

## **ZIWA Annual Report 2020-2021**

The following listed people were elected to the ZIWA Executive Board by the membership at the 2020 Annual General Meeting. The AGM, which is normally held during the first 2 weeks of May, was postponed due to the COVID pandemic social distancing regulations and was eventually held at the Zunfhaus zur Meisen on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

President	Sandra Quartermaine
Treasurer	Amy Yarbrough
Secretary	Elizabeth Halloran
Events Director	Lixin Zhang
Communications Director	Georgina Malone
Interest Groups Director	Maja Jhaveri
Director	Liz Davies

### **President's Report – Sandra Quartermaine**

Welcome to the new normal: social distancing, gathering restrictions, virtual meetups, etc. organisations, including ZIWA, having to hold meetings virtually just to keep in touch. This year, and for the first time, due to Covid restrictions, and not to have an extended delay like last year, your executive board will hold ZIWA's Annual General Meeting via a Zoom online meeting. At the time of this writing, we are in the final planning stages of our virtual AGM. Fingers crossed, and with lots of patience from our membership, hopefully we can pull off the AGM with as few hiccups as possible. I'm equally hopeful, as I'm sure are all of you, that this is not actually the new normal, but just a temporary blip, and we will soon be able to see each other in person once again.

At the start of the Swiss government's regulated lockdowns, your ZIWA board faced the challenge as to how we could continue to administer the association and keep in touch with our membership. Offering networking opportunities and support to our members is the heart of ZIWA and your executive board sought out solutions to ensure that our members could continue to keep in touch.

Our ZIWA sponsored Zoom subscriptions for our interest groups has been a great success during this time. One example is our Wednesday Stammtisch group who were able to meet regularly and to offer an opportunity for prospective new members to gain an insight into what ZIWA has to offer. Even during this period of lock down, we attracted 34 new members! Many of these new members joined after meeting our ZIWA ladies at the Stammtisch Zoom meetings.

Over 20 of our interest groups use the ZIWA-sponsored Zoom subscriptions to meet on a regular basis. Your ZIWA board will continue to offer Zoom subscriptions to our interest groups for as long as social gathering restrictions continue.

A big shout out to ZIWA's Member Care team who have done a superb job of reaching out to some of our members who have been alone and in need of some support. As this

crisis continues, if you know of any member in need please get in touch with Member Care or a board member.

Despite the Covid crisis, the ZIWA board undertook major administrative changes during 2020/21. The executive board took steps to reduce our environmental impact by eliminating the printed version of ZIWA news, by enhancing our website and Facebook page, and by using Twitter and e-newsletters. In fact, our ZIWA website now experiences several hits regularly by newcomers to Zurich providing them an opportunity to meet others in a situation where it may have been difficult to do so otherwise. The ZIWA page on Facebook has been well used by our members to exchange information, stories, and experiences during this time.

Moving with the times, the board has decided that we will no longer offer a printed version of the ZIWA member directory. As nearly all our members, except for 8, access ZIWA information online, the decision to end a printed directory makes sense. A printed directory is out of date the minute it is printed. Using our website and the ZIWA App to access member phone numbers and addresses is the best way to get up to date information.

The 2021 AGM will mark the end of my term as a ZIWA board member. In total I have been a board member for 4 years; one as secretary and three as president. These last 4 years have sometimes been challenging, but overall, I have enjoyed the experience immensely. The biggest take-away will be the opportunity this has given me to meet so many interesting women in the Zurich area. It has been a privilege. Many, many thanks to my fellow board members – I have so enjoyed working with you – and to all the volunteers who without their support and dedication ZIWA would not be the strong organization that it is today. Also, thanks to you, our members, who placed their trust in me to lead the organization. I look forward to meeting up with many of you in the future – when finally, all these restrictions are lifted!

Lastly, I am so pleased to see that we have a full line-up of candidates for the 2021/2022 executive board. Seeking out ZIWA members to stand as board candidates is usually a daunting task for the board and the nominations chair. This year has not been the case. We have 7 outstanding candidates bringing a great range of experience to the board. ZIWA can only get better!

