



Hal Balzan Local Council

Annual Administrative Report

2011

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1.0 Mayor's Introduction

The report covers the year between 1st January 2011 and the 31st December 2011.

Dr. J. Zammit Montebello
Mayor

2.0 The Council

2.1 The Council**Position****Meeting Participation**

Dr. John Zammit Montebello	100%
Mr. Joseph M. Galea	100%
Dr. Trevor DeGiorgio	88%
Mr. John Cassar	100%
Mr. Guido Borg	88%

The Council held 16 meetings during the financial year ending 31st December 2011. Meetings were held regularly, as far as possible three weeks apart on a Wednesday at 5.30pm.

Employees:

Ms Maria Zammit	Executive Secretary finished work on the 31 st October 2011
Mr. Mark Mallia	Acting Executive Secretary started work on the 19 th October 2011
Ms Mariella Casha	Part-time Clerk started work on the 18 th August 2008.
Ms. Doriette Farrugia	Part-time Clerk started work on the 18 th May 2009 and on Full-time as from the 1 st September 2011.

Seconded workers:

Mr. Carmel Desira	Labourer (from the Department of Works and Construction) started on 16 th August 2011
Mr. Joseph Desira	Titular (from IPSL) was transferred to another council on the 10 th January 2008 but came back with this council on the 31 st January 2008. Retired in October 2011
Mr. Hector Camilleri	Slinger (from IPSL) started on the 10 th January 2008.
Mr. Mario Cini	From Community Work Scheme started work with us on 18 th October 2009.

3.0 Financial and Operations review

3.1 Financial ReviewIncome:

The government allocation for the year amounted to €244,888 whilst other government income amounted to €2278.

Income from the LES Joint Committee amounted to € 9260.27.

General income included income from the organization of aerobic classes amounting to €560, €301.94 from donations received in connection with the distribution of the book Hal Balzan, income from temporary permits amounted to €2074.12, €287.32 was received from outings for the elderly, income from the printing of notices amounted to €700.02 and an income of €51.26 from WSC regarding road re-instatement works. The remainder €200 is income from other sources.

Expenditure:

Operations and Maintenance

Personal Emoluments remained practically the same as last year which amounted to € 56,393

There was a slight increase in the repairs and upkeep of the locality by almost 5% compared with last year for the amount of € 4569.

The amount spent on contractual services amounted to € 104,251 which shows an increase of 11% on the year 2010 which was mainly in the collection of refuse, road and street cleaning.

Administration costs and other expenditure amounted to € 29,978. There was a slight increase in Professional services due to the application for EU funding under the ERDF 205. The amount for the year 2010 was € 30,945.

Office Services shows an under-spending of €564.97 on stationery, subscriptions and other items.

Capital Expenditure

Urban Improvement Funds were not utilised due to our ERDF application for funding.

3.2 Operations Review

Major Projects

Wesgha Professur Guze Aquilina Project

The Council requested the Joint Office through the Local Council's Department to devolve the land at Wesgħa Prof. Guze' Aquilina to the Council for the construction, through a public/private partnership of a sports/recreational complex with underground parking and the construction of maisonettes including the Local Council Administrative building.

In the meantime there were various correspondences with the Joint Office where it was decided that the government issue a letter of intent to the local council so that we can move forward. However we cannot add more to this as we are still awaiting developments at the time of writing.

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

The Council had requested EU funding through the ERDF to finance the reconstruction of pavements and embellishment of church square, Pjazza Bertu Fenech, Dun Spir Sammut Street, Guze Bonnici Street Three Churches and Idmejda Street.

We are pleased to inform our residents that this application has been approved by the Planning Priorities Coordination Department within the Office of The Prime Minister and works have started. Part of the funding will be used also to restore the statue of St. Mary which application was originally submitted for funding under.

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. Hal Balzan Local Council will be getting up to €60,000 under this scheme.

Storm water Relief System

The Central Government is working on plans to construct an underground tunnel between Mosta and Msida to relief the streets from flood waters. We were involved by MEPA in the consultation process, the EIA study for the National Flood Relief Project in December 2009. Lately a meeting was held for those interested at the Birkirkara Parish Hall where these plans were shown and explained to the public.

During this meeting the Local Council put forward its request for the need for the work to start as soon as possible without any further delay.

Other Projects

Influenza Vaccination

During the past year the Council, for the sixth 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 120 persons during 2011 and to 124 persons during 2010, this means a decrease of 3% over the previous year. The vaccine was administered after arrangements were made with the Primary Health Centre. The vaccines were given during November 2011. These were provided free of charge.

