



MINUTES OF
THE 53rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 19th MAY 2018 AT 14:00 AT MAC BELFAST

PRESENT

FOSSUK COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt	President of FOSSUK, OSA UK Delegate
Franz Muheim	OSA UK Delegate
Joelle Nebbe-Mornod	Treasurer FOSSUK
Ané-Mari Peter	Media & Secretary FOSSUK
Alexandre Tissot	VP of FOSSUK & OSA UK Delegate
Gioia Palmieri	Swiss Review
Nathalie Chuard	OSA UK Delegate
Vincent Croset	OSA UK Delegate

DELEGATES

Rose-Marie Breitenstein	Frauenverein / La Causerie
Walter Isler	City Swiss Club London
Ruth Muheim	Swiss Club Edinburgh
Jane Muller-Mc Dougall	Swiss Club Edinburgh
Camilla Ghislanzoni	New Helvetic Society
Marc Peter	Swiss Benevolent Society, New Helvetic Society
Suzanne Egloff	Swiss Benevolent Society

GUESTS from the UK and Switzerland

H.E. Ambassador Alexandre Fasel	Hon. President FOSSUK
Sarah Mastantuoni	Directrice Organisation des Suisses de l'étranger
François Voeffray	Minister Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy
Hermann Aebischer	Consul General, Embassy
Franziska Hewitt	Honorary Consul Belfast
Eleonora Gherardi	Honorary Consul Gibraltar
Ruth Thomas-Lehmann	Honorary Consul Wales
Hans Scheiwiller	Honorary Consul Manchester
Peter Muller-Mc Dougall	Honorary Consul Edinburgh

OBSERVERS

Nicole Fasel-Rossier, Angela Scheiwiller, Robb Nebbe, Jean Isler, Hans Martin Senn, AnneMarie Doherty-Wurrsch, Karl Jeanette and Sheena Egli, Paula Emmenegger, Michael Hewitt, Philip McGarrity, Eric and Esperanca Morier-Genoud, Yvonne Robinson, Heidi Steffen,

MINUTES

Ané-Mari Peter (AP)
Edited Joelle Nebbe-Mornod (JN)

1. WELCOME

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt (LG) opened the AGM and welcomed the guests, the consuls and Embassy staff.

Ambassador Fasel (AF) is delighted to be here. FOSSUK is a strategic partner in the political landscape of the Swiss in the UK.

2. APOLOGIES

Carmen Rose
Lisa Hall
Carla Maurer

3. Minutes of AGM 2017

Marc Peter (MP) proposed
Camilla Ghislanzoni (CG) seconded

4. Annual Report

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt (LG) announced that this is her last year as president of FOSSUK. The report looks back at what done, but also to highlight the challenges.

FOSSUK exists as a result of club memberships, but as membership of clubs decreases, so do our members. Financially this is more challenging as a result – without sponsors we cannot host an AGM like this.

Northern Ireland does not even have a club.

Questions: Do we even need a club, and why can't informal groups or social media like a Facebook group be a 'club'? We follow the rules of OSA, which puts limits on member societies. These are important matters to discuss with them going forward.

Last year's highlight for FOSSUK is the addition of two new (and younger) delegates. It's important to pass the baton on to others.

Note that we are all volunteers in clubs and at FOSSUK. The FOSSUK committee does not get paid. Volunteers have to be recognized and thanked

otherwise they will lose interest. Clubs have the same challenge. FOSSUK is working with clubs to help.

Report Accepted - CG proposed, Walter Isler (WI) seconded.

5. Constitution

LG introduces Alexandre Tissot (AT) to talk about changes to the constitution.

Our constitution requires streamlining & modernization as it was last updated 10 years ago and does not reflect reality. A committee was formed with Vincent Croset (VC), Nathalie Chuard (NC), Franz Muheim (FM) & AT. Anne-Mari Peter (AP) & LG gave input.

Our mission remains the same – here to promote activities and interests of our members.

Membership: definition of what is a FOSSUK member. Full members have to stay within OSA guidelines but we want to add associate member societies and social group members. We need to take into account the existence of social media groups – though we need to make sure that these groups we do “add” are in sync with our values as set out in the constitution.

Delegates: we will continue to use a democratic process via the Swiss public for 3, for other 2 will continue to look to the corporate membership. This will likely be changed by OSA going to a direct election of delegates in 2021.

