

MINUTES OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY OF AQUATIC SCIENTISTS

39<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON 3<sup>d</sup> JULY 2002, UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE, BLOEMFONTEIN, FREE STATE, SOUTH AFRICA

Attending: Brian Allanson, Mick Angliss, Charles Breen, Mark Chutter, Mike Coke, Pierre de Villiers, Hein du Preez, William Ellery, Rene Glen, Thomas Gyedu-Ababio, Lil Haigh, Rob Hart, Genevieve Jones, Donovan Kotze, Pieter Kotze (non-member), K. Ugrasen (non-member), Heather Malan, Steve Mitchell, Brenton Niehaus (non-member), Tlali Ntholi, Rodney Owen, Nancy Rayner, Stan Rodgers, Kevin Rogers, Jan Roos, Dirk Roux, Maitland Seaman, Mike Silberbauer, Gert Steyn, Wynand Vlok, Victor Wepener.

Apologies: Shirley Bethune, Jim Cambray, Harold Champion, Digby Cyrus, Jenny Day, Chris Dickens, Mark Graham, Jackie King, Niel Malan, Nikite Muller, Jay O'Keeffe, Rob Palmer, Tally Palmer, Braam Pieterse, Kevin Roberts.

**ACTION**

**1 WELCOME**

1.1 Those attending were welcomed by Kevin Rogers. Apologies noted.

**2 ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

A point on Professionalism and conferences was added to 11.1

**3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGENDA**

Names spelled incorrectly were changed. Minutes accepted.

**4 MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 38<sup>TH</sup> MEETING HELD IN AVENTURA - DIE EILAND**

Kevin Rogers enquired into the status of the letter that was drafted on behalf of the Society to Minister Kasarils (DWAF) offering the expertise-base of Society members in ecological matters in a similar way the Society played a leading role in drafting the National Water Act. It was mentioned from the floor that it was unlikely that the Minister ever received the letter and that the Society should do more than just write letters. Dirk Roux suggested that there should be closer personal contact with government departments to increase credibility.

Mick Angliss queried the procedure to implementing resolutions passed during the AGM of conferences. Victor Wepener was requested to post the bye-law relating to resolutions at the Cape Town conference AGM.

**Victor  
Wepener**

**5 PRESIDENTS REPORT**

**The Past Year**

The main activity of the past year has been the changing of the guard from a Kwa-Zulu Natal based Council to one in Gauteng. On the whole the transition has been smooth although the problems which beset the previous Society treasury have delayed full transfer of the finances. The treasurer will report on this in more detail.

The new Council executive has met twice to find its feet and consider its future. We recognise that this is a learned society with three main activities/components (its members, the Journal and conferences) through which to meet its purpose. We will endeavour to promote all three during our term of office, with an emphasis on lifting the overall profile of the Society. Our initial thoughts and plans are presented below and we hope interaction with members will expand these.

**Members**

Apart from the usual need to maintain and even grow membership we consider it important to build a sense of belonging. The Journal and conferences both promote this but we have initiated a news letter, run by the Secretary, which we hope will keep the Society and its business more prominent in members minds. Please support the Secretary's call for new submissions.

The Society also has a series of medals with which to honour its top performers and promote a sense of identity for the membership. We intend to bring these to the fore in the next year. We did receive nominations this year but unfortunately they arrived very late and we felt needed to be more substantial. Notices and suggestions for how to motivate nominations will appear timeously and more than once in the Society News Letter.

*The Journal*

Putting the African Journal of Aquatic Science on the map was a major achievement of the previous council but its position is far from consolidated let alone secure. Our Editor performs a herculean task and has an impressive line up of manuscripts waiting for review and publication but the financial aspects are the worry. The Journal essentially consumes all membership subscription and a bit more, leaving conferences as our only source of income. This is a precarious situation which will need careful attention. The executive has undertaken to examine closely the relationship between our non-profit Society and the commercial publisher (NISC). At first glance the Society's contribution seems disproportionate but this may be due to the immaturity of the journal and will hopefully improve rapidly.

*Conferences*

Conferences need to achieve at least three aims for the Society; provide a stimulating intellectual experience which advances our science, raise the profile of the Society in the broader social system and raise funds with which we can promote the Society and serve its members. We will work closely with future conference organisers to promote these aims under their particular circumstances.

Finally, I must thank the previous Council for their dedication and relatively seamless handover. The new Council, especially Exco has made a stimulating start to our term. I hope it soon rubs off onto the Society.

Kevin Rogers  
President  
3 July 2002

**6 TREASURERS REPORT***Hand-over process*

Handing over of the treasury functions from the previous to the current EXCO has been slow and problematic due to an uncompleted financial audit for 2001. As a result, treasury activities are not on full speed yet.

A new cheque account was opened for the society. The previous EXCO transferred the bulk of the society funds (R 180 300.56) to the new account on 16 April 2002. As previously, a linked money market account will be used to optimise income from interest.

*Membership information*

The Pastel file with membership and payment information was received in middle June. However, this file did not contain the latest updates. Since this information is necessary in order to generate invoices, invoicing for membership fees will only take place after the 2002 Conference.

Current membership fees are R175 for local members and US\$ 40 plus handling fee for overseas members.

*Financial status*

An income statement and balance sheet will be drawn up at the end of the 2002 calendar year. The current balance in the Gauteng account of the society is R 171 040.65 (03/06/2002).

Two loans are outstanding, namely R 15 000 to the Environmental Flows Conference and R10 000 to the 2002 SASAQS-SAIE&ES Conference.

