



Hal Balzan Local Council

Annual Administrative Report

2016

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1.0 The Council

1.1 The Council**Council Meeting Participation**

Dr Ian Spiteri	100%
Mr Andre' Grech	94%
Mr Daniel Muscat	94%
Mr Desmond Zammit Marmara'	100%
Mr Joe Galea	100%

The Council held 17 meetings as at 31st December 2016. Meetings were held regularly, as far as possible three weeks apart.

Employees:


Mr Mark Mallia	Executive Secretary as from 19 th October 2011 to 30 th November 2015 Acting Executive Secretary as from 1 st December 2015 to 13 th September 2016
Ms Doriette Farrugia	Part-Time Clerk started work on the 18 th May 2009 to 31 st August 2011 Full-Time Clerk from 1 st September 2011 to 31 st October 2014 Full-Time Executive Officer as from 1 st November 2014 to 13 th September 2016 Executive Secretary as from 14 th September 2016
Ms Mariella Casha	Part-Time Clerk started work on the 18 th August 2008 to 31 st October 2014 Part-Time Executive Officer as from 1 st November 2014 to 30 th September 2016 Full-Time Executive Officer as from 1 st October 2016

Seconded workers:

Mr Hector Camilleri	RSS Ltd (ex-IPSL) started working with us on 10 th January 2008
Mr Anthony Bray	Community Work Scheme started working with us on 3 rd January 2013
Mr Martin Fenech	RSS Ltd (ex-IPSL) started working with us on 2 nd May 2016

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2.0 Financial and Operations review

2.1 Financial ReviewIncome:

The government allocation for the year amounted to € 265,469. Other Government Income was €16,122.

Income from the Local Enforcement System amounted to €5,107.

General income included income from €44,487. Of this amount, €11,639 was income from temporary permits and the remainder €32,848 is income derived from other sources.

Expenditure:

Operations and Maintenance amounted to € 157,474. Of this amount € 94,458 was spent on contractual services which were mainly in the collection of refuse, road and street cleaning.

Personal Emoluments amounted to € 64,504

Administration costs and other expenditure amounted to € 37,035 (excluding depreciation which amounted to €84,827).

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2.2 Operations Review

Influenza Vaccination

During the past year the Council, for the eight year running, provided the influenza vaccine to elderly residents so as to make the service available in the locality.

Balzan residents over the age of 55 years were given the possibility of receiving the influenza vaccine from the Balzan Clinic on the initiative of the local council. The vaccine was administered to 139 persons during 2016. The vaccine was administered after arrangements were made with the Primary Health Centre. The vaccines were given on Thursday 17th November 2016. These were provided free of charge.

Services

Streetlighting repairs

Street lamps were delegated to Council and the council started replacing street lamps where during 2016, 26 lamps were reported as needing repairs.

New Traffic Signs and Road Markings

During 2016 the Council requested a number of permits from Transport Malta and it seems that the backlog of pending applications were addressed by Transport Malta since the introduction of a new computerised system.

The most important request submitted by the Council which is still pending for over three years was a request to turn St Gabriel Street, St Francis Street, Patri Guze Delia Street, Kannizzata Street and Qarcilla Street into one-way streets and a no through traffic. However, although we were informed by Transport Malta that they have their studies ready as to date no report has been presented to the Council. Throughout 2017, the Council will carry out studies on the implementation of a traffic management system for the locality of Hal Balzan.

Council workers are refreshing road markings and repairing traffic signs when necessary so as to minimise the cost of works.

Re-instatement of Pavements

With the introduction of the services of a handyman, this year the Council has managed to re-instate a number of pavements and works were carried out on normal wear and tear. The deterioration of pavements along the years makes it necessary to re-instate a number of pavements during next year depending from the funds available.

It is the Council's policy to request a €232.94 deposit on application for the granting of a permit for a crane to work in the locality, to cover any damage that might be caused. The deposit is only refunded if public property is left in its original condition.

Re-instatement of Roads

The handyman and workers seconded to the Local Council from the Central Government carried out patching works of an urgent nature so as to prevent damage to vehicles or an accident.

A number of streets need to be resurfaced urgently as their state has deteriorated considerably over the past years, these are Old Railway Road, Sir Antonio Micallef Street, Balzan Valley and Gherusija Street.

