

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Society of New Zealand Incorporated
held on Sunday 4th of June 2023 at 2.00pm at the Wellington Swiss Club club house, Wainuiomata.

Present: Ambassador Viktor Vavricka (Patron of the Swiss Society) and 49 members.

Welcome President Othmar Hebler welcomed all present to the Annual General Meeting, especially our Ambassador, Viktor Vavricka.

Apologies- **Hamilton** – Anita Zuber and Rae Ackermann
Wellington – NIL
Auckland – Adrian Blaser (Honorary Consul)
Taranaki – Zeno von Hospenthal, Terese Orchard, Amanda Sherman, Richard and Lynley Wagner.
Society Only – NIL

Moved Neil Kaiser, seconded Adrian Drummond

Address by Ambassador

Viktor advised that he was pleased to be here, and has enjoyed meeting members from most of the Swiss Clubs, and will head to Auckland in July. He went to Christchurch (Sail GP) and Dunedin (Women's Football World Cup), and he is amazed by the efforts put in by all the committees of the Swiss Clubs and Groups in NZ. This year is the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and Switzerland and a function will be held on 8th of August with Swiss Foreign Minister, Ignazio Cassis, attending. Viktor will highlight Swiss presence in NZ and speak about common issues affecting our countries. Viktor promoted the Swiss team in the Women's Football World Cup and asked everyone to support them. There will be a mobile passport station in Auckland at the end of the year. He promoted elections in Switzerland with parliamentary voting on 23 October. He also has 1st of August badges for clubs to sell.

Appointment of Scrutineers

Hans Vetsch and Neil Kaiser were nominated by Marianne Drummond, seconded Herbert Staheli.

Minutes of the AGM held on 5th June 2022 in Taranaki were available on the webpage of the Swiss Society of New Zealand or could be posted out upon request, as advised in the Helvetia magazine. It was moved by Peter Ehrler and seconded by Peter Canziani that the minutes were a true and correct record.

Matters arising – NIL

Obituaries – sadly several members of our Society have passed away in the past year.

Hamilton - Ursula Stucki and Peter Weiss

Wellington - Vreni Madgwick

Society Only - John Fritschi and Arthur Rufer.

Auckland - Hans Lindegger, Emil Tellenbach, Heidi Wilson, Albert Ryter and Hans Fitzi.

Taranaki - Rosemary Mullin, Lou Butler (life member and Patron), Barbara Rogers, Mary Purser, Heinz von Allmen and Otto Herren.

Marianne asked that everyone present please stand for a minutes' silence in remembrance of these past members.

President's Report

Othmar advised that the Taranaki Swiss Club is in its third year of a four year term at the helm of the Swiss Society and compiling our great magazine, the Helvetia. It's great to read contributions from all the clubs to hear what's going on. He officially welcomed our Ambassador, Viktor Vavricka and his wife Bernadette, to New Zealand and hoped that they had settled in well. He thanked: the Swiss Society committee and helpers for compiling and packing the Helvetia magazine; Peter Ehrler for his dedicated efforts as our delegate to the Swiss Abroad (he won't be able to attend the Conference this year, however Deputy Delegate Peter Canziani will attend); Adrian Blaser for his work as Honorary Consul in Auckland; and all the Embassy staff for their great support of our Swiss Clubs and groups. He also thanked all the volunteers of the Swiss Clubs and groups for their tireless work ensuring many Swiss-Kiwis have functions to enjoy; your dedication is greatly appreciated by many. Welcome to the new office holders of the clubs and a huge thanks to those retiring from their roles. Following the passing of our Taranaki Swiss Club Patron, Lou Butler, Othmar congratulated Lisette Benkert for accepting the role of Patroness. Thank you all for attending this AGM and the functions over the weekend, and huge thanks to the Wellington Swiss Club members for hosting this weekend at their club house. I hope you all enjoy the friendship of fellow Kiwi-Swiss from various parts of New Zealand.

Moved Othmar Hebler, seconded Lisette Benkert.

Editor's Report –read by Marianne.

Dear Society members,

Wow, I can't believe another year is done and dusted already! And I really can't believe that three years has already gone by and we are into our final year! It continues to be a really interesting, stimulating and fulfilling experience putting together each issue, and I have certainly grown my list of places to visit by another dozen or so! The feedback we continue to receive has been so amazingly positive, so thank you to all our members around New Zealand who are reading it. The beautiful photos, travel articles, Swiss abroad information, the children's page (although many adults have confessed to loving it too!), as well as the recipes and gardening tips, have really engaged a wide audience ... not to mention all the various articles in between! I hope that going in to the final year it remains just as wonderful! Thanks to Peter Erhler for all his wisdom and information on the ongoing Swiss pension problem and all other Swiss Abroad matters, as well as the team at the Embassy for keeping us all updated with news from Switzerland and New Zealand.