*Honoraria*

During an EXCO meeting on 13 March 2002 it was decided to increase the Editor's honorarium to R 3 000 (previously R 1 500) per year. In addition, the Editor would be refunded for sundry expenses of up to R 200 (previously R 100) per month based on actual costs.

A honorarium for a bookkeeper of up to R 3000 has been approved

*Bookkeeper*

Linda Rowston has been approached and will act as part-time bookkeeper. She will assist with invoicing and preparation of financial statements.

Dirk Roux  
Honorary Treasurer

1 3 July 2002

The Treasurers report was noted and could only be accepted once the financial statements had been received.

**7 EDITORS REPORT**

The Editor's office has been humming over the past year. Two issues of the new Journal have been published, one more is in press at this moment - in fact it should have been out in time for this conference - and we already have six and a half manuscripts waiting for publication in the next issue. The 'half manuscript' is one that was laid out for the current issue but which was then found to have some gaps and so has been returned to the author for alteration.

Besides the above, I currently have 29 manuscripts on hand in various stages of refereeing and correction. Therefore we look well set to be able to publish two issues this year and two next year, even if no more manuscripts come in.

Through the kind offices of our Editorial Board members, spread from Canada to Australia, I have received manuscripts from authors in Denmark, Egypt, Cameroon, The Gambia, Kenya, Uganda, Mozambique and Malawi. Then there are also the usual offerings from Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. Our journal is therefore well on its way to representing a wide spectrum of African aquatic science. I have also been approached by the organisers of two forthcoming conferences, one in Benin and one in Tanzania, about the possibility of our publishing their Proceedings. If we net those, we could become firmly established as the leading aquatic science journal published in Africa.

As a matter of policy I have endeavoured to find at least one 'overseas' plus one South African referee per paper. Some papers have aroused such interest that three referees have offered their services for reviewing them. In my search for referees I have been greatly assisted by the Editorial Board members, who get sent the abstract of every incoming manuscript together with a request for offers or suggestions for overseas referees. In this way I have been put in touch with over 300 'contacts' who have or will assist in the writing and refereeing of manuscripts for the journal.

The process of handling electronic manuscripts and email messages has not been without its problems, although this method of refereeing has proved encouragingly successful. Some files were so large that they stuck in my server's electronic throat, precluding other messages from getting through until I found a way round the log-jam. I have also been sent the 'Klez' virus at least twice, the second instance necessitating having my computer reformatted and all my programmes reloaded. In the process I have learned some valuable tricks, but at the same time lost some cool and some money. My only way of controlling the incoming flood of messages - which admittedly is partly the product of my own willingness to correspond - has been to limit email transmission to once a day, which I suspect has not always suited anxious correspondents on the other end of the line.

NISC have been efficient in doing the laying-out, proofing and publishing of our journal and, in doing so, have taken a lot of strain off me - for which I'm extremely grateful. They have taken on extra staff to do graphics and scientific proofing, which has benefited our journal. NISC have, however, found that spiralling costs necessitated the initiation of page charges [R120 per page, with colour plate charges fully for authors' accounts] in order to keep the journal afloat. Currently they are in the first round of page charge levying and, consequently, there are some wails of disappointment reaching my in-tray. My greatest fear is that this system may initially cost us some manuscripts, unless SASAQs bails them out. We can only wait and see what happens. NISC have been energetic in advertising the journal world-wide but, at the moment, I don't know whether this has increased the sales. Certainly, they have had to cut back on handing out free copies to international libraries and Editorial Board members.

So, all in all, editing has kept me very busy over the past year, but I think the new-look journal has proved impressive and will inevitably prove popular.

Mike Coke  
Editor, African Journal of Aquatic Science.  
27 June 2002

The Editors Report was accepted.

Rodney Owen requested that papers submitted to AJAS by guest speakers should receive subsidy for page charges. Mike Coke indicated that all deserving cases would receive consideration.

Mike Coke mentioned that he had received a request that papers at an international fish conference be published in a special issue of AJAS. This was found acceptable on the provision that journal standards are maintained.

**ACTION***SASAgS News – electronic newsletter*

Victor Wepener mentioned that the electronic newsletter will be sent out on a quarterly / regular basis. He requested society members to specifically submit items related to recent publications, job opportunities and bursaries for dissemination to Society members.

<b>8</b>	<b>CONGRESSES</b> 2003 – Cape Town. Heather Malan gave feedback on the activities of the local organising committee. The conference will be held jointly with the bi-annual Zoological Society of Southern African conference. Every effort will be made to invite prominent guest speakers. 2004 – Gauteng to host this conference as the then outgoing/current EXCO.	<b>Heather Malan</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>AWARDS</b> No medals could be awarded in 2002 since the term of the current Awards Committee expired in 2001. The convenor of the Awards Committee (Society vice president) will be asked to constitute a new committee.	<b>Digby Cyrus</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>HONORARIA</b> The meeting accepted the proposals to increase the editor's honorarium to R3000 per annum and <i>ad hoc</i> expenses to R200 per month, as well as an increase in the bookkeepers honorarium to R3000 per annum.	<b>Dirk Roux</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>GENERAL</b> <i>11.1 Professionalism of conferences</i>  Mark Chutter reiterated the importance of maintaining a high level of invited speakers at conferences. This is of the utmost importance for the continued survival of learned societies.	
<b>12</b>	<b>NEXT MEETING</b> AGM to be held during Cape Town Conference 2003	