

Notice of Remit to AGM **Sea of Faith Conference November 2017**

I, Norman Ely, Treasurer of the Sea of Faith (NZ) Incorporated move as follows:

1. That the subscription to the Sea of Faith (NZ) Incorporated remain at \$20.00. This is to include 6 copies of the Newsletter **by email only**.
2. That the posted Newsletter (6 copies) now be a separate and additional cost of \$30.00. This will apply ONLY to members ordering the Newsletter by post.

Therefore, members who receive the Newsletter by email will pay an annual subscription of \$20.00. Members who receive the Newsletter by post will pay an annual subscription of \$20.00 plus \$30.00 a total of \$50.00.

Argument:

Sea of Faith Subscription and Newsletter Costs Analysis

Background:

There seems to be a lot of confusion as to what various terms mean. This has been corrupted over time into various descriptors. I have therefore set out the definition of these terms to avoid this confusion.

Member. A member is a person who has paid their subscription in July for the coming year. They therefore become a MEMBER of the NATIONAL BODY of the SEA of FAITH NZ Inc.

Persons who are involved in a Local Group of the Sea of Faith and pay any form of subscription/koha/or money ONLY to this local group are NOT members of the National Body unless they pay the subscription as described in the first sentence above. If they wish to be members of the National Body and a local group they may have to pay the Subscription to the National Body as well as any monies to the Local Group.

Local Group. This is a group of people in any part of NZ who agree to meet to discuss matters associated with the Sea of Faith NZ Inc. NO LOCAL GROUP IS AFFILIATED TO THE NATIONAL BODY.

Voting Rights at the AGM. These are determined in the *Rules of Incorporation* and in the Constitution of the National Body of the Sea of Faith NZ Inc. To vote at an AGM you must be a "Current Member of the Sea of Faith NZ Inc". Being involved in a Local Group without being a Member of the National Body does NOT give you any voting rights or speaking rights at the AGM.

Household Membership. This has become an issue for the Steering Committee. Historically, a "household" could have a membership. This was where other members of the household could interchange membership. In defining our membership Households were given a multiplier to determine our overall membership. I will now be defining members as above for Members. There will be no more "Household Members". This will reduce our reported numbers from 2017/2018. However, it will be a TRUE number.

Website. This is currently hosted by "Godzone" and operated by Noel Cheer. We pay an annual fee of \$450.00 to Godzone for this hosting. Any person can access this site. It is not limited to SoF members.

Newsletter. The National Body of the Sea of Faith NZ Inc produces a 12, page, 6-times-per-year Newsletter containing articles appropriate to the goals of Sea of Faith. It is composed and typeset by Noel Cheer assisted by Shirley Dixon using Microsoft Word from which a .pdf file is produced.

This file is forwarded to a print shop associated with the Wellington City Council. A delayed (by one edition) version is put on the website. Those who pay for a Newsletter receive the freshest copy.

Under the supervision of Yvonne Curtis, the paper version is posted (NZ Post) to subscribers who have elected to pay for this option. The email version is sent out by Peter Cowley.

Historically, **members** can elect to receive the Newsletter by email and or post. The cost of the postal copy has been underwritten by the national body membership subscription. If you are not a **member** then you don't receive a copy of any form. (As the newsletter is put on the website non-members could download it a month out of date).

What you have received for your \$20.00/\$25.00 subscription fee:

- Funding of the Steering Committee which meets in February every year in Wellington for their annual meeting. This sets up the operation of the Steering Committee, arranges the final aspects of that year's conference, finalises the speakers for that year's conference, sets up the "bones" of the next year's conference, approves budget criteria.
- Speaking rights at the AGM.
- Voting rights at the AGM.
- The right to place remits before the AGM.
- The Newsletter.
- The Website.

Future of the Newsletter:

Following discussions by members of the last Steering Committee and current Steering Committee I have analysed the cost of membership and the newsletter and the effect the current cost of the newsletter has on the membership subscriptions.

This analysis is based on the Excel Cashbook spreadsheet which allows us to get down to specific cost centre line items that make up our total costs. Therefore, it is based on our real Year to Date costs 2016/2017

When we put in costs and income this goes in as a line item in the cashbook which automatically totals up. In turn, this automatically transfers to the Profit & Loss giving us what we generally see at the AGM. Therefore, I can look at postage, printing costs, on-line web hosting costs etc. This applies to all of our cost and income structure that makes up our profit and loss.

