

**MINUTES OF THE SEGH BOARD MEETING HELD ON 25TH APRIL 2023 AT 1pm
(WAT) ON ZOOM**

Agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Matters arising from the last Minutes
4. Report on Greece 2023 Conference
5. Report on Membership and Finance
6. Website updates
7. Report on Fellows' Matters
8. Report from EGAH
9. Report on ECR Matters
10. Other Business
 - i) Further discussion on Bids for 2024 SEGH Conference
 - ii) Consideration for Honorary Membership
 - iii) Membership Certificates/Nos.
12. Adjournment and Closing

Attendance:

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| 1. A Olatunji | 11. F Ajayi |
| 2. B Kaninga | 12. F Onyangore |
| 3. O Osano | 13. M Gabersek |
| 4. O Morton-Bermea | 14. M Barbieri |
| 5. S Potgieter | 15. C Prater |
| 6. O Humphrey | 16. J Olajide-Kayode |
| 7. D Purchase | |
| 8. A Argyraki | |
| 9. M Watts | |
| 10. T Laniyan | |

In his opening address AO welcomed DP to her first Board Meeting. DP expressed her gratitude for the invite.

1. Apologies were received from:

1. Anthea Brown
2. Andrew Hursthouse
3. Keith Torrance
4. Zaffar Hashmi

2. The minutes of the last meeting was summarised by AO and it was adopted as the correct record of proceedings at the last meeting with motions moved by FA and OO.

3. On matters that arose from the minutes, it was reported that:

- (i) MW had sent sponsorship contact list to AA.
- (ii) The Chair of each Conference is to add maintenance of the Sponsorship Database to their responsibilities, and pass it to the next Chair upon conclusion of the Conference.
- (iii) AA reported that the options for live-streaming of the Conference were: Members - Euro 20, Non-members - Euro 50 (Euro 30 to go to the Society for membership but without journal access).
- (iv) The list of Past Presidents of the Society had been put on the website.
- (v) There had been no action on rallying the ECRs.

4. AA presented reports on the progress made on Greece 2023. Sponsorship had been received to the tune of Euro 7,186 from MDPI *Toxics* (Euro 500) and *Water* (Euro 300), Eldorado Gold Corp. (Euro 2,170), AMMAE (Euro 1,488), Marathon Data Systems (Euro 620), NEXUS MONARC (Euro 1,488) and KAPPA LAB (Euro 620). Another Euro 3,000 was still expected from the Dean of School of Sciences of the host Institution. No response was received to the mail sent to Agillent for sponsorship. MW added that Springer Nature had agreed to sponsor prizes to the tune of USD 800. DP and AO suggested that Springer could do more. AO had reached out to Springer on sponsorship but was yet to get a feedback. MW again reiterated that it is best to submit requests for sponsorship for conferences by November/December of each year, so that companies can include the requests in their budget plans for the coming year.

AA gave a breakdown of those that had registered for the Conference per country and that Euro 11,025 had been realised from registration. AA stated that she would send the list of registrants to KT and JO to check their membership status. 127 abstracts had been received; with 79 of them requesting oral presentation while 46 requested poster presentations. Of the 105 total presenting authors, 25 had registered for the Conference while 79 were yet to register. On live-streaming, AA asked if the SEGH Zoom account can be used, and OH responded that it can be used. For excursion, 12 people had registered for the excursion to Methana (Euro 1,980), but the minimum required is 25 participants.

AA reported that she received some requests for sponsorship from intending participants. She sought the opinion of the Board on this, as she was running on a very tight budget. SP suggested that the actual cost of sponsorship per person should be evaluated, and that people should apply (e.g. with a Motivation Letter) stating why they should be considered for sponsorship. Sponsors could then take up sponsorship for participants that qualify. AA stated that she would work on this. SP also advised that the lunch should be served as it is an opportunity to network, and not packed; as a packed lunch will encourage people to “roam”. In addition, MW suggested that sponsorship consideration should be given only to those who show evidence that they are attending the conference e.g. registration, booked accommodation or visa obtained. He then suggested that based on need and availability of funds, aspects of the cost of the conference such

as the registration or accommodation could be waived for those who qualify. AA stated that there were no accommodations available on campus.

AA informed the Board that due to the number of Abstracts received, those with two Abstracts will have one scheduled as Oral while the other will be Poster presentation. Posters will be flash presentations while Oral presentation will be a total of 12 minutes (including Q & A). She also added that as a courtesy to conference attendees from other countries, senior researchers from Greece will be scheduled mostly for Poster presentations. MW also suggested that the time for the Keynote Addresses should be reduced to curb monotony. AA stated that the Keynote presentations will be 30 minutes (including Q & A).

AO expressed excitement about the spread of the Abstracts by Country. He hoped that the challenge of securing Visas especially for African participants will be surmounted. He added that he expects majority of the Board Members to attend the Conference in Athens.

Action:

(i) AA to send list of registrants to KT and JO to vet their membership status (Status: Done).

(ii) AA to include that the Euro 50 remote access fee for non-members though including annual membership, is without journal access (Status: Done).

(iii) AA to determine cost per participants for possible sponsorships.

