

Saint Lucia National Trust

44th Annual General Meeting

November 28th, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 13:03 by Chairperson Alison King.

In attendance: Approximately 120 members, of which 90 joined via Zoom and
30 joined via Facebook.

The National Anthem was played. An opening prayer was delivered by Joanne Norville.

Apologies received: none.

Council members present: Ms. Alison King, Chairperson; Dr. Alison Gajadhar, Vice Chairperson; Ms. Mandy St. Rose, Secretary; Calixte George Jr.; and Kirk Elliott.

Approval of Agenda

Director Bishnu Tulsie requested that a message from the Secretary General of the International National Trust Organisation (INTO) be added after the opening of the meeting; that point #9 read “Appointment of Auditors for the period 2020 – 2021”;

and that “Launch of membership loyalty programme and review of membership categories” should be added under “Any Other Business”.

These items arose after the circulation of the agenda.

A motion to adopt the revised agenda was made by Mr. Cyril Saltibus, seconded by Mr. Calixte George Jr. and approved by the members in attendance.

Opening

Her Excellency Dame Pearlette Louisy delivered an opening address that highlighted the difference in circumstances between the last AGM and the present, transitioning from a physical, intimate gathering that sought not only to update the membership, but also to enjoy each other’s company, to a remote setting, physically distanced from one another, but no less committed to the objectives of the Trust. In a year that, even aside from COVID-19, was marked by heartache and broken promises, Dame Pearlette stressed the need to remain committed to the cause, and commended the Trust for its steadfastness, its indomitable spirit, and its wholehearted embrace of the stewardship of the patrimony of our native land, for the current generation, as well as those to come.

Message from INTO

A recorded message from the Secretary General of the INTO, Catherine Leonard, was shared with attendees. Ms. Leonard spoke of the impact of COVID-19 on

heritage organisations, not only in terms of those directly impacted from a health perspective, but also specifically the loss of income, unexpected expenditure, and reduced contact between members. However, Ms. Leonard also highlighted the ways in which heritage organisations have embraced digital platforms and shown willingness to work together during such challenging times.

Chairperson King expressed her gratitude, on behalf of the Trust, for Ms. Leonard's message of solidarity.

Minutes of Previous AGM

No changes were suggested to the circulated minutes which were considered as having been read. Mr. Cyril Saltibus moved a motion for the adoption of the Minutes. This was seconded by Mr. Calixte George Jr and approved by members in attendance. Subsequent to this, Ms. Ulrike Krauss suggested that in future, individual contributors be mentioned by name, rather than the minutes referencing "another member said...".

Matters Arising

Bishnu Tulsie raised a series of points, as follows:

1. A member had encouraged engagement between the Trust and Massy Stores from an education perspective, which is ongoing.

2. A jingle had been suggested that speaks to plastics. Although other jingles had been produced, there were no plans for a plastic-specific jingle.
3. As it relates to the River Doree protected landscape, and the Má Kôte Mangrove, the Trust remained engaged with the River Doree Action Committee, and the Má Kôte Mangrove would be covered later in the AGM.
4. In terms of social media, the Trust's presence has increased.
5. Expansion of membership is ongoing.
6. With regard to the Intellectual Property framework, discussions are underway with the Folk Research Centre on collaborative efforts.
7. The Cabot development would be covered at length later in the AGM.
8. Outreach activities had been scaled back because of COVID-19.
9. The archiving of photographs forms part of the Strategic Plan.
10. A public survey to determine areas of interest within historic sites is complete, and results will be shared later in the AGM, but it focused more on the safety of patrons than other areas.
11. As it relates to the inclusion of a Youth Representative on the Council, Mr. Tulsie encouraged members to keep this in mind during the election of Councilors later in the AGM .
12. Security of the Married Women's Quarters will be covered later in the AGM.
13. The evaluation and adjustment of the organisational structure has taken place as part of the Strategic Plan.

Additional comments raised as follows:

1. As it relates to the earlier comment from Ulrike Krauss concerning the naming of contributors, the general consensus was that this should be included in future minutes, though Dr. Gilbertha St. Rose disagreed, and Mr. Cyril Saltibus suggested that the commentator be asked if they want to appear on record. Mr. Gerry George and Dr. Alison Gajadhar agreed with this approach, while Ms. Justine Charles commented that the emphasis should be more on decisions made rather than individual comments.
2. Ms. Diana Theodore enquired as to the status of the Pointe Sable Environmental Protection Area (PSEPA), to which the response was that Vieux Fort staff members are monitoring the area, and attention was drawn to the ongoing mangrove enhancement and reforestation project funded by the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund.

