

General Assembly Meeting Minutes

19th June 2012

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome by the Chief Scout
2. Approval of proposed Agenda
3. Approval of previous Minutes and matters arising
4. Explanation of National Scout Council Election Procedure
5. Presentation of Nominees for the NSC Election
6. Election of the 8 NSC members (4 uniformed and 4 non-uniformed)
7. Address by the Honorary Secretary
8. Address by the Chief Commissioner
9. Presentation of the Financial Report
10. Nomination and Appointment of our Auditor
11. Q&A Session
12. Presentation of Election results
13. Closing address by the Chief Scout

Attendees

65 Eligible Attendees. 57 Attendees to the meeting excluding the observers on the strangers gallery.

The meeting started at 6:00pm with a prayer by Fr. Briffa. Mr. David Schembri, GSL Qrendi Scout Group, also remembered the late Mrs. Pizzuto, the Honorary Treasurer's Mum and the late Mr George Camilleri, former Group Scout Leader of the Marsa Scout Group.

1. Welcome by the Chief Scout

Mr. Martin Azzopardi, Deputy Chief Scout, welcomed and thanked all those present. He reminded all present that Mr. Kenneth DeMartino, Chief Scout, in the best interest of the Association had offered his resignation to the Council following a Court Case involving one of his companies. The National Scout Council had refused his resignation and instead offered a leave of absence until such time that the council feels that the matter is no longer a possible threat to the Association's best interests. At the last council meeting the National Scout Council has reconsidered this matter and further to a discussion it was agreed that the leave of absence should be terminated and the Chief Scout should be allowed to take back his full duties. The Deputy Chief Scout informed all members that the Chief Scout will be joining and chairing this meeting.

The Deputy Chief Scout reminded the members that the National Scout Council will today be presenting the annual reports and will also be holding the election for the 8 National Scout Council members. He also expressed his satisfaction in regards to new and young faces contesting the elections.

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The Chief Scout Joined the meeting and took over the chairperson's role from the Deputy Chief Scout. The Chief Scout confirmed what was explained by his Deputy and thanked him and the rest of the National Scout Council.

2. Approval of the proposed Agenda

The agenda for the meeting had been sent to all the General Assembly members prior to the meeting. The Chief Scout then proceeded to request the approval of proposed agenda. Mr. Martin Azzopardi (National Scout Council Member) and Mr. Anthony Abela Medici (National Scout Council Member) proposed and seconded the approval. There being no objections the Agenda was confirmed as proposed.

3. Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes had been distributed to all the General Assembly members prior to the meeting and were taken as read. The Chief Scout asked for any corrections. There being no corrections and no matters arising, the Chief Scout asked for members to propose and second the minutes. Mr. Martin Azzopardi (National Scout Council Member) and Ms. Avril Frendo (National Scout Council Member)

4. Explanation of National Scout Council Election Procedure

The Honorary Secretary explained that since 2009, being the year he was appointed as Honorary Secretary, there had never been an election which needed to elect more than one candidate and with more contestants than the number of candidates required. He explained that with this in mind and considering the number of eligible voters it was felt that the single transferable vote system, used in earlier recent elections, was probably inadequate. Hence the advice of an expert on the subject was sought.

Mr. Joe Scicluna, top person for a number of years of the National Electoral Commission and also experienced in running corporate elections such as that of Air Malta and the Ship Building, was contacted and asked to provide advice. Mr. Scicluna proposed a system whereby the 4 candidates with most preferences, having reached the quota (being the 50%+1 of valid votes casted) would be elected.

This procedure was explained with the help of a power point presentation by the Honorary Secretary to all those present complete with slides showing ballot papers samples. The Honorary Secretary also explained that the ballot papers had already been printed, stamped and signed prior to the meeting with Mr. Scicluna, hence they were still showing the single transferable vote, however whilst the same ballot papers will be used, the system explained during the presentation would be adopted for voting. Considering that some members could have already voted using the single transferable vote method, the Honorary Secretary assured that the numbers marked on the ballot papers will be counted as 'X' in the new system hence no vote will be invalidated if it has numbers instead of an 'X' next to a candidate's name.

