, Yvonne Pennington, David Chamberlain and Peter Divall. BirdLife International guest: Nick Prentice. RSBP guest Tim Stowe. Auditor: Mike Evans. Special Guests: Peter Harrison, Shirley Metz, Jonathan Rossouw, Giovanna Fasanelli. Past Chairpersons: Peter Sullivan, Vernon Head, Mike Bridgeford, Past President: Peter Ryan. The Flock 2017 Organising Committee, BirdLife South Africa staff, BirdLife South Africa members (180) and Isabel Human (Secretary).

2. APOLOGIES J and P Huggins

3. WELCOME

The CEO, Mark D. Anderson (MDA) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and inviting them to help themselves to printed copies of the financial statements, the Annual Report and all other documents relevant to the meeting. MDA then introduced the Chairman, Roger Wanless (RW), who welcomed all present. A special welcome was extended to past and present Chairmen all other special guests, their spouses as well as to everyone present at the meeting. RW requested all present to please sign the attendance register being circulated in the Teatro San Carlo.

3. CONFIRMATION/APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE 87TH AGM

The minutes of the 87th Annual General Meeting of 87th Annual General Meeting of 12 March 2016 were adopted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 87TH AGM

None.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS

In his address, the chairman mentioned the passing of the following friends, staff and supporters: Ntombi Stungu, Barrie Rose, Roy Cowgill and Sheila Stainforth. RW also informed the members of the

healthy financial position BirdLife South Africa is finding itself in, that the organisation is a respected partner of BirdLife International and also how well *African Birdlife* magazine is doing. RW further stated that one must never take good fortune for granted, and that BirdLife South Africa has its success attributed to good leadership. RW paid tribute to past leadership, and mentioned Mike Bridgeford, Peter Sullivan and Vernon Head. RW further mentioned support that BirdLife South Africa is getting from BirdLife International (BLI) as well as from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). He acknowledged Tim Stowe (RSPB) and Nick Prentice (BLI) in person.

RW provided background about BirdLife South Africa Legacy Programme and the importance of bequests to ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the organisation. He urged everyone to consider adding a codicil (provided at the entrance) to their Last Will and Testament and leave a bequest to BirdLife South Africa. RW concluded his address by welcoming the Honorary President, Prof. Colleen Downs to the stage for her address.

6. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Prof. Colleen Downs delivered her address which centred on the importance of curiosity and perseverance and made mention of our desire to learn new things, all born out of curiosity. Scientific methodology involves observation, the formulation of hypothesis, the collection of data all in order to determine cause and effect, or the testing of the hypothesis (experiment) followed by a discussion and a conclusion. She made mention of the phenomenal contribution of Charles Darwin, also born out of curiosity, supported by hard work and perseverance that have led to tremendous success. Charles Darwin made a huge contribution to Biology and Prof. Downs said that birding forms part of an enthusiasm about biology. She also mentioned the importance of inter-disciplinary research and co-operation between different scientific disciplines, such as social and natural science. Prof. Downs concluded her address by mentioning a book by Angela Duckworth with the title '*Grit, the power of passion and perseverance*' followed by her acknowledgements.

(Prof. Down's complete set of Power Point slides is available as Appendix A).

7. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CEO

(The report of the CEO is available as Appendix B)

RW invited MDA to deliver his annual report, also mentioning the astonishing amount of work delivered by everyone involved in the various activities of the organisation. MDA acknowledged RW's contribution to BirdLife South Africa and the value he is adding to the organisation. MDA mentioned that a copy of the Annual Report was included in the cabin drops, but additional copies were available

at the entrance of the Teatro San Carlo. MDA also acknowledged Emma Askes and the Flock Organising Committee, especially Gisela Ortner and Mel Trip. Recognition was given to all BirdLife South Africa staff and interns, Executive Board members, bird club members and the enthusiastic citizen scientists all contributing to the success of the organisation. MDA referred to the importance of good corporate governance as outlined in the King reports, and stated that impeccable financial management is one the cornerstone of BirdLife South Africa's work. Despite a sound scientific basis to decision making, we all still like having fun.

In his report, MDA covered the following topics: Governance, Finances and Financial administration, Staff, Marketing and awareness, BirdLife South Africa's premises (Isdell House), Publications (*African Birdlife magazine* and *Ostrich*), Membership and Events

This was followed by discussing BirdLife South Africa's conservation programmes such as the Terrestrial Bird Conservation Programme, Seabird Conservation Programme, Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBA) Programme, Policy and Advocacy Programme, as well as the Avitourism and Special Projects Programme.

He concluded his report by mentioning and displaying BirdLife South Africa's involvement across the African continent. He thanked everyone for 'giving conservation wings'.

8. PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF THE TREASURER'S REPORT AND AUDITED 2016 ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Tony Zoghby (TZ) delivered the report prepared by Fanie du Plessis. (The complete Annual Financial Report was included in the Annual Report). Despite uncertain and tough economic times, BirdLife South Africa is doing well financially with a nett income of close to 1.1 million Rand. On the request of TZ, by a show of hands, the treasurer's report was adopted by the members attending the AGM.

9. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

KPMG was re-appointed as external auditors for 2017.

10. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS AND ELECTION OF KZN REGIONAL FORUM REPRESENTATIVE

RW explained to the members the process involved in the nomination and election of office bearers, and Peter Divall's appointment as KZN Regional Forum Representative as well as Andrew Mitchell's appointment as Chairman of the Governance Committee (Audit committee).

11. LAUNCHES OF BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA INITIATIVES AND PUBLICATIONS

The Lappet-faced Vulture is Bird of the Year 2017 and this species has been publicised using a poster, articles in *African Birdlife*, and lesson plans for school learners. Mark Brown announced that the Bird of the Year 2018 will be the African Black Oystercatcher. He motivated the decision by mentioning the recent conservation success story of the African Black Oystercatcher, its iconic status as a coastline species, the collaborative effort ensuring the conservation of the species and finally because it is a sexy bird! A variety of channels will be used to publicise the species, and opportunities for partnerships with other organisations exist.

MDA announced that Flock on the West Coast 2018 will be held at Club Mykonos and will incorporate LAB (the Learn About Birds conference). Various other accommodation options in close proximity to Club Mykonos are available. He also enquired about interest in another Flock at Sea, possibly to Amsterdam Island, which was met enthusiastically by the audience.

12. RESOLUTIONS

After an explanation by RW, a proposed change to the 2015 constitution was also condoned. (*There were 9 revisions to the constitution highlighted in the explanatory note from the chairman, attached as Appendix C*).

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

14. GILL MEMORIAL MEDAL AWARD 2017

Prof. Colleen Downs announced that Prof. Leslie Gordon Underhill was the recipient of the Gill Memorial Medal Award, 2017. (*The citation of Prof Underhill is attached as Appendix D*).

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business for discussion, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending. Special thanks were extended to the Flock 2017 Organising Committee for a successful event. The meeting was adjourned at 16h35.