Auditors: modified to match reality: it said 2 auditors. We have only 1 – this is deemed to be sufficient in the case of the auditor being a professional.

Funds: Updated treasurer’s guidelines, was 50 pounds, but this has been raised to 150 to realistic costs. Added rules for reimbursement.

Fundraising, also mentioned by Loredana in her report. In past we raised funds from corporate members – has to it change to corporate sponsors. Forums, and other events are more complex and more expensive.

Also expanded expenses reimbursement to in particular delegates, but also committee members. Cost incurred for FOSSUK should be reimbursed as in a normal business expense. This means significant corporate sponsorship should be in place. This is vital to continue to attract younger committee members and OSA Delegates.

Predominant focus is corporate fundraising. Looking to raise 8 – 10K per year. Members’ contributions are largely symbolic. Mentioned NC as assisting here as a marketing professional.

Committee: CG stated that FOSSUK officers should be allowed to also be on committees of other clubs. (post AGM note: this was a mis-read, the text is “need not be”).

Does 12 committee members not make it more difficult for fundraising as expensive? Joelle Nebbe-Mornod (JN) explains that size increase is due to number of delegates. AT stated that it is a maximum of 12, if it works with 9, ok. This is a 'cap' not a goal, rather have a few engaged members, than a full static committee. CG stated it was 9 because of odd number – will this not cause an issue if we cannot agree on a vote? JN stated that with only 9 where 5 are also Delegates, we effectively only have 4 committee members which is not enough to do the work. Not all delegates get so involved in the committee.

Swiss review: ML noted that AT did not mention Swiss Review changes in constitution. FM noted that the Swiss Review changed e.g. the editor is now employed directly by OSA, we used to have an editorial committee. Rule 5 was rewritten to match the status quo, similarly appendix 2. There is a regional editor and a committee member which is the liaison between the editor and committee. We are currently fortunate that Gioia Palmieri (GP) is also on the committee, but this is not always the case. AT added that it better reflects reality.

Hans Senn asked whether index 6 – OSA pays allowance of CHF100 per delegate? AT noted that this is under review and this is a good point – the amount should not be fixed. Article 4.2 there is a typo – members' not member's.

Social Groups

Ruth Thomas (RT) – wants to know more about associate members – they have obligations, but what rights do they get if they don't have voting rights. BSCC is latest associate member AT noted – they have approx. 200 members, and contributing to FOSSUK, but committee are primarily British nationals – and per our constitution / rules, they are not 'Swiss'. JN explained that they want access to community, connection to Embassy, network, be part of our events – it's access – they do not want to vote. AT noted that we support them with Moving Art initiative, FOSSUK helps them with events, and are currently in discussion to assist with Centenary e.g. classical music. AT noted that they see a lot of benefit in working with us – and that relationship will continue to grow.

RT asked how groups can be involved that have no formal structure, that can't be a corporate member or associate members. If this group is supportive of FOSSUK, maybe they can be a 'friend'. What is this status? AT notes that we don't prejudice – we don't ignore you if you are not a corporate member, we are still open to dialogue. We exist for the member but we also have a Swiss community that we serve – we are going to be involved with groups and individuals who are part of community but not a corporate members.

JN noted that we need a real-life case. RT noted she is talking about Swiss gatherings as in Wales, who do not want bureaucracy and obligation to have AGM, writing a report – it is not attractive to young people – have a lively Welsh community, who want to be friends, but none of the formality. RT wants

to make a case for these informal groups – FM stated that this is what we call ‘social media. CG asked how is this different to social media. RT explained that they have their own names – but wants a mention in constitution. AT & JN noted that the constitution should be tidied.

ML is delighted to that RT is taking this step – ‘friend of FOSSUK” means more than just a social media group. Hermann Aebischer (HA) noted that these informal groups are probably the future and need attention. FM noted that the AGM is not the forum to detail the text, but we agree this is good and we will sort out. RT stated that they want to be friends too – they have lots of events, especially music – they want a status, they are real friends who know each other ‘in real life’.

RT on Rule 3: Committee shall represent language and regions of Switzerland. LG stated that this seems to be reflected. We want our members to be also across the UK as we have been criticized for this in the past. LG noted she is Poole (South), FM is Scotland, JN is Yorkshire. RT thinks it is a good step to know that things are not only London – RT has observed that committee was very London-centric. RT wants to see ‘endeavour’ to look for people to join the committee from all over the UK. FM supports adding this as a sentence. LG underscored that this is something that we have looked at. JN emphasized that expenses play a big part in being able to attend – we have adjusted meetings to be shorter, and do a lot of Skype so that we have a better chance for people being able to work on the Committee, without being London-based – otherwise it’s a day off work per meetings.

