



**MINUTES of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
held on Thursday, 27 June, at 9pm  
at Kelvin Grove Newlands**

**PRESENT:** Brent Meersman (chairing) Donwald Pressly (deputy chair), Clive Keegan, Sue Segar, Lalage Maurer (secretary), Carol van Vuuren, Richard Butt, Monica Graaff, Tessa Graaff, Tony Grogan, Beverley Houston, Twanji Kalula, Alan Lindhorst, Euvrard Loubser, Barbara Maragele, Colleen Monaghan, Thembela Ntongana, Norman Osburn, Margaret Richings, Patric van Blerk.

**APOLOGIES:** Marilyn Keegan, Mark Novitz, Michael Acott, Alex and Sheila Camerer, Gaye Davies, Muriel Hau Yoon, Ernest Hess-Leuttich, Jackie Lange, Lorna Levy, Sue Lipschitz, Klaus & Cornelia Schilling, Peter Soal, Jean-Marie de Waal Pressly

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Minutes of AGM 31st July 2018 were approved by Clive Keegan and Dowald Pressly

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT (Brent Meersman):**

The Cape Town Press Club has a lot going for it. We have excellent attendance by journalists (depending on the speaker of course), a bursary program for students, substantial resources, hundreds of loyal members and unpaid volunteers.

The club turns 45 next year, and it has a prestigious and irreproducible heritage. Nelson Mandela spoke at the club; Zuma announced he was going to run for president; African leaders and Western leaders, and the most newsworthy speakers in the country have for the past four decades addressed us.

Suffice to say that we have maintained a unique, fiercely non-partisan platform for newsworthy and headlining speakers, from a broad spectrum of South African public life. Some people don't like this. The club was loathed by the apartheid government for defending freedom of speech, and allowing figures such as Tutu to address it in 1981.

We also red flag any abuse of reporters on the ground and speak out against any moves to curb the freedom of journalists to do their jobs. Some people don't like this either.

The committee worked extremely hard this year, meeting almost every second week for the first few months, more often than any previous committee of the club. Also, attendance at committee meetings was very high, with only the occasional absence.

Whereas 19 functions were held between the two previous AGMs, a period of 9 months, in the past 9 months we have held 31 functions.

In the build-up to the elections we had the chairperson of the IEC, and also senior leadership of the ANC Ibrahim Rasool, PAC Narius Moloto, DA Musi Mamane, IFP Prince Buthulezi, UDM Bantu Holomisa, COPE Terror Lekota, and the Good Party's Brett Herron. We also had Patricia de Lille the day before she vacated her position as mayor.

Among our biggest functions were Musi Mamane, Roelf Meyer, FW de Klerk and Athol Trollip (shortly after his ousting as Mayor of Nelson Mandela Bay). Magda Wierzycka also drew a crowd.

It was most gratifying to have a number of journalists address the club, with Pieter Louis-Myburgh topping the charts with his book on Ace Magashule, amidst threats of book burnings; and bumper attendance at RW Johnson's talk, also Kimon de Greef, Jan-Jan Joubert, and we co-hosted with the US consulate ex-CNN producer Jennifer Thomas.

The British High Commissioner Nigel Casey also addressed us.

I won't go through the full list, but we also had a range of speakers from a number of think tanks discussing some of the most profound issues – such as unemployment and land redistribution which face our country.

Thank you to the committee:

Andrew Donaldson, who helped us with urgent press releases when journalists were imprisoned or murdered, but who has now emigrated to the UK).

Brian Hopkins, who made a major contribution in getting our membership database and programme in order. He is stepping down now.

Clive Keegan, as always, stalwart of the club, who also chaired Prof John Higgins on press freedom and tolerance.

Deputy chairs Marilyn Keegan and Donwald Pressly, who held the fort while I was away for all of November 2018 and May this year. Donwald is also instrumental in getting many of our speakers, as is Sue Segar.

Mark Nowitz, our resident advocate, who has helped us with numerous legal matters. Also to Carol-Ann van Vuuren who did a sterling job while our secretary Lalage was overseas.

Most importantly our secretary Lalage Maurer who is fully employed 24/7 10 days a week on a part-time basis!

A deep thank you to all our loyal members, and I must single out Mr Ben Rabinowitz for his extremely generous support throughout the year.

