

Friends of the Museums (Singapore)

Minutes of the 16th Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 4 December 2019

Seminar Room, National Museum of Singapore,
93 Stamford Road, Singapore 178897

The Friends of the Museums (Singapore) President Garima Lalwani presided over the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and called the meeting to order at 10.00 am so that voting for the 2019 Council Members could begin.

Since there was no quorum, the meeting proceeded after half an hour at 10.30am. Our President advised that the AGM is only for members of the Friends of the Museums (Singapore), hereinafter referred to as FOM.

Item 1. Vote to approve the minutes of 15th Annual General Meeting held on 5 December 2018

The President asked for the following resolution to be approved:

- Alison Kennedy-Cooke moved for the adoption of the following resolution to approve the Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Museums (Singapore) held on 5 December 2018.
- Chong Yit Peng seconded the resolution.

The President opened the floor for any questions regarding the resolution. There were no questions. The membership was asked to vote to approve the resolution. The votes were taken.

The President's Report

The President was pleased to share with the forum some of the highlights from museums programmes, activity groups and key FOM initiatives undertaken this year

A. Museum Programmes

FOM continues to be active in 2019 with service to Singapore's museums and

cultural institutions at the core of FOM's mission. The museums, arts and heritage institutions we serve remain the same as last year.

In addition to the regular tours, our docents guided several special exhibitions such as, *Raffles in Southeast Asia: Revisiting the Scholar and Statesman* and *An Old New World: From the East Indies to the Founding of Singapore, 1600s–1819* held at ACM and NMS, respectively, to commemorate the Bicentennial year, *Takashi Murakami: From Superflat to Bubblewrap* at STPI; *Pilgrims' Stories from the Malay World to Makkah* at MHC; *Between the Lines - The Chinese Cartoon Revolution* at SYSNMH; *Chetti Melaka of the Straits* at IHC, and *S.E.A. Focus* at GB The intense research conducted to guide these special exhibitions further enhanced the knowledge base of our docents.

Between October 2018 and September 2019, our docents conducted tours for 62,275 visitors, including tours for students and corporations. FOM volunteers also conducted guiding skills workshops for school students, which included training students to guide at the Venice Biennale. These workshops helped students develop presentation and public speaking skills.

We added 76 new docents at ACM, NMS, MHC, IHC and URA/FOM to our docent pool. This is a much smaller group compared with last year's 105 as some museums are undergoing renovation and did not conduct docent training this year. Besides English, FOM docents also provide tours in other languages such as Japanese, Mandarin, French, Korean, Spanish and Tamil. The Japanese docents or JDs are the largest foreign language community and a vital part of FOM with 65 docents. They guided more than 7,400 tours in Japanese at NMS, ACM, TPM and SAM.

B. Member Activities

FOM's mission also includes providing opportunities for our members and the wider community to learn about the history, art and culture of Singapore and Asia. This year all FOM Members had an opportunity to volunteer for "From Singapore to Singaporean: The Bicentennial Experience" exhibition at Fort Canning Park. Our regular member activity groups, namely Explore Singapore, Study Tours, Asian Study Groups, Asian Book Groups, Asian Film Study Group, Textile Enthusiasts Group, Curio, Monday Morning Lectures, and Friday with Friends, continued to engage new arrivals as well as long-term residents of Singapore with their diverse and exciting programs. Besides being opportunities for learning, these activities help members make new friends.

C. Communications

We continue to make improvements for the smooth operation of our re-designed website. We now average about 2400 monthly visits to our sites. Our newsletter, *What's Trending*, offers current updates to all our members. In addition to *What's Trending*, members received a monthly *Museums Newsletter*, highlighting exhibitions, lectures and tours. Members can also keep in touch via FOM's Facebook page, Instagram page and Twitter account. The FOM 'Where in the World' Bag Campaign helped increase FOM's Instagram followers, which went up by 80% this year. FOM's flagship bi-monthly magazine, *PASSAGE*, continues to provide interesting articles relating to art, history and culture. We applied for and received a S\$17,400 grant from NHB for our *FOM Outreach with PASSAGE Magazine* initiative. This will enable us to share the magazine with public libraries, community centres, educational institutions and social service organizations. Ms Karen Goh, Assistant Director, NHB (ECO), launched the initiative during FOM's Open Morning. In terms of Privacy policy, we are committed in safeguarding our members' data. Our Privacy Policy is published on FOM website and we seek to regulate the use and disclosure of our members' data while in our possession.

