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

Minutes of the 40th MaLIA Annual General Meeting, held on **Thursday 26th February, 2009**, at 6.00 pm at the UoM library.

Members present: Paul Xuereb, Robert Mizzi, Louis Cini, Laurence Zerafa, Victor Vella, Joseph R. Grima, Claudio Laferla, Anita Ragonesi, Martes Paris, Charlene Bajada, William Zammit, Lillian Sciberras, Josephine Spiteri, Dora Castorina, Anthony Mangion and Mary Sammut-Tagliaferro.

1. Introduction

Robert Mizzi welcomed the members present and reminded all that this AGM is the 40th in the history of MaLIA.

Paul Xuereb eloquently recalled how 40 years ago he was one of a nucleus who formed part of the Malta Library Association (MLA) as it was known at that time. He reminded us about Josie Attard Montalto and Fr Anthony Sapienza both of whom passed away. Paul stated that our model association was the British Library Association since most of the older members had received their library education abroad in the UK. Also, the ALA produced other library science literature.

Libraries always were the 'Cinderella' and when the credit crunch of the time was felt, the library budget was the first to be cut off. He also commented how the book week was also a success.

The MaLIA Association always formed part of COMLA and IFLA. In relation to these affiliations, Paul mentioned how he attended various COMLA & IFLA conferences and that this was always a big event and at the same time, a little

disheartening, since, we as Maltese librarians, lacked the necessary network with other librarians.

Lastly, Paul Xuereb commented about the MaLIA proposal on the Opera Site ruins and in concept, he agrees with its proposal for a state of the art public library.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the 40th Annual General Meeting.

Minutes were approved with minor corrections.

3.0 Matters arising from the minutes.

3.1 The following is the list of activities for the 40th MaLIA Anniversary:

Robert Mizzi said that the last Council (of 2008) met the Education Minister Dolores Cristina, and that amongst the many items discussed during the meeting, the recognition of the profession was first on the agenda. Rober also mentioned that the social workers had a diploma and still they were recognized as a profession.

This should serve us as a model to copy.

Lillian Sciberras cautioned the audience to be aware about the nomenclatures for ‘librarian’, since these were in flux – being defined differently by everyone. She also suggested that a road-map on how to become recognized should be drawn up.

Joe Grima mentioned that in a meeting held with Mr Degiovanni regarding the necessary steps to be taken to be recognized as a profession, had been also discussed.

Robert Mizzi also mentioned that the member number was still very small yet the work is always growing. Additionally, he commented that two Library Associations should be amalgamated. At this point, a small discussion about the ‘past issues’ in relation to the MSLA were discussed.

Laurence Zammit also commented that the meeting with the minister was satisfactory. On this point, Paul Xuereb commented whether the present Education Minister was up to the job. Here, Joe Grima mentioned that there is a ‘flux’ in the whole education division and how different persons have been moved.

Paul Xuereb asked about the number of members in the MSLA. Robert Mizzi answered that most of the teacher-librarians are enrolled. He also commented that

there is little cooperation by the MSLA, the last of a number of activities were the two talks given by foreign librarians from the US, in which, very few teacher-librarians turned up.

Joe Grima commented that MaLIA has very good relations with the US Embassy who assisted in these talks and even recently donated books. Paul Xuereb suggested that we make contact with the new Consul, Petra Bianchi.

4.0 Amendments to the Statute – Register of Voluntary Organization

- 4.1** Robert Mizzi shared that MaLIA is now an officially recognized NGO. He explained that MaLIA needed to make a declaration about her finances if MaLIA become redundant since this was an obligatory requirement to become an NGO. Basically, MaLIA has to state in her Statute that if MaLIA ceases to exist, its finances will have to be passed to another NGO. A general discussion ensued on how this could be best done and whom would benefit most from these funds. Lillian Sciberras suggested that funds should be given to a ‘kindred’ Association, such as the Friends of the National Archives. Finally, it has been decided and approved by a majority vote that should MaLIA ceases to exist as an Association, its funds would be given to the ‘Friends of the National Archives’, with whom MaLIA has cooperated on several events. As a second option, the funds would go to the Commissioner.