The Honorary Secretary asked if there were any questions. There being none he informed the assembly members that the electoral commission and himself will be around for any questions during the voting session.

5. Presentation of Nominees for the NSC Election

The Honorary Secretary informed all present that all the election candidates were asked to fill in an optional personal profile sheet for distribution to all the general assembly members. Most of the candidates had returned this and each received sheet was forwarded via email to all assembly members. The assembly was advised that the same profile sheets have been placed on the IHQ notice board.

6. Election of the 8 NSC members (4 uniformed and 4 non-uniformed)

The Honorary Secretary called for a 10 minutes break so as to allow Assembly members to cast their votes. The meeting then resumed and at the same time 3 members selected from the strangers gallery by the electoral commission starting counting the votes on a table set up in the assembly meeting hall.

7. Address by the Honorary Secretary

The Honorary Secretary, Mr. Robert Gonzi, noted that his report as published in the distributed General Assembly Report focused on the work of the outgoing National Scout Council in the past 3 years, the unfinished work, mainly due to the number of challenges undertaken and the confidence that the new council will continue on the enthusiasm wave and ensure to build upon and finalise the previous council's efforts.

The Honorary Secretary mentioned 2 particular unfinished tasks. Youth Empowerment and Quality in Scouting. He stressed the importance of these 2 topics and the believe that youth involvement in the decision making process and a truly national branded quality will make the difference between our association and other local organisations who have now adays encompassed a number of what was traditionally scouting activities.

He continued by expressing his admiration to the training departments constant efforts to keep our programme relevant to the needs to our members and also the professionalism by which they reach their goes which they base on recognised youth trends studies. Trends change and we must, all of us, adapt to these changes to ensure a quality programme and structure for our members.

He then asked the attendees to watch the last 5 minutes of a video from Ted Talks about the education system, presented by Sir Ken Robinson, an education adviser for the UK Government, and a number of non profit organisations. The video focused about the perception of educators towards their young students and the prospect that educators could potentially be a barrier rather than a launch pad for the creativity of kids. Sir Ken Robinson insisted that as educators we must identify the good in every child and promote the development of his/her particular skill rather than insisting on streamlining every student to our own prototype. Sir Ken Robinson ended hi talk by asking us to make sure that we are educating these children for what they will need in their future and not what we needed in our past closing with the words," By the way, we might not see this future, but they (young members) will and our job is to help them make something of it."

The Honorary Secretary closed his address by reminding the assembly members to make the best use of the National Scout Council by giving them feedback in order to ensure that they know your needs and can focus their work towards it.

8. Address by the Chief Commissioner

The Chief Commissioner (CC), Mr. Leslie Bonnici, addressed the Assembly and highlighted that the past year had been a tough one. He explained that a number of new guidelines were being introduced and also the POR was being revised and updated. Also new policies such as the Abseiling policy and new concepts such as the Adult networking had already be initiated.

The CC thanked all those that offered their help including the outgoing National Scout Council and in particular Mr. Mark Pizzuto and Ms. Avril Frendo who had just finished their 3+3 year terms, the Group Scout Leaders and individual leaders and the executive during which meetings a number of heated discussions are consumed but which members work hand in hand on all matters. The CC also highlighted that a few vacancies need to be filled at IHQ to complement the team.

He also thanked the Groups that voluntarily offered their help at our Camp Site in Ghajn Tuffieha. The project with the developers of the area was in its negotiations an whilst there was no final agreement as yet we are hopeful that we will move forward. The team was also working to achieve funds through the 'Good Causes' funds in order to improve the facilities further.

The CC switched over to the training department and reminded all that new training programs had been introduced. Training is now also working on the eldest 2 sections of the Association and was also preparing Ventures and Rovers forums to introduce and discuss the Venture and Rover programme. The Adult Training is also being upgraded and will include the standard adult training and also refresher training for trained leaders.

