

Minutes of the Marlborough Brandt Group Annual General Meeting

Friend's Meeting House, The Parade, Marlborough, 15th May 2019

1. Welcome and Apologies

Alex Davies (AD) welcomes the members and guests of the Marlborough Brandt Group who are present. The other Trustees, James Busby, David Johnson and Dr Janneke Blockland introduced themselves. AD introduced the two guest speakers Fiona Yang and Anna Gent.

Apologies were received from the following members: Susan Suchopar, Lesley Andrews, Davi Turner, Alan Davies, Hector Manly, Gordon and Angela Hutt, Joyce White, Mayor Councillor Mervyn Hall, Lord Judd.

2. Agreement of Agenda

The agenda was agreed.

3. Approval of last AGM minutes

The previous minutes were approved and signed.

4. Chairman's Report

MBG has had a busy year consolidating its operations as a result of the difficult decision to close the office in 2017/8. AD summarised the annual report and highlighted the funds yet to be distributed from 2018 in 2019.

Several members acknowledged the continued high quality and detailed nature of the annual report. AD confirmed that MBG will continue to produce physical reports, although anyone may ask to only receive a digital e-copy to reduced costs and carbon footprint.

AD said that over the next year we will look to update the MBG website imagery and language in line with developing best practice using RadiAid as a guide.

Sonia Buxton comments on the number of turn-up on the night teams at the Quiz in April and asked teams to use the registration process for future quizzes, or at least to send an email to info@mbg.org. Sonia confirmed that she will not be able to organise the food at next year's quiz but says it is easy and asked for a volunteer to take it over in 2020. AD will follow up. All present thanks Sonia again for her help over many years.

5. Reflection on the 2018 Summer trip

Anna Gent (AG) reports on the 2018 Summer Trip that worked on the fencing around the old Marlborough mango garden. This was the first to be run with Venture Force (VF). Although the trip was reduced to three weeks this time, the feedback was incredibly positive from all students.

AG felt there may have been a loss of cross-cultural exchange without the homestays this year; and comments on the issue of little group fundraising by students; improving communication with VF; and equipment issues in Gunjur. AG has provided the trustees with a trip review report.

AD acknowledges the loss of cultural experience and fundraising issues and will address for future trips; equipment is a known problem for most trips and will be addressed in strategy meetings with local partners; and that this was the first trip with VF to 'test' delivery but will consult with VF on future trips. AD reiterated that MBG would return to home stays if that were possible and will actively pursue this as time goes on although modern safeguarding requirements make it extremely difficult for those at school.

6. Treasurer's Report and signing accounts

Janneke Blokland (JB) gives a brief commentary on the end-of-year accounts as found in the Annual Report. The accounts show a reduction in costs due to the closure of the office: operational costs are now 14% of total expenditure and below the 15% target. Membership has also increased this year. JB confirmed that MBG would look to distribute a higher % of funds in 2019.

Nick Maurice (NM) questions why VF are not listed in the MBG accounts as a cost. AD replies to advise that MBG do not directly pay VF, they are paid individually by trip participants. MBG does subsidise the core trip costs for participants at £2,500 per trip.

Proposer for approval of 2018 accounts: James Busby; seconded by Anita Bew.

The 2018 accounts were signed by AD and JB.

Appointment of reporting accountant: Alex Davies proposes Munro Audit Limited, seconded by Bill Buxton

7. Position of Trustees

As is required by the MBG Constitution 2014, article 3.5, one third or nearest number of Trustees must retire at each AGM, those longest in service first. The two Trustees volunteering to step down: JB and AD

JB was duly re-elected as proposed by Dr Nick Maurice and seconded by Peter Webber: all in favour no abstentions

AD was duly re-elected as proposed by Janneke Blockland and seconded by Anita Bew: all in favour no abstentions

There is an open invitation for new Trustees.

8. Reflection on the 2018 SJP trips

Fiona Yang reports on the three 2018 SJP trips where places are decided by a nomination process within SJP due to the high demand. Fiona acknowledges the amazing work of the GCL in the development of the community centre. Home stays created a mixed experience for the volunteers with some reporting it as the most challenging and some as the most rewarding and enjoyable part of the trips.

Question from Steve Atyeo on weather direct feedback on trip home stay was gathered from the host families themselves. AD said the GCL did give some feedback but recorded this as an action to take forward.

There was also a question on skill-matching SJP colleagues for future projects. AD confirmed that there are some discussions at SJP about looking to connect people to skills based sabbaticals or placements in Gunjur.

9. Funding of future projects

JB confirmed that MBG remains supportive of the projects we fund at the moment and opens the floor to any suggestions for future projects encouraging members to encourage organisations working in Gunjur to make contact with the Trustees.

There was a question on applications for microfinance funding. AD replies to advise of high demand in Gunjur and MBG is working with United Purpose and TARUD on expanding and crossing-over into business skills.

10. Future events: Lecture

Nick Maurice updates the group on TTV and his efforts to recruit another high profile speaker for this year's event. The date and speaker are still to be confirmed. Nick also gave an update on looking to bring together agencies in the Gambia to support the development of Mango products and UK importing.

11. Questions and Any Other Business

No further questions nor Any Other Business

The meeting ends at 7.45pm