Nominations

The Nomination process was held early in the proceedings, because of the virtual nature of the meeting. An explanation of the process was provided by Ms. Joanne Norville, Communications and Advocacy Assistant. Nominations would be made first, before voting opens. The link to vote could be found in the email, sent to fully paid-up members only. A number of members had not received the link, so this was recirculated and time allowed for all members to confirm receipt.

Three (3) members had indicated an intention to stand down: Mr. Vincent “Jeg” Clarke; Ms. Mandy St. Rose; and Dr. Alison Gajadhar. The Director took the opportunity to thank these members for their service.

Nine (9) nominations were received ahead of the AGM, and the window for further nominations remained open at this time. The initial nominations were as follows:

1. Ms. Alison King (nominated by Dr. Alison Gajadhar and seconded by Mr. Cyril Saltibus)
2. Mr. Calixte George Jr. (nominated by Mr. Kirk Elliott and seconded by Ms. Thecla Deterville)
3. Dr. Christine Parris (nominated by Ms. Nadia Cazaubon and seconded by Mr. Shane Edgar)
4. Mr. Cyril Saltibus (nominated by Ms. Diane Theodore and seconded by Mr. Neil Archer)
5. Mr. Donovan Brown (nominated by Ms. Nadia Cazaubon and seconded by Ms. Euphemia Edmund)
6. Mr. Matthew Render (nominated by Ms. Mandy St. Rose and seconded by Mr. Sean Compton)
7. Mr. Sean Compton (nominated by Ms. Mandy St. Rose and seconded by Dr. Jimmy Fletcher)
8. Ms. Snaliah Mahal (nominated by Ms. Nadia Cazaubon and seconded by Ms. Euphemia Edmund)
9. Mr. Kirk Elliott (nominated by Ms. Alison King and seconded by Mr. Embert Charles)

Additional nominations were received during the meeting as follows:

10. Ms. Finola Jennings-Clarke (nominated by Ms. Mandy St. Rose and seconded by Ms. Sian Rambally)
11. Mr. Anselm Gittens (nominated by Ms. Justine Charles, but he declined the nomination)

There being no further nominations, Mr. Cyril Saltibus moved to close the nominations. This motion was seconded by Mr. Peter Lansiquot and approved by members in attendance. Nominees were then invited to address the attendees.

Mr. Cyril Saltibus wished all nominees luck, and pledged his commitment to continue the work of the Trust, a sentiment echoed by Ms. Finola Jennings-Clarke. Dr. Parris announced that her desire to serve had been reignited. Alison Gajadhar thanked the membership for the opportunity to serve, and wished the nominees luck.

The Director informed members that the names of all nominees will be uploaded to the voting platform and that they may cast their votes at their convenience. He reminded members that they may vote for a maximum of seven candidates.

Chairperson's Report

Chairperson King once again welcomed all attendees to the first virtual Trust AGM, acknowledging the extent to which COVID-19 has changed everything around us, and announcing that the electronic voting process had been tested and verified, and that a survey would be circulated at the end of the meeting.

As it relates to the past year, Ms. King holds mixed feelings, recognising that the Strategic Plan and Organisational Restructuring had been completed and implemented, but noting of course the impact of COVID-19, with net revenue dropping from \$1.247m to \$197,000, while spending amounted to \$1m more than what was earned, an unsustainable position. The unfortunate consequences of the required reduction in operating costs already implemented by Council. Going forward salary cuts and severances will have to be implemented, which in turn requires close examination of the work plan, to maintain critical activities and keep the Pigeon Island National Landmark (PINL) open. The financial health of the Trust will be monitored on an ongoing basis, with staff reinstated where possible. The Chairperson emphasised the difficulties in making such decisions, but stressed that viable alternatives do not exist. She thanked the team members for their commitment over the year, particularly in light of the difficult circumstances faced by the Trust.