LG noted that we cannot approve the constitution now or postpone to next AGM. AT called for an extraordinary meeting. JN asked for votes by writing. Ambassador Fasel suggested to modify the constitution that allows voting by letter/email.

Summary of changes submitted: remove the sentence of not being Swiss club committee (not needed). Add a sentence on UK regional representation. Adapt the category of friends. Fix typographical errors. Add a sentence ‘Par voie circulatoire’ to allow voting in writing at extraordinary meetings.

Rosemarie noted that we do not have voting cards so how do we know how many votes are. How can you vote if you don’t know how many members. LG explained that we don’t know the clubs’ sizes so don’t know exact number of votes. LG called again for extraordinary meeting. Ruth Muheim (RM) calls for some form of electronic voting to not necessitate a second physical meeting.

Voted for extraordinary AGM will be held. LG & AT confirmed.

6. DELEGATES REPORT

Nathalie Chuard (NC) presented her OSA Delegate perspective. Only delegate for 1 year and already 2 meetings.

52 countries were represented, almost 50% of delegates are new. 11% of Swiss live abroad, of which 5% live in UK – we are same size as Canton Uri – so quite big. UK is the 6th place for Swiss expats.

UK has one more seat now. 5 delegates making a good team. Diverse: gender, age group, profession, regional... FM was elected to OSA board (applause).

Referenda

Early 2017, the Swiss abroad were in favour of automatic info exchange; were in favour of pension reform (was rejected), voted to reject “No Billag” (high with 70%), recommend to keep current welfare benefits of expats – will hear more about this later.

Main issues at heart of OSA:

Swiss bank accounts – some progress.

Nationwide implementation of e-voting.

But not just about key issues, also attempts to influence political landscape.

Filipo Lombardi – accepted and approved the motion on bank accounts which is quite an achievement, even though lost in the end. He also urged Postfinance to update their policy, OSA in favour, we will hear later what the vote will be.

Beginning of 2018, OSA entered partnership with Banque Cantonale de Genève – now offers fair conditions to expats. You can open a bank account there.

Tim Guldemann (German Delegate) – submitted a motion for Federal Council to force information before passing legislation affecting expats – so we are not an afterthought.

Alan Berset gave the keynote speech, VC asked his opinion on Brexit – he gave compact answer that in Federal Council they are close to this, UK is an important partner, they continue to observe and work with the UK.

Swiss Tourism celebrating 100 years last year – looking back, but more importantly forward. In 1957 they launched an April Fool’s joke, 2 min video broadcast by BBC. Looking ahead – new campaign is grand tour of Switzerland – combine Swiss highlights on a scenic route.

Third highlight – political expert Thomas Midich came – shared profile of how Swiss expats are viewed from within and outside of Switzerland – turns out pretty much the same. Expats are better informed than Swiss at home, vote more liberally left. Expats contribute 2% to overall voting result, but sometimes when it’s tight the voice of expats can still change it.

Looking at 2018 – we already had the March meeting – in-depth discussion on e-Voting, someone from Post. Next congress in August 2018 in Visp, topic

is “Switzerland without Europe, Europe without Switzerland”. NC hopes some others will come – or follow on social media – so submit questions – we want to increase awareness of OSA.

Now over to VC who is involved in important project.

Story of 2 people, Fabio born in Davos, loves skiing and the mountains – was concerned about environment, became a geologist and now teaches at Oxford. For him it is important to have a bank account still in Switzerland and to vote online. Simone is about to retire, born in Neuchatel, has lived in Newcastle for a few decades – now worried about how her pension will work, concerned about Brexit and her dual nationality children. These are 2 people who are very different – but similar concerns in relationship with Switzerland.

There is no one in parliament to defend these people – 11% of citizens. What can we do about this?

We know that there are 2 houses, cantons sends MPs that proportional to cantons. Expats vote for members of parliament in their canton. This works for national council. Problem is that the voices of the expats are being diluted all over the cantons. Why not have a parliamentary seat representing the Swiss Abroad. This already happens in France and Italy – Switzerland should consider as it has so many expats.

