

General Assembly Meeting Minutes

13th December 2014

Held at IHQ. Floriana.

Programme

08.30 Registration

09.00 Opening of General Assembly

10.15 Coffee Break

13.00 Break for Lunch

14.30 Presentation of Awards

Commencement of Meeting

At 9:15 The Chief Scout welcomed the members present and noted that and thus there were 58 members (including proxies) present and thus there was no quorum present.

The meeting started at 9:30 with the same number of members above in line with article 19.3 of the constitution.

The Chief Scout informed the members the Hon Secretary cannot attend this Assembly and in his absence proposed Mr Joseph Borg to take up the role of Secretary.

This was unanimously approved by the General Assembly.

1. Approval of Agenda

The Chief Scout called for a vote on the proposed agenda.

1. Approval of proposed Agenda
2. Approval of previous Minutes and matters arising
3. Presentation of Motions to the Constitution
4. Voting in regards to the Motions followed by results
5. Workshop and discussion groups.
6. Presentations from workshop and discussion groups

The agenda was approved anonymously.

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2. Approval of Minutes

The Chief Scout called for amendments to the previous minutes.

Mr David Darmanin proposed that the last sentence of part 6(f) of the circulated minutes is amended to read "The Chief Scout stated that this has been tackled and the 1st Sliema Group had agreed to be represented by consenting youth members and adult leaders."

Mr Josmar Azzopardi proposed to add the following to part 6 (d) to read "Josmar proposed to on behalf National Scout youth Council emphasised the importance of the Council and to promote and emphasizes the need of leaders to attend the general assembly."

3. Amendments to the Constitution

The Chief Scout announced the resignation of Dr Kevin Camilleri as International Commissioner and congratulated him on his co-option of the European Scout Committee.

Dr Kevin Camilleri introduced the proposed amendments to the constitution. The current Constitution of TSAM provides two Chiefs - the Chief Scout and Chief Commissioner, which creates an anomaly as to who is really the head of the organisation and if the two elected persons do not see eye to eye, as has happened in the past, this can lead to major issues.

The new constitution foresees the election of the Chief Commissioner as the head of the organisation, and the election of eight members to form the National Scout Council, of which one will be chosen by the Council to act as the Chief Scout.

The new constitution will clearly separate the Executive Committee and the National Council, ensuring that the member cannot sit on both at the same time. The maximum number of terms that a member can be elected for the same post is clearly defined, so as to allow for new members to take up these positions.

Finally the new constitution widens the voting right to all appointed leader, thus solving the strange situation where we were trusting leaders with kids but not with voting.

The Chief Scout continued by explained that for the past 12 years or so, WOSM has been informing the Scout Association of Malta that the Constitution was not in line with the established principles, mainly citing the fact that the structure of the Association was top heavy. The amendments being proposed are intended to streamline the structure and to update the constitution in line with WOSM requirements. Furthermore the terms of office of the members of the National Scout Council will not be able to be extended beyond the defined period.

The National Scout Youth Council will also be a new addition to the constitution.

Mr Emanuel Grech enquired whether the proposed constitution is considering all registered leaders as members of the General Assembly.

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The Chief Commissioner clarified that all appointed leaders from support leader upwards would have a right to participate in the General Assembly.

Mr Edward Vella enquired on the proposed role of the National Scout Youth Council.

The Chief Scout replied that it is proposed that the NSYC will have two voting members in the Council and will have the obligation to organise the events that are required to reach the stated aims.

Mr Vella added that allowing members of the NSYC, aged 14 years and over, reinforces his previous requests where he had insisted that leader training should commence from 17 years and not from 18 years.

The Chief Commissioner stated that this request has been noted and the possibility of young leaders training was being considered; certain groups, subject to their respective leadership requirements, are being allowed to proceed in this manner.

Mr Edward Cassola noted that the proposed amendments, of expanding the membership of the General Assembly, could compound the present situation where meetings are held without reaching a quorum. The IHQ staff should embark on a process of encouraging the General Assembly members to attend.

The Chief Scout stated that according to article of the constitution the meeting can be held with the number of members present, however acknowledged the he is taking this low turn out as being very series.

Mr George Cassar recommended that point (a) of article 20.1 is renumbered as 20.2 and the words "eight (8) members elected by the General Assembly" is renumbered as point (a) of article 20.1.

Mr David Darmanin stressed the importance of strategy in any association and recommended that article 21.1.1 should be amended to include 'strategy' in after the word 'decisions' and before the word 'recommendations'.

The amendments to the Constitution as circulated with the proposed amendments by Mr George Cassar and Mr David Darmanin were unanimously approved.

The Chief Scout stated that further to the approval of amendments to the constitution where the Chief Scout will no longer be elected but chosen by the members of the Council. The term of office of the present members, except that of the Chief Scout of the Council will expire in March.

To ensure that the approved system can commence the Chief Scout will tender his resignation in March at the termination of the term of office of the rest of the Council members.

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The Chief Scout clarified that the article 16.1 (f) last point of the Constitution as approved refers to all appointed leaders and not to Woodbadge holders as indicated in the circulated draft.

4. Workshop presentations

Redevelopment of the IHQ Presentation

Mr Joseph Borg presented the details of the expression of interest published the Scout Association of Malta for the redevelopment of the IHQ at Floriana. The four short listed projects short listed were briefly explained through an electronic presentation.

Atheism in Scouting Workshop

Mr Josmar Azzopardi presented the findings of this workshop:

The workshop agreed that there needs to be a better definition of what we mean by religion and spirituality. Apart from coming up with an agreed definition of both within scouting, we also need to properly address the matter by appropriate sessions dedicated to the matter.

The workshop agreed that to be a good scout one needs to intrinsically have good values and good morals. However there was a discussion of what moulds a person to be altruistic and morally good. Some argued that only religion can shape a person to own such values. Others counter-argued that being good comes from within; that's why it is called Spirituality.

There was a consensus that youth members following the youth programme should be allowed to be scouts even if they consider themselves atheist since scouting can help them to further develop their morals and values according to the Scouting Laws. It was affirmed that these young members are in a journey of spiritual discovery and hence should be encouraged to explore their spiritual side without imposing any particular religion.

The main discussion evolved around the concept of whether a person considering himself an atheist should be allowed to be invested as a leader. Once again all agreed that a leader should have good morals and values as this is of utmost important since leaders are often looked up as Role models. There was a divide on this subject since some expressed that to be a good leader one has to pertain to a religion. Counter-arguments made were that there are people who confirm their religion but are still "not fit" to be part of our Association, therefore, a sound and moral person even if not pertaining to a specific religion can be a valid person.

All the participants reiterated that as leaders we shall not impose our own perceptions on our members. Rather we must be the tool or medium to transfer the association's policies and its programme to our member. We should refrain from twisting or biasing their experience to suit our own agenda but as a matter of fact allow our members to have a journey of discovery surrounded by the scouting principles.

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The role of the Annual Parade Workshop

Ms Loraine Borg presented the findings of this workshop:

The workshop first discussed whether the parade should be retained. Most of the participants agreed that the parade should still take place as before since it gives a sense of belonging, discipline and as well as being a learning experience. The large number of participants each year reflect the interest of the Association's members in it.

The majority of the participants also agreed that other activities should be organised to mirror true scouting. It was suggested that a National Events Commissioner should be appointed to give more importance to National Activities such as Festa Scout and community service day. The appointment of a PRO should be appointed in order to reach the public more frequently and in a more effective manner.

The second subject discussed was the format of Beavers participation in the parade. The workshop concluded that Beavers should walk hand in hand and not march, since they are not yet able to coordinate hands and legs together as required for marching. Some participants added that this should be extended to Cubs as well.

It was further concluded that the Beavers should walk with their respective group. This helps to keep them more contained and safe, as there will be more leaders (from other sections) attending to them. Some participants mentioned that they do not have enough leaders to have the Beavers separated from the group. Another issue raised was that parents expect to see their children with the Group.

The Chief Scout reminded that the members should abide by the branding document published by WOSM and available online. A copy of this document will be forwarded to all Assembly members by the General Secretary of the Association

The Chief Commissioner commented on the findings of the workshop of the role of the Annual Parade in Scouting which indicate that Beavers cannot be separated from the Group due to lack of leaders with the Colony. The Chief Commissioner noted that the Association has specific standards of the number of leaders that are required with the young members: a ration of one leader for every six members.

Mr Josef Camilleri added that the comments made during the workshop referred to better control of the Beavers and the difficulty of the leaders to keep track of their Group's members in the large number of Beavers amassed together.

Mr Edward Vella added that further to Mr Camilleri's explanation the workshop comments also referred to cases where leaders of the Colony were members of the Band and would not be able to tend to the young members. The latter situation is counteracted by leaders of other sections helping out.

The Chief Scout proposed the motion: *The annual rally shall continue to be held as per past years with the participation of Groups.*

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Mr Charles Bajjada asked whether the motion covered that Beavers would remain with their respective Group.

Mr Timmy Cutugno enquired whether it was compulsory to attend the Annual Rally.

The Chief Scout confirmed to the positive to both enquiries and proposed an amended motion as follows: *The annual rally shall, as per past years, continue to be held in Valletta through marching with the participation of all Groups with all their members.*

Mr Alex Cutajar asked to include, in the same motion, the reference to the wearing of the uniform.

Mr Adrian Farrugia stated that specifically referring to Valletta was too restrictive.

Ms May Cassar enquired whether Beavers would march or walk.

Mr Gordon Dimech enquired on the reference of this motion to the decision previously taken by the Commissioner for Children against marching of Beavers.

The Chief Scout clarified that if the motion is approved, discussions with the Commissioner for Children, providing updated information, will resume ascertaining whether Beavers can march.

Mr David Darmanin noted that as with all other national activities the wording should be amended to ensure that Groups are invited and have a right but not a duty to attend the Annual Rally. The proposed motion was: *The annual rally shall continue to be held as per past years through marching in uniform, Beavers will walk, with the participating Groups attending with all their members.*

Mr Edward Vella seconded Mr Darmanin's motion.

Ms Josmar Azzopardi enquired what would be the sanction against a Group which does not participate in the Annual Rally.

The Chief Scout clarified that if decisions of the General Assembly are not adhered to it is the General Assembly that will consider the sanctions against the contravener. Such example is the fact that three Groups have proceeded to take part in activities with Baden Powell Scouts against the General Assembly decision. Next year the General Assembly will have to deal with these Groups.

Mr Josef Camilleri enquired on why the national events such as Festa Scout and community service day were no longer being held.

The Chief Commissioner stated that national events were stopped mainly due to the harsh criticism received on the participation fees. A difference must be drawn between Group events and National events where a certain level of quality will have to be attained. However further to the renewed interest a call for an organising committee will be issued

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shortly. A similar call will be issued for the Public Relations Officer and Commissioner for Finance.

Mr David Darmanin clarified that Sliema Group does not want to participate in the Annual Rally, not because they do not wish to participate with other Scouts; the main reason for this is that they feel that SPICES principles and marching do not go together.

Mr Joseph Saliba stated that all members are members of the Association and thus there is no need to refer to Groups in the motion.

The Chief Scout accepted the fact that the members are all members of the Association however it was a known fact that members are regulated in Groups.

Mr Mario Micallef proposed a counter amendment to Mr Darmanin's motion to refer to a minimum representation of a Group.

The Chief Scout stated that this was not acceptable as it conveys the wrong image of the Association. A reference to an event which happened in the last Annual Rally where the President of the Republic commented on the low turnout of a particular group.

