The Buddhist Society of Western Australia (Inc.)
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MINUTES OF THE 2024 BUDDHIST SOCIETY OF WA (INC.) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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

Date: Saturday, 22 June 2024

Time: Commenced at 5pm.

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 Country

The President acknowledged the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we live, work and care. We pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

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: Confirmation of Quorum and apologies

Sangha: Ajahn Brahm

Executive Committee: Kseniya Lytvyn, Nimendra Dissanayake, Anthony Hawkins, Amitha Tennakoon

Committee Members: Gah Siong Lam, Bill Prins, Tonny Wijaya, Rina Burrows

Apologies : Ajahn Hasapanna, Morly Uttam, Sue Lee, Peter Smith, Dennis Sheppard

Full and Honorary Members Present at AGM: 60

Nicholas John Allott, Nataliya Bugayeva, Rina Burrows, Tholla Meung Chan, Babara Chew, Say Chuan Chua, John Cooke, Brett James Cooper, Nimendra Dissanayake, Eddy Fernando, Manel Fernando, Wayne Roy Finn, Lay Har Goh, Nayane

Gunawardena, Ainsley Haslegrave, Barbara Haslegrave, Anthony Hawkins, Dushanthi Hewa Pathirannhalage, Nadee Indrajith, Cherry Jackson, Lynne Jackson, Thalatha Karunaratna, Eddie Khoo, Gah Siong Lam, Geoffrey Law, Wai Wah Lee, Jia Liao, Hui Sia Lim, Kseniya Lytvyn, Natalie Mar, Shiroma Mendis, Prem Mirihagalla, Choon Seng Ong, Wan Nee Ong, Anne Paige, Oshadhi Panapitiya, Kit Lee Pang, Molly Pang, Tze Horng Pay, Willem Herman Prins, Raj Sajnani, Chamari Senarath, Ajith Senewiratne, Konrad Srokowski, Poh Lian Suan, Aurora Tait, Boon Chang Tan, Hwee Cheng Tan, Ian Tan, Chet Yeong Teh, Amitha Tennakoon, Kamani Tennakoon, Pasan Tennakoon, Ananda Thilakasiri, Richard Thomas, Lillian Uttam, Geoffrey Graham Webb, Dinusha Weeraratna, Tonny Wijaya, Chen Sen Yap

Proxies: 24

Mark Ang, Puey Chin Chew, Hau Mei Chin, Siok Lian Goh, Thilini Hettarachchi, Siew Vei Ho, Haiqing Jiang, Stephen Kessell, Shunit Jake Mitra, Nicole Moustakas, Rukshala Kulasekara Mudiyanselage, Diana Shum, Chee Way Siah, Peng Siah, Chad Jwi Sim, Ber Sun, Jee Thong Tan, Hock Chin Tee, Kim Chin Tee, Shamalee Thilakasiri, Morly Uttam, Wei Kee Wung, Eve Nget Hah Yap, Christina Yew

Total Eligible Voters: 84

1.5. Returning Officer: The President announced Ananda Thilakasiri's name as Returning Officer

2. Confirmation of 2023 AGM Minutes

The President called for the confirmation of the 2023 Minutes of the last AGM held on the 29 April 2023. The President put the motion to accept the Minutes.

Moved by: Bill Prins
Seconded by: Ananda Thilakasiri
Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

29 in favour. None against. None abstained. Agreed by the Spiritual Director.

NOTE: Only those members who were present at the AGM 2023 were entitled to vote on this motion. (Section 60(7) of BSWA's Constitution)

3. Reports & adoption thereof

3.1. <u>Address by Spiritual Director</u> -Venerable Ajahn Brahmavamso

In 2023, 6 anagarikas were given novice monk ordination, one of whom disrobed because of outstanding financial problems. 3 novice monks took the higher ordination, one of whom went to Sri Lanka to continue his practice.
Building work at Bodhinyana included the new carport at Hermits' Hill plus an upgrade to the carport in Bodhinyana. The Bodhinyana carport had a $45K solar electric power generating system installed which now supplies our main office, workshop and supplies all the power to our new Tesla EV. The Tesla vehicle is safe, comfortable and powered primarily by the sun (via the carport solar panels ☺).
We have installed more air conditioners at Hermits' Hill as well as many fire shutters.
Our ongoing problem at Bodhinyana is the large size of our Sangha, currently 24 monks and 7 novice monks and growing. We also have a problem this year with our potable water supply, usually sourced from rain water.