D. Volunteer Recognition and Appreciation

FOM Council hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Morning (VAM) at the Hard Rock Café on 30 April. About 244 members signed up to attend, with 141 of our members being eligible to be awarded a service pin for their years of service. The 35-year pin awarded to Ms. Sue Sismondo this year was a first for FOM. Every year, FOM honours a volunteer who epitomizes hard work and humility through the Salome De Decker Award. Ms. Sue Sismondo was also the recipient for this year's Salome De Decker award. FOM was recognized as a Supporter of Heritage at the Patron of Heritage Awards (POHA) hosted by NHB.

E. Philanthropy

In our effort to support Singapore's museums and art and heritage sites become inclusive spaces, we launched the FOM Cares initiative. We are working with the museums, NHB and target groups to organize ongoing training and awareness sessions. Our docents guided 137 FOM Cares tours this year, which included tours for seniors and visitors with special needs/disabilities. FOM has committed to continue giving to education through the FOM-NHB Heritage Grant. The grant provides our museums' education and programs staff members with the opportunity to gain valuable experience with some of the world's leading museums. This year's grant recipients are Ms. Cherry Thian

Huey Jye, Senior Manager, Audience, Access & Digital (ACM) and Ms. Chan Sock Mun, Senior Manager, Outreach & Education (SYSNMH).

F. The Future

The next few years will continue to be challenging for our society as two of the major museums where we guide, SAM and TPM, are undergoing renovation. This will continue to have a negative impact on our docent training, an important revenue source which supports our activities and programs. We managed to increase our membership by 18% this year, which will help offset some of the revenue decrease. Moving forward, we hope to find new ways to keep our docents and members engaged. The FOM Outreach with PASSAGE Magazine initiative should help increase awareness for the work FOM does and inspire people to join FOM in the coming years.

Finally, President Garima Lalwani thanked all FOM volunteers for their contributions towards the FOM cause, FOM members for keeping faith in the organization, and FOM partners for their unwavering support to our Society.

The President invited Hon. Treasurer, Durriya Dohadwala to report on our financial year 30 September 2019.

Treasurer's report and presentation of Audited Accounts

The Treasurer informed members that the financial statements are available on the FOM website on the About Us/AGM page.

We ended the financial year with a net surplus of \$24,246.

This is 10% lower than the surplus of \$27,068 in our last financial year (FY18). The year-over-year (YOY) net surplus from Members' Activities decreased by \$4,118. This was mainly due to a fall in the number of Study Tours (net surplus for Study Tours dropped by \$6,419 YOY) though other Members' Activities such as Curio, and Asian Film Study Group helped to offset part of the loss.

FOM40/PASSAGE10 celebrations and the new website's hosting and maintenance costs were the other main expense drivers. We also continued to amortise the cost of developing our new website at \$20,330 annually for the second consecutive year.

A. Income

Total income dropped by \$69,195, or 12% from \$580,089 in the previous year to \$510,894 in FY19.

Study Tour income declined by \$96,134 YOY as only five tours were conducted this year compared to six in the previous year. This shortfall was offset by an increase in membership fee income of \$6,953 and the NHB Heritage Participation Grant of \$22,386. Increase in membership fee income was due to an 18% rise in membership numbers. At the end of FY19, the total number of active members was 1,744.

In June 2018, we were awarded a Heritage Participation Grant of \$22,500 by the National Heritage Board (NHB) to extend distribution of PASSAGE magazine to all local and international schools in Singapore. Of this grant, \$19,486 was recognised in FY19 to partially subsidise our FOM40/PASSAGE10 celebrations of 1 October 2018 and the five issues of PASSAGE magazine from Nov/Dec 2018 to Jul/Aug 2019.