Meetings

Seventeen (17) meetings were held during the year, typically starting at 5pm and lasting for at least five hours. Attendance at meetings was recorded as follows:

Ms. Alison King	–	17 meetings
Dr. Alison Gajadhar	–	15 meetings
Ms. Mandy St. Rose	–	16 meetings
Mr. Calixte George Jr.	–	13 meetings

Mr. Kirk Elliott – 13 meetings
Mr. Sean Compton – 7 meetings (was off island at the start of the Covid lock down and unable to return for 7 months)
Mr. Laurent Jn. Pierre (Archeological & Historical Society representative) – 11 meetings
Dr. Nicholas Frederick (AHS representative) – 11 meetings
Mr. Vincent “Jeg” Clarke – 8 meetings
Ms. Nancy Charles (Government representative) – 7 meetings
Mr. Henry Amedee (Government representative) – 2 meetings

Challenges

In addition to the survival of the Trust, several other major challenges were identified. Despite promises by Government that the Royal Gaol in Castries would be preserved, this was not to be, and the Government demonstrated that its word could not be relied upon, and that the patrimony of the country is disposable. Despite the purported urgency of the Halls of Justice project, no further action has been taken since the prison was demolished earlier in the year.

Similarly, the Cabot development is another example of the apparent lack of concern for the patrimony of Saint Lucia and the rights of its citizens on the part of Government and its agencies. The development has been allowed to proceed without the requisite environmental, social or archeological assessments having been completed. Partnerships with various groups and individuals were inculcated by the Trust, and ultimately an EIA was initiated. However, despite this, the Trust

is poised to file a case, *via* its lawyers, to challenge the DCA's decision to proceed with the project. The Chairperson singled out Mr. Akim Larcher and Ms. Finola Jennings-Clarke, as well as an anonymous donor, for their unwavering support of the Trust's efforts in this area.

The Anse L'Ivrogne development, situated within the Piton Management Area, is another major cause for concern, and once again, the DCA and agencies of Government demonstrated scant regard for the heritage of Saint Lucia. Engagement with the developer has not assuaged the Trust's concerns that the World Heritage status of the PMA could be jeopardised by this project, and the Trust has called upon the Piton Management Area Advisory Committee (PMAAC), of which the Trust is a member, to investigate further, though there is little hope that this will happen.

Having completed the process of identifying a replacement Director for the Trust, Council wrote to the Prime Minister requesting approval for the appointment of Mrs. Jeannine Compton-Antoine to the position. As is now common knowledge, the request was rejected, as were subsequent attempts to convince the Prime Minister to change his mind. Mrs. Compton-Antoine has been appointed as Corporate Services Manager, while Mr. Tulsie continues to serve as Director.

Achievements

During the last financial year, the Trust saw an increase in net assets of 0.6%, to \$13,225,352, and growth in income of 10%, or \$247,688, to \$2,651,307, while

expenditure increased by 2% to \$2,469,993. Growth emanated from PINL entrance fees, rentals, guided tours, and weddings, while revenue from events, sales of publications and photo shoots all declined. Operating expenditure increased by 3%, or \$61,725, while direct expenditure fell by 3%, or \$5,264. The cost of hosting weddings increased by 52%. As at March 2020, the Trust recorded a reduction of \$293,223 in its net cash position. More information is available in the audit report, shared with members ahead of the meeting.

A number of new initiatives involving external partners, launched during the course of the year, were highlighted as follows:

1. COVID-19 support from the INTO

The INTO reached out to the Trust in April, offering support in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. While the level of funding received was small, it facilitated the purchase of PPE supplies and two laptops for staff members who were forced by the Covid-19 protocols to work from home.

2. BIOPAMA Rapid Response grant

A grant application to assist the Trust to continue its work in protected area management was successful, enabling the purchase of equipment, including a drone to assist with site monitoring, species monitoring and fieldwork.

3. Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EBA) project

This project, which covers the PINL and PSEPA, was approved by the Caribbean Biodiversity Fund in January 2020, financed by the German Development Bank, and has a budget of US\$1,079,345, of which \$893,055 is grant funds, and \$186,290 is the Trust's in-kind contribution. More information on this project will follow later in the meeting.

4. AMEXCID (Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation)

The Trust along with other heritage Management organisations and interests reached out to AMEXCID via the local Mexican embassy and the office of the Prime Minister, to submit a project proposal comprising a number of elements: the development of a national policy and Bill for heritage management; the creation of a registry for heritage assets; the development of local skills in preservation techniques for built heritage assets; the eradication of alien invasive species of flora within the Piton Management Area; the development of local skills in interpreting heritage sites; historical and biocultural investigations of the Dauphin valley; and development of management plans for key historical sites. The proposal is being reviewed and expected to start in the first quarter of 2021.

5. Embassy of Cuba

The Trust reached out to the Embassy of Cuba for assistance with an engineering assessment of structural damage caused by seismic movements at the Married Women's Quarters, making recommendations including designs and costings to

address them, and proposals to convert the site into a museum. The prospects for the project seem encouraging.