Our senior monks continue to travel to teach in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, England, Norway, Poland, Sydney and Melbourne. In 2023, Ajahn Brahmali was awarded an honorary PHD from Chulalongkorn University for his work in translating the Vinaya Pitaka from Pali into English.

3.2. **Report by Assistant Spiritual Director - Venerable Ajahn Hasapanna**

Lay Har Goh read part of the report in the absence of Assistant Spiritual Director. Full report below.

Overview

The period from 2023 to 2024 marked another significant year for Dhammasara, the BSWA, and their committee and members. Following the successful construction of the Sala Complex, carpark, and Dhammasara Access Road, four new Kutis were added, along with the completion of one Retreat Kuti. Currently, we are in the stage of obtaining quotes for the construction of the second Retreat Kuti, with the optimistic goal of completing it before Vassa 2024.

Throughout the year, the nuns have diligently devoted their efforts to training and instructing junior nuns and Anagarikas, ensuring the monastery's smooth functioning during my travels. I would like to express my gratitude to all the nuns for their invaluable presence and contributions.

On July 4, 2023, Santi Forest Monastery acquired a residence in Leumeah, aligning with our vision to provide care for the elderly, attend to the sick, and regularly offer teachings to the Buddhist communities in the Sydney suburb. The generous support from many individuals facilitated the furnishing of the new Vihara, which has been operational since July of this year. Ayya Karunika has been residing at the Vihara at least once a week, allowing her to offer consistent teachings at the Crow's Nest centre in recent months. Additionally, Ajahn Brahmali utilized the new Vihara during his teaching stint in Sydney. The Vihara proved instrumental when Ayya Nirodha faced a medical emergency after the rains retreat, leading her to stay at the Vihara for several days.

This year, Santi constructed a Buddha pavilion adjacent to the dana shelter, a project funded and built by friends from both the Sri Lankan and Vietnamese communities. Simultaneously, renovations to the caravan were completed, providing an additional living space close to the main area. This space served as the residence for the nun's community during the rains retreat.

Santi nuns have organized monthly day retreats at the monastery, welcoming laypeople to experience a day in our tranquil setting and receive guidance from the nuns. Ayya Karunika has been actively involved in numerous teaching activities, with contributions from nuns from Dhammasara as well. Some highlights include regular teachings at the Crow Nest Centre, weekly guided meditations via Zoom for Western Sydney University staff, Dhamma talks for the youth group in Canberra, participation in a panel alongside Bhikkhu Bodhi for International Bhikkhuni Day 2023 at the Metta Convention, and multiple Zoom sessions for audiences in Sri Lanka, the UK, and New Zealand.

Dhammasara Community

Currently, Dhammasara hosts a community comprising 13 Bhikkhunis, 3 Samaneris, and 2 Anagarikas, totalling 18 members.

Santi Community
At Santi Forest Monastery, there are three Bhikkhunis and one Samaneri in residence.

Activities
• Ajahn Hāsapañña was honoured with an invitation to teach at the E-Vam Institute Buddhist Summer School in Melbourne, conducting sessions from the 14th to the 15th of January 2023.
• On the 30th of April 2023, there was a Dual Sangha Bhikkhuni Ordination ceremony for Venerable Somā at Dhammasara Nuns Monastery, led by Ajahn Hāsapañña as her preceptor.
• Another Dual Sangha Bhikkhuni Ordination took place on the 8th of May 2023, as Venerable Santā received ordination at Newbury Buddhist Monastery in Victoria, with Ajahn Hāsapañña as her preceptor.
• Ajahn Hāsapañña, Ajahn Munissara, and Venerable Analaya participated in the BSV Vesak Celebration at Newbury Monastery on the 7th of May 2023.
• Ajahn Hasapanna attended the BCWA Vesak at the WA Parliament on the 26th of May 2023, and led a day retreat on the 5th of June at Dhammaloka.
• The Dhammasara Entry to Rains Ceremony took place on Sunday, 23rd July 2023, and Kathina was observed on Sunday, 12th November 2023, attracting 11 participants from Singapore, along with local Singaporeans and friends who joined to support and partake in the event.
• Ajahn Hasapanna attended the Santi Forest Monastery Entry to Rains Ceremony on Sunday, 30th July 2023, as well as the End of Rains Ceremony on Sunday, the 19th of November 2023.
• A Busy Bee event was organized on Sunday, 19th of November, where participants assisted the nuns in clearing and raking debris and leaves for bushfire preparation in anticipation of the summer season.

