

# General Assembly Meeting Minutes

19<sup>th</sup> December 2012

## Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome by the Chief Scout
2. Approval of proposed Agenda
3. Approval of previous Minutes and matters arising
4. Briefing re Update from the VO Commissioner
5. Presentation of Motions
6. Voting in regards to the Motions followed by results
7. Closing address by the Chief Scout

## Attendees

67 Eligible Attendees. 47 Attendees to the meeting excluding the observers on the strangers gallery.

The meeting started at 6:00pm.

### 1. Welcome by the Chief Scout

The Chief Scout thanked all members present especially due to the fact of the particular season. He explained that today all members will be discussing 2 motions, as sent to all members prior to the meeting, which the council is proposing for the Assembly's consideration and approval. The 1<sup>st</sup> motion is being suggested by our lawyers further to meetings held with the VO Commissioner. The 2<sup>nd</sup> motion is completely different and with it the council is aiming to continue the process of involving more people in the democratic process of the Association. The Chief Scout informed all present the the Secretary will read these motions out and explain the reasons in further detail so as to open a healthy discussion.

### 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. Mario Micallef (District Commissioner North) and Mr. Adrian Farrugia (Training Commissioner) proposed and seconded the approval. A point was raised in regards to the pending matter of the Association Auditor raised in the last meeting. The Chief Scout acknowledged this point and proceeded to include the topic in the matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting. There being no objections the Agenda was confirmed as proposed.

### 3. Approval of Minutes of the previous meeting

#### Island Headquarters

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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 the Chief Scout asked for members to propose and second the minutes. Mr. Mario Rayner (GSL St. Augustine Air Scout Group) and Mr. Lorrie Saliba (GSL Victoria Scout Group and District Commissioner GOZO) proposed and seconded the minutes.

The Chief Scout then proceeded to open up the Auditor topic. It was debated that given that Mr. Peter DeGiorgio, who had the full trust and appreciation of the Assembly members, was also an elected member of the National Scout Council, his auditing role could lead to a situation of conflict of interest. Further to a discussion it was agreed that an independent auditor should be sought to eliminate any such doubts at the earliest possible. However it was also agreed that until such time that an independent auditor is found Mr. Peter DeGiorgio will retain his role.

#### **4. Briefing re Update from the VO Commissioner**

The Honorary Secretary explained that as discussed during the recent GSL and IHQ Forums a number of meetings were held with the commissioner of Voluntary Organisations due to the fact that his legal advisers were indicating that our Association is a Federation and not an Association hence all groups needed to register in accordance with the VO Act and shoulder all the responsibilities due with such an enrolment.

This was particularly evident when a number of groups who had applied for funding and for property, even though these were awarded from the relevant authority, the commissioner had asked the particular ministers to deny such grants until the situation is regularised. Obviously the Association reiterated and with the help of our Lawyer, namely Dr. Arthur Azzopardi, who is a former member of the movement and was also on the original committee that shaped our Constitution, explained to the VO Commissioner and his lawyers that we are in fact an Association. Given some ambiguities within the Constitution in this sense the National Council was recommending a motion to amend the constitution as necessary to eliminate such ambiguities.

#### **5. Presentation of Motions**

#### **6. Voting in regards to the Motions followed by results**

The 1<sup>st</sup> Motion proposed was read out by the Honorary Secretary together with the purpose as sent to all assembly members.

A debate followed. 2 members of the Assembly wished for the motion to be less specific and to amend it in such a way so as it leaves more freedom to our Lawyer and also that it does not somehow imply that the members belong to the Association rather than the Group. Dr. Azzopardi who was present in the strangers' gallery asked for the permission to address the meeting, which was granted by the Chief Scout. He explained that first of all the members did in fact belong to the Association who for logistical reasons met within local groups and that this motion was needed as a terms of reference for his work so he could come up with the necessary wording to resolve the above. Furthermore Dr. Azzopardi assured all present that the constitutional amendments that would be recommended would obviously come back to the Assembly. The Secretary continued that this was an urgent matter as he did not want to see Groups losing any grant opportunities and that he needed a motion that could be sent to the VO

Commissioner to clearly indicate the Assembly's decision as an interim until the Constitution changes take effect.