The Chief Commissioner closed his address by thanking Avril Frendo for all the services rendered to the Association for over 30 years and recalled occasions where they worked together over the years. He was sure that she will still be involved in our Association.

The Chief Commissioner reminded the assembly members that separate reports had been distributed via email and were uploaded on ScoutKeeper in regards to the Training and International Departments. He then asked if there were any question from the floor regarding his address and distributed reports.

Joseph Saliba, GSL Qormi Scout Group, suggested making use of ETC schemes such as the Community Service Scheme which provides persons to Voluntary Organisations and others. The Hon Secretary stated that such schemes are very interesting even for groups as they provide a helping hand. He also informed the members that in the recent past the Association was granted 4 persons on a similar scheme for a couple of months to help out with manual work at IHQ. The Chief Scout also informed the assembly members that the Association has a person seconded from the civil service at present and he was a real asset.

9. Presentation of the Financial Report

Mr. Mark Pizzuto, Commissioner of Finance, highlighted a few aspects of the financial report, which was represented in the distributed General Assembly Document and also previously sent to all members via email. He then proceeded to ask Assembly members to address any questions.

A question was raised re the car park figures. Mr. Pizzuto explained that some of the parking renewals of 2010 had been reflected in 2011 as the period overlapped from one year to the other. The Honorary Secretary also highlighted the fact that the car park had been upgraded to accommodate new parking spaces and also the Scout Fellowship was providing invaluable support by manning the IHQ on a daily basis in the morning which facilitated car park users and also monitored that unsubscribed cars are not allowed to park inside our grounds.

Mr. Pizzuto also notified the members that the affiliation fee to WOSM of 2010 was also reflected in 2011.

A point was raised in regards to the fact that some figures referred to notes 10a and b and these notes were not listed in the notes section. Mr. Pizzuto realised that these notes were omitted at the printing stage and possibly there might be some mismatches as well. This will be seen to and the full set of notes will be redistributed.

It was also pointed out that the Scouting Activities other income included the Nestle sponsorship and also funds collected from Roverway participants, the latter to be used to pay for our contingent's participation this year. It was suggested that such figures should be split further so as to show a clearer picture.

A query was raised in regards to the Auditor's neutrality. Whilst everyone was appreciative of the hard work put in for free and whilst no one questioned the correctness of the Audit exercise, the fact that the auditor was in fact a National Scout Council member was seen as a possible lack of neutrality. The Chief Scout explained that Mr. Peter DeGiorgio has actually other people in his office doing the Audit and that this matter had been discussed at Council level and the subject of conflict of interests had been raised but the Council did not feel there was any reason not to allow Mr. DeGiorgio to provide his services.

Mr. DeGiorgio explained that whilst he understood the concerns raised he informed the members that effectively and a VO we were not obliged to present Audited accounts by an Auditing firm and that our Association was already going beyond its obligations in doing so. He also pointed out that such concerns should have been raised when his appointment was tabled at the last AGM rather than after the accounts had been prepared.

There being no further questions the Chief Scout asked for members to propose and second the approval of the financial report. Mr. Martin Azzopardi (National Scout Council Member) and Mr. Anthony Abela Medici (National Scout Council Member) proposed and seconded the approval. There being no objections the financial reports were approved.

12. Presentation of Election Results

Since the counting of the votes was ready, it was decided to read out the results. The Electoral Committee made up of Mr. Joseph Borg, Assistant Commissioner Administration and Mr. Ryan Ellul, Group Scout Leader Tarxien Scout Group, presented the results sheet to the Honorary Secretary to be presented to all members as follows:

Election for National Scout Council - Non-Uniformed Members

Eligible voters: 65
Votes Casted: 57
Valid Votes: 57
Quota: 30

Mr. Anthony Abela Medici:	46 votes (Elected)
Mr. Azzopardi Martin:	41 votes (Elected)
Ms. Bonavia Veronica:	37 votes (Elected)
Mr. Cassar George:	23 votes
Mr. Degiorgio Peter:	41 votes (Elected)