We also engaged new auditors, Browne and Associates, and we thank them for greatly discounting their fees.

Sadly, a number of members and former members passed away:

Rudi Andrist

Carol Hobday

Lesley McKenzie

Nigel Murphy

Anton Steenkamp

Cloete Breytenbach

We also remember Raymond Louw.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT (Lalage Maurer) :**

The highlights of the Annual Financial Statements for 2018 are as follows :

The increase in revenue for 2018 of R8,371 is due to higher subscription receipts of R47,500 which includes early bird payments for the 2019 year but is negatively impacted by lower function takings as well as zero sponsorship income.

The deficit for the year of R81,020 compared with the profit of R33,164 for 2017 is due to the downward fair value adjustment of the Allan Gray Unit Trusts of R33,793, as well as higher function costs. (Please note that the Allan Gray Unit Trusts have gone back up by R30,983 since 31 December 2018)

It was thus necessary to dip into the reserves of the club. This is evidenced by the decrease in total assets shown on page 8 of the Statement of Financial Position.

We held 25 functions in 2018 and the total profit realised from these functions was R26,421 which was not the profit hoped for. An increase in functions and better attendances will bolster these figures in 2019 and we are hard at work to acquire new sponsors.

It is important to note that we no longer have a wine sponsorship from Distell and an auditing sponsorship from Bass Gordon and these are costs that the club is absorbing in 2019.

The current balances of the Cape Town Press Club as at 26 June 2019 are as follows :

Current Account :	R1,028
Call Account :	R28,346
Allan Gray Units: Press Club:	R152,276
Allan Gray Units: Barry Streek Fund:	R363,820

The Financials were approved by Donwald Pressly and Susan Segar

## **APPOINTMENT OF THE AUDITORS**

Browne and Associates were reappointed as the auditors by Clive Keegan and Brent Meersman

## **SPECIAL RESOLUTION**

The following resolution submitted by Mark Nowitz was unanimously passed by the members present.

Motivation: in order to widen the net for possible sponsorship for the club including foundational support, it is necessary to make the club an appropriate legal entity.

“Resolved that the Cape Town Press Club, currently a voluntary association, be converted into a non profit company (NPC) in terms of the Companies Act No 71 of 2008.

Resolved further that the existing Constitution be amended to accord with the provisions of a standard Memorandum of Incorporation (MOI), suitably adapted.”

## **MEMBERSHIP:**

After deliberations by the committee it is proposed that the club's membership categories be amended. As we understand the history, the club was originally only for members of the media and other people could join as associate members. At some point it was decided there would only be one category. The result has been a dilution of the press contingent; however the club would not have survived without broadening its membership. The downside is that fellow journalists have stopped taking ownership of the club - it is therefore seen as "not us, but in our name" as a journo on the Daily Maverick put it to me.

After a discussion among the members present it was agreed membership categories will be amended as follows:

### **Full member: R500 per annum**

Restricted to working and former journalists and foreign correspondents, including news photographers, bloggers and cartoonists. Existing members, who joined prior to 2020, continue to be full members. Also former journalists.

### **Associate member: R600 per annum**

Open to people in the media, communications industries, writers, editors, spokespersons, consular and diplomatic staff, news sources and persons who share a keen interest in current affairs and who wish to participate in civil life.

### **Student member: R25 per annum**

Must be a full-time student studying journalism at a tertiary institution or a journalism student interning at a news organisation in the Western Cape

### **Associate student member: R25 per annum**

Must be a full-time student studying at a tertiary institution in the Western Cape

## **ELECTION OF COMMITTEE**

Nine candidates were nominated.

Eight candidates were elected as follows: Brent Meersman; Donwald Pressly, Twanji Kalula, Beverley Houston; Thembela Ntongana, Sue Segar; Colleen Monaghan; Clive Keegan.

Mark Novitz was co-opted on to the committee.

Lalage Maurer serves as secretary ex officio

## **SPECIAL UNOPPOSED MOTION**

The Cape Town Press Club mourns the passing of Nigel Murphy and expresses its appreciation of his outstanding contribution to journalism, broadcasting, and the club itself as a past chairman, and regular attendance of its functions in his retirement. (Alan Lindhorst)

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting which started at 9.00pm on Thursday, 27 June 2019, and closed at 10:15pm