



MINUTES OF THE 2022 BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF WA (Inc.) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Venue: Meditation Hall, Dhammaloka, 18 Nanson Way, Nollamara WA 6061

Date: 30th April 2022

Time: 5.00 PM

1. Opening

The President welcomed everyone present at this annual general meeting.

1.1. Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest were raised.

1.2. Acknowledgement of Traditional Inhabitants

The President acknowledged the traditional owners of this country that we are standing on here today, and the elders past, present and emerging.

1.3. Homage to Buddha Dhamma Sangha; taking of 5 Precepts & a Short Meditation

For this year's meeting this was led by Ajahn Brahm.

1.4. Attendance

Sangha: Ajahn Brahm, Ayya Hasapanna, Venerable Mettaji

Executive Committee: Hock Chin Tee, Kseniya Abusaif, Peter Hong

Committee Members: Gah Siong Lam, Vivara Kunabutr, Lucky Kodituwakku, Bill Prins, Tonny Wijaya, Paul Firth

Apologies: Ajahn Brahmali, Linda McGuire, Phuong Truong, Jake Mitra and Cecilia Mitra

Full and Honorary Members Present at AGM: 60

Kseniya Abusaif, Nicholas John Allott, Thiam Seng Mark Ang, Tholla Meung Chan, Barbara Chew, Brett James Cooper, Shyama De Silva, Eddy Fernando, Manel Fernando, Paul Francis Firth, Sofia Fisher, Lay Har Goh, Siok Lian Patricia Goh, Karu Gunathilake, Lalith Gunathilake, Nayane Gunawardena, Ainsley Haslegrave, Barbara Haslegrave, Sandra Anne Henville, Peter Halim Hong, Cherry Jackson, Lynne Jackson, Dylan Jayatilaka, Sompop Kamsrikerd, Eddie Khoo, Lucky Kodituwakku, Nihal Kodituwakku, Vivara Kunabutr, Elle

Louise Langley, Susan Lee, Hui Sia Lim, Steven Lim, Gah Siong Lam, Geetha Mendis, Shiroma Mendis, Diana Minich, Prem Mirihagalla, Margo Ogledzka, Tom Ogledzki, Wan Nee Ong, Markus Uwe Ott, Kit Lee Pang, Willem Herman Prins, Ajith Senewiratne, Dennis Sheppard, Peter Ross Smith, Konrad Srokowski, Boon Chang Tan, Hwee Cheng Tan, Siew Tan, Hock Chin Tee, Kim Chin Tee, Chet Yeong Teh, Ananda Thilakasiri, Lillian Uttam, Geoffrey Graham Webb, Tonny Wijaya, San Wong, Chen Sen Yap, Ai Lin Yoong,

Proxies:

Kaz Takehara, Tracy Simmons (USA), Stephen Kessell, Manel Meegahage

Total Eligible Voters: 64

2. Confirmation of 2021 AGM Minutes

The President called for the confirmation of the 2021 minutes of the last AGM held on the 27 March 2021. There were no comments or questions from the floor. 55 in favour, none against, 3 abstain. Agreed by the Spiritual Director. The motion was passed.

Moved by: Paul Firth

Seconded by: Steven Lim

Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

Unanimously Accepted.

3. Reports & Adoption Thereof

3.1. Address by Spiritual Director - Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso

The Bodhinyana monastery and all other branch monasteries are developing well. There are more people ordaining and the Sangha is growing. There are also more things to do with the monastics local, interstate and overseas. The monastic situation in WA is wonderful. In spite of the Covid pandemic, none of the monks were infected.

3.2. Address by Assistant Spiritual Director - Venerable Ayya Hasapanna

As most have known, the BSWA is taking over Santi as a branch monastery, (*See Note 1*). The transition has been smooth and successful. The monastery is up-running now and we have been receiving a lot of material and financial supports.

We can also recruit more nuns and 2 more Anagarikas are coming from the overseas. Last year, we stopped recruiting due to the Covid pandemic restrictions. Last year, we had our first Bhikkhuni ordination. In the past, we needed to invite a preceptor from the overseas but now we can do it in-house. We now have enough quorum of Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis and a preceptor.

We also had a successful Kathina celebration last year in which we raised about \$60,000/-

Recently, we had a nearby bushfire but fortunately everyone was safe. We asked the nuns to observe and monitor the situation and fortunately the authorities put out the fire quickly.

We are building one more retreat kuti which is almost complete. It is expected that will be able to use it at the beginning of Vassa.

3.3. President's Report - Hock Chin Tee

Year 2021 was full of challenges to keep the community safe and to provide services in the midst of the Covid pandemic. It reflects the nature of impermanence.

Fortunately, the BSWA was able to continue operating due to the generosity from our members in the form of donations and voluntary services. For this, we would like to express our gratitude and heartfelt thanks.

During the Covid pandemic, we had several lockdowns, but we were still able to provide online live streaming of Dhamma talks that were beneficial to our members, who were in need of spiritual and mental supports. We are very grateful to the Sangha for their tireless and kind efforts.

