



Minutes Wellington Branch 21 May 2020

Secretary
PO Box 11993
Manners Street
Wellington 6142

Call Free 0800 888 472
Office Phone 04 472 7006
wellington@gsa.org.nz
www.gsa.org.nz

A meeting of the Branch Committee held electronically via ZOOM application **10.00 am on Thursday 21 May 2020.**

Present:

Ian Clunies-Ross (Chair & Convenor), Peter Chambers (Deputy Chair), Kevin Duggan (arrived later), Graham Hill, Kay Monks, Alan Peck, Elizabeth Smaal, Mike Smith, Ray Woolhouse.

1 Welcome:

The Chair welcomed committee members to the ZOOM meeting and asked if this meeting would be treated as extraordinary meeting. The committee agreed that the meeting be regarded as a normal committee meeting.

2 Apologies:

Bryan Whisker. Kevin Duggan for joining half an hour later. The Chair moved that the apologies be accepted.

3 Minutes from the Meeting Held on 20 February 2020:

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2020 be accepted as a true and correct record.

Graham Hill/Elizabeth Smaal

4 Matters Arising:

a) Branch positions and responsibilities 2020

The Board has directed that branches hold their AGM in conjunction with their end of year function. This would mean that members could be fully informed through the October newsletter. The Wellington branch committee felt that having to incorporate the AGM, Centennial celebration and Christmas function in one event could be overwhelming. The committee was aware that legally, the branch could decide not to hold an AGM in 2020 because of the exceptional circumstances created by covid-19. Also an AGM could be held as a separate event or combined with other functions.

The Board was continuing to plan for the Council meeting in the 1st week of September, accommodating physical distancing rules, unless circumstances dictate otherwise. The committee queried how the 'physical distancing' rule in social functions would work and there was no guarantee that the rule would be lifted when the government announced a move to alert level 1.

The committee will further consider all its planned social functions at the June meeting with a view to possibly cancelling some if not all the functions prior to the Christmas function.

It was suggested that an AGM could be carried out within a half hour prior to the previously planned Centenary and Christmas celebrations on 26 November. Alternatively, the branch could postpone the AGM until next year. With a subsidy applying on 26 November, this could be a relatively cheap function/luncheon for members. If all other functions are cancelled, the branch could well afford to subsidise this last and important event. However, there is no obligation for the branch to hold an AGM this year. If the committee takes this view, they would need to advise the members in the October newsletter explaining the reasons. It was agreed that further discussion of these matters should take place at the meeting on 18 June 2020 before any final decision is made.

ACTION: To include the discussion of the AGM, and all other planned function bookings at the committee meeting on 18 June 2020.

b) Branch operation and meetings under pandemic

A concern over social isolation, and a challenge working in the home environment was raised by the Secretary. She had been able to work successfully from home during the Covid-19 lockdown. National Office strongly recommended that the staff continue to work from home under alert level 2 until distancing rules were relaxed and public transport considered safe. Currently public transport could only accommodate 30% of its full capacity to allow for distancing rules. Two weekly office meetings with the National Office were organised throughout the lockdown and will continue. The Chair suggested Jirayu should be able to get to the office if/when she needed to for the benefit of her wellbeing. There is no obligation for her to go to the office under level 2.

It was agreed that Jirayu carry on working from home over the next few weeks and if she needs to return to work in the office in Wellington, she would discuss this directly with National Office.

c) Public liability insurance

At the April meeting the committee considered the branch's obligations regarding the health and safety of members who accidentally injured themselves at one of the branch social events.

ACC was contacted for clarification and it advised that the branch would not be liable for any accident. ACC however did not provide any further detail about public liability and suggested the branch seek advice from independent advisors. The National Office had more information and would send this to Secretary.

The branch should inform members of any obvious hazards such as inadequate disabled access to the venues with this being noted in the newsletter when advertising the social event.

ACTION: Secretary to follow up on Public Liability information from National Office.

d) Telephone Tree and communication with members

A list was created of members with only telephone numbers provided in the database. This was to follow up on the fact that if functions advertised in the newsletter were to be cancelled, those members without email addresses would need to be contacted. If this task was to happen each committee member would need to contact 176 members! It appeared the branch currently would not need to contact all members as only members who booked for cancelled functions would need to be contacted.

e) **ZOOM Application**

The application for the current meetings was useful. However, as a free account, the restriction of 40 minutes meeting applied. The branch considered buying a membership. The National Office however, offered the branch the use of its paid account. It was noted that the cost of the committee attending the meetings in person was more expensive than buying an annual ZOOM account.

It was agreed the branch continue to access the National Office's Zoom account.