Building & Maintenance
We encountered several sewage pipe blockages at various locations, including the Annex, Sala Complex, Accommodation Pod, and the Ablution Block. To address these issues, the following corrective measures were implemented:
1. Conducted high-pressure jetting and camera inspection of drains at the Annex, identifying blockages caused by paper.
2. Utilized CCTV camera inspection for toilets in the Accommodation Pod, revealing collar issues and a misaligned drain under the concrete outside the bathroom. Rectification involved cutting and removing the concrete slab, extracting the damaged drain, and installing a new section of drain and pipework. The drain was thoroughly tested and backfilled.
3. Replaced a damaged drainpipe at the Ablution Block.

Repairs were undertaken for Kuti 9 (Campsite Kuti) to address issues of leakage and termite infestation.

In October, comprehensive maintenance of the Emergency Exit and all firebreaks was completed, ensuring readiness for Council inspection on the 1st of November 2023. Six malfunctioning Exit lights were replaced, and a risk assessment inspection conducted on October 26th ensured compliance with all aspects of the Public Building Regulation, resulting in a successful pass.

Last and not least, I would like to take the opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to the committee members and all the supporters/volunteers for your support and kindness.

3.3. **Committee Report by Hon. President – Kseniya Lytvyn**

BSWA Committee, Staff and Volunteers

I was privileged to be appointed as the President of the Buddhist Society of Western Australia (BSWA) at the AGM last year. Serving as President has not only been an honour but a profound responsibility that I cherished every moment. I would like to thank all committee members for their invaluable advice, support, and contributions. Our committee is both strong and harmonious, dedicating time and effort towards BSWA. Also, my deep appreciation extends to all our staff members and Lay Har Goh, our Operations Manager, for their dedication and hard work in ensuring the smooth operation of BSWA.

Our Buddhist Society is a large and complex organisation with volunteers working at all levels to keep it all running well. I am deeply grateful to all our volunteers and supporters for their immense contributions and unwavering support.

I would like to acknowledge our Spiritual Director Ajahn Brahm, Assistant Spiritual Director, Ajahn Hasapanna and second Assistant Spiritual Director Ajahn Brahmali for their wisdom, support and guidance. I also acknowledge the great support that comes from the wider realms of our monastic landscape.

Events in 2023

Thank You Volunteer Event

The event was held on 20 May 2023 to thank all BSWA volunteers for their invaluable support and contributions to BSWA. We were delighted to receive a $1,000 grant from Volunteering WA and Lotterywest, which greatly facilitated the funding of this event.

Vesak Celebration at Parliament House

The event was held at WA Parliament House on 26 May 2023. We were delighted to receive a formal invitation from Hon Dr Tony Buti MLA, Minister of Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests and Natasha Tang JP President of Buddhist Council of Western Australia. The event was also attended by invited monastics and members of BSWA.

Vesak Day and BSWA 50th Anniversary

The event was held on 4 June 2023 at Dhammaloka. Despite the rainy weather, the event was well attended by the members and guests. We were happy to welcome the founders of BSWA and VIP guests to the event. We are very thankful to Boon Tan, the organizer of this event, Venerable Mettaji, Lay Har Goh and all organizing committee members and volunteers for making this event a success.

Ajahn Brahm's 72nd Birthday

We celebrated Ajahn Brahm's 72nd birthday on 6th August 2023. It was a significant event where communities from different countries came together via online to celebrate this great occasion.

Grant Applications

Our Ops Manager had also been diligently seeking out and applying for eligible grants. As they are usually a highly competitive process, it takes a lot of effort to submit a grant application as the grant requirements and supporting documents can be very demanding.

Though we had a few unsuccessful attempts, we were also very pleased to be successful with the National Volunteer Week Grant ($1k) from Volunteering WA and Lotterywest. We were also informed in December 23 that we were successful in the Securing Faith-Based Places Grant

($195k) from Attorney-General's Department, while pending Agreement to be executed in Jan 2024.