The Chairperson highlighted the importance of forging partnerships to assist with the work of the Trust, and referenced support received over the last twelve months from 45 individuals, 16 private-sector businesses, 20 public-sector organisations, 10 national non-governmental organisations, 10 regional organisations, 13 international organisations, 7 friendly governments and inter-governmental organisations. The Trust also engaged students from six schools. She extended profound thanks to all, on behalf of the Trust, and also to Mrs. Michelle Stephen Jules for assisting with the funding strategy roadmap.

Membership

During the year, the Trust welcomed 135 new members, and saw 206 renewals, with 608 members financially up-to-date and 2,658 additional individuals in the register. More information on Membership activities will be covered later under Programme Reports.

The Chairperson took this opportunity to thank the following long-standing (>20 years) staff of the Trust:

Stanley Hilaire	–	28 years
Eleanor Maurille	–	25 years
Esther Mayers	–	25 years

Barbara Antoine – 24 years
Eulalie Marcellin – 23 years
Murlina Murray – 21 years

Programme Report

The Director referred to the Programme Report circulated ahead of the AGM, and which is attached to these Minutes. He spoke briefly to the following related matters:

1. Conservation
 - (i) Built Heritage
 - (ii) Training
 - (iii) Grant Proposal Writing
2. Education & Advocacy
3. Membership
4. Corporate & Business Services

Questions

1. Ms. Kimoyia Rose and Mr. Embert Charles asked about the Dolphinarium. Mr. Tulsie indicated that there has been no public update, and that although the project allegedly remains on the table, there is no activity at this time.
2. Mr. Cyril Saltibus asked about the Discover Saint Lucia section of the report, specifically, Moule-a-Chique lighthouse and US bunkers, and the Black Bay sites, and urged action, despite the pressures on the team. Mr. Tulsie

confirmed that the Trust is in talks with SLASPA and that funding is required to replace the lighthouse dome. Ms. Althea Valmont indicated a willingness to assist in this area, and Mr. Gerry George echoed the need for action, suggesting that it would encourage wider participation. Mr. Embert Charles recommended collaborating with the Folk Research Centre and the Cultural Development Foundation. Ms. Jolien Harmsen reminded those in attendance that there had previously been talk of establishing a Moule-a-Chique National Landmark, along the lines of the PINL, drawing attention to the history and ecology of the area, overlooking as it did, the site of the first attempt at settlement by the English anywhere in the Caribbean, and its role as the site for a missile tracking station in the 1960s.

3. Ms. Diana Theodore raised the question of preservation of chattel houses, to which Mr. Calixte George Jr. responded that there is little appetite for compensation, even pre-COVID, and stressed the need to advocate for a new agenda on the funding of historic building conservation.
4. Ms. Cheryl Didier-Holstein expressed concern that photos shared during the Programme Report showed participants without masks. Whilst it was acknowledged that many of the photos had been taken pre-COVID, Mrs. Jeannine Compton-Antoine re-emphasised the need for compliance at all times.
5. Mr. Embert Charles thanked Mr. Calixte George Jr. for his tireless advocacy work over the course of the year.

Audit Report

At this time, representatives of Grant Thornton, Ms. Jessica Peterkin and Ms. Sharon Raoul, joined the meeting and presented the Audit Report for Financial Year ended March 31, 2020, a copy of which was circulated to members ahead of the AGM.

The audit report on the financial statements of the Trust, which comprise the balance sheet as of March 31st, 2020 and the statements of comprehensive income and expenditure, changes in accumulated fund balance and cash flows for the year then ended and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, declared that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Trust.

A question was raised over a doubling of bad debt being written off, to which the auditors responded that in light of COVID-19, cash flow is a major issue for many tourism businesses, and the likelihood of collecting these debts is low. The amounts have been removed from the receivables, to reflect a more accurate financial position, but Mr. Tulsie stressed that this does not mean that pursuit of the funds will not continue.

There being no objections, Mr. Cyril Saltibus moved for the adoption of the Audit Report. This was seconded by Mr. Digby Ambris and the motion carried by members in attendance. Mr. Tulsie thanked the auditors, who then left the meeting.

Appointment of Auditors

At this time, comments were invited on the retention of Grant Thornton as auditors, currently three years into a five-year agreement. Dr. Gilbertha St. Rose questioned why the report was submitted late, and was advised that this was due to delays in information received from third parties (due in part to the closure of businesses during COVID).

Comments in support of the retention of Grant Thornton were received from Ms. Cheryl Didier-Holstein, Mr. Cyril Saltibus, Mr. Calixte George Jr., Ms. Thecal Deterville, Ms. Justine Charles and Mr. Matthew Render.