Kevin Duggan arrived at 10.45am

5 Correspondence:

Members had approached the branch requesting a coloured copy of the newsletter to be sent to them. The branch ordered black and white copied for members. It was more costly for colouring printing. It was agreed to let the members know there is no coloured copy available.

6 Finance:

(a) Accounts to 28 April 2020

The bank statements ending 28 April had been circulated. There were two accounts, one the normal branch operating account and the other a credit card account with a \$500 limit for a secretary to buy necessary items e.g. morning tea for the branch meetings, envelopes, stamps etc. It was noted that the normal branch bank account looked healthy.

It was agreed that approval of the finances be carried over to the June meeting.

7 Board report: Alan Peck reported as follows..

- (a) Board meetings - these are being held over two separate days, one week apart, by ZOOM. It worked well. If the meeting went on too long using ZOOM, attention tended to drift.
- (b) Honours Committee - Diane Ward, Nelson committee, was appointed to the Honours Committee. She is a former Board member.
- (c) Waikato King Country Proposal – Waikato King Country, a very active branch acknowledged for their contributions, had proposed that the Board should declare a pandemic under the emergency regulations in the Constitution. The Board did not agree with this proposal as the Board believed that the wording 'Emergency' in the constitution related to the scheme's and members' interests and the Covid-19 pandemic did not impact the GSF and members' annuities. The reason behind this proposal was that the Board should share its concerns about the economic and health impact on senior citizens with a range of agencies writing to political parties and MPs, and making public statements where older New Zealanders are put at any risk.
- (d) Surviving Spouses - GSFA is going to formalise and implement the rule that a payment deduction from the superannuation of a surviving spouse would not commence until GSFA received a formal agreement from them. In the past, it was assumed that once the member died, a spouse member would automatically be a paying member of GSA. The arrangement was now formalised. Datacom would write to each surviving spouse of an annuitant who had died asking if they wished to become a paying member of GSA. If the branch were to follow up on surviving spouses, this could be a potential way to retain

their membership. Some smaller branches already did this but it would be a big task for a bigger branch. Also when the spouse members died, there was no way the branch would know unless the branch was notified.

- (e) GSFA Appeals Board - The Board had nominated Alan Peck, a Board and a Wellington branch committee member, to the Appeals Board. The nomination had gone through and would be before the Cabinet on Monday to be formalised and approved. It was hopeful that GSA would have a representative on the Appeals Board again. Alan was congratulated by the Wellington Branch committee.
- (f) Council meeting – at this stage, Council will go ahead as planned.
- (g) Honours Committee - Life member nominations close on 10 July. Any suggested nomination(s) should be discussed with the Chair, Ian Clunies-Ross.
- (h) COLA – The hoped for resolution of GSA’s petition will be delayed as a result of the Finance Minister’s current and pressing priorities relating to Covid-19.
- (i) Amalgamation of Branches - The Board was working on a policy paper on a process of disestablishing and amalgamating some of the branches. The draft outlines a process that will be finalised before the Council meeting in September. At least one branch is having difficulty operating. The Board was looking at how branches operated, how amalgamation might work and the implication of this process in the future.

It was noted that Wellington branch, as one of the largest branches, might take care of some neighbouring branches in the future. It would be a secretarial and/or social support for the branch.

- (j) Board Liaison Visits - A question was raised about the feedback from Board liaison visits as nothing was reported in the Board minutes. It was clarified that there was no discussion of the Board liaison visited due to the pandemic. Most of the last visits were in December at Christmas functions. The branch visits were on track, twice a year, up until the Covid-19 pandemic.
- (l) Request for Assistance – The Horowhenua/Kapiti branch, with approximately 1,200 members, has asked if the Wellington branch could assist the H/K branch processing membership applications. The H/K branch has a problem recruiting a branch Secretary. They would manage the non-membership and social functions tasks. The Wellington branch Secretary would need to be invited to carry out the tasks for H/K branch and be paid by H/K for the hours involved, based on her hourly rate of pay.

ACTION: The Chair to send out the H/K proposal to the Wellington committee for their consideration and to the Executive Officer for her information.

ACTION: To include this proposal in the June meeting agenda for a decision.

8 Sub Committees reports:

- a) **Recruitment-** no report.
- b) **Honours**

The Committee were reminded to think about nominations for life membership. A deadline to submit proposals to the Board is 10 July.

- c) **Policy** - no report
- d) **Finance** – refer item 6.
- e) **Social**

It was agreed that a decision regarding the cancellation of the mid-winter luncheon booked for 26 August would be delayed to the June meeting. Also the branch needed to decide on the venue for the Christmas/Centennial celebration.

ACTION: Secretary to include this agenda item in the June meeting.

9 General business.

There was no further business.

The meeting closed at 11.20 pm

Jirayu Brennan,
Branch Secretary



Confirmed:
Ian Clunies-Ross,
Chair