



MINUTES OF
THE 55th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 12th December 2020
11:00 ONLINE

PRESENT

FOSSUK COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND DELEGATES

Sarah Grand-Clément (SG)
Loredana Guetg-Wyatt (LG)
Franz Mülheim (FM)
Nathalie Chuard (NC)
Ane-Mari Peter (AP)
Gioia Palmieri (GP)
Joelle Nebbe-Mornod (JN)

GUESTS from the UK and Switzerland

H.E. Ambassador Alexandre Fasel Hon. President FOSSUK
OSA VP, Roger Sauvain

Club reps and other attendees:

Andrew Allaz - New Helvetic Society
Camilla Ghislanzoni - New Helvetic Society
Cristina Brandao - New Helvetic Society
Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom - Unione Ticinese
Hans Martin Senn
Jan Schurch
Jeannette Crosier
Jeffrey Long
John & Heidi Williamson - Southern Area Swiss Club
Manuela Ferrari – Consul General
Marc Peter - New Helvetic Society
Margrit Lyster - Swiss Benevolent Society, Frauenverein
Marine Vaclez - New Helvetic Society
Michael Zurbrügg
Rosemarie Breitenstein - Frauenverein
Ruth Muheim - Edinburgh
Sabine Citron
Simon Townsend
Suzanne Egloff – Swiss Benevolent Society
+ others on zoom, if you would like to be recorded, please let us know

MINUTES

Joelle Nebbe-Mornod (JN)
Sarah Grand Clement (SG)

1. WELCOME

AGM starts 1107hrs.

First ever virtual AGM in history for FOSSUK.

H.E. Alexandre Fasel gave an introduction to the AGM.

Ideally we would be congregated in person but this has not been possible with COVID-19. It has been a strange year with the pandemic and the Brexit negotiations, and the latter has been the main activity of the Embassy this year. The Embassy has been adopting the Mind The Gap strategy and it has been successful in negotiating a series of treaties.

The Ambassador gave a reminder to register for (pre)-settled status, with the deadline being end June 2021. He stated that we will be fine from a Swiss perspective and will seek to deepen and enhance the bilateral relationship next year.

President FM asked a question as to whether people with indefinite leave to remain should still register for settled status. The Ambassador said it was safer applying for settled status even if someone already has indefinite leave to remain.

President FM thanked Ambassador for his welcome.

2. APOLOGIES

Vincent Croset

3. Minutes of AGM 2019

Comments from Rosemarie:

- Put the time of the AGM at the start and the venue where it took place
- Ariane Rustichelli's name is not mentioned although she was there
- Typo: we mention that the next AGM would be in 2019 when it should be 2020.

Ruth Muheim (Edinburgh) proposed, Marine Vaclez seconded (NHS)

2019 corrections sent with the 2020 minutes

4. Presidents Report

President FM noted that the pandemic has been difficult and life has changed.

Comments on the report:

Margrit: She felt the report was too negative and mentioned that a lot of positivity and creativity came out despite the pandemic. She thinks that the delegates should have done more during the pandemic, but that instead the delegates were silent. With this report, she now understands that we found it difficult, but noted it was still a shame that the delegates had not made the most of the opportunities.

Reply from Franz: Life was busy and complicated, but regardless admit that the delegates could have done better. FM noted that there are positives that have emerged from the pandemic, such as how communities got together.

Margrit noted that the delegates could have delegated the responsibility or have called for help.

Andrew Allaz (NHS) proposed, Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom (UT) seconded

5. DELEGATES REPORT

No comments on the 2019 delegates reports.

Marine Vaclez (NHS) proposed, Cristina Brandao (NHS) seconded

6. FINANCE

LG presented the 2019 Finance overview.

Income and Expenditure Accounts: LG explained that FOSSUK did not have many transactions last year as the 2019 AGM was kindly paid by the Embassy. FOSSUK also wanted to pause membership briefly especially as this year we couldn't do much for the members.

LG noted that FOSSUK are aware that clubs have not paid but also that clubs have struggled in 2019 and 2020. As such, perhaps the 2020 membership should be cancelled. The payment for 2021 is different however, because of the upcoming elections.

Accounts accepted - Ruth Muheim (Edinburgh) proposed, Andrew Allaz (NHS) seconded

Auditors' report for 2019: It has been reviewed and we have received certification with virtual review of accounts.

Marine Vaclez (NHS) proposed, Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom (UT) seconded

2020 budget for approval: LG noted that we want to make changes, such as checking whether clubs can still pay.

Q&A

Question from Margrit

- Which clubs are members?

Answer from Loredana

- Members include City Swiss Clubs, UT, NHS, SBS...

Comment from Margrit:

- She feels that the first three clubs should be paying a membership fee above what FOSSUK received for 2019. She doesn't understand why FOSSUK was only paid £106.

Question from Rosemarie

- She also doesn't understand how the amount can be so low.

Answer from Loredana

- Times are changing: clubs are struggling to recruit members and there is a lot of pressure to have delegates which are not associated with a club. That is seen in the clubs that don't have many members or don't feel like they need to contribute.

