



جمعية الصداقة البريطانية اللبنانية
THE BRITISH LEBANESE
ASSOCIATION

Registered in England and Wales as a Limited Company
Registration No: 1934028 VAT No: 444021491 Registered Charity No: 294578

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**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
of
The British Lebanese Association Ltd.
held on
Tuesday the 23rd of June 2009
at
The Royal Thames Yacht Club
60 Knightsbridge, London SW1X 7LF**

Those present:

Sir David Miers - Chairman
Mrs. Maria Shammas - Vice-Chairman
Mr. George Schweiry – Hon. Treasurer
Mrs. Lisa Zakhem – Hon. Secretary
Members of the Executive Committee
Members of the Association

1. The Chairman called the meeting to order at 11 a.m.

The Chairman confirmed that the meeting had been convened in accordance with the companies act 1985, with written notices sent to all British Lebanese Association members, and public announcements were made in the Times and Daily Telegraph. He welcomed all members present and confirmed that with the attendance of 11 members of the Executive Committee, and over 15 proxies received, there was a quorum for the meeting.

The Chairman brought to the attention of the Executive Committee members, new tighter legislation concerning the veracity of charity records and documentation. The Chairman asked that all officers and committee members concerned confirm that they double check all records, correspondence and documentation.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM

The Chairman reported that copies of the minutes of the previous AGM were sent individually to all the British Lebanese Association members, and that no objections had been received. The chairman put to the meeting that the minutes of the previous AGM be declared a true record of the proceedings of that AGM. The motion was proposed by Hisham Solh, and seconded by Anthony Dawton, agreed by the meeting, and the minutes duly signed by the chairman.



3. Chairman report

The Chairman said that the year since the last AGM had not seen the BLA put on an event. It was only possible to mount a major event such as "LEBANON: Vision & Achievement" at intervals greater than a year; moreover the global economic situation in the last twelve months had not been conducive to the mounting of a major gala or fund-raising event.

However the Association's major programme, the award of scholarships from the BLA scholarship fund had continued. The value of the scholarships awarded had been increased by 50% and this had resulted in more applications than in the past and thus a greater range of applicants to choose from.

Because of the economic downturn, and a reduction in the contribution made by The Arab British Chamber of Commerce to our joint scholarship programme, the prospects for an expansion of the programme in current circumstances looked poor. However, as a result of a welcome approach from the Karim Rida Said Foundation the scholarship committee have now been able to set up arrangements under which a joint BLA, Arab Chamber, Rida Said Foundation scheme will fund a larger number of full and partial scholarships.

The BLA is much indebted to the scholarship committee, and particularly to David MacLennan, for the successful outcome of the discussions with the BLA's partners in this initiative which will make a highly significant contribution to the continuing achievement of this important objective of the Association in the educational field.

In July of last year the Association wrote a letter of congratulation to the newly elected President of Lebanon, General Michel Sleiman expressing the hope that there might be an opportunity for the membership to offer their congratulations to him in person when he visited Britain. The President did visit at the end of April and, although it was not possible for him to take up our invitation to give an address to the Association, a number of officers and members of the BLA had the opportunity of meeting the President and Mrs. Sleiman during this successful visit.

Turning to the future, it is hoped that later this or early next year there will be a British Lebanese Association event in London in conjunction with the Khalil Gibran Chair at Maryland University to celebrate the 127th anniversary of the birth of Gibran. We envisage this to be an evening celebrating Lebanese excellence, to include input from Professor Suheil Bushrui of Maryland University. We hope too that a distinguished guest of honour will join us on the night.

It has been proposed that in the spring of 2010, the Association will organise a large fund raising event in Lebanon. If this comes to fruition it will be our first fund-raising event to be staged in Lebanon rather than in Britain. It is hoped that the event will take the form of an opportunity for the demonstration of Lebanese cultural, artistic and commercial excellence.



4. Treasurer's report

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I submit to you the accounts of the Association for the year ended 31 August 2008.

As you all know, the major fund raising event was held in 2007, and therefore 2008 figures are more modest by comparison. I am pleased to report, however, that our voluntary income is up by 58% to £45,429. This is comprised of donations, subscriptions and an overspill from the 2007 event. Also, our investment income is up slightly from £12,234 to £15,115.

I am also pleased to announce that our donations are up from last year's figure of £57,022 to £60,725. This is comprised of a £50,000 donation to Oum El Noor, which is a very worthy charity in Lebanon that is focused on drug rehabilitation and £10,750 for scholarships.

Support costs are down by 30% from £45,370 to £31,541. Here, once again we have to thank Anthony Dawton and his team for always keeping costs to a minimum.

Our balance sheet as at 31 August 2008 continues to be healthy with cash on hand totaling £343,752 compared to £285,760 at the end of 2007.

Mr. Chairman, I take the opportunity of this report to recommend the reappointment of our auditors, Raffingers Stuart, who continue to provide us with a very good service at a reasonable cost.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report was proposed by, Maria Shammass and seconded by Hisham Solh and approved unanimously.

5. Appointment and remuneration of auditors

The Treasurer recommended in his report, the reappointment of our auditors, Raffingers Stewart, who continue to provide us with a very good service at a reasonable cost.

The reappointment was proposed by George Schweiry, and seconded by Maria Shammass and approved unanimously.

6. Resignation and Election of Committee Members

The chairman stated that in conformity with article 35b of the articles of association of the British Lebanese Association, the resignation of half the members of the executive committee takes place with effect from this announcement. Those resigning are eligible for re-election.



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Nomination forms were individually sent with the announcement of this annual general meeting to all British Lebanese Association members, inviting them to offer candidates for election to the executive committee.

The Chairman suggested that with the agreement of the meeting, the executive committee members currently willing to be re-elected, be re-elected to the committee en bloc. Consideration will be given later in the year towards possible co-options to fill vacancies.

Joumana Karouni proposed the nomination of Mr. Marc Oufi, who it was proposed would work with the Fund Raising Committee. The Proposal was however deemed non-constitutional as his election papers were received later than the constitutionally stipulated 14 days. There could accordingly not be a vote, however after much discussion it was decided that Mr. Oufi will be co-opted under the co-option rule in the following Executive Committee meeting, and will be elected formally at the next AGM.

7. Any Other Business

There was no further business

8. Closure of meeting

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 11:55 a.m.

Please note: The Financial Statement is available online at: www.britishlebanese.org

Signed/Approved

Date