VC asked a question about this at Autumn meeting – people came to join in these discussions and this includes LG, Constantin Kokkinos, Stéphanie Leu, Hermes Murrat and Daniel Plumet. Discussions about strategy, how to implement, is there even a chance to change Swiss parliament.

Summary: Pros

If we have parliamentary delegates that were expats they know about the situation, problems, concerns. People coming from outside could bring new ideas and perspectives to problems in Switzerland, which could add value. Increase the interest of the Swiss Abroad in Swiss politics – but if you have a representative, you would be more engaged when it comes to elections. Switzerland has direct democracy – by improving democracy this will improve Switzerland’s democracy.

Negatives: Sheer difficulty of implementation Constitution will need to be changed – thus parliament and people need to be convinced. If extra members from the community – how to add them? You can’t just add them or remove some from some cantons? What about geographically very remote constituents – how will they serve in Parliament in Switzerland?

We have 160k registered expats – this about the size of Canton Schwyz – this could be a model e.g. 4 delegates in parliament. Eligibility is clear, e.g. lived abroad for at least 3 years. Big question is will they be added to existing ones, but room only literally has 200 seats. Could have e.g. 2 delegates from Europe, 1 for USA, one for rest of world. Online tools will need to be developed for the Swiss Abroad, this remains important even if parliament

does not change to allow 'expat' delegates yet. We are confident that with population becoming more global, that it will become useful and quite important to implement this. This idea is over 10 years old (previously rejected). This process will be slow, but the issue does need to stay under examination.

Ambassador Fasel thanked VC and is absolutely fascinated. He wants to know what UK Delegates think about the resignation of Mr. Guldemann – Delegates were very disappointed – we realized this is more of a set-back because of the whole travel issue between Berlin and Bern. Vincent does not think it is impossible to do this, but not a job for just anyone. Guldemann has done an amazing job for the Swiss abroad – but maybe this job will not be so hard for everyone. HA: he was elected by Zurich – he knew before what he was getting in to. Noted that Swiss people were skeptical about this situation. VC added that the fact that he was even in parliament was already a victory for the Swiss Abroad.

7. TREASURER'S REPORT

VC handed over to JN to talk finances. JN took over in March, but effectively we have not had a treasurer since the last AGM.

I am reporting on something that has been rebuilt only from March – will be quick. Need to adopt the past accounts for 2017 – nothing unexpected – keep in mind that we had elections at last AGM. These AGM is now a big cost and cannot use Embassy facilities anymore (Bern rules' change). Not many expenses were reimbursed in 2017 and due to legacy of committee not claiming expenses. No questions.

Main issue is that membership letters were not sent – expenses will be settled. Auditors report will reflect the report – we are spending more money and need sponsorship.

RM proposed Income & Expenditure Accounts. MP seconds.

JN: We still have assets, but the reserve is roughly the cost of the AGM. CG proposed, seconded RM. Auditors report accepted.

JN outlined budget – cost of website, assume that we will get same or higher website income, AGM will be a loss. Camilla asked about subscriptions / budget – most clubs will have to pay twice this year, assuming another decrease. JN confirmed that budgeting for less membership subs. Expenses that has decreased – we budgeted for more, but not claiming, and more remote meetings, but increased proposed expenditure to cover Delegate expenses. Assuming sponsorship is obtained.

Budget proposed WI, seconded Margrit Lyster.

CG noted that NSH has decided to reduce its membership fee by 50% - requested whether we can open a discussion of how to organize payment of membership fee. JN hoped to introduce consistency.

CG proposed acceptance of Membership Fee, RM seconded.

8. FOSSUK COMMITTEE

Loredana Guetg-Wyatt announced Daniel Pedroletti's retirement from the Swiss Community.

She also thanked Herman Aebischer and Tiziano Pedrioli – thank you for helping FOSSUK & the support

9. FOSSUK MEDIA & COMMUNICATION

NC & GP work together. NC presented, giving some context. Important to be relevant, not fake, the real information being shared.

1. Social media: Replicating Facebook strategy on Twitter. Reach of Facebook is huge – avg dwell time on social is 3 hours. Not just friends but also for news. It's important that FOSSUK is on Facebook. Audience is growing and young. 174 followers, number went up dramatically from last year, we are posting weekly – so users like the content, friends will see if you 'like' it. Split between male & female is pretty even. Peaking at age group 25 – 44. NC asked who here is following FOSSUK on FB – François Voeffray said he'd literally just joined.