Best wishes to you all and I hope to see many of you soon.

Kind regards,

Sandra Quartermaine

## **Director for Communications Report by Georgina Malone**

How ZIWA communicates has changed dramatically in the period 2020/2021. A strategy report was presented to the Executive Board in April 2020 and recommendations were made for changes within this area to streamline channels within the communication sector.

The Executive Board looked at the changes in how people access information and how companies market to individuals to gain new membership. They also considered the environmental and cost impacts of using paper as a form of communication and the time required by volunteers to put together the different channels of communication ZIWA used. After careful consideration the Executive Board invested in updating the design of the website and took the decision to change ZIWA News from a printed magazine to an online blog on the website.

Working with a web design team, a newly designed website was launched in July 2020. The aim was to use this platform as the marketing tool for gaining new membership and provide potential members with more useful information pages for example Life in Zurich. The website continues to give up to date information to ZIWA members via a new “blog” area for all our ZIWA News. The workings behind the existing website continue to provide members with access to membership registration, renewals, events signup and payments, plus an up to date directory of member’s information. This is also supported by the WildApricot App.

This investment has also given ZIWA the ability not to rely on advertisers for its costs. During this period, when COVID has impacted all our lives, this has proved to be critical. Companies have reduced their advertising spend which could have greatly impacted ZIWA’s income. However, due to no printing costs this has not affected ZIWA’s budget. We continue to actively seek advertisers for the banner headline on the website and this is an ongoing project. The paid classified advertisements sector has changed to a marketplace for our members to advertise free of charge. Giving value to our members and promoting women in business was uppermost in our goals with this page being open to the public for wider circulation.

Members are also encouraged to use other social media methods to communicate. Our Facebook membership continues to grow and is becoming more proactive.

The eNewsletter, which comes out twice a month, keeps our members updated with any news, changes to events and messages from the Executive Board.

For members who do not have access to a computer, a hard copy is sent monthly to them by our Member Care team with information taken from our eNewsletter and articles from our ZIWA News.

Working with the Executive Board has been a pleasure and I have thoroughly enjoyed getting out to many interest groups and meeting so many members, listening to their viewpoints and engaging with the variety of activities, even during this pandemic. Learning about designing a website has definitely enhanced my skill sets and I really believe that as we get used to our new lines of communication we can provide fast, efficient and quality information to our members.

## **Director of Events Report by Lixin Zhang**

The Year in Events 2020/2021:

### **AGM/Kick Off 2020**

Christmas Lunch/Summer Celebratory Lunch

AGM/Kick Off – This has been an extremely unusual and challenging year for the events team and everybody due to the Covid pandemic.

The board and our events team, including Iris Oba, Elke Steinmann and myself, had to postpone the AGM in May 2020 to September 9<sup>th</sup>, which we combined with our annual Kick Off event. We had to change the venue from Glockenhof to Zunfthaus Zur Meisen because of space limitations at Glockenhof. We had a full registration of 100 people, but only close to 60 members turned up due to Covid concerns, which was understandable.

After a rather smooth and successful AGM and voting, members were entertained by Lazy Day, a young band with a few young music students. Its singer, Caroline Ferrara, sang a variety of songs including jazz. Many members could not help tapping their feet and nodding to the music. The food provided at the venue was delicious and was more or less completely consumed even though it was intended for a larger crowd.

Christmas Lunch/Summer Celebratory Lunch – Christmas Lunch was originally planned to be held at the Widder Hotel, however, we had to switch the venue to the Dolder Hotel, due to social distancing concerns. The December 3<sup>rd</sup> Christmas Lunch had to be postponed to a Spring Celebratory lunch in April due to lockdown measures and then once again to June 5<sup>th</sup> also because of restrictions. Hopefully that will be the end of it and the Summer Lunch will now go ahead as planned, but with a possible 3<sup>rd</sup> Covid wave in sight, we may need to rename it as Autumn Celebratory Lunch.

France Country Meeting – A team of French ladies, chaired by Béatrice Gaillard, have been working hard to organize the next country meeting. It has been scheduled for March 8 at Novotel Hotel. Sadly we had no choice but to postpone it to October 7. Fingers crossed all restrictions will have been lifted by then.