Translations of Ajahn Brahm's talks to Russian and Ukrainian languages
The Broadcasting Management Group (BMG) which is a Sub-committee in BSWA has been instrumental in putting talks online so that teachings from our monks and nuns including Ajahn Brahm, Ajahn Brahmali, Ajahn Hasapanna and many others can be shared with the world. BMG also has a translation team providing subtitling in different languages for some of these talks. Most recently, with the unrest happening in Ukraine and Russia, Ajahn Brahm's translated talks in the Russian and Ukrainian languages have been gaining popularity on YouTube. We are delighted to have great supporters overseas who made this possible during the difficult times currently experienced by both countries.

Our Focus in 2024
Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities to further expand our meditation programs and reach out to more individuals and communities seeking spiritual guidance. We remain committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, fostering spiritual development, spreading Dhamma and contributing to the well-being of our community and beyond.

In conclusion, I am very optimistic about the future of our Buddhist Society. With the continued support of lay community and monastics I am confident that we will achieve even greater heights in our spiritual journey and create peace and harmony in our lives. May we continue to grow in Dhamma and in unity.

Moved by: Bill Prins
Seconded by: Raj Sajnani
Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

All in favour. None abstain. None against.

3.4. **Hon. Treasurer's Report & Auditor's Statement – Anthony Hawkins**

3.4.1. Motion to Accept the Hon. Treasurer's Report on Audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Statement for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The 2023 income year has been a busy year for the treasury team. First, we provided funding assistance to Santi Forest Monastery Incorporated in the acquisition of a property in Leumeah, NSW. Second, we provided funding assistance to the Anukampa Bhikkhuni Project to establish a Buddhist Nuns Monastery in the United Kingdom.

The 2023 year saw the transition to the new auditor, Hall Chadwick. Finalising the 2023 audit was an exhausting challenge, but we got there, and we are happy to take questions. For 2024, we will propose a change to the membership fees, which is part of the agenda in this AGM.

Before going into these, we would like to present the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The 2023 Financial Statements

Some of the highlights in the financial statements are:

1. The net profit for the year was $272,755 for the year. There was an increase of $50,387 from the prior year, which can be explained by the following movements:

a) The was an increase of $60,875 in income.
b) There was an increase of $22,402 in depreciation expenses.
c) There was a decrease of $11,914 in expenses.

2. The Balance Sheet shows an increase in the net assets of $258,484 which can be broken down into the following:
a) A decrease of $1,115,057 in cash and cash equivalents
b) Which is accounted for by an increase in loan funding to Santi Forest Monastery and Anukampa Bhikkhuni Project of $600,000 and 1,375,000, respectively.
c) Property Plant & Equipment decreased by $601,459 after depreciation.
Hall Chadwick audited the financial statements this year. The auditor issued an unqualified audit statement and is satisfied that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the BSWA's financial position as of 31 December 2023.

Revaluation of Land and Buildings

The BSWA is required to revalue land and buildings every 3 to 5 years. The last revaluation was in 2019. So, as discussed with the auditor Hall Chadwick, a valuation will need to be done on 1 January 2025 for the financial year ending 31 December 2024. The new Committee and treasury team will discuss and decide this year.

Final Note
Finally, I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to the work and made it possible for the treasury team to function well. First, the hard-working treasury team, Bikash, Madu and Ronnie, for going beyond and above to get the jobs done. I would also like to thank the banking team and other volunteers for helping the treasury team.

Last but not least, I would also like to thank Ajahn Brahm, Ajahn Hasapanna, Ajahn Brahmali, Venerable Ananda and the rest of the nuns and monks at Dhammasara and Bodhinyana for the support and encouragement.

Anthony Hawkins read the above report and opened the floor for any questions.

***Bill Prins**: Wasn't Anukampa Project expenditure achieved this year not last year.*

***Anthony Hawkins**: I am talking about the funding.*

***Bill Prins**: Yes. It was this year.*

***Kseniya Lytvyn**: If the funds were disbursed this year probably it will go to next year report.*

***Anthony Hawkins** (clarified later during the discussion time): Accounts were audited with other five current assets. Although the project (Anukampa) did not commence until after January 2024, funds were disbursed in December 2023.*

***Ananda Thilakasiri**: Question on revaluation of land and buildings was discussed at the previous committee as well and there are a couple of reports prepared for the last management committee. As far as I know revaluation of land and buildings is governed and driven by accounting standards. There is a specific accounting standard that requires all the organisations to value their assets except, in my memory, for special purpose financial reports. Revaluation of land and buildings is a huge and expensive exercise for BSWA who owned about 5 large properties. It will cost huge amount as I experienced in the past some 20 years ago. BSWA is producing special purpose financial reports but not general-purpose financial reports. Those who prepare special purpose financial reports are not required to do as per accounting*

standards. So my question is why are we going to do this when there is an exemption for us. Standards setters would have allowed this exemption as their thinking would have been that it is really not necessary. Otherwise, they wouldn't have put that exemption. I like to know what the reasons are.

