



FIREFLYERS INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

Winter-North East Monsoon- Summer 2020

Fireflyers International Network (FIN) Steering Committee meeting held over Zoom, December 7, 2020 from 7.00-8.00pm (MYT).

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Chairperson - Dr Sara Lewis (USA)

Honorary secretary - Mr Sonny Wong Choong Hay (Malaysia)

Honorary treasurer - Mr Vor Yiu (Hong Kong)

Asia Representative - Dr Wu Chiah Siung (Taiwan)

North America Representative - Dr Marc Branham (USA)

Australasia-Pacific Representative - Dr Lesley Ballantyne (Australia)

Apologies for absence:

Europe Representative - Dr Jose-Ramon Guzman-Alvarez (Spain)

Agenda

1. Welcome by the Chair

Sara welcomed everyone to this 2020 year end, to catch up on the on going of FIN since the last meeting in March 2018. Past minutes sent earlier by the secretary to the committee. The agenda was read out.

2. Financial Matters

Vor sent the up to date Income and Expenditure account and detail transactions to the committee early.

He explained the delayed FIN bank account which was rejected by all traditional banks, (which took a year to register an account finally registered a digital bank account), as the FIN office bearers were not residents. The choice was to go virtual banking, which FIN bank account is now in HK Curenxie, which is part of a traditional bank. This virtual bank account was used for e payments to traditional banks, overseas and locally. For receiving money, a PayPal account was opened for FIN.

He went through the transactions (Income and Expenditure), money only in on 2019, only three types of transaction. Grants received from MBZ Species Conservation Fund and SSC Internal Grants (Global Wildlife Conservation) for the 2020 Red List assessment training for IUCN SSC Firefly Specialist Group members in Portugal which was postponed; memberships and donations.

Sara explained further that the we set up a SSC Firefly Specialist Group was set up as a subset of FIN for firefly conservation work. FSG do not have a bank account and will be supported by FIN (using FIN bank account). As for the grants received, will determine the place or time and method to hold the trainings.

Marc asked about projected income come out from membership and donations and expenditures eg website fees and other expenditures.

Sara mentioned of donation and join button, and the difficulties to use PayPal in some cases.

Vor mentioned that paid up members are very few (10). FIN members may pay before IF Symposium as they can't vote if not a member of FIN. Membership is between two IFS (3 years).

Sara to explain the benefits of membership so that people will join, and application of travel subsidy.

Vor explained that FIN cannot keep too much money but need to spend as soon as possible, as FIN is not tax exempt status from the Tax Department, and to apply the tax exempt status, you need citizens office bearers not foreigners. There needs to change the constitution for a HK citizen office bearers. But FIN is an international NGO. As for expenses, can spend it through publications, subsidized travel to IFS or related firefly meetings.

Sara mentioned that the only expenditure is the web annual fee (Business package USD216/year). The next SC will have to determine how the funds to be used.

Wu suggested that to attend IFS, to include membership fee, need to be an ordinary member or life time member.

Sonny mentioned from experience, that membership fee cannot raised enough funds for expenditures, need donors or other ways of raising funds.

Vor read out from the constitution that the annual membership is 'from time to time'. And the SC terms are from IFS to IFS.

3. World Firefly Day

Sonny presented on why the World Firefly Day was needed as a public outreach tool, education and awareness, fundraising and day for action on firefly conservation. Started in 2018, and has attracted many countries and local groups to celebrate annually during the first weekend of July. He went through the themes for each year. 2020 was a virtual celebration due to the Covid 19 pandemic. FIN celebrated with videos from artists as the awareness story will attract a whole range of people. FIN started the YouTube channel for the occasion. There are 12 videos submitted by artists and members. Facebook was full of artwork and members celebrations. He mentioned about the pros and cons of virtual celebration and ended with suggestions for the next WffD 2021 theme and activities, and suggestions from the SC members.

Wu mentioned that to have a donation for the webinar or on newsletter. He asked for a 2 page A4 sized write up on WffD 2018-2020.

