

Minutes AGM 2020

9 September 2020

Attendance 54

The Meeting was called to order at 13:30

A short film was shown, which had previously been put together by Christine Gilbert and Georgina Malone for the ZIWA 30th Anniversary. It seemed particularly apt this year to remind us all of the necessity of friendships and helping to bring women together.

1. Welcome by the President

President Sandra Quartermaine opened the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for the Zurich International Women's Association, welcoming and thanking the members for their participation, especially in light of the current situation with COVID. She explained that the original May AGM as per the ZIWA Constitution, should have been held between May 1-14 Constitution Articles 7.1 to 7.8. However, it had to be postponed due to the government's social gathering restrictions during this time. This was communicated to the membership in March 2020. So, it was with delight that so many members signed up when registration opened. Today our attendance numbers once again reflect the rising number of infections in Switzerland, and after reaching 100 acceptances we today welcomed 54 members to the AGM. Two Board Members were also absent: Secretary Elizabeth Halloran and IG Director Maja Jhaveri, who were both out of the country. Our Director and Membership Secretary volunteered to record the minutes.

The President also explained the reason for the joint AGM and Kick-off being combined. Owing to the fact the AGM was postponed, bringing it into the same month as the Kick-off, the Board decided to waive the normal Kick-off fee in light of the unusual circumstances. Lixin Zhang, Iris Oba & Elke Steinmann were thanked for putting together a wonderful event with live music to help celebrate being able to meet up again.

The President thanked her fellow Board Members and Appointed Members for their support and flexibility and thanked the membership for their trust in her as President.

After her opening remarks the President briefly outlined the guidelines for the meeting. Any documents being addressed at the meeting had been issued beforehand to all the members through the May issue of the ZIWA News, where the Minutes of the 2019 AGM, the Executive Board reports and candidate biographies had been published. Also, via the e-Newsletter in May, the financial review document and proposed Budget for 2020/21 was circulated. Any member without email access received this by post.

The President also reminded members that voting on all issues would be by a show of hands of members present and only in the case where a majority vote was in doubt would there be a count of hands.

The election of the candidates for each Executive Board position would be by simple majority vote of valid, secret and absentee ballots returned. The ballots were handed out at registration. For those who had chosen to delay their vote until after the presentation of the Board candidates, Christine Baumann and Jane Aragon, circulated and gathered ballot papers. Chip Efthymiades and Christine Gilbert volunteered to count hands if necessary.

2. AGM Minutes

There were no matters arising from the 2019 AGM minutes and were approved by majority vote.

3. Executive Board report

The President hoped all members had enjoyed reading the reports of Board members and those of appointed positions, all of which appeared in the May addition of the ZIWA News.

She thanked all the volunteers in appointed positions, Board positions, and those working behind the scenes, for their dedication and effort. The members showed their thanks.

Snapshot of 2019-2020

At the close of the fiscal year there were 559 members, from 48 countries. New members during this period were 88. At the new fiscal year, beginning in April, we presently have 468 members. This number has definitely been affected by COVID and the uncertainty of social distancing regulations. However, membership is now on the rise and we have had 20 new members join recently, three of which attended the AGM. Our Events Director Lixin Zhang and her assistants Iris Oba and Elke Steinmann hosted 5 major events throughout the year 2019-2020. The kick-off at Zurich Zoo, Western Night, Christmas Lunch, Beyer Jewellery talk and the UK Country event.

Currently we have 55 Interest groups ranging from book clubs to coffee meetups, food, drink and fitness. Since March 2020 it has been particularly challenging for our groups. In response, the Board initiated Zoom subscriptions to all the Chairpersons, with technical help if needed, and to all the groups that were interested. Fourteen groups took up the offer and eleven are still using it for their meetings. The Board has also been using Zoom for its meetings since March very successfully. Zoom will stay available to the groups until we see an easing of the COVID pandemic.

