



EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY (NATURE KENYA)

MINUTES OF THE 110th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the virtual Annual General Meeting held via Zoom on 19th August 2020

Present: Ian Gordon, Chairman; Fleur Ng'weno, Hon. Secretary; Paul Matiku, Executive Director; and 83 members; 57 members sent apologies

1. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Society's 109th AGM were accepted by the meeting *nem con.* (Proposer Paul Gacheru, Seconder Rosemary Dolan)

2. Matter Arising

No matters arising

3. Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Dr Ian Gordon, began with Nature Kenya's strategic goals: saving species, protecting sites and habitats, enhancing ecological sustainability and local empowerment. He noted the serious challenges to conservation during 2019-2020, including: the Covid-19 pandemic, policy failures, infrastructure, limited public support and limited funding for conservation; limited knowledge and threats to species. The chairman then highlighted the overarching responses to address the challenges: advocacy and engagement in policy and legislation development; engagement with the private sector; promoting sustainable production techniques; establishing a conservation constituency; forging partnerships; education; fundraising; use of science; land restoration; land purchase; and developing local support.

The chairman noted that the impacts of Covid-19 included: less unrestricted income; staff working from home; Nature Kenya office, Museum galleries and joint library closed to members and the public; cashless transactions at the shop; events postponed; increased threats to species and sites; few conservation activities taking place nationally; field activities reduced to basic monitoring (no meetings); and loss of conservation-related community livelihoods. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic challenges, Nature Kenya had given seeds and small loans to butterfly farmers at Arabuko-Sokoke Forest when exports collapsed with the closure of butterfly exhibits.

Reaction to Chairman's Report

Leon Bennun complimented Nature Kenya for the achievements despite the challenges associated with Covid.

Nancy Chege sought to know the survival rate of the trees planted and associated challenges. In response Dr. Matiku said that Nature Kenya grows trees at an average cost of Ksh 70. This includes the cost of planting, weeding and monitoring, resulting in a survival rate of 80% in most areas. Grazing and limited funding are the main challenges affecting the survival rate.

John Cooper inquired on the long-term future of Kipepeo following the impacts of Covid-19. The chairman noted that exports have now resumed. Esther Kioko noted the need to encourage farmers to take up other economic ventures such as fast-growing crops to cushion farmers against the impacts of Covid-19.

Helen Keane raised concern that the Mt Kenya resource centre was not active. In response Dr. Matiku indicated that the centre was active but not as much as expected, with close to 10,000 children visiting the center annually. Limited funding was the greatest challenge towards optimizing the facility.

The Chairman's Report was accepted by the meeting, *nem con*. (Proposer Pieter Pietrowitz and seconders Anthony Rawala, George Morara Oghenda, Ben Allen and Willis Okech).

[A summary of the Chairman's Report was published in the September issue of Nature Net]

4. Honorary Treasurer's Report

Upin Vasani presented the Honorary Treasurer's Report. The summary of the East Africa Natural History Society (Nature Kenya) audited accounts for 2019 reported a healthy financial position, well-controlled and IAS compliant, but still donor dependent. There are currently some 30 donor-funded projects, each with its own accounting requirements. More effort and new strategies were required to grow and sustain membership income streams.

The Hon. Treasurer's Report was accepted by the meeting, *nem con*. (Proposer Pieter Pietrowitz seconders Ben Allen and Willis Okech)

5. Appointment of Auditor

The Chairman proposed that CarrStanyer Gitau & Co. be re-appointed Auditors for 2020-2021.

The auditors were approved *nem con*. (Proposer Anthony Rawala and Seconders George Morara Oghenda and Willis Okech).

6. Election

The Honorary Secretary presented the names of the members standing for election as office bearers and committee members:

Chairman: Dr. Ian Gordon

Honorary Librarian: Dr. Dino Martins

Member: Mr. Rupert Watson

Member: Mr. James Kashangaki

The slate of office bearers and committee members was accepted *nem con* (Proposer Caleb Toroitich seconders Esther Kioko and Helen Keane).

7. Any Other Business

Several members who live outside Nairobi requested that future AGMs adopt both physical and virtual methods.