***Anthony Hawkins**: Yes, there are special purpose reports for typical mum & dad companies. As for the not for profit organizations with size of a body like BSWA it is required to be audited. As part of that Auditors made very clear that it required to be revalued every 5 years, 3 years max. I can report back to auditors about accounting standards but as per ACNC website there are three levels of organisations of Not for Profit, and we are next tier up. Although we do special purpose reports, we still require to do it. Auditor Hall Chadwick said that we need to revalue this in our next audit. This has to be done by someone who has the knowledge to do the revaluation so I am suggesting to get three quotes from experts.*

***Ananda Thilakasiri**: Ok but I am not convinced, it's up to the committee to decide. Auditors are not be all and end all. Auditors have done a huge, gigantic mistake however it is up to the committee to decide. Auditors will comment and advise but Management committee is the manager. I think incoming committee will have to look at this very carefully on whether the organisation is a reporting entity or not is governed by what we call Statement of Accounting Concepts. Number 1: we are very clear that we are falling within what you said. We are not a mum and dad company. We are a large charitable organisation and we are producing special purpose reports. So all three boxes are ticked. So there is no statutory requirement but the management can decide.*

***Anthony Hawkins**: As per ACNC website we are considered as a large body and financial reports required to be audited. As per the accounting standards we are required to have properties valued. If you have a question, please email Hall Chadwick and they will be able to clarify on that.*

***Ananda Thilakasiri** ; No I do not have to contact Hall Chadwick and I do not have a relationship with them. It is the BSWA committee need to check and put the case out. I am just highlighting. Look at it carefully there is no statutory requirement. We have to go through an audit. Doing an audit and doing a revaluation which is a huge exercise, it costs time and money and also it is not required. I am just commenting and leave for the next committee.*

***Ajahn Brahm** : I know that the committee is really working so hard on this. Ananda, can you get the relevant information from the internet and send to me then I can forward it to Anthony? Then we can confirm what exactly going on.*

***Ananda Thilakasiri**: Ajahn, when this happened last year, I produced a report presented to the management committee then. However, I will send a copy of the report soon.*

The President put the motion to accept the report.

Moved by: Nicholas Allott
Seconded by: Chamari Senarath
Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

All in favour. None abstain. None against.

3.4.2. Resolution- Proposal for Changes to BSWA (Inc.) Membership Fees – Anthony Hawkins

The Management Committee of Buddhist Society of Western Australia (Inc), at its meeting held

on 26 November 2023 resolved to propose to members at the AGM on 22 June 2024 the following resolution to change membership fees:

> *That there be an increase in Membership fees from $50 to $65 per annum and from $990 to $1300 for lifetime membership.*

Anthony Hawkins read the above resolution and the President put the proposal for voting.

Result: 66 in favour. 2 abstain. 8 against.

President announced that the majority voted yes for the proposal so, the proposal is accepted.

3.5. Hon Secretary's Report on Membership– Amitha Tennakoon

Our reporting period for the annual membership report (all purposes) was for 12 months ended 31st December 2023. On the 31st of December 2023, our total membership was 1737. This is a 15.7% increase from the 31st of December 2022, which had 1,501 total memberships.

Breakdown of each membership category with numbers:

Category	Australia	Overseas	Overseas %	Total
Full*	615	167	21	**782**
Associate*	353	65	16	**418**
Paid for Lifetime	305	211	41	**516**
Honorary	7	1	13	**8**
Youth	12	1	8	**13**
Total	**1292**	**445**	**26**	**1737**

*Excluding paid for lifetime members

No of Overseas countries: 47

The membership staff and volunteers worked hard to provide services to our members. Our sincere thanks go to Angela, Nick, Lucky, Elle, Aurora, Ronnie, Madu, Manel and the library team.

