



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 14th of June 2011
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
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 9 members of the Executive Committee, and 3 proxies received, there was a quorum for the meeting.

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 Maria Shammas, and seconded by Douglas Gordon, agreed by the meeting, and the minutes duly signed by the chairman.



3. Chairman report 2011

The Chairman began: The celebration of our 25th anniversary, the BLA's jubilee year, which was partly covered at last year's AGM, has continued into the current year's reporting period. So we continued to celebrate the achievement in the second half of last year and into this.

The main event last year was the magnificent all day and evening event on 19 November at the The Banqueting House in Whitehall. This featured a striking exhibition of paintings jointly produced by Emmanuel Guiragossian, the artist, and Mourad Boutros, the calligrapher, inspired by the works of Gibran, which our guests were able to enjoy beneath the superb painted ceiling by Peter Paul Rubens. The chief element of the day however was the London launch of a volume of the Prince of Wales speeches translated into Arabic and published in Beirut. This was done in the presence of HRH himself who was able to circulate amongst our membership before delivering an address covering some of the themes in the speeches selected for translation. We were very grateful to HRH and to the University of Maryland, and to the University's Khalil Gibran chair, for choosing our 25th Anniversary celebrations as the occasion for launching this collection of HRH's speeches in Arabic. The event continued with a gala fund-raising lunch the proceeds of which were devoted to the BLA's charities and in particular to the scholarship fund. The lunch was much enlivened by some well-known operatic arias and Lebanese songs performed by Samar Salameh and Nadim Naaman of the Peace and Prosperity Trust, as well as by a speech from Professor Suhail Bushrui with readings from Gibran.

The David Roberts Memorial Lecture in the jubilee year was given on 6 September by Robert Fisk, the well-known British journalist and author of several books on Lebanon and the Middle East. His theme "Lebanon, State of Denial" proved predictably provocative. His conclusions, as well as some engagingly presented but pessimistic forecasts relating to the pressures likely to be confronting Lebanon in the immediate future, gave the audience plenty of food for thought.

In August we were proud to bring our resources and administrative team to promote the two days of performances at the London Coliseum by the Caracalla Dance Company, the Lebanese institution with a worldwide reputation. This year's show, certainly their most ambitious to date, was entitled "Zayed and the Dream, an historic journey to the heart of the Arabian Desert" and attracted the usual appreciative audience.



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In April this year with welcome support from the Noura Restaurant we arranged an "evening of literary excellence" with the authors Philip Mansel, Ted Gorton and Andrée Feghali Gorton. Brief speeches on their respective books "the Levant, splendour and catastrophe in the Mediterranean" and "Lebanon through writers 'eyes" were followed, in due course and after an excellent Lebanese meal, by a question and answer session. This proved to be a successful formula for an entertaining evening. The Association is encouraged to continue with high quality but relatively low cost events of this kind.

As for coming events, we now have confirmation of our first ever event in Beirut. Our membership will remember that an event was scheduled for last year but had to be postponed. The new date has now been fixed for Tuesday 25 October, at the Phoenicia Hotel. A robust and talented committee in Beirut is moving matters forward at a rapid pace. The event will be under the patronage of the British Embassy where we have had every encouragement and support from the ambassador, Frances Guy. The celebration will take the form of a gala fund-raising dinner with various supporting attractions. The funds raised will go to Arc en Ciel, the well-respected Lebanese charity, for the integration of disabled children into mainstream schools, as well as to the BLA scholarship fund. We are confident that the event will be a historic occasion and a major event in the 2011 Lebanese social calendar. We hope that many of our British members will find the time and wherewithal to join us. Members will of course be kept abreast of this event and in due course will be able to purchase tickets.

We have also been in discussion with Philip Beale, builder of the vessel "Phoenicia" which recently completed a circumnavigation of the African continent in imitation of the ancient Phoenician voyage recorded by the historian Herodotos, and Director of the Phoenicia project. He has been approached to give the Association a talk in the autumn and we understand that in 2012 he may sail his vessel "Phoenicia" from Lebanon, and up the Thames in order for the boat to be placed in the courtyard of the Royal Academy at the same time as a projected exhibition at the Academy on Phoenicia. The BLA is considering carefully what part it might play in this.