Our previous operations manager left in 2021 and he was succeeded by Lay Har Goh in September 2021. Lay Har has been involved with the BSWA in various capacities for many years. She has the necessary experience and business acumen to be an effective leader.

We also celebrated Ajahn Brahms's 70th birthday in August 2021, may he live up to 100 years or more. Sadly, we had a farewell for Ajahn Vayama in November 2021 and her passing was a great loss to all of us.

We are now an established organisation and we need to look for opportunities to improve ourselves. In 2022, we will make progress on few areas; provide a safe environment for all in the midst of the Covid pandemic, promote teamwork within BSWA and review our policies to ensure that we are up to date.

The BSWA is doing well thanks to the support from all members.

Moved by: Hock Chin Tee

Seconded by: Kseniya Abusaif

Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

Unanimously Accepted.

3.4. Hon. Treasurer's Report & Auditor's Statement - Peter Hong

I would like to start with the 2021 financial statement. The highlights are a net profit of \$533,866/, which was less than the prior year by \$167,765/-. This is due to the fact that last year, we received the Job keeper payment from the ATO but this year we did not. There are also some changes in donation and expenses and increase in depreciation expenses. Overall, our financials are stable despite the Covid pandemic.

The balance sheet is looking very good and there was an increase of \$766,841/- in cash by the end of the year. If we look at ourselves as an organisation, we have limited liabilities and that is really healthy.

The bottom line is in terms of the auditor's statement, there is nothing. The audit was conducted smoothly and fortunately there were no lockdowns and no disruptions.

There are a few issues that I would like to raise. Firstly, as stated in the BSWA constitution, we require land revaluation every 3 to 5 years, (*See Note 2*). That 3 years will be up in 2022, hence a revaluation will be undertaken this year after further discussion with the committee.

There is a potential change of auditor in 2023. We have been using the same auditor for some years and while it is not a requirement by law for a charity, public companies have the practice of changing their auditor every 3 years. We have a process to follow and members need to be notified 2 months before. So, closer to the next AGM we will be in touch again.

The Treasury team have been involved in developing financial policies as part of the Project Accord in which we developed governance and policies. Good governance can minimise risk and this project has been going on for a few years. We have a new Treasury team and we took that on and are now in a transition.

I would like to thank everyone for their help to keep the Treasury team operating smoothly.

The president called for questions from the floor.

Question from Steven Lim: Can you provide an explanation on why there was a shortfall or downgrade in profit from the previous years?

Reply from Peter Hong: It can be due to few reason such as donations going down and expenses also going down but not by much. The major reason is because we received the Jobkeeper payment from the ATO in 2020, but not in 2021. Another reason is that we had many projects in the past e.g., kuti projects, which go as an asset but we need to depreciate so it started depreciating last year. Depreciation has gone up quite a bit and it is not a cash expense. Those 2 reasons explain the 80% to 90% of the reduction in our net profit.

Question from Prem Mirihagalla: There was a major investment, the purchase of a land close to Bodhinyana – is that included here?

Reply from Peter Hong: The process started in late 2021 but the transaction did not happen until early this year. So, it will be included in this year's financial report.

Question from Prem Mirihagalla: The online donations do not include Kusala Hermitage. There is one for the Cambodian temple but not Kusala Hermitage.

Reply from Peter Hong: That is a good point and I will review that.

Moved by: Kseniya Abusaif

Seconded by: Prem Mirihagalla

Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

Unanimously Accepted.

Secretary's Report on Membership – Gah Siong Lam (Acting Secretary)

TOTAL CURRENT MEMBERS

Full Members: 1104

Associate Members: 370

Youth Members: 40

Honorary Members: 6

Members Paid for Lifetime: 447

The BSWA membership figures for 2021 remained static with no significant changes in any category. As of 31 December 2021, our total membership was 1520. Out of this total number, we have 1111 members in Australia while the remaining 409 are overseas.

Our overseas members come from 41 countries and the highest proportion of our overseas members come from the USA which is about 88 members.

With the Covid restrictions eased, we are expecting an increase in demand on our retreats and subsequently an increase in our membership numbers for 2022.

The BSWA would like to thank all our membership volunteers especially Lucky, Nick and Elle for working so hard to provide service to our members both local and overseas. Lucky who is stepping down from the membership liaison role this year has provided a warm welcome to new members and has always been available to handle queries from members whether they are in Perth or overseas. Many will remember Lucky as the first point of contact at BSWA and we are grateful for her dedication to the community and especially to the Sangha.

On behalf of the Sangha, the committee and all our volunteers, the BSWA would like to thank everyone for their continued support and generosity.

The president called for questions from the floor.

Question from Eddie Khoo: Regarding the opening up of retreats for overseas participants, do we have any control and protection measures for our retreats just in case there are cases?

Reply from Hock Chin Tee: We are trying to provide a safe environment so we will follow the advice from the regulators.

Reply from Lay Har Goh: We do open our retreats to overseas members as soon as the WA border opens. In the April retreat, there were some from interstate and overseas and we asked the retreatants to do a RAT test. We do comply with the WA Covid rules.