The fantastic secretaries from each of the clubs, thank you for your round ups each issue. I know there have been a couple of changes around the country since the last AGM so thank you to Debora Bleuler and Marianne Traber for stepping in to these roles and carrying on the great work and believe me, I know how quickly the two months comes around again! To all the advertisers, thank you for your continued support of our magazine – without it the Helvetia would not be possible. It is

great to see some new ones pop in from time to time. Of course, where would we be without the amazing group of people working away in the background helping to put it all together; we are blessed to have a great committee.

Along with Amanda, we run a pretty well-organised and efficient machine in the way we get everything together and get it onto the pages now. It's a big job the two of us have finding articles, photos and envisaging what will appeal to the readers, then making it all look captivating each and every issue, and I am very thankful for Amanda's design talents and her enthusiasm. Many thanks to everyone who gets the magazine into the post and e-mailed out, as well as keeping the accounts in order. Thank you all for sharing the load with me!

I look forward to the next year of putting out some more top-quality issues for you all to read. On this note I close my report and wish you all the best for the rest of the AGM.

Moved Hans Vetsch, seconded Trudi Fill-Weidmann

Treasurer's Report

The accounts have been reviewed by an independent party in May 2023 which showed that nothing had come to the reviewer's attention that caused her to believe that the Financial Statement did not give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Swiss Society for the year ended 31 March 2023. The Society made a profit of \$1,629.00 compared to \$3,520.00 the previous year. The decrease is due to a small reduction in subscription and advertising revenue, increase in printing costs due every issue being full colour, purchase of envelopes and payment of website costs from October 2020 to January 2023. We produced six issues of the Helvetia magazine and, thanks to Amanda Sherman our designer, continue to have good revenue from advertising. We have had a slight decrease in paying membership from 640 to 633 (Society Only 103, Auckland 113 (1 life), Hamilton 143 (6 life), Wellington 55 (1 life) and Taranaki 228 (1 life). It is pleasing to note that the Society Only membership has increased substantially again, mainly due to word of mouth and also thanks to Peter Ehrler for promoting membership to our Swiss Society to people he speaks with. Huge thanks to Alison Turner from Baker Tilly Staples Rodway for her efficiency, wonderful help and professional advice as reviewer for the Society.

Moved Marianne Drummond, seconded Herbert Staheli.

Rifle Master's Report

Mark reported that, although Wellington didn't compete in this year's Swiss Society Competitions, participation from the other Swiss Clubs had increased. All results have now been received and certificates will be issued with funds being credited to the clubs accounts allowing them to purchase prizes. Mark advised that all clubs need to abide by the new gun laws, and applications to seek certification of ranges need to be in by 24th of June 2023. He understands that ranges will then be reviewed in five years. Not complying with this is like having a rifle and no firearms licence. If you need to speak with anyone about this, please see Joe Kuriger, Adrian Drummond or Othmar Hebler as they are in the process of getting the Taranaki Swiss Clubs' range certified.

Moved Mark Kiser, seconded Adrian Drummond

Delegate to Swiss Abroad Report (OSA) Peter Ehrler

Peter Ehrler advised he attended the 98th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lugano, and also had virtual on-line meetings during the year. He attended the Swiss Clubs President's Conference in Canberra together with the Australian delegates to the OSA. Australia now has an umbrella organisation similar to the Swiss Society of NZ. Banking for those living overseas continues to be difficult however the Zurcher Kantonalbank has now joined as a member bank of the ASO. Electronic voting is happening in three cantons. Most of Peter's correspondence for Kiwi-Swiss continues to involve the AHV. As mentioned earlier he won't be attending the 99th Congress in St Gallen due to other commitments. Peter also gave early notification that, when he and Peter Canziani's terms are up in 2025, they will not seek re-election.

Moved Peter Ehrler, seconded Bernie Napp.

Setting of Society Subscriptions 2023/2024

The Swiss Society of New Zealand remains in a good financial position and it was suggested that subscriptions effective from 1 April 2024 remain the same.

Moved Hans Vetsch, seconded Vitus Ackermann.

Election of Officers

Office holders are usually elected for a four-year term; however our constitution states "that the committee shall be elected annually". As it will be the Wellington Swiss Club's turn to manage and administer the affairs of the Swiss Society of NZ, a vice president should be nominated from their club.

Bernie Napp was nominated by Roland Schuetz, seconded by Craig Press.

The remaining committee was re-elected en-bloc – moved Adrian Drummond, seconded Peter Canziani.

Club Reports

Auckland – Neil Kaiser, Club President, reported that vice president, Jacqui Ziegler, has been a great organiser. They have an attendance at functions of 80 – 120 which they're happy with. They have huge numbers joining up, with many new families. They're in the process of having their ranges certified, and they're keen to offer their range to Swiss Society members throughout NZ who wish to shoot the Swiss Army programmes. It's possible that they may get more ammunition through the Swiss Shooting Federation. A special mention was made of Daniel Wiederkehr, their new rifle master, for his efforts. They have good numbers hiring their facility. Sadly their good member, Emil Tellenbach, passed away, but on a positive note Hilde Iten celebrated her 100th birthday.