May saw the last publication of the ZIWA News. Despite thorough efforts to find a volunteer, which was unsuccessful, the Board decided to instead concentrate its efforts on improving communication through 2 x monthly e-Newsletters, expanding, improving and regularly updating the ZIWA website and Facebook. The budget reflects the additional funds to do this. Thanks to the hard work of our Communications Director Georgina Malone and members Christine Gilbert, Liz Davies, Elaine Vautier and Katrin Gyax, we have a much-improved website. Members, which number 12, who do not have email are sent a bi monthly a printed update of all the communication from the Membercare Team.

Although the decision to stop publication of the printed ZIWA News was not popular with everybody the Board did receive emails of support from many members.

Lisa Bond who was the ZIWA News Editor and Members Directory Editor for the last 4 years was officially thanked for the professional and superb job in making the ZIWA News such a success. The Board had, prior to the AGM thanked Lisa for her hard work. A presentation of flowers was made to Lisa.

No questions were raised and the members approved the Report by majority vote.

4. Treasurers Report 2019/20

Treasurer Ileen Sangster presented the 2019/20 Treasurer's Report ending 31 March, 2020

Ileen explained she had stepped into the Treasurer's role over the past 6 months, due to the return of the previous Treasurer, Amy Yarborough, to the USA. Ileen is also returning to Scotland this month, explained the importance of having an external accounting function. Franziska Johannes of OS Revisions provides external financial governance and helps review and control ZIWA's accounting.

Ileen explained that income is partly uncontrollable, depending on the number of members, numbers, attendance at events and advertising. Since all of these have been affected by COVID this year, this has been reflected in the Budget.

There were no questions regarding the Treasurer's Report and a majority vote was passed to approve the Report for 2019/20

5. Budget 2020/21

Ileen presented the Budget for 2020/21.

She brought to the members attention that ZIWA has always aimed for a break-even budget, with zero income or loss. However, this year has presented unique circumstances and unpredictable constraints. Therefore, budgeting for 2020/2021 will show a loss. Since ZIWA has cash reserves we are in a position to absorb the loss. This was approved by the Board.

No questions were raised and the 2020/21 Budget was approved by majority vote.

6. Discharge of the Executive Board

President Sandra Quartermaine asked for a discharge of the Executive Board. Before a vote was taken she reminded the members of the changes made to the Board during the 2019/20 year. Amy Yarborough, Treasurer and Antonella Stainbrook, Communication Director were both elected at the 2019 AGM but had to step away from their positions during the year. To temporarily fill these positions, the Board appointed Ileen Sangster as Treasurer and Georgina Malone as Communications Director. These appointments were communicated to the membership in March 2020.

By majority vote the Executive Board 2019/20 was discharged.

7. Election of Officers.

Nominations chairlady, Christine Baumann, assisted by Jane Aragon, thanked the current Board for their commitment, and productivity behind the scenes, especially this year.

She explained that Amy Yarborough, a member of ZIWA, was ready to step in as Treasurer, until next year's election. Amy was present on Zoom for this year's AGM.

She also called for volunteers to come forward by February for the next AGM when several Board members who will have served 3/4 years on the Board, would be stepping down.

Christine presented the candidates for the 2020/21 Executive Board

Ballots not previously filled in upon registration were collected by Jane Aragon

Ileen Sangster was presented with a leaving gift for all her hard work.

8. Presentation of updated ZIWA website

Georgina Malone, Director of Communications, demonstrated the functions of the improved website, navigating the many additional functions now available to the public and members. She advised members that no personal information was available on the public page. She encouraged members to post blogs, and give feedback on any changes to enhance the website. ZIWA's Marketplace, previously the classified section, is now free for members to advertise their businesses to members and the public.

The improved Public page was also shown, which showcases ZIWA as an effective recruiting tool, providing prospective members with information on activities offered, events coming up, Life in Zurich and the Marketplace. Georgina Malone thanked previous members who set up and worked on the website as ZIWA has a very prominent position on Goggle search

Wild Apricot App, available for mobile phones, gives information on events, membership directory and the member's profile. Georgina offered to help install this app for members if they wished and asked members to ensure that they have updated their information, especially if they wish to be contacted by mobile phone.

