



## MINUTES OF BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING

LAICO Regency Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya at 7 p.m. 10<sup>th</sup> November 2017

1. The Chairman, Elie Dangoor, called the meeting to order.
2. Meeting approved the minutes of the 2015 Biennial General Meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015 in Perth, Australia.
3. There were no matters arising.
4. Chairman acknowledged the contribution of the WESPA committee during the previous term, and the work put in by Scrabble Kenya towards the success of the 2017 WESPA Championship. WESPA's members paid their subscriptions and nominated its committee, and WESPA oversaw international ratings and tournaments.
5. Chairman thanked the former Treasurer, Andrew Fisher, and advised meeting that Jason Broersma (Canada) had volunteered and been appointed WESPA Treasurer in 2017. He also noted that Cheah SH (Singapore) would welcome a successor to take over the secretaryship in due course. Chairman thanked Mpakaboari Jack (Nigeria) for his continuing service as honorary Auditor.
6. Meeting voted in favour of accepting the WESPA audited accounts for financial years 2015 and 2016.
7. Chairman drew meeting's attention to the only sizable exceptional expenditure in the accounts, being a fee for legal advice to confirm that the contract with Mattel was a valid one. He noted that Mattel was supportive of WESPA's efforts and was aware that WESPA promoted Scrabble worldwide. Mattel's facebook page had promoted the WESPA Championship.
8. Elections for the committee then took place. He thanked Nikhil Soneja (UAE) who was retiring from the committee. The Chairman advised that there had been 12 nominations for the 11 seats available being 3 officers and 8 ordinary members. Rather than leave one candidate out, Chairman requested the meeting for approval to expand the committee by one seat for the duration of the 2017-2019 term.
9. It was resolved that the number of ordinary committee members be set at 9 members instead of 8 until the conclusion of the 2019 Biennial General Meeting. Motion was moved by Wilma Vialle (Australia) and seconded by Michael Tang (Malaysia) and passed unopposed.
10. The WESPA committee for the 2017-2019 term is: Elie Dangoor (England), Cheah Siu Hean (Singapore), Jason Broersma (Canada), Toke Aka (Nigeria), Karen Richards (Australia), Tony Leah (Canada), Evan Cohen (Israel), Craig Beevers (England), Steve Polatnick (USA), Trevor Hovelmeier (South Africa), Nick Ivanovski (Australia), Eric Kinderman (UAE).

11. Meeting reappointed Mpakaboari Jack as honorary Auditor for the 2017-2019 term.
12. The Chairman then called for expressions of interest from member associations to hold the 2019 WESPA Championship; expressions of interest are to be submitted by the end of January 2018<sup>1</sup> with full proposals by the end of February 2018.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13. The Chairman then opened the meeting to comments from the floor. Femi Awowade (England) expressed appreciation for the recent marked improvement in WESPA's website.
14. Wellington Jighere (Nigeria) hoped for Scrabble's inclusion as a Commonwealth and Olympic sport. Chairman advised that there had been contact with International Mind Sports Association (IMSA), the Olympics-affiliated body for mind sports. IMSA held that Scrabble was disqualified as a "game of chance". The several languages in which Scrabble was played presented another obstacle. Nevertheless, the meeting expressed interest in the possibility of advancing the inclusion of Duplicate Scrabble, which had no element of chance.
15. Mohamed Kamara (Sierra Leone) observed that Scrabble had been considered a game for the elderly but lately young people were coming to the game. He favoured aggressive promotion to youth, youth being more attractive to sponsors and partners. Chairman reminded meeting that Karen Richards would soon be running the 2017 World Youth Cup, with high attendance and good prize money. For promotional efforts, he advised liaising with Nick Ivanovski, heading WESPA promotion committee.
16. Faruq Baba-Inna (Nigeria) pointed out that Nigeria had incorporated spelling bees into youth Scrabble. Karen Richards advised that she had taken this idea up with MSI but they had expressed no interest.
17. Ishmael Sesay (Sierra Leone) noted that, speaking as physically disadvantaged person himself, the world should be made aware that Scrabble could be played by anybody.
18. Malek Sharif (Liberia) told the meeting that this was his first international played to the Collins word list, and thanked Mpakaboari Jack and Chief Toke Aka for encouragement and Karen Richards for inviting him to participate. He noted that support was wanted in terms of accessories and equipment.
19. Sulaiman Gorba Gora (chair, Nigerian Scrabble Federation) appreciated the work of Scrabble Kenya and WESPA. He suggested that WESPA should consider the business aspects of competition Scrabble, and that the best path forward was promotion to schools and institutions of learning. A business plan could be drawn up to convince corporate that Scrabble was beneficial to youth. He also proposed that PANASA should be represented in WESPA. Chair responded that Karen Richards could assist with youth promotions; however volunteers were always welcome.
20. Shan Abbasi (Canada) shared his experience from the non-profit sector. He cited volunteer centres in Canada where volunteers with appropriate skills were matched to a wants list, and suggested that precise 'job descriptions' on the WESPA website would be useful.