2. Delegates are quite active socially – top post was Basel selfie. Embassy pic re referenda also elicits attention and feedback.

3. Political agenda – number 1 topic is Brexit. Second is bank accounts – we are getting a lot of feedback on these posts. Top event was live video when Ambassador talked about Brexit – we had 91 minutes view time.

The hub for all information remains the website. Please keep feeding events information – we need this. Here you will also find info on OSA. Reviewed success statistics – dwell time is important.

NC mentioned that we really need sponsorship – we want to leverage these channels – as we have healthy and growing reach. NC asked if anyone is interested / knows any business who is interested, to get in touch.

Handed over to GP.

10. SWISS REVIEW

GP outlined the distribution of the Swiss Review, 10k subs to print edition, 30k readers of online included.

The role of the Swiss Review is to promote Swiss culture and to keep the community updated.

GP inviting all to keep writing and sending contributions – this helps with dialogue e.g. talks between GP and Ambassador about Brexit for example...

11. VENUE OF THE AGM 2019

LG confirmed that this will be in London – there will need to be discussion about how to work with the Embassy, but we will need a sponsor for an outside sponsor. Currently working with Credit Suisse.

Dates is 18th & 19th of May.

12. Q&A

LG noted this brings us to the end of the AGM – is there any other topics to discuss?

ML noted that there was a meeting with the Presidents' roundtable to discuss the future of the clubs, what happened following it? LG stated that this project is less active due to work on constitution and treasurer changes. There were multiple changes in club leadership. AT added that action that followed that meeting was LG joined UT preventing the club from folding. The club now has new President.

AT has now joined the CSC committee as Reto Jauch was at the meeting. There will be more events movement from CSC. The Swiss Church was also at the meeting – primary concern is fund raising (lost huge Swiss resource). AT working with consitaire, raising 4K at dinner last week. Also working with the Swiss Church and Mosimann for Swiss national Day.

So not another dinner – but a lot of work has happened. ML noted that the smaller societies don't know what happened even if participated.

AT noted that even with SBS there is dialogue taking place and that contact has taken place.

AT stated that the message was that FOSSUK can bring benefits, but we also expect the Member to raise their hand and reach out and ask for what they need. Clubs need to come to us with initiative or queries. Same for our friends in Wales. LG noted that the main event was the Brexit event that FOSSUK supported, we know a lot of people won't be able to come to a London event. FOSSUK was the video initiative to share the event with other members. We needed to get a professional, but that service was worth the cost.

AF feels it was a nice example of how FOSSUK can be a strategic alliance e.g. NSH approached FOSSUK, then it became pan-UK. FOSSUK can be the multiplier of events of all the clubs.

HA is leaving before 1 August, and although in the "hands of god" at the Swiss Church, but worried about the future of this in the South/London.

This is not the task of FOSSUK, but there doesn't seem to be clubs keen to continue this. Only Carla Maurer, AT and Hermann. What about members from each London club? CG noted that it's capacity, not lack of interest.

LG noted that not many volunteers came forward – it's too big an event for FOSSUK – it's the same people on the all committees. They retire but younger ones are maybe not so interested in Switzerland, they are more interested in London.

LG noted that this should be an item on the agenda for AT.

HA does not want to 'lose' this celebration.

JN noted that committee 'generation changes' are important. CG noted that there are ONLY 4 people now on NSH committee. It is very difficult to engage. Swiss Quality for example have cool events, but when push comes to shove nothing happens. LG noted that we are not in a desperate situation, and we are attracting younger people e.g. outreach to a club in Oxford. CG and LG noted that it is always the same people. LG noted that this should not be a 'private club' but sometimes this is easier than having an event with structure. JN notes that 'advocacy' is important – reminding people these clubs and events exist.

LG noted initiative at NSH to have a 'vote event' (Neuburger) when UK Swiss turn 18 – and can vote. As a direct democracy it is so important.

LG thanked everyone for engagement and discussion – it's been quite interactive.

LG thanked Franziska Hewitt – there is no club here – she was fantastic – big round of applause. A little something from Dorset.

LG introduced FM as the new President of FOSSUK. FM happy to have new delegates, but now realized that he is experienced member of committee – there is one more step between experience and becoming useless... he will try to be president. There are going to be many challenges – Brexit will feature, capacities of the home office will become a feature, also opportunities e.g. social media is an option.

People are realizing that FOSSUK are actually doing a lot for the Swiss Community in the UK.

16:16 AGM formally closed