Now that the border is open, we welcome all interstate and overseas members to join our retreats. We put in place all different measures.

Moved by: Peter Hong

Seconded by: Barbara Hazelgrove

Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

Unanimously Accepted.

4.0 Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members

The President next introduced Prem Mirihagalla as the Election Officer for this AGM. The President passed the floor to Prem Mirihagalla to conduct the session. Prem Mirihagalla noted that most of the executive member positions are uncontested and they are remaining for another year to serve the BSWA.

Prem Mirihagalla announced the positions that were elected unopposed.

Elected Unopposed:

Position	Type	Nominee's Name
President	Office Holder - Executive	Hock Chin Tee
Vice President	Office Holder - Executive	Kseniya Abusaif
Secretary	Office Holder - Executive	Ananda Thilakasiri
Treasurer	Office Holder - Executive	Peter Hong
Assistant Secretary	Office Holder	Gah Siong Lam
Assistant Treasurer	Office Holder	San Wong
Ordinary Member	Non-Office Holder	Tonny Wijaya
Ordinary Member	Non-Office Holder	Angela Black
Ordinary Member	Non-Office Holder	Willem (Bill) H. Prins
Ordinary Member	Non-Office Holder	Phuong Truong
Ordinary Member	Non-Office Holder	

Prem Mirihagalla then noted that there were 5 positions for ordinary members and 1 is vacant. He asked if there were any members of the floor who were interested to take up the role.

Question from Heng: What are the roles and responsibilities of the vacant position?

Reply from Kseniya Abusaif: We have 5 positions for ordinary members, 4 have been filled and 1 is vacant. The BSWA have not decided what will be the exact roles and responsibilities for Ordinary Members and this will be decided in the first committee meeting. In general, we have events coordinator, membership liaison, facilities coordinator and IT services. One of the requirement is to attend our committee meetings.

At this point, Sofia Fisher put up her hand for the role.

Voted at AGM

Position	Type	Nominee's Name
Ordinary Member	Non-Office Holder	Sofia Fisher

Prem Mirihagalla asked for someone to nominate Sofia Fisher to be elected as an Ordinary Member. Nominated by Lucky Kodituwakku and seconded by Boon Tan.

5.0 Special Business

None.

6.0 Questions with Due Notice

None.

7.0 Questions without Notice

Question from Chet Yeong Teh: Are there any future plans for the Care Group office since the activities have stopped?

Reply from Sandra Henville: The BSWA ran the 'care line' as a trial for 18 months and came to the decision that it was not sustainable to continue supporting that. There are a variety of reasons and everyone is welcome to speak to me if you would like to know more. Today, the Care Group have the Dhamma Yarns series which runs on the 1st Wednesday of every month to share open dialogues with the lay community. However, we do not have the 'care line' operating any more.

Question from Prem Mirihagalla: Ayya Hasapanna, can you provide some progress of the Santi monastery?

Reply from Ayya Hasapanna: Because they have very small cottage and due to Covid, it is very difficult to hold many visitors. So, they have built a Dana shed and outside kitchen so more people can come to offer Dana. They also extended the shelter and they have 40 volunteers to come and help. They are doing some online programs and children and youths come for day retreats. They are doing well with programs and online teaching. We are in the process of planning to build a couple of mobile kutis. Santi has the restrictions because it is a reserve land. We are only allowed to build a big house and at the moment it is already full i.e., we cannot build more. But for mobile is still ok. Some of the kutis like the waterfall kuti and water kuti are very tough, very difficult, only nuns who are strong can stay there. So, we need to build some kutis that are closer to the main house. We have volunteers and architects to help with that. We started to go there in April but officially took over in July so within less than a year we have built a shelter and an outside kitchen. They are doing really well.

Question from Prem Mirihagalla: What about developing community support?

Reply from Ayya Hasapanna: They have good material and financial support. Many visitors are going there and they are happy that we have nuns there. We are growing.

Question from Barbara Hazelgrove: When will we have more nuns participate in the Friday night talks?

Reply from Ayya Hasapanna: I will take note on this.

Reply from Hock Chin Tee: Just to clarify, Santi is not officially part of the BSWA.

Reply from Ayya Hasapanna: Santi have their own committee and I am the Spiritual Director.

Ananda Thilakasiri acknowledged the contribution of long term members Sol Hanna and Lucky Kodituwakku. He proposed a formal vote of thanks to both members on behalf of the BSWA.

Moved by: Ananda Thilakasiri

Seconded by: Tonny Wijaya

8.0 General Business

None

9.0 Closure

The President called the meeting to a close at 5:53pm.

Post AGM Notes:

- Note 1: Please note that Santi is not a branch monastery of BSWA. The Dhammasara Community is overlooking the affairs of Santi Monastery, helping in its management. Venerable Ayya Hasapanna has assumed the roles of Abbot & Spiritual Director of Santi.*
- Note 2: The requirement of asset revaluation emanates from BSWA's Policy titled 'Capital Expenditure Policy and Procedure', not from BSWA's constitution.*