



**Hal Balzan Local Council**

# **Annual Administrative Report**

**2013**



## 2.0 The Council

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### 2.1 The Council

#### Council Meeting Participation

Dr. John Zammit Montebello	100%
Mr. Joseph M. Galea	100%
Mr. Guido Borg	100%
Mr. Desmond Zammit Marmara	100%
Mr. Stephen Gatt	100%

The Council held 20 meetings during the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. Meetings were held regularly, as far as possible three weeks apart.

#### Employees:

Mr Mark Mallia	Executive Secretary as from 19 <sup>th</sup> October 2011
Ms Mariella Casha	Part-time Clerk started work on the 18 <sup>th</sup> August 2008.
Ms. Doriette Farrugia	Part-time Clerk started work on the 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2009 and on Full-time as from the 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2011.

#### Seconded workers:

Mr. Carmel Desira	Labourer (from the Department of Works and Construction) started on 16 <sup>th</sup> August 2011
Mr. Hector Camilleri	Slinger (from IPSL) started on the 10 <sup>th</sup> January 2008.
Mr. Anthony Bray	From Community Work Scheme started working with us on 3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2013.
Mr. Christopher Cortis	From Community Work Scheme started work with us on 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2012.

**3.0 Financial and Operations review**

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**3.1 Financial Review**Income:

The government allocation for the year amounted to € 249,556 and Supplementary income was € 11,414.84

Income from the LES Joint Committee amounted to € 3087,97.

General income included income from the organization of aerobic classes amounting to €297, €412 from donations received in connection with the distribution of the book Hal Balzan, income from temporary permits amounted to €2921.43, €115.50 was received from outings for the elderly, €110 was received from Sponsorships and income from the printing of notices amounted to €1535.85. An income of €5362.06 was received from WSC regarding road re-instatement works. The remainder €9.32 is income from other sources.

Expenditure:

Operations and Maintenance amounted to € 165,277. Of this amount € 107,290 was spent on contractual services which were mainly in the collection of refuse, road and street cleaning.

Personal Emoluments amounted to € 68,079

Administration costs and other expenditure amounted to € 21,919.

Capital Expenditure

In March 2012 works started on the Paving and Embellishment of Pjazza Bertu Fenech, Triq Il-Kbira, Triq Dun Spir Sammut, Triq It-Tlett Knejjes, Triq Guze Bonnici and Triq Idmejda part financed under the European Regional Development Fund ERDF 2005- Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 Operational Programme I. This has been completed by the end of this year. Total cost of the project as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 was € 321,394.29 part-financed by the EU. There are still some pending payments as the Council managed to get funds under this programme to restore the church parvis

Urban Improvement Funds which amount to € 88,632 were not utilised as our application for the reconstruction of pavements of Balzan Valley at the junction with Main Street was not approved. The Council is to utilise these funds for the installation of decorative lanterns in the older part of the locality which will be implemented in 2014.



## **3.2 Operations Review**

### **Major Projects**

#### European Regional Development Fund – Paving and Embellishment of Church Square area

Works on the Paving and Embellishment of Pjazza Bertu Fenech, Triq Il-Kbira, Triq Dun Spir Sammut, Triq It-Tlett Knejjes, Triq Guze Bonnici and Triq Idmejda part financed under the European Regional Development Fund ERDF 2005- Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 Operational Programme I has been completed by the end of this year. Total cost of the project as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 was € 321,394.29 part-financed by the EU. There are still some pending payments as the Council managed to get funds under this programme to restore the church parvis

#### Urban Improvement Funds – Balzan Valley with Main Street Junction

The Council requested MEPA's aide to finance through it's Urban Improvement Scheme, the reconstruction of pavements in Balzan Valley at the junction with Main Street. However this application was not approved and the Hal Balzan Local Council will be applying to utilise the funds under this scheme for the installation of decorative lanterns in the older part of the locality.

### **Other Projects**

#### 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 153 persons during 2013. The vaccine was administered after arrangements were made with the Primary Health Centre. The vaccines were given during November 2013. These were provided free of charge.

### **Services**

#### New lamps approved and installed

Only one new lamp was installed during 2013 in Idmejda Street near Melita Restaurant. Street lamps were delegated to Council and the council started replacing street lamps and during 2013, 48 lamps were reported as needing repairs.

#### New Traffic Signs and Road Markings

During 2013 the Council requested a number of permits but due to the backlog of applications we have not been given a reply to a number of our requests except for the implementation

The most important request submitted by the council which is still pending for over two years was a request to turn Triq San Gabriel, Triq San Frangisk, Triq Patri Guze Delia, Triq Il-Kannizzata and Triq Qarcilla 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 2014, the Council will be insisting with the relevant authority to implement this traffic management.

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 make 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, Wesgħa Prof. G. Aquilina, 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 the Council due to the fact that the financial statements on a yearly basis showed a surplus, it has decided that this surplus will be used for the resurfacing and paving of Triq L-Gherusija and Triq Guze Bonnici in 2014 estimated to cost the Council the sum of € 160,000.

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 Street, Gulju Cauchi Street, Dun Gwann Zammit Hammet Street, Sigismondo Dimech Street, Balaguer Street, Wesgħa Prof. G. Aquilina, Kannizzata Street, Old Railway Road, Karenza Street, Paguni Street, Dr. Zammit Street, Guzeppi Frendo Street, Qarcilla Street and Patri Guze Delia Street.

