



MALTA LIBRARY AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION
c/o University Library, Msida MSD 06, Malta.

Member of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Association (EBLIDA) and of the Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA)

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Minutes of the MaLIA Annual General Meeting 2006 held on Monday 27th February 2006 at the Library, University of Malta. The following items were on the agenda.

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2005
 - Confirmation of the minutes
3. Matters arising from the minutes
 - The Report on the state of Maltese Libraries
 - Committee for the Development of Public Libraries
 - Courses
4. The Chairman's Annual Report
5. Report of the Treasurer
6. Register of Library and Information Professionals
7. Discussion
8. Election of the Council
9. Adjournment

1. Introduction

The Chairman, Mr Robert Mizzi opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present. Proceedings were to be held in English for the benefit of Council member Ms Heather Brown.

2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2005

Minutes from the 2005 AGM were approved with some amendments.

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 Report on the State of Maltese Libraries

Mr Mizzi stated that for the past one and a half years Council concentrated most of its efforts on the Report. He thanked all those involved in producing and publishing it. He went on to say that it was a great strain on the resources of the association and encouraged members to come forward and volunteer to help when such projects are undertaken. Ms Heather Brown thanked Mr Mizzi for pioneering it and spending so much time working on it.

3.2 Committee for the Development of Public Libraries

The committee has been set up in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs. Mr Mizzi noted that it was encouraging that a MaLIA representative is on Council. The last year has been spent discussing the problems being faced by the local public libraries and trying to acquire resources for them. One of the benefits of the work done is the donation of around 1000 books from the Chinese Cultural Centre. The committee has organised two seminars so far and there are plans for a third.

3.3 Courses

Since the Report has taken up most of Council's time, the short courses have been unfortunately neglected. Mr Mizzi acknowledged their importance and noted that in the last few meetings Council discussed the problem. He added that the newly elected Council should take them on board again and target specific areas in the local scene that need to be improved.

4. The Chairman's annual report

Mr Mizzi went through the report and highlighted the most important points.

4.1 Mutual Recognition of Qualifications

MaLIA is working hard to obtain recognition of the profession which will, once obtained, help ensure greater commitment by the government.

4.2 Communication with the Minister of Education, Youth and Employment

Since MaLIA's frequent attempts at meeting with the Minister have borne no results, it was agreed that it would be better to make direct contact with the relevant people instead of with the Minister.

4.3 National Book Council

Mr Mizzi noted that MaLIA was not consulted when this council was set up, which reflects the weak mentality that anyone can be appointed, whilst those with the requisite skills and knowledge are passed over. All complaints have been ignored and Mr Mizzi asked for a motion to be passed to officially write in the press about the current situation. All were in favour and ardently advocated this line of action.

4.4 National recognition to Dr Paul Xuereb

A very positive note is the appointment of Dr Xuereb as a member in the National Order of Merit specifically for the work done in the local library scene.

4.5 COMLA / UNESCO workshop on Information Literacy

Mr Mizzi attended the COMLA/UNESCO Workshop in Information Literacy held in Jamaica in January 2006. He said that this merits a whole discussion and that more information will be given in the newsletter.

4.6 Dewey Decimal Classification

No official reply has been received to the letter sent to OCLC asking for advice regarding the changes made to the number in DDC 22 for Maltese History.

4.7 Conclusion

Mr Mizzi said he hoped the report will serve as a catalyst to encourage new members to join and support MaLIA in its endeavours. Council's efforts should now be directed towards creating an advocacy campaign with members.

5. Report of the Treasurer

The report of the Treasurer was read out to members and approved. Mr Mizzi noted that income is mainly donations, not membership.

6. Register of Library and Information Professionals

The purpose of the register is to give library and information workers the opportunity to be listed as professionals, as the name indicates. Mr Mizzi thanked the subcommittee in charge. Two routes are provided, one for university qualified librarians and the second for para-professionals who will be included as professionals if they meet the criteria and evaluation

benchmarks listed. The biggest challenge is get the authorities to endorse the register. Dr Scibberas observed that it should serve as a reference point for employers and help stabilise the anomalies regarding the employment of librarians. Mr Mizzi emphasised that only MaLIA members are entitled to be on the register and that it could be used as a tool to get new members. A few suggestions were made:

1. Route B pt 8 – the need for an interview to verify that the applicant did in fact write the professional development report;
2. Route B pt 10 – the period of employment for those without a formal education be extended to five years for full-timers and seven years for part-timers;
3. Route B pt 13 – Unsuccessful applicants can reapply once more;
4. To clarify further whether those who have not physically worked in or have some contact with library work for some time can apply to be on the register;
5. Post nominal letters to be added for those on the register.

The issue of the Data Protection Act was also raised. Since this is to be forwarded to the relevant Ministry and is to be used as a tool for employers, members should be notified and should sign a form entitling the association to pass on the necessary information.

7. Amendments to the Statute

The following amendments to the Statute were proposed and approved.

1. Pg 5 item 10 "*Any member is eligible to life membership*" is be changed to "*Members over 60 years are eligible to life membership*"
2. Pg 5 item 10 After "... 29 February 2004 is Lm 5.00" the following phrase be added "*for local members and €20 for foreign members.*"
3. Pg 8 Item (V) This point should be changed to "*The nominations, which should be sent to the secretary not later that one week before the Annual General Meeting, for election of Members to Council who will take office not alter that four weeks after the date of the Annual General Meeting.*"

8. Discussion

8.1 Outside pressure

Dr Sciberras recommended turning to European Institutions to apply the necessary pressure, meeting up with the European Union representatives to explain the situation and find out what European remedies there are. Mr Mizzi added that since MaLIA is a very small association, we can hope for little support from IFLA and EBLIDA, with which we do not have good communication. The only library association that can come to our aid is COMLA.

8.2 Membership

Mr Joseph Grima noted that one of MaLIA's main issues is that of a decline in membership and that the principal librarians of the country are not members or only pay lip-service to the association. Ms Ruth Muscat asked whether a survey of members can be carried out, to find out what motivates them to join or leave. Mr Laurence Zerafa pointed out that whilst carrying out the survey for the Report it transpired that people's perception is that MaLIA is inactive, invisible and does not have good communication with the public.

8.3 Public profile

Mr Cilia noted that MaLIA lacks a marketing strategy and Ms Paris added that the association should organize activities on an annual basis to connect with members and have a good look at who they are and what they require. Mr Zerafa said that being involved in a controversy will help raise the association's profile. Mr Anthony Mangion observed that if MaLIA has sound media coverage, interested parties will become aware of the situation and the authorities will be forced to act. Ms Brown asked Philip Brog whether he could promote MaLIA and the draft legislation with the Minister. Ms Anita Ragonesi recommended MaLIA strengthening its position by being affiliating with other associations. She added that the co-operation of three different Ministries are required, which weakens the chances of immediate action. Mr Mangion said that the presence of various library associations is baffling to the outsider and Mr Grima said that MaLIA is trying hard to bridge the gap.

8.4 Nomination for MaLIA Hon. President

Mr. Robert Mizzi informed members present that the outgoing Council, following consultation and confirmation with Dr. Paul Xuereb, is proposing that Dr. Xuereb is appointed as the new Hon. President of MaLIA. Following a brief discussion and questions on the role of the Hon. President, the motion was approved by the members present.

9. Election of the Council

The following members were nominated and approved for election to the MaLIA council 2006

- Robert Mizzi nominated by Heather Brown and seconded by Veronica Calleja.
- Joseph Grima nominated by Veronica Calleja and seconded by Robert Mizzi.
- Josephine Spiteri nominated by Anita Ragonesi and seconded by Robert Mizzi.
- Heather Brown nominated by Robert Mizzi and seconded by Anita Ragonesi.
- Anita Ragonesi nominated by Robert Mizzi and seconded by Veronica Calleja.
- Marion Borg nominated by Heather Brown and seconded by Robert Mizzi.
- Edwin Sciberras nominated by Heather Brown and seconded by Veronica Calleja.
- Louis Cini nominated by Laurence Zerafa and seconded by Lillian Sciberras.

Since there was no need for an election, all members were approved for the 2006 MaLIA Council. Mr Mizzi congratulated and welcomed new members, and thanked Mr Mangion for the use of the University Library,

Robert Mizzi

Hon. Chairman

MaLIA

Veronica Calleja

Hon. Secretary

MaLIA