Mr Joseph Borg proposed a motion as follows: *Groups attending the Annual Rally shall participate by marching or in any other concurrent complimentary activity.*

Mr Josmar Azzopardi seconded the motion by Mr Borg.

The Chief Scout proposed the final updated motion as follows: *The annual rally shall continue to be held as per past years through marching in uniform, Beavers will walk, with the participation of all Groups with all their members.*

The Chief Scout called for a vote on the motion proposed by Mr Darmanin.

The motion was approved with 37 votes in favour, 17 votes against and 5 abstentions.

The Chief Scout called for a vote on the motion proposed by Mr Borg.

The motion was rejected with 34 votes against, 14 votes in favour and 11 abstentions.

Changes to the Uniform Workshop

Mr Joseph Zerafa presented the findings of this workshop:

The workshop discussed the need to change the uniform and the implications this would have both financially and on scouting activities. The colour and cut of a new uniform were also mentioned and discussed without arriving to any particular preference. The findings were presented to the Assembly and various contributions to the discussion were made.

Mr Alex Cutajar requested that IHQ staff visit all 40 Scout Groups individually to identify their onions and requirements. Should the Scout uniform change, assurance was requested

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that this would not impact the band uniform as Marsa Group had invested substantially in their band attire. The chief Scout and Chief Commissioner both explained that consultation was already being held and that such an exercise would be a lengthy one and would only serve at further delaying a decision.

A considerable number of assembly members present complained that uniform items were unavailable from the Scout Shop.

Both Chief Scout and the Chief Commissioner intervened to explain the position of the Association on this matter. The Chief Scout noted that he had order that no new stock is order so that the change over to a new uniform would be facilitated. The Chief Commissioner explained that regulating stock at the Scout Shop was proving to be extremely difficult thus the latter decision on re-ordering.

On a query raised by a number of members both the Chief Commissioner and the Chief Scout confirmed that the current activity wear is to remain in use and will not be affected or phased out.

The Chief Scout called a vote on the change of the Scout uniform as follows: *The current uniform shall be changed to reflect current times and which change to be approved with a separate vote.*

Mr John Micallef Engerer seconded the motion.

Mr Alex Cutajar stated that he could not vote on the motion if the design of the uniform has not yet been established.

Mr Charles Bajjada stated that he was not prepared for this motion and could not vote before discussing the matter with his Group.

The Chief Commissioner noted that the report of the working group on the uniforms was circulated much ahead of the Assembly and the Groups had the time to discuss its contents.

Mr Alex Cutajar reiterated that as suggested in the report there should be more consultation with the individual Groups.

The motion was approved with 39 votes in favour, 4 abstentions and 16 against.

Mr Marco Cassar enquired what will happen with regards the items which are no longer in stock in the interim period before the approval of the new uniform.

The Chief Scout stated that the Chief Commissioner will be issuing instructions on these measures.

Mr Mario Ellul appealed that the new uniform should be one that can be worn with dignity and without too many embellishments, i.e. a planer version of the current uniform.

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Mr Josmar Azzopardi referred to the Strategy Document and enquired whether the Council has prepared a strategy plan and if a person responsible with its implementation was identified.

The Chief Scout noted that the plan is being implemented, however no specific dead lines were yet set. Mr Azzopardi should raise the issue at the next Council meeting to ensure that the Strategy Document implementation is discussed further.

Mr Mario Ellul noted that the decisions taken today were a step forward in line with the strategy of the Association.

Mr Joseph Saliba enquired on the progress of the issue of the donation of dumper from ITS to the Association.

The Chief Scout stated that an Audit Committee will be setup shortly.

Mr Adrian Farrugia referred to the Association's cooperation with the Youth and United Nations Global Alliance, a result of which badge work handbooks were distributed to each Group.

Dr Arthur Azzopardi
Chief Scout

Mr Joseph Borg
General Assembly Secretary



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