At this point, William Zammit asked about any benefits in being an NGO. Robert Mizzi shared that he attended a MEUSEC meeting for voluntary organizations in view of EU funding. Eligibility of these funds were only possible if one was officially part of the NGO register. Robert also explained how the Commissioner explained that there were meetings with the EU for the omission of the 25% of the financial burden that was supposed to be forked out by the NGO applying for the funding.

- 5.0** Since Paul Xuereb had to leave due to other matters, Lillian Sciberras, on behalf of all the members thanked Dr Paul Xuereb for his service to the Association.

6.0 The Number of the Council Members

6.1 Robert Mizzi explained that the statutes state that the Council should be formed by 7 members. If there would be additional members, they will be co-opted, yet, without voting rights. A suggestion was brought forward whether any number should be mentioned at all.

7.0 Chair's Annual Report

7.1 Robert Mizzi briefly explained his report. A discussion ensued on the European Digital Library and why there is no Maltese content available.

8.0 MaLIA's Proposal – Cultural Centre including a state-of-the-art Public Library

8.1 Laurence Zerafa confirmed the number of members online: Facebook around 623 and another 433 signed for the iPetition. Robert Mizzi shared that a very short report was prepared and that in due time it will be sent to the Prime Minister and other Ministers. He also said that MaLIA's past Council met with several political parties regarding the matter. Laurence Zerafa asked whether MaLIA should work with FAA. He also mentioned that Freedom Square might be built as well. A discussion ensued on what are the different proposals given to Renzo Piano – the Italian Architect – who was working on the project.

At this stage, the meeting with the Education Minister surfaced again. Robert again briefed about this meeting. He said that the minister appointed Charles Caruana Carabez as a 'link' with MaLIA to iron out various library matters.

William Zammit commented on the need to present to the Minister of Education different Standards for different Libraries. He thought that this could be the right time to make such proposals to the Minister.

Here, Martes Paris asked about the Public Library and whether there were any calls for the right personnel to fill the coming retirees. She suggested that it would be a good idea to get in touch with Charles Caruana Carabez to check about this issue.

9.0 Visit – Career Development Group, UK

- 9.1** Robert Mizzi explained that this group will be arriving in Malta on the 27th of March. All the necessary details may be found on MaLIA's website. At this stage, Laurence Zerafa on behalf of all the members, thanked Robert Mizzi for his service as a chairman.

10.0 Website Hits

- 10.1** Anita Ragonesi asked how many website hits on MaLIA. Robert Mizzi will be looking into this matter.

11.0 Treasurer's Report

- 11.1** Robert Mizzi briefly explained the Report.

12.0 MaLIA's Membership to Current Diploma Holders

- 12.1** Robert Mizzi suggested that the current diploma students be given a special concession for a free membership for one year. This was unanimously approved.

13.0 Members on Facebook

- 13.1** Laurence Zerafa asked about the members on Facebook and how these members can benefit by forming part of MaLIA. Martes Paris suggested that a 'Friends of the Libraries' group should be created. Lillian Sciberras opted for a 'sub-committee'. A discussion ensued about what type of name should be given to this group.

14.0 Election for the 2009 Council Members

- 14.1** Seven members were nominated and elected on Council for the year 2009. These are the names of the members:
Robert Mizzi, Laurence Zerafa, Victor Vella, Joe Grima, Charlene Bajada, Josephine Spiteri and Claudio Laferla.

15.0 New Coordinator of the LIS Dept.

- 15.1** Martes Paris informed the audience that William Zammit was the new LIS coordinator. Robert Mizzi thanked Martes Paris for her work as coordinator of this Dept.

16.0 The 2008 Council Members Thanked

- 16.1** Robert Mizzi thanked the outgoing 2008 Council Members and special thanks went to Louis Cini who did not contest and also to Joanne Carabot who resigned earlier in the year. Robert said that though he contested for this new Council, he will be taking a low profile. He augured well that the new chairman will find cooperation so that MaLIA will continue to move forward. Tony Mangion was also thanked for his constant support to MaLIA's meetings in providing the venue.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:15pm.

Robert Mizzi
Hon. Chairman

Claudio Laferla
Hon. Secretary