Before closing I should like to pay tribute, once again, to the work of our scholarship committee, both in Beirut and in Britain, and to the BLA's scholarship programme. A recent count established that since 1995 the fund has assisted over 120 Lebanese postgraduates and civil servants to obtain master's degrees or attend refresher courses in 23 different disciplines at 39 British universities, colleges or training centres. A magnificent record.



Comments on the Chairman's report

There were no comments.

4. Treasurer's report

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I submit to you the accounts of your Association for the year ended 31 August 2010. As you all know, the 25th Anniversary celebration of the BLA was held after our year-end, on 19 November 2010, which meant that we had to recognise some of the costs associated with that event during our financial year, while deferring the revenue recognition to next year.

This has resulted in a net loss for the year 2010 of £29,421. We do, however, expect 2011 to show a marked improvement on this due to the success of the events already held, and 2012 to be even better due to the major event your committee is working on as we speak.

I am pleased to report that donations are up significantly from £830 in 2009 to £8,511 in 2010. Subscriptions are also up from £2,251 to £2,857. Income from fund-raising events is also up from Nil in 2009 to £11,030 in 2010. Interest on deposits is much lower at £426 down from £6,494 in 2009. Given the general condition of banks, this is unfortunately not unusual.

In terms of expenses, apart from the three items that relate to the 25th Anniversary event I have already mentioned, being Fundraising Costs, Postage and Stationery and Advertising, all other costs have been kept roughly in line with previous years. Given the inflationary pressures around us, this is an achievement for which we are always grateful to Anthony Dawton and his team.

Our balance sheet as at 31 August 2010 continues to be healthy with cash on hand totalling £269,763.

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. Thank you.

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 Shweiry, and seconded by Gaby Fadel 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.

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 introduced Sir David Richmond as a new member of the Executive Committee. This was proposed by Sir David Miers and seconded by Leila Tannous.

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. Proposed by Leila Tannous and seconded by Douglas Gordon and agreed by the meeting.

The names were read out loud by the Chairman and consequently the following were approved as Executive Committee Members:

Officers

Chairman: Sir David Miers
Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Maria Shammass
Hon Treasurer: Mr. George Shweiry
Hon Secretary: Mrs. Lisa Zakhem

Hon. Executive Committee Members

Mrs. Myrna Bustani
Mrs. Leila Tannous

Executive Committee

Sir David Richmond
Mr. Bahaedine Bassatne
Lady Cochrane
Mr. Rajai El Khouri
Mr. Hisham El Solh
Mr. Ghias El Yafi
Mr. Douglas Gordon
Dr Samir Hraiki
Dr Saeb Jaroudi
Mr. Ghazi Jounblat
Miss Joumana Karouni
Mr. David MacLennan
Miss Rania Nassar
Mr. Richard Palmer
Mrs. Dalia Salam Rishani
Mrs. Bushra Salha
Mr. Marc Oufi



7. Any Other Business

Maria Shammass wished to propose the entrance of Paula Zard to the Executive Committee. Maria was informed that any name should be proposed and seconded at least 14 days before an AGM. The Chairman suggested that Paula Zard could be Co-opted on to the committee.

Maria Shammass asked if the Charities Commission allows for large amounts to be left on deposit in the BLA Bank Account. Lisa Zakhem added that the BLA should be distributing as much of its deposits as possible. The Chairman said that the large sum held in the BLA accounts was not a problem as it is being used to grow the scholarship endowment fund.

Dalia Salam Rishani asked what percentage of the income from the upcoming event in Lebanon would go to the The Arc en Ciel Charity. Lisa Zakhem, the Chairman of the BLA Fund Raising Committee and the Chairman of the Beirut Event Committee said it was proposed fifty per cent should go to the BLA scholarship fund and 50 per cent to Arc en Ciel.

8. Closure of meeting

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 11:41 a.m.

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

Signed:

Date: