

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Swiss Society of New Zealand Incorporated**  
held on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2024 at 3.15pm at the Hobsonville RSA, 114 Hobsonville Road,  
Hobsonville, Auckland.

**Present:** Ambassador Viktor Vavricka (Patron of the Swiss Society) and 69 members.

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

**Apologies-** **Hamilton** – Walter and Anita Zuber, Herbert Staheli.  
**Wellington** – Paul Scherrer.  
**Auckland** –  
**Taranaki** – Peter and Monika Canziani and Ruedi and Verena Kull.  
**Society Only** –

Moved Neil Kaiser, seconded Johnny Bishop.

**Address by Ambassador**

Viktor thanked Taranaki for their efforts with the Swiss Society of NZ and wished Wellington all the best for their tenure. It was decided that the Embassy would close in 2002, but due to opposition by the Swiss community and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad we, fortunately, still have an Embassy here today. This year was 60 years of political relationships between New Zealand and Switzerland and Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis came to our shores. The FIFA Women's World Cup, which included the Swiss National team and Sail GP were successful events that the Embassy supported. The Embassy is currently building relationships with new government officials and this is helped by Chris Luxon going to Switzerland in 2017, as a CEO, to learn about Swiss political views and systems. Tourism is a big common issue for both Switzerland and NZ with policy discussions taking place. He recently held discussions with the Swiss business community in Auckland. The Mobile Passport will be in Auckland in the not too distant future and the Oceania President's Conference will be held in Sydney at the beginning of November. They're still working on the Superannuation deductions, and Viktor thanked Peter Ehrler for his diligent work on this issue.

**Appointment of Scrutineers**

Adrian Blaser and Martin Beskid were nominated by Marianne Drummond, seconded Daniel Wiederkehr.

**Minutes of the AGM held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2023 in Wellington** 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 Aaron Bosch 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 -** Therese Rust, Ernst Wueterich, Therese Risi and Brunhilde Brunner.

**Wellington -** Fred Wehrli.

**Society Only -** Peter Schmidt, Elisabeth Haggie and Angela Hodel.

**Auckland -** Vladimir Kralicek, Walter Haller, Pat Abplanalp, Roy Spillman, Heinz Matysik, Iman Sprenger and Franz Krieger.

**Taranaki -** Hans-Ruedi Baumann, Ernst Forster, Noeleen Neuburger, Peter Muller, Pauline Hunt, Beno Noetzli (former Taranaki committee member and Deputy Delegate to the Swiss Abroad), Nigel Adlam and Walter Zumbuhl (former Taranaki committee member).

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

### **President's Report**

Othmar advised that after being formed in 1935, the Swiss Society of NZ is still going strong 89 years later, with 661 members. Four years have passed since we took over from Hamilton, and having the Helvetia in full colour has made a big improvement. Our committee has really enjoyed the journey, especially the packing of the issues where we enjoy a cup of coffee, some baking and a good few yarns afterwards. I would like to thank members of the Auckland Swiss Club for organising this event, especially after an eight year hiatus due to Covid disruptions. I would like to suggest that we change the Cowbell Competition to be played as a final only, to be held at King's Birthday weekend, due to low participant numbers at the semi-finals. As my tenure as President will come to an end I would like to thank all the people who helped me in various ways: our Ambassador and Patron Viktor Vavricka and his staff at the Embassy; Adrian Blaser for his work as honorary Consul in Auckland; Peter Ehrler for his sterling work for the Swiss Abroad as well as his deputy Peter Canziani; the Presidents of the Swiss Clubs for their great work for the Swiss Communities in NZ; Amanda Sherman our designer and advertising person; Terese Orchard our editor who gave me a nudge when my report was late; Marianne Drummond for her stellar treasurers and secretarial duties; my wife Marlies for her tremendous support and secretary work; to all who have written columns on cooking, baking, gardening, travel, children's pages etc; the proof readers; packers – this has helped glue us together as a committee as well! It is a privilege to have members from the South Island with us today; something we have been working on hard during our tenure, so welcome to Martin and Alexandra Beskid (Nelson Swiss Group), Anita Ferris (Christchurch Swiss Club) and Kevin and Esther Gilbert (Dunedin Swiss Group). Thank you all for coming such a long way and we hope to see you at future AGMs. Now it is time to hand the job over to members of the Wellington Swiss Club and we wish you good luck and don't be afraid to ask for help or support.

Moved Othmar Hebler, seconded Trudi Fill-Weidmann

### **Editor's Report** –read by Marianne.

The last four years have come and gone: in the beginning ever so slowly, and over the past year so quickly!! The magazine continued, down to the very last issue, to be a really fascinating, stimulating and fulfilling 'job' and I will now have to find a new hobby to fill the void editing the magazine will

surely make. The feedback we have continued to receive over the last year has been so heartfelt, so thank you to all our members around NZ who are enjoying reading it. The beautiful photos, travel articles, Swiss abroad information, the children's page, as well as the recipes and gardening tips ... not to mention all the weird and wonderful articles in between, have been a hit with all ages of readers! Thanks to Peter Ehrler, for all his wisdom and information on the ongoing Swiss pension and all other Swiss Abroad matters, as well as the team at the Embassy for keeping us all updated with news from Switzerland and around New Zealand.

To all the advertisers, thank you for your continued support for our magazine – without it the Helvetia would not be possible, especially a full colour one! It is great to see some new ones pop in from time to time. The fantastic secretaries from each of the clubs, thank you for your write ups each issue. Carry on the great work and believe me, I know how quickly the two months comes around again! Of course, where would we be without the amazing group of people working away in the back ground helping to put it all together, we are blessed to have a great committee.

Myself, along with Amanda, have run a pretty well-oiled machine over the past four years, in the way we get everything together and get it onto the pages. 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 passion. I will definitely miss working alongside her!! A big thank you to everyone who gets the magazine into the post and e-mailed out, as well as keeping the accounts in order and secretarial duties fulfilled.

In a couple of weeks, I will finally be able to cross some of those amazing things off my now huge list, as our family heads to the land of alps, cheese and chocolate for six weeks holiday. I don't know who is more excited, the children or the bigger children!! But editing the Helvetia has certainly brought back a renewed love for the country and I can't wait to go and explore with my family!

Good luck to Bernie Napp and the rest of the Wellington Club members; may the next four years be as fantastic as they were for me. I look forward to seeing the next issue of the magazine and all that Wellington has to offer!!

On this note I close my report and wish you all the best for the rest of the AGM, Terese.

Moved Othmar, seconded Bernie Napp.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The accounts have been reviewed by an independent party in April 2024 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 2024. The Society made a profit of \$2,774.00 compared to \$1,629.00 the previous year. The increase is due to higher interest rates, a small increase in membership and no website costs (paid in 2025 financial year when account was received). We produced six coloured issues of the Helvetia magazine and, thanks to Amanda Sherman our designer, continue to have good revenue from advertising. As mentioned we have had a slight increase in paying membership to 652 from 640

(Society Only 101, Auckland 117 (1 life), Hamilton 143 (6 life), Wellington 51 (1 life) and Taranaki 240 (1 life). Grateful thanks to Peter Ehrler for promoting membership to our Swiss Society to people he speaks with and big thanks to Alison Turner for her efficiency, wonderful help and professional advice as reviewer for the Society.

Moved Marianne Drummond, seconded Jackie Ziegler.

Marianne passed the following bills for payment, seconded Martin Beskid

	\$
Print Ready – Helvetia	2,133.15
NZ Post	517.13
E Gilbert – Dunedin Swiss Group	250.00
Wellington Swiss Club (host AGM)	1,000.00
Peter Canziani – Swiss Abroad conf	1,000.00
Print Ready - Helvetia	2,133.15
NZ Post	519.85
Swiss Society Comp-spot prizes	90.00
Swiss Society Comp-refund clubs	952.00
Paper Plus – ink cartridge / labels	155.59
Print Ready – certificates	189.75
Print Ready – Helvetia	2,152.70
NZ Post	611.54
Print Ready – Helvetia	2,152.70
NZ Post	655.04
Print Ready – Helvetia	2,152.70
NZ Post	643.13
Print Ready – Helvetia	2,152.70
NZ Post	638.89

### **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 has remained steady. All results have now been received and certificates will be issued with funds being credited to the clubs accounts allowing them to purchase prizes. He, too, wondered about holding the Swiss Society Cowbell competition in a different format. Mark reiterated the ruling that all women and girls, junior boys (under 16) and men over 60, who choose to shoot with a sling instead of a rest, are entitled to two extra points. He wished the new rifle master all the best in his new role.

Moved Mark Kiser, seconded Othmar Hebler.

### **Delegate to Swiss Abroad Report (OSA) Peter Ehrler**

Peter Ehrler reported that Peter Canziani had attended the Congress in his absence. In July he met with Laurent Wehrli, National Councillor and member of the Executive Board of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and in August was invited by the Embassy to meet with Federal Councillor Ignazio

Cassis in Wellington. He took the opportunity to explain the pension absurdity and the injustice of the deductions occurring to the Swiss. Peter participated in two virtual Swiss Abroad meetings. Most of the issues he deals with are pensions, voluntary contributions and bank closures (all Raiffeisen Bank). He continues to promote the Swiss Society to people. Going forward, the 100<sup>th</sup> OSA meeting will be 11 – 13 July in Luzern with his attendance uncertain. Peter will be attending the Oceania Conference in Sydney organised by the Swiss Alliance Australia (umbrella organisation similar to Swiss Society of NZ). Some officials from the Swiss Government will be in attendance.

Peter reminded us that he and Peter Canziani will not seek re-election in 2025.

Moved Peter Ehrler, seconded Adrian Blaser.

### **Setting of Society Subscriptions 2024/2025**

The Swiss Society of New Zealand remains in a good financial position and it was suggested that subscriptions effective from 1 April 2025 remain the same at \$25.00 per year.

Moved Marianne Drummond, seconded Willetta Staheli.

### **Election of Officers**

President: Gertrud (Trudi) Fill-Weidmann, moved Bernie Napp, seconded Susie Wood.

Vice-President: John Bernard (Bernie) Napp, moved Trudi Fill-Weidmann, seconded Marianne Drummond.

Secretary: Gertrud (Trudi) Fill-Weidmann, moved Bernie Napp, seconded Adrian Drummond.

Treasurer: Marie-Odile (Odile) Stotzer, moved Marianne Drummond, seconded Trudi Fill-Weidmann.

Rifle master: Dominique Heller, moved Trudi Fill-Weidmann, seconded Odile Stotzer.

### **Club Reports**

**Auckland** – Past President Neil Kaiser spoke. He has resigned due to living out of the area. They have had good success at events, increase in attendance and more members. They are working with the Austrian Club. They're arranging certification of their ranges. The Swiss Farm is the focus of their events. Neil introduced their new president, Birgit Bacher and thanked everyone for their support during his term as President.

**Hamilton** – Heidi Fransen, vice president, thanked Auckland for hosting the Swiss Society AGM, and also Taranaki for their great efforts running the Swiss Society of NZ, and wished the Wellington Swiss Club all the best for their four year tenure. Their Fondue was a lunchtime event which seemed to suit members better. Their picnic started with debatable weather but ended up good. The Christmas function is free to all members and thoroughly enjoyed. The hiking weekend is enjoyed by

about 16 members, and the jassen evenings attract about 30 people. Heidi thanked Herbert and Willetta for their great work for the club.

**Wellington** – Trudi Fill-Weidmann spoke and acknowledged the amazing work that past President Roland Schuetz has given to their club. Paul Scherrer has taken over the role and we wish him well. They have two fondue evenings, a lunch time Christmas dinner which was successful, hosted the last Swiss Society AGM, enjoyed a small bonfire and gluhwein for the 1<sup>st</sup> of August, and a Bernese Evening. She thanked the Taranaki Swiss Club for their support of Wellington functions. Their biggest challenges are low membership and getting better support from their members.

**Taranaki** – Marlies Hebler spoke. Club membership stands at 361 including 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation Swiss. All meal functions are especially well attended with about 170 at the recent Fondue. Have a sauerkraut meal, 1<sup>st</sup> of August, card afternoons, 50m small bore shooting, kegeln and we have held two senior's social days which have been very successful. We're currently looking at upgrading our toilet facilities. She thanked all our members for their loyal support.

**Dunedin** – Esther Gilbert advised that they a loose community of people, but don't have a club. She concentrates on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August event. She has enjoyed listening to ideas from the North Island clubs. She had a big input in the FIFA Women's World Cup and there was a great atmosphere.

**Christchurch** – Anita Ferris is their new President, not willingly, but wanted to carry on the Swiss culture and traditions so took the job on! She has a great team. They had 115 attend their 1<sup>st</sup> of August, held a Christmas function and a picnic which resulted in a few more younger families attending. She's looking for people to organise jassen and tramping.

**Nelson** – Martin Beskid reported that he and his wife Alexandra returned to Nelson seven years ago and decided to start up a Swiss community group. Their first function, a 1<sup>st</sup> of August, suddenly ballooned out and they had to put a stop at 120 attendees. They have ten jassen evenings in Nelson with between 8 – 16 participants. They aren't a formal club, but need more people in their team to help organise events.

## **General Business**

Marianne thanked Jackie Ziegler for her great help in getting the website back up and running. We really appreciated your amazing help. Marianne advised that we are grateful that we have a person actively involved in a Swiss Club who is willing to take over the webmaster's role. She moved that Lukas Ziegler be webmaster, seconded Adrian Blaser. Marianne will speak with Shaun Clarkin, our current webmaster, to advise we have found a replacement person.

Marianne also thanked Adrian Blaser very much for purchasing three 7.26kg shot put balls for our clubs (Taranaki already had one) as we were unable to buy them in Taranaki.

Othmar moved that the Swiss Society of New Zealand make a donation of \$1,000.00 to the Auckland Swiss Club to help with costs associated with organising this weekend, seconded 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. She continues to find errors when new members are added or addresses changed.

Marianne moved that Othmar Alois Hebler, Zeno von Hospenthal, Richard Wagner and Marianne Drummond be deleted as signatories to the ANZ accounts and that Gertrud Fill-Weidmann, Marie-Odile Stotzer and John Bernard Napp be added with effect from when the new signatories have an appointment with an ANZ branch in the Wellington area, seconded Neil Kaiser. As required by banks, Taranaki will provide Wellington with a copy of the minutes signed by their committee.

Willetta Staheli moved that the semi-finals of the Cowbell Competition should be cancelled due to poor participation numbers from some clubs and all clubs compete at King's Birthday weekend annually, seconded George Russenberger. Remember the shooting scores from the Swiss Society Competitions count towards the Cowbell, so only shot put, kegeln and jassen need to be played. Trudi Fill-Weidmann offered to look into a new format and changing the rules, and will consult with other Swiss Society members for their input. Martin Beskid advised that the Nelson Swiss Group would like to compete for the Cowbell, and everyone thought this would be great. Adrian Blaser suggested that they may like to form a team of Society Only members.

Marianne advised that with the new Incorporated Societies 2022 Act, the Swiss Society of NZ Inc will need to renew its' constitution to be passed at the AGM in 2025 to ensure that we meet their requirements. Having consulted with the Wellington team first, she is happy to sort this out but needs a resolution from the meeting that she can draft a new constitution and continue to be a contact person with the Incorporated Societies. It was moved by Willetta Staheli, seconded by Neil Kaiser that Marianne draft a new constitution, adding it to the 'links' on our webpage when completed and be one of the contact people with the Incorporated Societies. There was some discussion about the constitution contents but Marianne advised that there is a template on Constitution Builder which has limited room for change. Marianne advised that it will be of paramount importance that members look at the old and new constitutions and advise her of any additions, changes or deletions as soon as possible, so a revised draft can then be made available online. We need to ensure the new constitution can be passed in June 2025 and we only have one chance at this; otherwise a Special General Meeting needs to be held which would be rather difficult! When the new rules take effect we will need to have registers for the following: Conflict of Interest, members who cease to pay their subscription, consent form for new members who will all need to receive a copy of the Society's constitution, committee nomination form, consent form from committee members and a signed certificate to say that they're not disqualified from being a committee member! I would like to ask all secretaries to carefully add ALL details on the database as all the information is important (we also need to have a record of the date people become members).

Marianne suggested that the payment to Amanda Sherman should be increased (hasn't changed for many years) as besides designing the magazine she also encourages people / businesses to advertise. Bernie Napp moved that the payment be increased from \$375.00 plus GST to \$525.00 plus GST, seconded Joe Kuriger.

Willetta Staheli advised that an Australasian Jassen tournament will be held on 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2025, similar to three years ago and will invite members of the Swiss Clubs in Australia.

Heidi Fransen invited all members to the Hamilton Swiss Club next year with the AGM being held on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2025 at 2.00pm.

Othmar wished everyone an enjoyable evening and safe travels home.

**Meeting closed at 4.55pm**

Read and confirmed, 1 June 2025