

Minutes of the 4th Virtual Meeting of the Friends of Soqotra

01 – 07 April 2017

Participants: Kay van Damme (KVD), Julian Jansen van Rensburg (JJVR), Miranda Morris (MM), Dana Pietsch (DP), Lisa Banfield (LB), Vladimir Melnik (VM), Peter De Geest (PDG), Sue Christie (SC), Raquel Vasconcelos (RV), Dirk Van Dorpe (DVD), Sabina Knees (SK), Fabio Attore (FA), Salwa Barkwan.

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Report on current projects

Leaflets.

JJVR reported that he had a series of leaflets that had been translated into various languages and has shared the link on Dropbox. MM noted that there were three still needing translation, ‘Soqotra: general information and advice for visitors and tourists’, ‘the traditional Soqotri way of life’ and ‘the Soqotri language’. SC sent an updated version of the ‘Di-Hamri’ leaflet for translation. LB has supplied a leaflet on trees to be translated. VM, DVD have agreed to translate the leaflets that are still required. It was agreed that the leaflets are to be translated into as many languages as possible but only those required on the island are to be printed for dissemination on the island. LB mentioned that it would be useful for the leaflets to have a short piece about FoS. LB also stated that she would look into the printing costs of leaflets in the UAE and report back, also possible dissemination from the UAE to Socotra. RV mentioned that the ‘Soqotra: general information and advice for visitors and tourists’ may be

better worded, VM mentioned that it could be similar to a Russian site, MM mentioned that it could be changed, further comment necessary. KVD to ask Ismael to see if the leaflets could be distributed to eco-guides and MM to ask Abdalgamil Mohammed. MM also said that it would be good for the leaflets to be distributed to other places, such as hotels and camp sites, while VM mentioned they could be at arrival points such as the airport. KVD mentioned that ARC WH would be interested in the printing and distribution of the leaflets, to look into this and report back. JJVR and PDG agreed to do a leaflet for archaeological sites and caves. MM compiled a list of leaflets and the translations still required. See Appendix 1

Fishermen assistance

Uwe to look at possibility of getting Fouad Naseeb Saeed to check if fishermen on the western and southern coast may need assistance? KVD to chase.

Cyclone relief update

MM mentioned that it was necessary for Ismael to report back on the cyclone relief fund and how the money was spent and on what. LB agreed that it was imperative for how the funds were spent to be clearly shown and disseminated. KVD reported that Ismael had sent updates on the work undertaken in Homhill. KVD agreed to enquire after Ismael about reporting back on the funds. KVD stated that Ismael wished for the FOS to co-ordinate with the ARC WH about help in supporting these projects to increase the possibilities of help in the future.

ARC WH collaboration

KVD mentioned that ARC-WH has requested FoS to collaborate on 1. Awareness and 2. Local projects, and offered help in distribution and support. ARC-WH are reaching out to FoS through Ismael and Haifaa and have explicitly asked for us to collaborate KVD to liaise.

Tayf

SC reported the need for articles for Tayf, especially those related to life on the island.

DOI and ISBN requirements for Tayf were looked at. RQ sent a link to a website with regards the arranging of a DOI for articles. MM and SK looking at getting an ISBN for Tayf rather than a DOI for each article, which would require a lot of work. LB mentioned that it may be easier for the authors to arrange their own DOI should they feel it necessary KVD agreed. The idea of DOI for articles in Tayf was agreed to be dropped in favour of either an ISBN or people arranging it for themselves.

Recent events at Jebel Hawari to be sent to SC for inclusion in Tayf, JJVR and KVD.

SC said that she would like to step down as editor of Tayf as soon as a replacement can be found.

Website

MM mentioned that there were still sections of the website that required updating. KVD to update the environment and biodiversity of a UNESCO World Heritage Site information page. DP mentioned that there has been a lack of input from people to enliven the website, more news required. LB suggested a link between the website and the FOS Facebook page, DP and LB to collaborate on this. VM suggested a Soqotra news page that could be updated with news from Socotri on Facebook. SK agreed but suggested this would need quite a bit of work for someone to keep it updated.

FoS 2017 AGM in Bern

Eike Neubert has reported back that the NMBE has agreed to host the FOS to hold its AGM 2017 in the museum. The museum will also provide some financial support. An initial plan would be Friday evening registration, Saturday lectures and Sunday FoS AGM.

Any other business

Voting system for when projects are proposed

LB proposed that it was necessary to clarify the procedure for the decision making with regards projects proposals. MM agreed and mentioned it was necessary to for a specific time-frame to be put in place with regards a response from committee members. SK proposed a week, this was agreed.

Outreach

KVD reported back that he had attended the UNEP/GEF Inception Meeting in Jordan in March 2017 where he had presented to the attendees about the FOS and that reactions were positive.

Signposts

SB mentioned that it might be useful for certain sites to have sign boards that would present the data required to help inform tourists and about sites and possibly provide some protection. It was agreed that this would be a good idea and that KVD could approach the ARC WH about possible funding for this. SB also mentioned that it would be useful to have a map of Soqotra showing the various sites that could be visited by tourists.

UAE building response

MM mentioned that it would be difficult for FOS to draft a response until it was possible to determine exactly what was happening and how this was damaging to the people and environment. KVD mentioned that he and JJVR had already put into place a rapid plan to temporarily stop the development of the fort on Jebel Hawari, which had been successful.

Appendix 1

[A] ILLUSTRATED LEAFLETS (COLOUR)

BIRDS

English
German
Arabic
Russian

REPTILES

English
German
Arabic
Russian

TREES

English
[Lisa says she is working on one for smaller plants]

DI HAMRI

English

[B] FACT SHEETS (BLACK AND WHITE)

SOQOTRA GENERAL INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR VISITORS AND TOURIST

English
Dutch

THE SOQOTRI LANGUAGE

English

THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE ON SOQOTRA

English