



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
Wednesday 27th June 2007
at
Royal Yacht Club
60 Knightsbridge SW1X 7LF**

Those Present:

Sir David Miers – Chairman
Mr. George Shweiry – Treasurer
Members of the Executive Committee
Members of the Association

The Chairman called the Meeting to order at 11.00 a.m.

He 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 made in The Times and Daily Telegraph. He welcomed all members present and confirmed that with the attendance, and over 25 proxies received, there was a quorum for the Meeting.

Minutes of the Previous AGM

The Chairman reported that copies of the Minutes of the Previous AGM were sent individually to all 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 Leila Tannous, seconded by Douglas Gordon, agreed by the Meeting, and the Minutes duly signed by the Chairman.

Chairman's Oral Report

He said that the major event for the BLA during the year had been the Exhibition, "**LEBANON: Vision & Achievement**" which ran from 30 May to 2 June in Kensington Town Hall. This had been a tremendous success. This success was all the more gratifying and remarkable when one considers the background against which it was achieved. The Exhibition had originally been planned for October 2006 but had had to be



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postponed because of the severe fighting and grave political uncertainties which had been inflicted on Lebanon in the summer. However those involved had never lost faith. Despite all discouragements, despite the continuation of political uncertainty and despite even the threat that further fighting might spread in Lebanon as the revised opening date for the Exhibition approached, the organisers persevered, the participants, sponsors and other supporters remained loyal, and the Exhibition was opened as planned on 30 May by Mrs. Hariri in Kensington Town Hall.

The purpose of the Exhibition was to provide an opportunity for the very best that Lebanon has to offer in the field of culture, art, heritage and design to be shown off at a venue in the heart of London. Numerous Lebanese companies seized this opportunity to set out their stalls. Their enterprise and commitment was rewarded by a commercial success which permitted the Exhibition to take over three quarters of a million dollars in, effectively, three days. The Exhibition was also a reminder of the determination and resilience of the Lebanese entrepreneur and proof that, even when the clouds are darkest, Lebanese commercial acumen, business skills, design creativity and indeed the people themselves will not allow their momentum to be stopped.

I should take this opportunity of expressing the BLA's thanks to all those who sponsored, supported or participated in the Exhibition, and in particular to the patron of the Exhibition, Mrs. Nazek Hariri, ever loyal to the BLA, for whom this was the first such occasion since the tragic assassination of her husband as Prime Minister over two years ago; and also, of course, to our own BLA fund-raising committee members, and above all to Lisa Zakhem, whose unquenchable enthusiasm, unerring fixity of purpose and unremitting hard work was once again the critical factor in the success of this major event.

Large sums were raised for the two charitable beneficiaries of the Exhibition, the BLA's Scholarship Fund and Oum el Nour. I will ask those more directly concerned to report on the details.

I should like to mention that in the margins of the Exhibition a number of subsidiary events were staged which, but for the Exhibition, would have been worth mounting in their own right: a Concert by Wissam Boustani supported by Timothy Carey, a Backgammon competition under the direction of Romanos Moukarzel, a lecture on oriental carpets by Nivine Maktabi. I should particularly like to mention the panel discussion under the title "Lebanon meaning and message" in which Dr Philip Salem, Richard Beeston, Charles Glass and Tim Llewellyn participated.

When the fighting broke out in Lebanon last summer, and harrowing pictures of devastation and human suffering were broadcast on the world's TV, the BLA immediately opened a special account to which our members, friends of Lebanon in Britain and indeed the wider public, could contribute



for the relief of the suffering caused. The BLA itself made an initial contribution of £5,000. I am proud to report that nearly £85,000 in all was contributed to this fund. The money was remitted to the Lebanese Red Cross for distribution to those in need.

I must also mention, very much in the same spirit, our holding of the UK premiere of the Lebanese film Bosta. We were delighted to co-host the screening and show such a heart warming depiction, in these times, of Lebanon and her people. Proceeds raised from the screening went into the BLA special Help Lebanon Fund and were sent to the Lebanese Red Cross to help with the aftermath of the invasion.

I should also mention the other concert which Wissam Boustani gave in St John's Smith Square in December. This was very well attended and the full proceeds of this, too, were generously donated by Wissam Boustani to our Help Lebanon Fund.

The Scholarship Fund during the year continued to contribute to the Association's objects by providing opportunities for deserving Lebanese students to pursue courses in Britain. In 2006, because of the upheaval and uncertainty caused by the fighting, we only financed one scholarship. But we are confident that normal service will be resumed for the future.

Acceptance of the Chairman's report was proposed by Leila Tannous and seconded by George Shweiry.

Treasurer's Report

The Hon Treasurer submitted to the meeting the accounts of the Association for the year ended 31st August 2006.

He started off by saying: As you all know, the year was a difficult one for the BLA and for Lebanon as a whole due to the war which took place in July of that year. The major fund raising event which we had planned for 2006 was naturally postponed to 2007 and was eventually a great success. That success will be reflected in the 2007 year-end accounts. In 2006, however, we did initiate a "Help the Lebanon" Appeal which received an overwhelming response, and as a result of which we were able to make a donation of £85,000, £45,000 of which was paid before the year-end and £40,000 of which was paid shortly after. Our gratitude and congratulations go to everyone who has worked on and supported this Appeal.

In addition to that, we were able to make scholarship donations of £23,000 up from last year's figure of £6,000.



As to the accounts for the year, our donation and subscription income was up from £3,439 to £86,063 mainly reflecting the success of the "Help the Lebanon" Appeal. Investment income was down by 15.6% to £13,009 reflecting the lower interest rate climate in which we live. Subscription income, on the other hand, was steady at £3,703 for the year. Fundraising and publicity cost was £13,917, significantly up from the previous year's figure of £716. This was mainly associated with the 'Vision and Achievement' event, the income from which will be reflected in the 2007 year end accounts.

Our management and administration expenses were successfully kept to a minimum and, at £16,760, were roughly in line with the 2005 figure. Once again, our thanks go to our management and administration team who manage such a tight ship.

Our Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2006 looks healthy, with cash at bank and in hand of £338,695. This figure is expected to be greatly improved once the successful results of the 2007 event are incorporated in next year's accounts.

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

It was proposed by George Shweiry, seconded by Douglas Gordon, and agreed by the Meeting.

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.

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.



Resignation and election of committee members: there was one resignation, from Farouk Kamal. This was not accepted.

Leila Tannous, as the proxy for Lisa Zakhem, nominated Rania Nassar as a new executive committee member. This was seconded by Leila Tannous and adopted unanimously.

Any Other Business

Supplementary comments: Dahlia Salaam Rishani, asked after the management of funds on deposit. Due to a present low interest rate, the funds are gaining less interest than in previous years. George Shweiry suggested the setting up of a subcommittee to discuss the options for investment, Sir David suggested; that, for funding our scholarships, we might consider interest-bearing securities with appropriate maturity dates rather than placing all our funds on deposit

It was decided to create with the help of the Hon. Treasurer, an advisory committee to research possible options, and report to the executive committee. This was proposed by Mr Palmer, and seconded by Martin Short.

At present, the funds of the British Lebanese Association scholarship fund are held in the UK sterling account in Beirut Bank in London.

The Chairman invited the Meeting to bring forward any further business of significance falling within the scope of the Meeting. No request was received.

Closure of the Meeting

The Chairman declared the Meeting closed at 11.45 a.m.