Sara mentioned that the story telling is a big part of FIN outreach and was successful and getting artists contribution during pandemic year.

Vor suggested to put the themes on fb and ask for suggestions and then a poll, which everyone agrees.

4. FIN Newsletter

He edited two previous newsletters since 2018, using an online software. He planned to come out with the special issue memorials for Dr Ohba, Dr Ho and Dr Lloyd and requested Marc to write 250-300 words about Dr Ohba, translation work for Dr Anchana's and Dr Fu firefly larva predator work and a video clip by Radim and Fang before Christmas. Sonny to provide a 2 page A4 sized write up on WffD 2018-2020.

Sara congratulated Wu, mentioned the newsletter, a product of FIN to be proud of and distributed. 1. As an incentive for people to join as paid up members or 2. Information for public outreach. Previously distributed through a mailing list of members and non members.

Wu mentioned should the newsletter with video clips be for paid up members or not paid up members?

Vor mentioned 'should be free to a sense' but highlight 'donation' on the page, which Wu supported.

Sara should thank the individual for joining.

Wu mentioned of a full version and a short version (to entice membership). Most voted for two versions.

Sonny mention who to distribute to – main list of 481 persons (from various IFS registers), registered FIN members (92) out of which 10 paid up FIN members (google doc as at 7 Dec 2020). Do we send to all the registered members and put a notice for payment for membership?

Sara mentioned seemed to have three classes of IFS members, list of registered members with donation and paid up membership. Also mentioned of a person in charge of membership is needed. Send to all registered a short version, and a long version for paid up members. Sara thank Wu for the technology involved.

Wu repeated that the newsletter will be out before Christmas.

Wu apologized and left go for another meeting.

5. FIN website

Sara displayed the website, with added donation and join buttons, mission, past meetings, biographies of scientists, conservations and artists, world firefly day, iNaturalist (Tim Fallon set up)-no data in Australia yet, and thanked Oliver Keller for ID firefly. Avalon our webmaster will be graduating and need another help soon.

FIN Facebook page was next- since WffD we have 900+ people mostly photographer, a great outreach tool and if possible a story for every week by contributors.

Now we have a YouTube channel, with artists and members, but no TikTok, Instagram and Twitter at the moment.

6. International Firefly Symposium 2021

Ramon, the liaison person with Parque Gaia was not available to answer will IFS 2021 be held in Portugal on 2022 or held virtually 2021? The decision will be by the host, Parque Gaia. Raphael helping Ramon for your information, but no news from them. We can discuss our preference now.

Marc mentioned that as a volunteer there will be a lot of work preparing for an IFS. There is a lot of unknown and cannot be forecast, unknowns a lot. For a virtual IFS, there will be less surprises and have a more lead time to set up. We must also respect the host, and let them decide due to lot of investment done, and a chance of limited turnout for 2021 can happen.

Lesley suggested for a virtual IFS. (through chat, mic not working)

Sonny supported Marc's reasoning of low turn up, lots of unknown and if the pandemic continues then there will be quarantine upon landing which will not make sense of attending.

Vor mentioned of an option in December 2021? Which will depend on the host.

Marc asked to be patience and wait for their options, as these are trying times.

Sara mentioned to wait for news from Ramon and Raphael.

7. Any Other Matters

a. New steering committee election

Sara mentioned that the rotation system from IFS to IFS will benefit from new ideas. Although we have opened for nomination last year but there are very few responders. The old committee will continue to serve until the next IFS. We need to get persons who are responsible and can lead.

Marc thanked everyone for their effort.

Sara mentioned of any follow ups will be through emails. This meeting has been recorded.

Meeting adjourned at 8.00pm (MYT).

Reported by,



Sonny Wong

Honorary Secretary

Verified by,



Sara Lewis

Chairperson

Dated December 14 2020

Attachments:

1. Past Minutes March 2018- pdf
2. Financial Reports- statement and details- pdf
3. World Firefly Day report -pdf
4. Newsletter report- png
5. Vor's screenshot on Constitution – png
6. Screenshot of meeting. png