



جمعية الصداقة البريطانية اللبنانية
THE BRITISH LEBANESE
ASSOCIATION

Registered in England and Wales as a Limited Company
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**Minutes of the Executive Committee 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 Shweiry – Hon Treasurer
Mrs. Lisa Zakhem – Hon Secretary
Mr. David Maclennan
Mr. Raja'i El Khoury
Mr. Douglas Gordon
Mr. Richard Palmer
Mrs. Dalia Salam Rishani
Mr. Hisham El-Solh
Miss Rania Nassar

Apologies for absence were received from: Miss Joumana Karouni, Mr. Bahaedine Bassatne, Dr Saeb Jaroudi, Mr. Ghazi Jounblat, Mrs. Bushra Salha, Mr. Ghias El-Yafi, Lady Cochrane and Dr. Samir Hreiki.

The Chairman opened the Meeting at 12:15

Action

Minutes of the previous Executive Committee Meeting

The Meeting agreed that the Minutes of the Previous Executive Committee Meeting were a correct record of the proceedings. This was proposed by Maria Shammas and seconded by Raja'i El Khoury. The Chairman duly signed them.

Action Arising from the Minutes of the Previous Executive Meeting

[Hon Secretary's Note: Action arising from the Minutes of the Previous Executive Committee is dealt with under the Agenda Items concerned]



Chairman's Report

The Chairman said that he has no formal report to offer the committee apart from that just offered to the AGM but would comment on various matters as they arise at the meeting.

The Chairman advised the meeting that he had sent a letter to President Michel Suleiman on behalf of the BLA, congratulating the President on his election success and expressing the hope that he would visit the BLA sometime in the future. As there had been no reply to this communication, there was concern whether it had actually reached its destination. It was suggested that from now on that all official correspondence to the President be sent via the Lebanese embassy in London.

Treasurer's Report

The Hon. Treasurer gave the quarterly report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Fundraising Committee

Lisa Zakhem said that she and her fundraising committee are planning an event mid January next year to celebrate the 127th anniversary of Gibran Khalil Gibran. This would be in conjunction with the Khalil Gibran Chair for Values And Peace Project (Maryland University, USA) headed by the esteemed and world authority on Gibran Professor Souheil Bushruhi.

Lisa Zakhem

Secondly the Fund Raising Committee is considering an event in Beirut in May or June 2010. Many of the Lebanese participants of the 2006 Vision & Achievement Exhibition in London are eager to replicate its success in Lebanon.

Lisa Zakhem

Events Committee

There were no events this year. Maria suggested that next year's lecture could be similar to the Medical Excellence event but on a different subject. Maria is working on this and will inform the committee on here progress.

Maria Shammas

Music Committee

Raja'i El Khoury, proposed a concert to be held at the Audi House.
And possibly an event to held the same night as Lisa's Khalil Gibran event.
Raja'i said that he would like to meet with Lisa and Leila to discuss this matter.



BLA Scholarships Report

Action

Mr. David MacLennan, Coordinator of BLA Scholarship gave the following report: He said, that in 2008 we continued our scholarships programme in Lebanon in conjunction with the Arab British Chamber of Commerce Cultural Fund.

The amount available for each of two scholarships was raised from £9000 to £13500 per scholar of which £10000 came from BLA and £3500 from ABCCF. This amount represented about two thirds of the cost of a post graduate course. As a result of the increase we received more applications than in the recent past. The two successful students - Siwar Zein (Human Resources Management at Kings College, London and Nadia Manasfi (Environmental Change and Management at Oxford) have successfully completed their period of study.

Turning to 2009, we probably have to accept that the BLA's resources for the scholarships programme are unlikely to be capable of substantial increase in the current economic climate. Moreover the ABCCF is itself facing financial problems and has told us that it can only make a total of £3500 available for the coming academic year i.e. half what it contributed last year.

However this somewhat gloomy prospect brightened when at the end of 2008, the BLA received a welcome approach from the Karim Rida Said Foundation suggesting that our two organisations combine their resources and jointly fund post graduate scholarships in respect of students from Lebanon. The new arrangements mean that by joining forces, BLA/ABCCF and KRSF can fund a larger number of full and partial scholarships. At the same time there will be savings to the BLA on administrative costs which will be carried by the KRSF. The funding will also go further thanks to partnership arrangements that KRSF has with a number of British universities that offer reductions in tuition costs. The selection process for scholars for the 2009/10 academic programme, under the new arrangements, is currently in train with the BLA Scholarship Fund Committee fully involved at each step in the process.

The BLA Scholarship Committee has very much welcomed the opportunity to work with the prestigious Karim Rida Said Foundation and would like to record its appreciation for the initiative taken by the Foundation to cooperate with the BLA. Thanks also go to the ABCCF for its continuing involvement.

The Scholarships Committee would like to record its thanks to the British Council in Beirut for its role in handling BLA scholarships in the past. The Council will continue to play a key role in selecting and processing applicants under the new joint arrangements.



The London members of the BLA Scholarships Committee would also like to thank the BLA's Beirut representatives, Ghazi Joublatt and Saeb Jaroudeh for their active involvement in the selection process.

Any Other Business

1. The Chairman opened for discussion the fact that the BLA was not in touch with the UK political establishment. That there should be dialogue between the BLA and political organizations interested in Lebanon, such as the Lebanese-UK Friendship Parliamentary Group.

Sir David read from a list of names suggested by Francis Guy (Ambassador to the Republic of Lebanon), and proposed that he contact those on the list and arrange for an informal meeting in the House of Commons. To explain to them what the BLA is all about and find out what their involvement with Lebanon is and see if we might not be of assistance to each other. This was unanimously agreed by the meeting.

2. Maria Shammass suggested that a meeting between some of those mentioned in the list with four or five leading Lebanese Businessmen would make an excellent event, especially if hosted in the House of Commons. Members could also be invited.
3. Rania Nassar, suggested a more pro-active approach towards the younger generation. A lecture by the Lebanese author Nassim Taleb, writer of the acclaimed Black Swan was proposed.
4. Sir David mentioned that it was time for another BLA Newsletter, and that the Website should be regularly updated.
5. Marc Oufi was co-opted.
Proposed by the Chairman and Seconded by Lisa Zakhem.

Date of the Next Committee Meeting

The date of the next Executive Meeting will be announced in due course.

Conclusion

The Chairman concluded the Meeting at 13.00 p.m.

Attached:

- 1) BLA Membership Report – Sheet 16,
- 2) BLA Quarterly Statement,

Signed/Approved

Date



1. BLA Membership Report 16

Method of payment	Total members	Individual memberships	Joint memberships	Total memberships	Overdue memberships	Overdue balance
Bankers order	224	78	73	151	147	£2516
Cash	4	0	2	2	2	£50
Cheque	485	185	150	335	299	£6484
Gratis	24	22	1	23	0	£0
Life	55	17	19	36	7	£3500
Overseas	0	0	0	0	0	£00
Postal order	1	1	0	1	1	£15
Unknown	20	10	5	15	14	£286
Grand totals	813	313	250	563	469	£12,851



2. BLA Bank Accounts Report as at 10 June 2009

Account	Nov-07	Feb-08	May-08
<u>BLA</u>			
Current	1,743.89	1,392.99	121.18
Call	396.36	-	-
Help Lebanon Fund	2,160.47	2,115.47	2,070.47
<u>Scholarship</u>			
Current	548.26	548.26	548.26
Fund			4,354.64
Fixed Deposit	310,089.90	308,671.67	303,938.00
Total Funds	314,938.88	312,728.39	311,032.55

Notes

- 1 These are cleared balances as at 31 May 2009