Facebook, currently 312 members signed up and is a great way to quickly communicate between members. Georgina encouraged members to post their group activities, great books they have read etc. to keep the members engaged and communicating.

E- news is sent to the members twice a month, communicating all the information from the Board and current news.

The role of Advertising was discussed by Georgina. There is a rolling banner for 6 possible advertisers. Currently there are 2, but they are trying to attract more although advertising revenue is not so important, with IT costs considerably reduced from 2017 (CHF 13000) and 2021 the budget being CHF3,500.

Q: Christine Gilbert explained more about what the public now sees, as mentioned before and the improvement in learning more about ZIWA and providing useful information of Living in Zurich through the pages "Life in Zurich" which was put together by Elaine Vautier.

Q: Yuko Sasano said she has not been able to log onto the website.
Liz Davies explained that a member must use the email address they had recorded on their profile and then set their own password. Yuko was later helped by Liz to set up her password.

Q: What was the best things to put on the market place, could furniture be advertised?
Georgina explained the market place was better for businesses and that Facebook is best used for personal items to sell etc. For members that are not on Facebook they should contact one of the Facebook coordinators who would put it on for them.

Georgina explained to the members that ZIWA wanted to ensure that the association gave "added value" to the members and encouraged members to contact her for any ideas they might have.

Julia Newton congratulated Georgina on the new more inviting website.

9. Results of the Executive Board election.

Christine Baumann informed the members that 54 people had attended the AGM, 26 no shows (which may have been influenced by COVID), 17 absentee ballots.

The New Executive Board 2020/21

President – Sandra Quartermaine

Treasurer – Amy Yarbrough

Secretary – Elizabeth Halloran

Director of Events – Lixin Zhang

Director of Interest Groups – Maja Jhaveri

Director of Communications – Georgina Malone

Director – Liz Davies

Flowers were presented to the New Executive Board

10. Proposals by the Membership.

No proposals were sent to the Secretary.

11. Any other business

Christine Gilbert talked about how Interest Groups were coping with COVID restrictions and gave examples of what were happening in her groups; Wine Lovers and Walk and Talk, Meilen. The Walk and Talk was now meeting physically meeting every Wednesday morning but during the lockdown she had put together a newsletter for her Groups which had been well received. The Wine Lovers Group did not feel ready to meet up at the current time but she was in contact with all her members.

Aurorita Hunzinker informed the meeting that Meet and Eat had started up again.

Chip Efthymiades and Helga Meyer-Piening informed us that the cinema groups and Italian groups were meeting, but the yearly Travel Group trip to Georgia and Istanbul had been postponed until next year. She also said the Spanish conversation and Philosophy groups are using Zoom.

Maja Jhaveri (via Zoom) informed the members that Zoom would continue for the foreseeable future. Thalwil coffee are not meeting as Starbucks will not allow groups. Friday Stammtish have taken it outside with a walk along the lake and coffee.

Susan Straubinger (Flying Croissant contact) said they had been back to normal from mid-May at 4 of the institutions, the 5th still closed. Masked are now required at all deliveries.

Q: Christine Gilbert asked if a questionnaire could go out to groups to see how they are currently operating, to get a sense of where we were. Christine also spoke about members giving back to ZIWA by Volunteering for positions.

12. Closing Remarks

President Sandra Quartermaine thanked everybody for attending and once again stressed the importance of attracting new members for the Board positions that will be available next year. Positions to be filled, President, Treasurer, Events and Interest groups.

She then invited everyone to enjoy the Kick-off following the AGM.

The meeting was adjourned at 15:05

Date: September 9th, 2020

Sandra Quartermaine
Sandra Quartermaine
President

Liz Davies (author)
pp Elizabeth Halloran
Secretary