21. Christopher Thomas (Trinidad & Tobago) asked how tournaments could be made more affordable. Rasheed Balogun (USA) noted that it was often difficult for players from African countries to obtain visas.
22. Carol Johnsen (chair, Council of Australian Scrabble Players Associations) shared Australia's experience with a Scrabble curriculum designed for schools. This had not worked; it was discovered that teachers were needed to introduce the curriculum into schools, and schools had not been interested.
23. Michael Tang (Malaysia), congratulated Scrabble Kenya on the WESPAC and announced that he had decided to revive the "Causeway World Team Challenge"<sup>2</sup> to consist of 10 teams playing to the 2008 format, in Penang in 2018.
24. Trevor Hovelmeier asked the meeting to note the Cape Town International in January 2018. He also asked if there was any Scrabble software suitable for beginners. Karen Richards advised that her son had developed such software, which would be available in 2 or 3 weeks. Mohamed Kamara remarked on the shortage of tournament capable apps for the Android platform; Trevor Hovelmeier advised that there were such apps. Anand Buddhev (Netherlands) opined that the apps currently used by the Scrabble community were fragmented, that is, were created by developers on their own initiative, who from time to time stopped supporting the software. He asked if WESPA could promulgate a cross-platform official app. Chairman asked if Anand would be willing to spearhead such a project, to which he kindly agreed.
25. Eliud Lell (chair, Scrabble Kenya) thanked the meeting for their compliments and Toke Aka for his support with the government, and was warmly applauded by the meeting.
26. There being no further business, the meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Cheah SH, Secretary

Approved by Elie Dangoor, Chairman.

1 Corrected; deadline stated at the meeting was inaccurate.

2 Subsequent to the BGM, renamed to "Alchemist Cup".

## ATTENDANCE LIST

(List is based on the sign-in sheets. Please advise of omissions or spelling errors.)

Elie Dangoor  
Tony Leah  
Andrew Fisher  
Steve Polatnick  
Karen Richards  
SH Cheah  
Eric Kinderman  
Trevor Hovelmeier  
Chief Toke Aka  
Mpakaboari Jack  
Charles Haizel Tachie-Menson  
David Webb  
Powell Kiplagat  
Anand Buddhhev  
Andrew Golding  
Russell Honeybun  
Mohammad Sulaiman  
Joshua Otieno Manase  
Nicholas Mbugua  
Wamucii Irungu  
Mohamed A Kamara  
Ishmael Sesay  
Eta Karo P  
Curtis John  
Malek V Al Sherif  
Evelyn B Gathoni  
Thacha Koowirat  
Onyoin Yona Lawrence  
Mulenga Chitundu  
Tony Sim  
Geraldo Leopoldo "Robbie" Onate  
John Sang  
Junaid Kardame  
Charles Kariuki  
Willy Mwangi  
Emmanuel King  
Thoyo Mayuku  
Evelyne Wangui  
Dr Patrick Litunya  
Wilma Vialle  
Edwin Boama  
Sanath Hemachandra  
John Ashmore  
Andrew Goodwin

Wellington Jighere  
Prince Osahon Omosefe  
Bernard Amuke  
Eliud Lell  
Hillary Busienei  
Andy Kurnia  
Michael Tang  
Shan Abbasi  
Steve Ozorio  
Lakshan Wanniarachchi  
Basse William Umoh  
Faruq Baba-Inna  
Sulaiman Gorba Gora  
Bob Jackman  
Femi Awowade  
Fred Magu  
Bernard Sinyika  
Julius Auka  
Christopher Thomas  
Leslie Charles  
Antony Kiroria  
Nicholas Kamunyu  
Moses Peter  
Limo Kipkemoi  
Muema Muumbi  
Pierre RM Opio  
Isaac Mwape  
Christian Egike Oboku  
Moses Adeh Owugah  
Balogun Rasheed  
Martins Mutahi  
Winnie Wambugu  
Julia Mwaura  
Ikekeregor Dennis  
Paul Mbuati Gachie