The state of some roads, will in the very near future entail their being taken up. The Council does not have the necessary funds to re-instate roads through its budget. However it is the intention of the Council to use some of its surplus funds to re-instate one of the pavements that needs urgent attention.

If the budget allocation is not increased or the central government does not intervene to re-instate the other streets, we will soon be in a situation where the work will become an urgent matter and funds not available to carry them out. This especially so for streets who's road base is made up of soil. We strongly suspect this is so for Sir Antonio Micallef

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Customer Care

The number of complaints received during 2016 amounted to 58. Of these complaints 21 fell within the responsibility of the Local Council whilst 37 fell within the responsibility of the Central Government or some Authority. 1 complaint of the 21 complaints that fell within the responsibility of the Council received during 2016 were still pending on the 31st December 2016. This means that 97.3% of the complaints were settled in the same year.

Credit of this success should be given to the handyman of the Council together with the seconded workers as they are settling most of the complaints and the necessary works to be done the next day.

E-Government Services

No record of usage is kept for the year under review but the service is hardly being used at the office, probably because residents have internet service in the home. During 2011 a Wi-Fi point has installed in the village square.

Supply of application forms

The Council provides a number of forms for the provision of services by a number of parastatal entities, the number of forms being provided is always increasing as the number of entities having websites is also increasing and forms are being downloaded from these sites.

The Council Newsletter

During the year 2016, the detailed magazine was issued on an annual basis.

Other Matters

Initiative by residents and Band Clubs

The Council appreciates the initiative being taken by residents who live in Triq L-Għerusija area who annually decorate the roundabout and streets of the area during the Christmas Season. The Council finances the use of electricity and the installation of the electricity meter as its contribution to the initiative.

In collaboration with the San Gabriel Band Club the traditional *Hadd il-Palm Purċissjoni* was organised which was a huge success.

Enforcement Issues

Enforcement Issues are as usual by nature controversial. Residents want more enforcement especially with regards to parking in the vicinity of St Aloysius School during school hours, dog fouling, traffic regulations, noise pollution, circulation of heavy vehicles and dumping around the bring-in-sites.

Unfortunately, the Council hasn't got the executive powers to enforce and need to rely on the Hal Balzan Police Station which is not opening on a regular basis and is not helping in the effective enforcement as requested by the community on time and wardens who do not make regular inspections in the locality.

In 2016, the Council with the approval of Transport Malta continued with the 'Residential Parking Scheme' in various streets around the locality which are prone to parking problems which is proving to be effective.

Those who demand enforcement think we are doing little whilst those on whom enforcement is done wish to be educated instead.

Organization of Courses in the locality

No courses were organised during 2016 as unfortunately every time the Council issues a call for applications the response is almost nil.

Applications for Special Funding by the Central Government

The Central Government issued several calls for applications to help Local Councils with fund particular projects through such schemes. Ħal Balzan Local Council applied for funding for the activity 'Balzan Arts and Festival' which this year has proved to be a huge success. We were given funds from the Department of Local Councils to organize this activity.

Meetings and Activities

Outings for the Elderly

A number of outings for the elderly were organized to help the elderly socialise.

The outings consisted of visits to a number of historic places in which they were served also tea/coffee amongst other things.

The outings are very popular with the elderly who look forward to them with enthusiasm.

Jum Ħal Balzan and Balzan Arts and Music Festival

Jum Ħal Balzan was celebrated on Friday, 3rd June 2016. The celebrations consisted of a Thanksgiving Mass held at the Ħal Balzan Parish church after the raising of the Ħal Balzan flag in the square.

The presentation of the honour of Ġieħ Ħal Balzan to Fr Kalcidon Vassallo (former Parish priest), Mr John Cassar (ex-Councillor) and Mr Keith Camilleri was held during the 'Balzan Arts and Music Festival'.

For the second year the Council organised the 'Balzan Arts and Festival' which was celebrated on the 3rd June 2016. The activity included a variety program with various established singers. Food and drinks were available. This activity was a huge success and will continue to be organised in the coming years if special funds are given by the Central Government as in previous years.



Mark Mallia
Acting Executive Secretary



Doriette Farrugia
Executive Secretary