Answer from Franz:

- He noted it is very difficult these days to get members to pay. We need to reinvent ourselves to remain relevant.

Question from Jeffrey

- How many clubs are members of FOSSUK?

Answer from Loredana

- Seven clubs

Comment from Ruth

- There are conversations around how much clubs have changed. There are big changes going on which are reflected in FOSSUK's accounts.

Comment from Franz

- We might not like the fact there are fewer clubs, but it's a fact. Several years ago there were 6 to 7 clubs in Scotland, now there is only one left.

Comment from Jeffrey

- It seems sad, almost like FOSSUK is fading away.

2020 budget approved. Marine Vaclez (NHS) proposed, Ruth Muheim (Edinburgh) seconded

Membership fees

The FOSSUK committee decided not to increase current membership fee which remains at £1 per member. If clubs can pay, they can pay.

Comment/query from Camilla:

- Has not received an invoice for payment for 2019.

Clarification from Loredana:

- LG has already sent the invoices for 2019, and we need to understand why these were not paid (e.g. went into the spam folder?). After the AGM, LG will send the invoice for 2020, which can be paid on a voluntary basis. For the 2021 payment, invoiced will be sent following the 2021 AGM.

Andrew (NHS) proposed, Emilie Martinoni Hoogenboom (UT) seconded

Membership fee – Andrew Allaz (NHS) proposed / Emilie (UT) seconded

8. MEDIA UPDATE

Update given by Nathalie. There are three media tools to reach Swiss in the UK: Swiss review, social media, FOSSUK website. There has also been increased traffic on the FOSSUK website, with more users and page views. Nathalie gave a reminder that the website is a hub for everything - events, social media, OSA and delegates, and the Swiss review.

social media

Facebook – Updated once per week, growing subscribers, audience young and more women but increase on all.

Facebook is one of FOSSUK's biggest channels. The audience is growing on social media: we have 262 followers on Facebook. The biggest bulk of followers is 25-34 year-olds. The four posts with the most reach on Facebook were centered around AGM and Brexit.

website

website use is growing – all stats up. It contains news, the electronic Swiss Review.

Nathalie gave a reminder that the website is a hub for everything - events, social media, OSA and delegates, and the Swiss review.

Swiss review

Update given by Gioia, in charge of Swiss Review for four years now. Gioia said to please continue to send stories and activities and information - the next deadline is end of year. The next issue will be focused on FOSSUK's call for candidates.

9. ELECTION

Next year is delegate election – expect activity and communication.

The CSA works in four year terms, with elections coming up for the 2021-2025 term. While there was enthusiasm to elect people via e-voting, these options have stopped for now. We had planned to vote electronically in the UK, but it is very likely that it will still be paper-based.

We need to have an election coordinator and Camilla has agreed to take on the role, as she did 4 years ago.

Camilla gave overview of election:

Camilla and Ane will take care of it together. There is a dedicated email address for questions.

Camilla outlined the three key steps:

1. Call for candidates. Deadline to apply is 28 February. Anyone can apply whether they are member or not of a Swiss Club in the UK. A letter will be sent to all clubs after AGM. Clubs should share information widely within their membership. Clubs can endorse a candidate (request that they please use that option). The Embassy will vet the candidates, they will be published
2. Call for votes. Swiss nationals in the UK can vote for candidates. Ane is looking at e-voting options. Deadline is 20 May for voting. Ane and Camilla will count votes with the Embassy
3. Delegates announced at the 2021 FOSSUK AGM on 19 June.

10. Address by OSA VP, Roger Sauvain

Review of OSA 2020/2021

Roger Sauvain is the vice president of OSA and a member of executive committee. Gave overview of goals and results for 2020 and for 2021.

With regard to banking, a campaign was conducted to recommend the BCG (Banque Cantonale de Geneve) to Swiss abroad as they apply the same conditions to the Swiss abroad as the Swiss in Switzerland. Also, the Swiss compensation office in Geneva was contacted to find solution for the life certificate issue (which needs to be provided every year) and now policies have changed and it will no longer be requested.

On voting and elections, the final report from Franz's working group will be published next year.

On international mobility, OSA led a successful campaign on the limitation initiative.

A new mandate between FDAA and OSA will come in 2021.

The promotion of gender equality in OSA and the aim of having gender parity will be discussed at Lugano next year.

The three important issues for 2021 are the election of delegates to the CSA; the annual meeting of delegates which is planned on 19-20 March and will be done virtually; and the congress in Lugano which is planned to be in person.

He thanked our commitment to serving the Swiss abroad and wished us a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

11. AGM 2021

19th June 2021 at London Embassy, with our thanks

12. Fossuk Committee membership

All will continue to be members until next year, however there will be one change. Franz announced he was stepping down from the President role. He stated that the committee has decided to appoint Nathalie as President of FOSSUK for the next year.

Nathalie thanks Franz and said she is excited to take on opportunity, that there is lots to do, but is confident we will make a difference. She presented herself and will be reaching out to the clubs.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

AGM closed at 1251