### Bulky Refuse Collection

During the year 2013 we had 1313 calls for the collection of bulky refuse whereas during 2012 we had 1218 calls. During 2013 the calls increased by 7.8% over the previous year. This is being paid for by the Council.

### Cleaning and Other Services

The contract for street sweeping was allocated to Innovative Projects Ltd until October 2013. A fresh call for Tenders was issued, however an appeal has been lodged and at the moment this service is being given on a direct order. As to date, the Appeals Board has not decided on this matter. The new contractor will be using a small sweeping machine which was a huge success as cleanliness improved.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 collection of garden waste is being carried out on Saturdays and domestic waste is not being collected on Tuesdays. The Council took this initiative (the first on the island), to collect garden (green) waste so as to minimize the amount of refuse deposited at Mgħatab .

The Council allocated the door-to-door waste separation collection which is being carried out on Tuesdays and the collection from the three bring-in-sites to Greenpak. Greenpak carried out a door-to-door education campaign and distributed free green bags to all households to encourage waste separation. We do have a problem with dumping around the bring-in-sites especially the one in Balzan Valley. Enforcement by green wardens was requested to solve this persistent problem.

## **Office Services**

### LES Payments Collected at the Local Council office

During 2013 the Council received 1172 payments with regards to fines collected, of these 376 were for Balzan, whilst 796 were for other local councils.

### Trading Licences

During the year 2013, 23 licences were renewed at the local council office.

### Government Rent Payments

During the year 2013 we received 21 payments with regards to government rents.

### Permits for the placing of Skips and Bins-on-wheels

During 2013 the Council issued 98 permits for the placing of skips and bins-on-wheels whereas during 2012, 91 permits were issued. This is an increase of 7.69% over the previous year.

### Permits for the placing of Cranes, and other activities

During 2013, 684 temporary permits were issued whereas during 2012, 652 permits were issued. This is an increase of 4.9% over the previous year.

### Local Enforcement by Wardens

During the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013 a total of 73 tickets were issued by wardens in the locality of Hal Balzan.

### Customer Care

The number of complaints received during 2013 amounted to 445. Of these complaints 281 fell within the responsibility of the local council whilst 164 fell within the responsibility of the Central Government or some Authority. 6 complaints of the 281 complaints that fell within the responsibility of the Council received during 2013 were still pending on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. This means that 98% of the complaints were settled in the same year.

During the period of 2012 complaints received amounted to 644. This means that during 2013 complaints decreased on average by 44% over the previous year.

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

### Kartanzjan

During 2013, 88 kartanzjan documents were distributed.

### E-Government Services

The Council is providing an internet service to residents, free of charge during normal office hours at the local council office. Residents can access the Council website to obtain information about services being provided and information for students, photos etc about the locality and projects that were carried out. The service was upgraded to Wi-Fi and seating facilities provided. No record of usage is kept for the year under review but the service is hardly being used,



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 2013, three (3) editions of the council newsletter were published. The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis during 2014.



## **Other Matters**

### Issue of Tenders for works and services

During the year 2013 the Council allocated the Tender for the 'Services of An Architect' for a period of three years. Another Tender was issued for the 'Leasing of a Commercial Vehicle' for a period of five years, another Tender for "Manual and Mechanised Street Sweeping" and also the Tender for the 'Reconstruction of the Church Parvis"

### 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. It is the intention of the Council to participate once again in 2014.

### Enforcement Issues

Enforcement Issues are as usual by nature controversial. Residents want more enforcement especially with regards to parking in the vicinity of Stella Maris School during school hours, dog fouling, traffic regulations and dumping around the bring-in-sites. Whilst the first is easily enforceable the second is proving to be a bit tricky even now that green wardens are in our streets. Dumping around the bring-in-site of Wesgħa Prof. Guze' Aquilina and Balzan valley continues to remain a problem.

Unfortunately the Balzan Police Station is not opening on a regular basis and is not helping in the effective enforcement as requested by the community on time.

In 2013 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

Hal Balzan Local Council organized aerobic classes during 2013 and applications amounted to 11. During 2012 applications for aerobic classes amounted to 36.

### 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. Hal Balzan Local Council applied for such funding to organize Aerobic Classes under the "Sports Initiative Scheme Application 2013". We were given funds to organize 10 sessions of aerobic classes.

The Council applied for funding for the activity 'Lejla Interkulturali Balzanija" 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 buffet breakfasts, high tea amongst other things.

Every outing starts with mass either in Balzan or at the place being visited. The outings are very popular with the elderly who look forward them with enthusiasm.

#### Jum Hal Balzan, Lejla Interkulturali Balzanija

Jum Hal Balzan was celebrated during the weekend of Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 2013. The celebrations consisted of a Thanksgiving Mass held at the Balzan Parish church after the raising of the Balzan flag in the square. The presentation of the honour Gieħ Hal Balzan together with the participation of the two band clubs namely 'Socjeta Filarmonika Marija Annunzjata' and Banda San Gabriel. The Mini Club Tour participated in this event

For the second consecutive time the Council organised "The Lejla Interkulturali Balzanija" which was celebrated on the 11<sup>th</sup> October, the activity included a variety program with various established singers. Food and drinks were available. The Mini Club Tour participated in this event. 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

The Council also organised various talks about the Culture and History of Hal Balzan which proved to be a success with the participation of the residents

Mark Mallia  
Executive Secretary