



MINUTES OF BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING

held on 17th October 2019 at 1.30 p.m. in SAG Indoor Stadium, Peddem, Goa

1. The Chair, Elie Dangoor, called the meeting to order. It was stipulated that WESPA Championship players and officials would be assumed to comprise the attendance.
2. Elie Dangoor observed that he was stepping down after ten-and-a-half years and it had been a pleasure and honour serving as Chair. The WESPAC in Perth in 2015, Nairobi in 2017 and now Goa in 2019 showed what can be done by the community. He had been trying to convince Mattel to work with WESPA.
3. The 2017 BGM minutes were approved. Motion was moved by Tony Leah and seconded by Karen Richards.
4. Chair noted that there had been no feedback on matters arising since the previous BGM.
5. Chair reminded the BGM that his report was viewable on the WESPA website. He noted that Chris Lipe was taking over as Chair, and especially thanked Nick Ivanovski for his fantastic work on promotions. Chair called for volunteers to help with promotions.
6. Chair advised that funds currently stood at about USD21,000 and expressed the opinion that a small but not excessive reserve should be built up. He also noted that Chris Lipe was working towards a system for automated submission and processing of ratings.
7. Meeting voted in favour of accepting the WESPA audited accounts for financial years 2017 and 2018.
8. Chair noted that there had been more nominations than places available for the 11 seats available, being the 3 officers and 8 ordinary members. Chair requested the meeting for approval to expand the size of the committee by one for the duration of the 2019-2021 term. This had previously been done at the 2017 BGM in Nairobi.
9. It was resolved that the number of ordinary committee members be set at 9 members instead of 8 until the conclusion of the 2021 Biennial General Meeting. Motion was moved by Elie Dangoor and seconded by Bob Linn, and passed unopposed.
10. The WESPA committee for the 2019-2021 term was therefore: Chris Lipe (Chair), Carol Johnsen (Secretary), Jason Broersma (Treasurer), Toke Aka (Nigeria), Karen Richards (Australia), Tony Leah (Canada), Peter Thorpe (UK), Brett Smitheram (UK), Puneet Sharma (USA), Tariq Pervez (Pakistan), Waseem Khatri (Pakistan) and Douglas Tsang (Hong Kong). Evan Cohen (Israel) and Eric Kinderman (UAE) had been willing to stand again but were not eligible as there were sufficient nominees of national associations. Chair advised that his successor would be happy to invite Evan and Eric to be nonvoting observers.

11. Meeting reappointed Mpakaboari Jack as honorary Auditor until the conclusion of the 2021 BGM.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12. The Chair opened the meeting to questions from the floor.
13. Bob Linn (USA) inquired as to the next WESPAC. Elie Dangoor said that this would depend on the new committee but personally felt that it was due to be held in North America. Evan Cohen said that bids should be called for.
14. Anthony Ikolo (Nigeria) noted first that the prizes for the current WESPAC had not been stated¹ and secondly that the team prize should be a more prestigious one than the individual one.
15. Olatunde Oduwole (Nigeria) suggested that perhaps the WESPAC could be held in France as a way to reconcile the different language versions. Tony Leah acknowledged that it was a good point and important to build ties with the other language federations. The Spanish-language federation, FISE, had been accommodating and in fact there had been WESPA-rated divisions at recent Spanish-language events.
16. Limo Kipkemoi (Kenya) said Africa should have more WESPA committee representatives given the number of African countries of which several used English. Chief Toke Aka responded that the point was that committee members should be prepared to put in the work. Tony Leah noted that WESPA did reach out and listen to its members. He reminded the meeting of the impassioned plea by Gitonga Nderitu at the 2015 WESPAC which eventually led to the 2017 WESPAC being held in Nairobi.
17. Mohammed Kamara (Sierra Leone) thanked the Chair for his service. He said that the longevity of the game depended on youth and asked about the long term youth strategy. He further proposed a tournament be held in honour of Karen Richards, the youth head.
18. Howard Warner (NZ) thanked Cheah SH, who was stepping down as WESPA Secretary, for his part in driving the WESPA initiative.
19. Moses Peter (Nigeria) beseeched WESPA to publicise the game more. Chair reminded the BGM that Nick Ivanovski had long tried without success to call for volunteers with promotions.
20. John Holgate (Australia) raised the matter of professionalizing the game. He noted that there was no control over naming rights and mentioned an instance in which John Hamilton had secured some limited naming rights in Australia.
21. Niyi Adebayo (Scotland) gave his opinion that players going for world events should engage more with public officials such as mayors for publicity purposes.
22. Wellington Jighere (Nigeria) asked if it was possible for Scrabble to become a Commonwealth Games sport. Chair responded that it was desired to grow Scrabble as a mind sport and that there had been contacts with IMSA, the Olympics-affiliated mind sports federation. An objection of IMSA had been the multiple languages in which Scrabble was played. Tony Leah said the possibility of trying to get Scrabble in the Commonwealth Games could be explored.
23. There being no further questions, the meeting concluded with a sincere vote of thanks to the retiring Chair.

Cheah SH, Secretary
Approved by Elie Dangoor, Chairman.

Footnotes

1. The prize list was posted on (an easily-overlooked) sheet of paper at the front of the playing area.