



REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR 1JUNE2017-31 MAY 2018

The Board of Trustees held a total of four meetings during the year on 28 November 2017, 23 March 2018, 1 June 2018 and 10 August 2018.

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BOT) AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

As at the start of the year, the Board consisted of nine voting members drawn from academia, professionals and corporate leaders and with Prof Dr. Ahmad Ismail as Interim Honorary Treasurer joining them from the meeting on 23 March 2018.

At the AGM held in September 2017, Ar. John Koh, Dato' Ghazali Dato' Yusoff and Lim Lee Hock were re-elected to the Board.

At the first meeting, Ar. John Koh was re-elected as BOT Chair and Dato' Ghazali was re-appointed as Vice Chair.

REVIEW OF THE FINANCES OF MNS

The Society has achieved a total operating surplus of RM315 thousand for year ended 31st May 2018 as compared to a surplus of RM10 thousand for the previous year. The Society's total revenue for the year showed an increase of 1.15% from RM5.06 million to RM5.83 million for the current financial year. The total expenditure for the year amounted to RM5.51 million against RM5.05 million for the previous year, an increase of 1.09%.

Donations of RM46 thousand were received during the year and RM276 thousand was set aside in the Sustainability Fund.

The total cash balance as at 31st May 2018 is RM4.06 million as compared to RM 3.81 million of the last financial period.

FINANCIAL RESERVES

As at the end of the financial year on 31st May 2017, reserves remained at RM1.6 million. The BOT deems this level of reserves as unsatisfactory.

As at the end of the financial year on 31st May 2018, total reserves of RM2 million include the following, the utilization of which requires the approval of the Board:-

1. Fiduciary Funds of RM347,905
2. 70th Anniversary Celebration of RM316,838
3. Merdeka Award Fund of RM272,443
4. Heritage Fund of RM67,835
5. Building Fund of RM629,254

The Property Fund remains depleted from the original balance of RM946,441 arising from the deficit suffered in the 2014/2015 financial year. The Council will endeavor to achieve surpluses in the forthcoming years to reinstate if not to increase the original sum of the Property Fund.

ACTIONS TAKEN BY BOT

Members of the Board contributed through the Governance of the Society in the area of **financial stewardship, supporting formulated policies and defining strategic futures.**

- **Sustainability of MNS Parks and Education Centres**

The Parks and Centre's Focus Group chaired by Dato Christopher Boyd has undertaken an in-depth study of the financial performance of all the centres with view of Setting Goals for the centres for the coming year and exploring opportunities collaborating with Eco and Nature Specialists as at the Dark Caves Conservation Site.

- **MNS Going Digital**

- The Malaysian Naturalist on the Board's recommendation has made the publication available electronically to the members free of charge. To reduce publication cost, limited copies are only provided for those wishing to pay to receive the print publication.
- Improvement of the MNS website and platform have been undertaken and the recommendation to develop an MNS App has been considered by the Management Team.

- **Brand Enhancement**

- BOT initiated MNS participation in the 9th World Urban Forum (WUF 9) in Kuala Lumpur in Feb 2018 whence MNS organized and participated in the Networking Session on the 'Role of Non-State Actors in the Protection of Urban Green Environment - Case Study : - Malaysia'. This global event highlighted the role of MNS in Urban Forest Conservation and in particular the Urban Community Forest Project. It also facilitated the participation of MNS Birdlife partners from Bhutan, Cambodia, Myanmar and Nepal, and gave HQ staff exposure. This can be considered as capacity building ; as part and parcel of raising the Profile and the Brand of MNS.

- **Publicity - Bringing into Print**

2 of 4 MNS Merdeka Award Grantees' works namely "Waterbirds and Wetlands survey of Sarawak Coast and Mangroves" and " Fireflies of northern Sarawak" have been published in the Malaysian Naturalist March-May 2018 and June-August 2018 issues.

These publications together with the 3rd and 4th installments will give a good overview of the Grantees' research, the challenges and achievements faced by them and spin-off conservation benefits.

RECOMMENDATION

- The Board of Trustees maintain its recommendation to continue to improve the financial status of the Society.
- Leadership and development of management skills are crucial.
- The run-up to the celebration of MNS 80th Anniversary in 2020 should be viewed as an opportunity for Council and the Management Team to intensify efforts in the following areas requiring focused attention.
- **Membership Development**
 - Making MNS accessible to Youth in particular uniformed groups and to be inclusive to those who are marginalized.
In this regard, the development of an **MNS App** would allow the public to access general information about events and information.
 - Encourage members to respond to organized events, provide feedback, register interest, receive notifications regarding news and updates on the App.
 - Encouragement of senior members or members who are retired to volunteer for MNS events is just as important as membership retention.
A target was previously set to increase the current 2400 to 5000 members by the end of 2020.
- **Parks and Education Centres**
 - Upgrade the Management of Parks and Centres to ensure their sustainability.
- **Conservation and Fund Raising**
 - As a pilot project, the proposed upgrading of the HQ to a Nature Education Centre (Rumah Tapir) can focus on the ongoing Tapir Conservation and Awareness Program ; profile the extensive works on the Belum-Temenggor Hornbill project and the SunBear Project. This pilot project will call for Funding and this project will complement the UCF project and MNS Urban Environment Education Hub in MidValley.
 - This initiative will also facilitate the repair and restoration of MNS HQ as a Heritage Building in the precinct of Historic Federal Hill.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank my fellow Trustees in particular Ms. Ho Yuet Mee and Tan Sri Dr. Salleh Mohd Nor who will be leaving the Board for giving their time, expertise and experience to the essential role of Governance.

Also my grateful thanks to Stephanie Bacon for providing the much required secretarial support to the Board.

In a boat race, we need to row in a synchronized fashion as a team and persevere in the face of obstacles, for this I also give my thanks to the Management and MNS staff.

Ar. John Koh
Chair