5. JO reported that of the 141 members in the database, 10 had memberships that had lapsed or that would lapse in a matter of weeks. Reminder emails had been sent to those affected to renew their membership. He added that at the conference of the umbrella body for Geoscientists in Nigeria (the Nigerian Mining and Geosciences Society) held in the last week of March, a booth was set up to sensitize participants about SEGh and the benefits of joining the Society. He stated that the contact details of those that indicated interest were taken and they had been contacted.

On finance, JO also reported that for the period 1.4.2022 to 31.3.2023; opening balance was GBP 5,358.11, income was GBP 8,216.83 and expenditure was GBP 7,269.52. The balance as at 31.3.2023 was GBP 6,305.42.

AO again pointed out that membership drive is a key responsibility of all Board Members, and each person should bring in more members from their Regions.

Action: Board Members to improve on membership drive.

6. OH reported that there was good engagement with the website with 360 users since the last update, and an average session time of 2.5 minutes. The 2023 Conference, Board Members, Join SEGh, and SEGh Live links were the most visited. He added that the SEGh Live sessions could benefit from better attendance, and that the weekly email broadcasts sent by the Secretary would not suffice in giving it better publicity. He enjoined Board Members to use other professional body and social network platforms to promote the SEGh Live events. He also reminded members to write a blog for the website.

Action: Members to improve on publicity of the SEGh Fellows Seminars, and to write a blog.

7. There were no updates on Fellows' Matters.

8. MW reported on some statistics for EGAH: 429 submissions had been received in 2023 with ca. 60% rejection rate. He mentioned that there were fundamental issues of structure, methodology (description of measurements and evidence of quality of the measurements) and sample size/element of interest in many of the manuscripts received. He also stated that the journal was reaching a breaking capacity for handling the manuscripts. However, new Handling Editors were being recruited (6 added in 2023, 2 more to be added) and OH; who is serving as an Editorial Assistant, sends reminders to Handling Editors on the need to attend to papers assigned to them. In 2023, the average time to first decision had been reduced from 20 to 13 days, and from 25 days to 8 days for average time for rejection. The average time for acceptance was 125 days in 2022 and now 65 days in 2023. The Editorial Assistant now sends a reminder to Handling Editors every week. The system being adopted is that in cases where second reviewers were not forthcoming, the Handling Editor can make a decision on the manuscript using their expertise and judgement in addition to the report from the first reviewer. DP stated that some Associate Editors were not yet aware of the move of EGAH from Editorial Manager to SNAPP. Work is being done to ensure that they are informed. Also, the landing page of EGAH is being improved/updated to give very clear guidance on what is required of authors submitting manuscripts. She added that she filled an online survey from Springer Nature in which the challenges being faced with the SNAPP system were detailed, and she hoped that noticeable improvements would be made to the system soon.

On Special Issues, MW reported that the Lead Guest Editors for *Fate, speciation analysis and ecotoxicology of emerging metallic contaminants (Technology-Critical Elements: TCEs) in aquatic environments: current knowledge and future challenges* (Dr. Melina Abdou and Dr. Carlos Monteiro), have shown interests in doing an SEGH Live event and in joining the Board. The SIs which are on board EGAH include those on Contamination around Coal Mines (which has about 30 papers), Environment and Health (which has about 15 papers), etc.

MW stated that he was surprised with the backlog of papers still in the SNAPP system waiting to be released into an Issue. He said to clear the backlog of 240 papers, 80 (instead of 15 to 20) papers will be released in the next Issue. EGAH will try to clear the backlog of papers this year. Ad-hoc publishing to commence next year. MW also reported that the EGAH handler at Springer is very keen for growth of EGAH and Springer has identified EGAH as a journal with great potential for growth.

9. MW had asked what was being done to retain the ECRs from the different regions especially those from the British Academy Workshop, stating that a lot of work went into bringing them back into the fold. AO stated that almost all ECRs from the Nigerian cohort were retained, and agreed with MW that it was important that those from the other regions be retained/engaged too. OO suggested that a meeting be held with the ECRs on the Board to fashion out modalities for rejuvenating the ECR drive. A *steering committee* composed of AO, OO, FA, MG, OH, JO, BK, KT and AA was set up to discuss setting up an ECR activity/event soon, and to think of how to retain them going forward.

Action: AO and OO to meet with FA, MG, OH, JO, BK, KT and AA on setting up an event/activity for the ECRs.

10. (a) Proposal for Board Membership submitted by Carlos Monteiro and Melina Abdou for the European Region had been sent to members for consideration. JO was asked to send a vote poll to all members on the proposals.

Action: JO to send a poll to members to vote on the Board Membership proposal (Status: Done).

(b) Bids for SEGH 2024: only Nigeria had signified an intention to host the 2024 Conference. Members were enjoined to think about possible hosts for the 2024 Conference and come up with suggestions by the June meeting. MW suggested that two events should be planned for the year 2024.

Action: Members to make suggestions on SEGH2024 host by June meeting.

(c) AO presented the proposal from KT for conferment of Honorary Membership on Anthea Brown, in respect of her meritorious service and commitment to SEGH over the decades. The members unanimously agreed.

(d) There were calls from certain members on the need to issue membership certificates. The Board asked JO to work with KT on it.

Action: JO to work with KT on the design of membership certificates.

12. The meeting was unanimously adjourned and ended at 2:40pm WAT.