Hamilton – Herbert Staheli, Club President, advised they had had a successful year with AGM, five card evenings, National Day function, fondue evening (over 100) and this year the fondue will be held during the day. A family walk day in November, the Christmas function and annual picnic in February round off their events.

Wellington – Roland Schuetz, Club President, reported that he has just taken over the reins again. They would love to increase their membership. They had 70 people attend their recent fondue evening. They will continue to promote their club, and he thanked the Swiss Society team for their great work. He hoped everyone would enjoy the remainder of the weekend.

Taranaki – Othmar Hebler, Club President, reported that our membership stands around 340. We had a new function, the Seniors Social Day, which was well-supported. Our 300m range has been closed but we're in the process of certifying our 50m range. He encouraged all clubs to become compliant if they wished to continue using their ranges. He's grateful to have a great committee with the club in good shape.

Dunedin – Esther Gilbert runs the Swiss Community of Otago and Southland and reported they're a very non-unified group. She has a list of 200 names in their area. They hold a 1st of August celebration with usually 40 – 50 people attending. Esther took over leading the group two years ago but has limited support. She is hoping that hosting the Swiss in the FIFA Women's World Cup will help to promote their Swiss community.

Nelson – Although not able to attend this AGM, Marianne Drummond read Alexandra Beskids' report, and that they are hoping to make it to the AGM in Auckland next year.

We have about 70 people on our mailing list. Our monthly Jass evenings attract usually 12 – 16 regulars. In 2022 we had our first winner of the Wanderpokal for the Jassen – Martina Staubli. Recently we had an autumn barbeque at Evelines and Markus lifestyle block where finally families with children had a chance to attend a day activity around the Blenheim area without travelling all the way to Nelson. We had about 18 people turn up enjoying some last sausages from Peter, the Swiss butcher, a jass and a yarn in Swiss German. As most of our regulars will be overseas in August we plan to have a low key 1st of August function this year, probably a BYO BBQ or similar. The monthly jass evenings are our busiest event where people all the way from Dovedale, Upper Moutere, in the past even all the way from Takaka and on the other side of the Rai Valley and Blenheim come and join us! Kids events are in demand but unfortunately no-one is keen to organise them meaning this year Santa and Easter Bunny couldn't make it and had to attend a better party ...

Christchurch – although contacted several times, no report was sent.

General Business

Willetta Staheli promoted the Swiss team at the FIFA Women's World Cup and encouraged others to join in. She has distributed posters and flyers for people to take.

Website – Neil Kaiser advised that the website is rather user-unfriendly and antiquated. It needs refreshing, but more importantly needs to function better for clubs to be able to use it as a promotional tool. The “swiss.org.nz” e-mail system is not working well. Neil moved that the executive of the Swiss Society investigate an audit of the functions of the website, seconded Peter Ehrler. This may require that the Swiss Society pays someone to undertake this. Allan Pledger advised that if we want to rebuild the website we need parameters, as the cost could be quite big. It was decided that an advertisement be put in the Helvetia looking for a co-ordinator to, primarily get the website functioning, and then to look at refreshing the site. Swiss Alliance Australia has recently undertaken this, so perhaps model ours on theirs. Marianne advised that she has very limited understanding of the mechanics of websites, as did Othmar and Marlies, so this may need to be looked at by someone else who has far greater expertise in this area.

Herbert Staheli moved that the Swiss Society of New Zealand make a donation of \$1,000.00 to the Wellington Swiss Club to help with costs associated with organising this weekend. Seconded Hans Vetsch.

Othmar Hebler moved that Peter Canziani be paid \$1,000.00 for attending the 99th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in St Gallen in August 2023. This was seconded by Trudi Fill-Weidmann.

Marianne asked that secretaries (and for those not present that President’s pass on this information) please update the database regularly when new information comes to hand, adding on and deleting members, and to please check addresses with “postcode finder” to ensure they are 100% correct so that we get the best possible rate with NZ Post. Terese also asked that club secretaries please have their reports to her by the 10th of each odd month, and that photos be sent separately (the bigger the photos, the better and with captions please).

Adrian Drummond said that many older members were struggling with the big 14kg concrete block when doing the shot put and felt that there should be a better way to throw it or even another option. This was discussed, and many members felt that the smaller 7kg ball would be better. Hans Vetsch moved that Society members use a 7kg ball for the Swiss Society competitions, seconded Neil Kaiser. Joe Kuriger moved that the Swiss Society purchases one shot put ball for each associated club, seconded Heinz Diener. Everyone agreed.

Neil Kaiser invited all members to the Auckland Swiss Club next year with the AGM being held on Sunday 2nd of June 2024 at 2.00pm.

Othmar wished everyone an enjoyable evening and safe travels home.

Meeting closed at 3.45pm

Read and confirmed, 2 June 2024