Election for National Scout Council - Uniformed Members

Eligible voters: 65
Votes Casted: 57
Valid Votes: 57
Quota: 30

Mr. Evander Borg:	18 votes
Mr. Kevin Camilleri:	41 votes (Elected)
Mr. Andrew Cutugno:	37 votes (Elected)
Mr. Mark O'Neill:	34 votes (Elected)
Mr. Joseph Saliba:	16 votes
Mr. Joseph Zerafa:	37 votes (Elected)

A heartfelt thanks goes to the Electoral Commission and the 3 representatives selected by the commission for the strangers gallery who managed the counting of the ballot papers, namely Mr. Pierre Mangion, Former North District Commissioner, Mr Harry Haig, Committee Member of the Scout Fellowship and Mr. Cedric Salafia, AGSL 1st Hamrun Scout Group.

Mr. Peter DeGiorgio offered to step down from the council and continue offering the Auditing service for free if the Assembly felt that it was the right thing to do. He suggested that Mr. George Cassar could take his place in the Council. The Honorary Secretary noted that whilst Mr. Degiorgio was free to step down, Mr. Cassar could not take his place as he did not reach the quota necessary therefore another election would be needed to fill in his place..

A question was raised if the Assembly was bound to nominate the Auditor at the AGM. The Honorary Secretary notified the members that it was the constitutional duty of the assembly to appoint an Auditor however given that we shall have another general assembly prior to the next AGM he suggested that a call for an Association Auditor would be published on ScoutKeeper to see if we could possibly identify an alternate member who is not part of the National Scout Council and then present the different possibilities at the next assembly so that an Auditor would be identified prior to the next AGM.

10. Nomination and Appointment of or Auditor

The Chief Scout seconded the suggestion of the Honorary Secretary and there being no objections it was decided to postpone the appointment of the Auditor to the next Assembly.

11. QA Session

Josmar Azzopardi, proxi holder for the Xaghra Scout Group, asked if the creation of a company was still a possibility in regards for our Camp Site at Ghajn Tuffieha. The Chief Scout replied that as indicated by the Chief Commissioner in his address the negotiations were still ongoing and were hopeful to be able to go forward soon.

Josmar Azzopardi also asked for the possibility that the Executive presenta a budget to the Assembly for the upcoming year during an AGM as this would help the Assembly members understand what projects were underway. The Chief Scout replied that this was already being discussed during meeting of the National Scout Council and he thanked Josmar for his suggestion.

13. Closing address by the Chief Scout

The Chief Scout (CS) pointed out that he had learnt a lot during his leave of absence. He could see the movement from an 'outsider' lens and could see that we have a very healthy movement: Disciplined; Traditional; Possibly not much on the move. He had the opportunity to question if the image that the Association portrayed was right or wrong. It is evident that we do a great deal of good but once on the inside there is a lot of dirty linen. We wasted a lot of time arguing rather than acting.

Hence my message is that the movement is not ours. We are responsible for it for a period of time and then we make room for others. We simply leave a mark so we must ensure that we leave a positive mark. The Chief Scout stated that he wasn't comfortable when he was away. When one finishes from a role, the scouting spirit stays on and one should seek to find a new alternate role for the benefit of our members.

We sure do mistakes but at the end we all have the same aim which is to attract a larger number of youths in order to provide them with our programme and leave a positive mark on them. In order to pull the same rope we need to get closer and ensure that a few issues that we might have do not take us apart so we can move ahead.

The Chief Scout closed his address by thanking all present, the outgoing council with a particular mention to the 2 members whose 2 consecutive terms had just ended and also the new members elected on the Council.

Minutes approved on _____
Date

By:

Kenneth De Martino
Chief Scout
The Scout Association of Malta

Robert Gonzi
Honorary Secretary
The Scout Association of Malta

Proposer

Secunder