



MINUTES OF BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING

LAICO Regency Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya at 7 p.m. 10th 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 6th 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 2018¹ 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. She also suggested that it would find more favour in countries with English as a second language³.
23. Michael Tang (Malaysia), congratulated Scrabble Kenya on the WESPAC and announced that he had decided to revive the "Causeway World Team Challenge"³ 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 Buddhhev (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".

3 Missed from original and added in.

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
Carol Johnsen
John Chew