It is only through the support of our members that the BSWA can continue to spread dhamma to all regions of the world. On behalf of the Sangha, the committee and our many volunteers, we thank you for your continued support and generosity.

The President opened the floor for any questions.

Eddie Khoo: *I think, being a big organisation total number of members 1737 is very little.*

Ajahn Brahm: *Mostly because so many of our traditions the idea of a member of organisation is not necessary. People come to the temple for services. And they put donations in the boxes. I mention this before. Idea of a member in Anathapindika's monastery in Savatti paying membership like that never occurred in Buddhism. Even in Thailand and Sri Lanka you are never a member of a monastery by paying a fee. They come and support so many different ways. The membership number is only useful for the sake of government requirements.*

Eddie Khoo: *Agree In case we need more support but if we have 5000 members it carry more weight.*

***Ajahn Brahm**: Yes It does carry more weight. It is not much to join as a member. If anyone hasn't joined, they can be encouraged.*

The President put the motion to accept the report.

Moved by: Bill Prins
Seconded by: Ananda Thilakasiri
Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

All in favour. None abstain. None against.

4. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members for 2024/2025

The President invited to Ananda Thilakasiri to conduct the session and to announce the results.
Ananda Thilakasiri announced the positions that following members were elected unopposed.

Elected Unopposed:

Position	Type	Nominee's Name
President	Office Holder-Exec	Kseniya Lytvyn
Vice President	Office Holder-Exec	Nimendra Dissanayake
Secretary	Office Holder-Exec	Amitha Tennakoon
Assistant Treasurer	Office Holder	Pay Tze Horng
Assistant Secretary	Office Holder	Bikash Rai
Ordinary Member - Communications Coordinator		Rina Burrows
Ordinary Member - IT		Tonny Wijaya
Ordinary Member - Events		Willem (Bill) Prins
Ordinary Member - Membership Liaison		Oshadi Panapitiya
Ordinary Member - Undelegated		John Ian Cooke

4.1. Election of Office Bearers for Contested Positions:

Ananda announced that following members are contesting for the position of Hon Treasurer.

Position	Type	Nominee's Names
Treasurer	Office Holder-Exec	Anthony Paul Hawkins / Morly Uttam

Ananda invited Anthony Hawkins and Boon Tan (representing Morly Uttam who has sent apologies to the meeting due to pre-arranged travel) to speak 3-5 minutes on why he wants to serve as Hon Treasurer in BSWA. He gave the opportunity to speakers in the alphabetical order of name/ surname.

***Anthony Hawkins:** Further to the statement previously provided, I served few not for profit organisations before. Long time member of Scarborough Beach Swimming Club seen grown over the time and few not for profit Indigenous Companies where I worked. I really enjoyed the*

work what I was doing last 12 months. I have seen committee is being really really helpful and voting on things in expeditious manner. We've gone through a lot of approvals last 12 months. Enjoyed the time with them. Certainly, would like for opportunity to serve for another 12 months. First 12 months was always most difficult due to inherited issues last 7-8 years and learning things around it. It has been exciting time and I look forward to future whether it be myself or Morly takes over. I had a great time.

***Boon Chang Tan** (proxy for Morly Uttam): First I congratulate Anthony going through 2023. It's hard being a treasurer. Morly can't be here due to his travels arranged prior to AGM postponement. I have known Morly for long time since late 90's. In fact, I asked him to be the treasurer a couple of times without success. I am glad he put his nomination this time. I was informed he was used to help Bodhinyana Monastery during Ajahn Jagaro's time. He is not new to BSWA. Even today he is helping various other Buddhist centres. I am glad he is still active. He got few family members with BSWA. His sister Lillian, BSWA librarian, his nephew Jaden AV volunteer. His mum used to support monks with arranging dana in Community Hall for many years until she passed away few years ago. Morly is very humble, easy to get along with, and very hard working by nature. He used to be a partner in an accounting firm. He is a registered tax agent, a member of certified practicing accountant Australia and someone who understand legislative requirements and legal matters related to finance and accounting. Few years ago, I actually asked advice Morly on particularly tax and accounting systems in BSWA. So, he has been helping BSWA for some time as well. He is now retired and has more time in hand and greater flexibility. He is kindly willing to assist the demand role of Treasurer. I am highly confident that Morly can help and improve accounting requirements of BSWA. And we should use this opportunity to get him into BSWA before he changes his attention to somewhere else.*

Returning Officer, Ananda Thilakasiri advised that he refrain from voting to maintain impartiality. However, he will exercise his vote if there is a tie. Anthony Hawkins cast his vote first and exit the meeting during voting process. Meeting went to voting to elect the Treasurer. Ananda Thilakasiri announced the voting count below and announced that Morly Uttam has been elected as new Hon. Treasurer by majority of votes.