There being no objections, Ms. Finola Jennings-Clarke moved a motion to reappoint Grant Thornton as the Trust's Auditors for the 2020-21 financial year. This was seconded by Dr. Christine Parris and adopted by members present.

Membership

Loyalty Programme

The Trust reached out to several business houses to offer discounts to Trust members who were in good financial standing. The outcome was not as good as was expected and to date, the following discounts can be announced: 10% at

Jambe de Bois, Taxi Boutique and Eden Herbs and 7.5% on food only at Spice of India.

To identify up-to-date membership, Mr. Tulsie indicated that a sticker will be placed on the reverse of the membership card indicating the expiry date. Mr. Anselm Gittens suggested that renewal reminders should be sent to members, something that should be taking place but appears to be inconsistent.

Renewal Date

Membership renewal date was confirmed as 12 months after the last payment was received, but a recommendation was made that payment for membership should become due on the anniversary date of the approval of membership.

Lifetime Membership

The question of lifetime membership limits was raised, with Mr. Neil Archer and Mr. Anselm Gittens supporting a percentage of total membership, while Ms. Finola Jennings-Clarke, Ms. Mandy St. Rose and Dr. Christine Parris opting for an annual limit, and Mr. Calixte George Jr. and Dr. James Fletcher advocating for no limit, the latter questioning why numbers should be restricted if overall membership remains low. The question of fees was also raised, along with the suggestion of increasing the dues from \$400 to \$600 (unless a regular member has renewed consistently for 5 or more years, in which case the lifetime rate would be \$400). The suggestion to prepare a paper with recommendations was made by Mr. Embert Charles, and

seconded by Dr. Alison Gajadhar, who called for guidelines in this area, and advocated for tabling the paper for discussion at the next quarterly meeting.

Membership Categories

The suggestion of a Corporate membership category, with tiers depending on number of employees, was floated, offering a 50% discount on PINL entrance fees for employees. Mr. Cyril Saltibus expressed concern that lifetime corporate membership should not be offered, and Mr. Tulsie agreed that this is not the intention. Questions were raised by members over the benefits of corporate membership, and how far it reaches, and the decision was taken to table the discussion for the next quarterly meeting, with all members encouraged to share their opinions in advance.

Membership Fees

Proposed increases to fees for the various membership categories were shared with attendees. As it relates to the proposed increase for schools, Ms. Cheryl Didier-Holstein expressed concern that schools will not be able to afford the increase. Mr. Kirk Elliott suggested that fundraising be held by the schools to offset the costs, but Ms. Didier-Holstein stressed that there is already too much emphasis placed on schools to fundraise for other areas. A further suggestion from Mr. Elliott was to offer complimentary membership to all children born in Saint Lucia, up to the age of 18, with a view to encouraging them to renew on a paid basis once they reach this age. Concerns were raised by several members that this would remove the

need for school membership, thus decreasing revenue, and would also raise challenges in persuading children to start paying at age 18. This was also tabled for discussion at the next quarterly meeting.

In relation to adult membership, support for an increase of \$10 was unanimous.

New Councilors

While the final tallying of votes took place, The Chairperson once again thanked the outgoing Councilors for their commitment over the previous year. The results of the voting were then announced as follows:

Ms. Alison King	–	43 votes
Ms. Finola Jennings-Clarke	–	43 votes
Mr. Calixte George Jr.	–	40 votes
Mr. Sean Compton	–	38 votes
Dr. Christine Parris	–	35 votes
Ms. Snaliah Mahal	–	34 votes
Mr. Cyril Saltibus	–	28 votes
Mr. Kirk Elliott	–	24 votes
Mr. Matthew Render	–	19 votes
Mr. Donovan Brown	–	17 votes

The top seven nominees, marked in bold, are thus elected to council.

The Chairperson congratulated all elected Councilors and this was echoed by Mr. Tulsie, who also added his thanks to the Trust's team for managing the voting process.

Other Business

Mr. Anselm Gittens reminded attendees that donations to the Trust are tax-deductible.

The Chairperson announced that the first meeting of the new Council is scheduled for Thursday December 3, 2020 at 5pm at which the Executive Committee will be elected.

The vote of thanks was given by Mrs. Karetta Crooks-Charles who took the opportunity to point out that the Global Giving programme has not achieved the desired results, and encouraged all members to give where possible. Mr. Tulsie and Ms. King added their final thanks to attendees, and to the Trust's team for organising the meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 17:44.