### **Director's Report by Liz Davies**

The start of my second year as Director has been a slightly different type of year. Our support groups have been able to continue, with the use of Zoom, to stay in touch with their groups. We have raised the awareness of the Membercare team who have played a huge roll in keeping our members connected with phone calls, cards and flowers when appropriate. Our Stammtisch groups have played a pivotal role in welcoming new members through Zoom calls, which have translated into many new members. I attend many of these calls to be ready to meet the new members and help with any questions. I liaise between the groups bringing attention to the Executive Board of any changes and issues to be addressed. Other side projects have been to help Communication's with the new website and offer volunteer help to Events when they have needed registration help. I have also been putting together a bi-monthly newsletter for our 11 members with no email addresses with all the information that members receive via the eNewsletter and the website blogs.

### **The Interest Group Director's Report by Maja Jhaveri**

Clearly, the pandemic has also put ZIWA with all its active Interest Groups to the test in 2020/2021. Our core activity – meeting new people and building friendships in person – has been challenged. But not for long since we found ways and means for members to meet after all....

In the early stage of the first lockdown in March 2020, when in-person meetings were no longer possible and everybody was equally hit with full force by this unprecedented situation, the ZIWA Board made it a priority to set up a system that allowed the individual Interest Groups to stay in touch if they wished to do so. The offer for ZOOM subscriptions was born. One may think that these virtual gatherings are not suitable for all groups, but interestingly not only book clubs and discussion groups but also groups such as the cooking and eating IG and the line dance IG also asked for a ZOOM account. The "A Day Out" IG became a "A Day In" IG where games and trivia were offered through ZOOM. The hiking and walking groups were really the only groups that could meet in-person due to the nature of their activity being outside. But even for them a temporary break was unavoidable. So far, in total about 20 ZOOM subscriptions have been given out and we hope to see more Chairpersons contacting the IG Director as it might still take some time until it will be safe for our members to meet again face-to-face.

Currently, we have a wonderful variety of 58 Interest Groups broken down into 10 different categories. I am delighted to inform you that a new proposed Interest Group has been set up: a virtual book club. For more information please check the ZIWA website.

The main responsibility of the Interest Group Director is to help chairladies in getting their activities posted through our activities calendar, FaceBook or the E-Newsletter, but also under the "Proposed New Interest Group" rubric one can find updates on upcoming IGs. We are always open for new Interest Groups to be established and the organization appreciates the initiative and vitality that members show who wish to run an interest group for ZIWA members.

Furthermore, the Director of Interest Groups is in charge of the organization of two events per year for the chairladies, co-chairladies, and the appointed members. These are the Business Lunch and The Thank you Luncheon.

This year's Business Meeting was held under strong safety restrictions at the Restaurant "Milchbar" in down town Zurich. Wrapped up in warm blankets and with sheep skins on the chairs, we enjoyed an outdoor Fondue Plausch (relaxed get together while enjoying a cheese fondue) and used the time to exchange thoughts on how to encourage members to come forward for volunteer positions. In addition, it was interesting to hear how the individual Interest Groups had been coping during the first lockdown. All 28 participants enjoyed the get together which was possible at that point of the year after a long period of complete shutdown.

To express our appreciation for all the great work that our chair- and co-chairladies and appointed members do, we usually host a Thank You Luncheon at a restaurant in Zurich. Sadly, this spring the current situation does not allow a safe and relaxed gathering. Therefore, on behalf of the entire Board I would like to extend a big thank you to everybody for your continued commitment and support!

P.S. On a separate note I would like to inform you all that I will step down from my role as Interest Group Director at the coming AGM in May. It's been a great pleasure to get in touch with so many wonderful women over the last three years. I will remain part of the ZIWA community and hope to see many of you again once we are back to normal times. Stay safe and healthy!

### **Treasurer's Report by Amy Yarbrough**

AS the financial report has to be audited in April at the end of the financial year, it will not be published in the eNewsletter until later this month or in early May, prior to the AGM.