Anthony Hawkins - 12 votes
Morly Uttam - 60 votes

Both Ananda and the President thanked Anthony Hawkins for his service in BSWA for the last few terms. Ananda requested the audience to give three big Sadhus which is the Buddhist way instead of clapping, to the newly elected committee. President also thanked Ananda Thilakasiri for doing the Returning Officer role for the AGM.

5. Special Resolution
Proposal for Changes to BSWA (Inc.) Constitution in Memberships – Amitha Tennakoon

The Management Committee of Buddhist Society of Western Australia (Inc), at its meeting held on 26 November 2023 resolved to propose to members at the AGM on 22 June 2024 to adopt the following Special Resolution to Memberships; to amend the Clause 12(4)(e) of the Society's current Constitution, noting that the notice containing this Special Resolution was sent to members by email on 31 May 2024, complying with the requirements of BSWA's Constitution & the Associations Incorporation Act 2015:

Part 1 of the Resolution:

That BSWA (Inc.) Constitution Clause 12(4)(e) be reworded to imply that the Paid for Lifetime membership, is for either Full or Associate membership.

Part 2 of the Resolution:

The change of wording of the constitution is proposed as below.

Current Constitution: Part 4, Rule 12 Classes of Membership;
(e) Paid for Lifetime Membership. A member who pays the Full membership annual fee, in a multiple of 20 times, will be designated a Paid for Lifetime member and will pay no future fees

Proposed Constitution: Part 4, Rule 12; Classes of Membership;
(e) Paid for Lifetime Membership. A member (Full or Associate) who pays the Full membership annual fee, in a multiple of 20 times, will be designated a Paid for Lifetime member (Full or Associate) and will pay no future fees

Moved by: Ananda Thilakasiri
Seconded by: Bill Prins
Agreed by: Ajahn Brahm

77 in favour. None abstain. None against.
Resolution passed with more than 75% majority of members voting in person or by proxy.

6. Questions with Due Notice

Nil

7. Questions Without Notice

Prem Mirihagalla*: We are looking for more members. We are not short of funds. Profits have increased. What is the drive for increase in membership fees?*

Kseniya Lytvyn*: I know our membership fees were unchanged for long period of time.*

Anthony Hawkins*: Membership fees hasn't changed in 10 years. Office costs have gone up that include helpers, accounting team and particularly last 12 months inflation was quite significant. Inflation has gone up more than the increase from 50 to 65 dollars. It might be profitable overall, but we need to look at where the profits are. Mainly profits in other areas, not here where membership come from.*

Prem Mirihagalla*: I see profits are not that much. We used to do fund raising events to cover operational costs. Have you done any fund-raising last year?*

Kseniya Lytvyn *: I know there were fund raising events but they were for specific purposes. There were no fund-raising events done to cover operational costs.*

Prem Mirihagalla*: I am thinking of overseas members. For some even $10 is a lot of money. We are ok in Australia even a pensioner can pay. Some overseas members are*

diligently paying this. And the amount could be a whole month salary for them. But they are paying the amount because they love the place and so dedicated. Is there a way we can give a concession.

***Kseniya Lytvyn**: That's a good point. In general, we are increasing cost because membership processing costs are gone up over 10 years. But if any particular person wants to be a member but due to a reason they cannot pay the membership fee, we would like know about it. We will not reject them. We are happy to receive that email from them for us to understand their situation. And we will look at them and attend to those requests.*

***Prem Mirihagalla**: Thank you. I suppose they do not know there is such a way to approach BSWA and appreciate such consideration.*

***Eddie Khoo**: My opinion is to have more memberships. We are a big organisation. Is there a drive for the membership to be more attractive for more people to join in. Like books or some other things, we can think of. Might need to increase membership. Make more affordable so more people to come in. If they can benefit and it will be a drive to increase in members.*