We have had a significant back stop in our savings account. This has been the case for many years. This sum has roamed from slightly less than \$20,000.00 up to \$30,000.00. The historical interest rates paid on these savings was for some time very good. Over more recent years this has ceased to be the case. Historically, the higher interest rates overcame any pressure on our accounts. Therefore, the increase in some of our costs were not so obvious. Conversely, as interest rates changed we became more aware of those increases even though they were not significantly affecting our Profit & Loss.

When I took over as Treasurer I noted that there were some issues that hadn't been historically addressed. The major issue was that the savings account had been steadily diminishing during 2015, 2016 and continuing into 2017.

This was put down to the very low interest rates and our need to increase membership fees. We addressed that at last year's AGM and moved the fees up. At the time I was challenged on the fact that we had this surplus in the savings account. Therefore, we should keep the fees the same and use the savings to tide us through. As it turned out the increase in membership fees was very much needed because the newsletter costs were rising rapidly after being static for many years. We therefore had to transfer the remaining savings into our trading account to cover these costs plus the loss we made on Conference 2016. This loss occurred owing to a heavy cost of overseas speakers and the technology required to bring Michael Benedikt to our conference live.

I therefore did an analysis of the line by line costs and found just how much the newsletter was really costing us.

The result of this analysis as at July 2017 is as follows:

1. Our total membership is 461, (this includes the "household" members).
2. The production of the newsletter has varied from some 300 copies to our current 236 copies.
3. The email distribution is 113 copies.

Note:

- A small number of paper copies are sent out to other than members. Some go to the National Library, Parliamentary Library, UK etc.
 - Some people get a copy for two people living in one home, (household members).
 - Some groups get a posted hard copy for one or two of their members and then circulate these around their members. (As an aside these "local group members" are generally NOT members of the National SoF body).
4. Our newsletter costs to financial year end 2016/2017 are:
 - Cost of printing last year \$5,261.05
 - Cost of Envelopes & post \$1,203.45
 - **Total newsletter Cost YTD \$6,564.50**
 - This extrapolates to \$14.24 per member (461) **or \$27.82 per posted copy (236).**
 5. Our Website/Email costs to date are as follows;
 - Total Cost of Web Hosting \$450.00
 - **This extrapolates to \$1.00 per member**
 6. Our other running costs are approximately \$5,000.00.
 - **This extrapolates out to \$10.85 per member.**
 7. Our Conference costs *normally* are approximately \$35,000.00. It is my opinion that a small proportion of this cost (maybe 10%) should be borne by ALL members. The reason for this is that a significant proportion of the steering committee time and cost is involved with the Conference (as noted above).
 - **This would equate to each member paying a conference subsidy of \$7.60 per annum.**

The breakdown of the above figures (*per member subscription*) equates to:

Item 6 - General Running costs	\$10.85
Item 5 - Web cost	\$ 1.00
Item 7 - Conference subsidy	<u>\$ 7.60</u>
Total	<u>\$19.45</u>

My recommendation is to retain the subscription rates at the current \$20.00.

This would include 6 *email* copies of the Newsletter per annum, and the delayed Newsletter available on the Website.

Members who get the newsletter by mail will need to pay an *additional* \$30.00 per annum. Postal prices have recently increased. This has taken the cost from 80 cents per unit to \$1.80 per unit in a very short period of time. Also, the cost of printing has increased, albeit by a much lesser percentage, but it is a larger cost line.

So, to sum up. Membership subscription with free email newsletter would remain at \$20.00.

For those still requiring a posted copy the cost would be \$20 + \$30 = Total \$50.00.

The alternative is that **all** members pay a subscription rate and continue to subsidise those few who get the newsletter posted.

I would suggest most members would want to receive email copies only. (You can print off a copy yourself if you require a hard copy). Members who do not have email could access the SoF website via a friend (or family member) to whom the newsletter could be sent and print it off. This is much cheaper than print and post.

Norm Ely
Treasurer
September 2017