In September 2019, we applied for and were awarded a Heritage Participation Grant of \$17,400 by the NHB to extend distribution of our magazine into Singapore's community for a year. A portion of this grant (\$2900) has been recognised in FY19 for the Sept/Oct 2019 issue.

This year, the total number of docents trained at the museums fell by 40% YOY (from 80 to 48). This was due to the closure of The Peranakan Museum and the Singapore Art Museum for renovation works and a lower number of trainees at the Asian Civilisations Museum and National Museum of Singapore. The loss in income was, however, offset by training at the heritage institutions (Malay Heritage Centre and Indian Heritage Centre) and an increase in training fees for the URA/FOM Heritage Trails.

B. Expenses

Total expenditure fell by \$66,373 or 12% over the previous year mainly in line with the decrease in Study Tour and Docent Training income as explained above.

YOY there was an increase of \$6,129 in web hosting and maintenance expenses for the new website. Also, net expenses for the FOM 40/PASSAGE10 celebrations were \$5,537.

Over the last year, PASSAGE magazine printing expenses increased by \$8,905. This was due to an increase in distribution to schools. In FY18, an average of 1700 copies was printed per issue whereas in FY19 it increased to 2850 per issue.

C. Balance Sheet

At 30 September 2019, FOM had accumulated funds of \$558,513 that was fully backed by cash and time deposits totalling \$869,589.

The financial prudence of past generations of FOM leaders has allowed us to enjoy healthy reserves, and we are committed to ensuring FOM's continued financial viability and astuteness.

Item 2. Vote on resolution to approve the Audited Accounts for the financial year ended 30 September 2019

The President asked for the following motion to be approved:

- Priya Seshadri moved the adoption of the resolution to approve the Audited Accounts for the financial year ended 30 September 2019.
- Susanne Geerdink seconded the resolution.

The President opened the floor for any questions regarding the resolution. There were no questions. The membership was asked to vote to approve the resolution and votes were taken.

Item 3. Vote on resolution to approve the appointment of auditors PlanPartners PAC for the financial year ending 30 September 2020

- Charlotte Dawson moved the adoption of the resolution to approve the appointment of PlanPartners PAC, or successor organisations, as auditors for the year ending 30 September 2020.
- Jo wright seconded the resolution.

The President opened the floor for any questions regarding the resolution. There were no questions. The membership was asked to vote to approve the resolution and votes were taken.

Item 4. Announcement of Resolutions vote and Election results for 2018-19 Council members.

The results of the floor vote were tallied, the President introduced Janice Montgomery, Lead Teller, to read the results.

1. The Motion to approve the Minutes of the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Museums (Singapore) held on 5 December 2018 was APPROVED by a majority vote. The motion was passed.

2. The Motion to approve the Audited Accounts of the Friends of the Museums (Singapore) for the financial year ended 30 September 2019 was APPROVED by a majority vote. The motion was passed.
3. The Motion to appoint PlanPartners PAC, or successor organisations, as auditors for the Friends of the Museums (Singapore) for the financial year ending 30 September 2020 was APPROVED by a majority vote. The motion was passed.

Next Janice Montgomery announced the election results for the FOM 2019 -20 Council Members.

The following 2019-20 Friends of the Museums Council members were ELECTED by the membership:

Position	Council Member	Vote
President	Garima Lalwani	Elected by a majority vote
Vice President	Susan Fong	Elected by a majority vote
Honorary Treasurer	Yasmin Javeri Krishan	Elected by a majority vote
Honorary Secretary	Durga Arivan	Elected by a majority vote
Council Representative	Laura Socha	Elected by a majority vote
Council Representative	Gisella Harrold	Elected by a majority vote
Council Representative	Christine Zeng	Elected by a majority vote
Council Representative	Holly Smith	Elected by a majority vote
Council Representative	Michelle Foo	Elected by a majority vote

The President asked if there were any further questions on the business of the day. No questions were received. The President congratulated the newly elected members of the 2019-20 FOM Council and thanked the 2019 FOM Council for their dedication.

The President thanked everyone who attended and adjourned the meeting at 11:45am.

Minutes recorded by Durga Arivan (Honorary Secretary)

Minutes approved by  President FOM

Date: 11 December 2019