***Anthony Hawkins**: My wife is Thai. I asked her to be a member. Like other ladies she like celebrations at the end of Rains. Together with other Thai ladies they like to prepare food items at their cost and give them as donations. I think you will find very hard with Thai culture for them to change. They prefer to come to celebrations and bring food free of charge and enjoy the time and celebrate and not worrying about membership. That's what they believe in. I got lots of Thai friends. I tried for them to join in but they prefer donating to celebrations.*

***Eddie Khoo**: We are all multi-cultural. We live in a Western Country. Thai culture respect Buddhism a lot. But here in case we need support, we need more people.*

***Ajahn Brahm**: Two reasons why people from overseas membership fees. One is if you are a member, you can join a retreat which I run. That's why they join and after a while they just disappear. That's why it is very hard for people live here to join a retreat. All spots gone in one minute. Anybody finds very hard to pay membership fees should think why they want to pay membership fee. Usually only reason is to join a retreat. Many people overseas become members to get easy access to a retreat. If they can't afford airfare they don't need to pay for retreats. Everything is available to everybody on our YouTube channels including talks, celebrations joining live and retreats. Paying a membership is a donation different way. It's not only Thailand, many people in Sri Lanka like Ajahn Brahm Society in Sri Lanka, I don't think they pay membership fees. Because they hardly come here. (interruption by Prem saying 'not everybody and it's not compulsory as such') Exactly! that's part of Buddhism. It's not compulsory to pay membership fee.*

***Prem Mirihagalla**: They just do it for the sake of being belong to BSWA.*

***Eddie Fernando**: I support what Prem has said about raising the membership fees. I think the President and all committee members should think about a way, not only doing*

work. All other facilities available here because most people here regulars are always around. They are the ones who is helping the temple, bringing food, supporting monks, contributing, donating etc. So, you dip on the members again. Double dipping; that's not nice. Do your part the way best you can and try to bring this society up. I feel that being done is not enough. Do your fair share. Have the society grow. Ajahn Brahm is being fantastic. You have to give him a break as well. Do your part please.

***Boon Tan**: Previous committee few years ago, tried bringing the membership fees up. But it wasn't brought up due to Covid and financial impact to the community. Apart from many other reasons, one of the reasons to increase fees because of the Dhammaloka centre expenses. We cannot rely on donations alone. If you may not be aware of it. But if you look at financial statement, huge amount of money coming to Dhammaloka comes from monastery. You should not rely on the monastery to support Dhammaloka. Should be independent. As a society, we should be focussing on how we increase income to maintain, Dhammaloka, we have to pay staff and support.*

***Ananda Thilakasiri**: I like to echo what Boon said. As Anthony said it hasn't gone up for last 10 years. So $15 increase over $50 is 30% increase over 10 years. It will be 3% per annum but if you take compounding effect it should have been even less. Inflation is running around 4% now. So it is a very small increase for the benefit of BSWA and benefit of many. So we should support the committee's decision to increase fees. Alongside with increase, we also need to look at the ways as Eddie suggested increase in membership. Both have to go hand in hand.*

***Eddie Khoo**: I also think about people who bring food to monasteries in big ways. And especially those regular ones who spend so much time in preparation. We should make special thanks to them.*

***Kseniya Lytvyn**: Yes we thank them all for their support.*

***Ajahn Brahm**: Sometimes we have to be careful about thanking to people with some cultures. It can be offensive sometimes. For them it's honour to having the opportunity to support. They thank me for being there. Good example is a Vietnamese couple (Can and Lin). Every time they bring something for me they say thank you to me. Thank you for letting them serve me. They mean that. They get the joy being able to help.*

***Eddie Khoo**: Special Sadhu to you Ajahn Brahm.*

***Bill Prins**: Is it possible to have an overseas membership with a lower rate? I know it can be an administrative nightmare.*

***Ajahn Brahm**: But some people has split nationality!*

***Bill Prins**: Anyway, something to think about.*

8. General Business

The President said she will take this opportunity to thank our outgoing committee members Angela Black, Gah Siong Lam, Thilini Maligaspe and Anthony Hawkins.

The President thanked Anthony for his dedication, hard work, passion, valuable contribution. We appreciate all your help and time given to serve BSWA.

Also thanked our serving staff Cherry Jackson who retired earlier this year. The President also welcomed new committee members. Also thanked all volunteers, our staff and everyone here today attending AGM 2024.

9. Closure

The President called the meeting to a close at 6:37 pm.

Kseniya Lytvyn
5.07.2024