A request to amend the motion was put forward by a member of the Assembly, however given that most members seemed willing to go forward with the motion as initially proposed the Secretary suggested that a vote is taken with the motion as is and then if it fails to pass a different motion could be presented. The Chief Scout approved the suggestion. The Secretary proceeded to ask if any Assembly member wished to have a secret vote rather than a show of hands. There being no objections voting took place by a show of hands.

*Proposed by Mr. Kenneth DeMartino, Chief Scout*

*Seconded by Mr. Robert Gonzi, Honorary General Secretary*

*"As recommended by the Commissioner for Voluntary Organisations, it is hereby being proposed to amend the constitution in such a way so as to remove any ambiguity within our constitution which somehow may imply that our Association is a Federation. This change will affect those clauses that define membership in such a way to demonstrate that the members of the Association are in fact all the individuals within each Scout Group. This will also imply that the Group Membership fee will be removed and not charged any longer hence providing for each Group to effectively work as one single entity with a single legal representation under a single VO registration number or any other future applicable registration numbers so as not to create a separate distinction between the Association and each Scout Group"*

Voting Result:            Votes Cast 46            40 in favour    4 Against    2 Abstentions  
Constitutional Change quota of 2/3 = 31 votes  
Motion Passed by 86.9%

The Secretary then proceeded to read and explain the purpose and the text of the second motion. The National Scout Council wants to give more weight to the Leaders within Scout Groups on the decision making process of the Association as they are constantly working in the field closer to our young members. Also in line with the constant promotion of inclusion and empowerment to our young leaders, the National Scout Council believes that Groups representation at the Assembly should increase to also include all appointed section leaders who have the leading role in each section.

A debate followed. A question was raised as to whether leaders needed to be appointed or even considered if within the process. It was finally agreed that an appointed section leader would have completed his/her full Woodbadge training and therefore would have at least a few years of experience which is needed to better understand the governance of the Association. Again the vast majority of the members wanted to go ahead with the Motion as proposed.

The Secretary proceeded to ask if any Assembly member wished to have a secret vote rather than a show of hands. There being no objections voting took place by a show of hands.

*Proposed by Mr. Kenneth DeMartino, Chief Scout*

*Seconded by Mr. Robert Gonzi, Honorary General Secretary*

*"It is hereby being proposed to amend the constitution in such a way so as to allow all appointed Group Scout Leaders/Scouters in Charge, appointed Assistant Group Scout Leaders and appointed Section Leaders, to become full members of the General Assembly thus*

*increasing the voting ratio proportion assigned to the Scout Groups. Assistant Section Leaders, Support Leaders and Group Auxiliaries will continue to be welcome as observers in the visitors' gallery in order to follow the works of the Assembly. "*

Voting Result:            Votes Cast 45            44 in favour    1 Against    0 Abstentions  
Constitutional Change quota of 2/3 = 30 votes  
Motion Passed by 97.8%

## **7. Closing address by the Chief Scout**

The Chief Scout (CS) started by pointed out that the Scout Association was not just ours but of all members. It is important that we listen and respect the ideas of all. The Chief Scout assured that the National Scout Council had no intentions to hamper the local Groups in any way as some seemed to imply. To the contrary the council believes that the Association is only as strong and healthy as its Groups.

The Chief Scout continued that youth empowerment was essential as the Association needed to guarantee continuity. Members who have been in the same role for many years need to ensure that a continuity plan is in place. The second motion is a major step in the direction that we need to take to ensure that the youth voice is heard and that will support the continuity process. In this spirit the National Council is about to propose a Youth National Scout Council and it is hoped that the Assembly will approve such an idea.

The Chief Scout closed his address by wishing all the very best for the festive season and thanked all present for their efforts and dedication. He also thanked the National Scout Council for their constant support and efforts and wished to once again remind all present that the National Scout Council was still allowing adult members to attend as observers to the council meetings.

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

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Secunder