Idmejda Street Pavement and Other pavements

The work on the storm water system for Idmejda Street was not be carried out as the agreement reached with the Good Shepherd Convent Sisters for the disposal of water was not confirmed by the new administration of the Good Shepherd Sisters. The Good Shepherd Nuns were requesting that arrangements are made to capture the water from Idmejda Street and channel it so as not to flood their property but this was not even done when Bir Bal Street was resurfaced during 2007. A meeting was held with the Roads Department representatives way back in 2005 but have not received any feedback since. We were expecting their proposals before commencing the work on the pavements in idmejda Street. A meeting was held with representatives of Transport Malta on the 18th January 2011 when it was proposed that a soak-away be constructed to drain the water that floods Idmejda Street. This project has been done in October 2011.

Financial and Operations Review (cont.)

ServicesNew lamps approved and installed

No new lamps were installed during 2011. Street lamps were delegated to Council and the council started replacing street lamps and during 2011 68 lamps were reported as needing repairs, of these we had to replace the complete lantern of 4 of these.

New Traffic Signs and Road Markings

During 2011 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.

The most important requests submitted by council which are still pending or are for consideration were 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, Sign at B. Bontadini Street, the painting of a number of 1m double yellow lines next to garage doors to facilitate access, a 90 min NO Return Parking near Balzan Valley and adjacent streets, benches in front of San Anton, new pavement in MON FX Zahra in front of Palazzo Bosio, parking bays on both sides of Sisner Street and a zebra crossing near HSBC in Idmejda Street

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

Re-instatement of Pavements

The deterioration of pavements along the years because of works carried out and normal wear and tear, make it necessary to re-instate a number of pavements during next year if funds are available. During this year our workers maintained small sections of pavements in various parts of the locality but no pavements were totally reconstructed.

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

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. If the budget allocation is not increased or the central government does not intervene to re-instate them, 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 whose road base is made up of soil. We strongly suspect this is so for Sir Antonio Micallef Street, Gulju Cauchi Street, Gherusija 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 2011 we had 1159 calls for the collection of bulky refuse whereas during 2010 we had 1101 calls. During 2011 the calls increased by 5% over the previous year.

Financial and Operations Review (cont.)

Cleaning and Other Services

The contract for street sweeping was allocated to Innovative Projects Ltd in October 2010. The new contractor is using a small sweeping machine so we expect cleanliness to improve.

Since 1st 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-ro-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 Wesgħa Prof. Aquilina. Enforcement by green wardens was requested to solve this persistent problem .

Financial and Operations Review (cont.)

Office ServicesLES Payments Collected at the Local Council office

During 2011 the Council received 1061 payments with regards to fines collected, of these 434 were for Balzan, whilst 627 were for other local councils.

Trading Licences

During the year 2011, 24 licences were renewed at the local council office.

Government Rent Payments

During the year 2011 we received 24 payments with regards to government rents.

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

During 2011 the Council issued 54 permits for the placing of skips and bins-on-wheels whereas during 2010, 77 permits were issued. This is a decrease of 42% over the previous year.

Permits for the placing of Cranes, and other activities

During 2011, 497 temporary permits were issued whereas during 2010, 440 permits were issued. This is an increase of 13% over the previous year.

Local Enforcement by Wardens

During the year ending 31st December 2011 a total of 1298 tickets were issued, whilst during the previous year, 1632 tickets were issued.

Customer Care

The number of complaints received during 2011 amounted to 793. Of these complaints 607 fell within the responsibility of the local council whilst 186 fell within the responsibility of the Central Government or some Authority. 73 complaints of the 793 complaints received during 2011 were still pending on the 31st December 2011. This means that 91% of the complaints were settled in the same year.

During the period of 2010 complaints received amounted to 859. This means that during 2011 complaints decreased on average by 8% over the previous year.

Kartanzjan

During 2011, 96 kartanzjan documents were distributed.

Financial and Operations Review (cont.)

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 2011 the council newsletter was not published. We hope the newsletter will be published regularly during 2012.

Financial and Operations Review (cont.)

Other MattersIssue of Tenders for works and services

During the year 2011 the Council allocated the Tender for the 'Collection and Separation at Source of Household and Commercial Waste' for a period of four years.

With regards to the 'Paving and Embellishment Works at Bertu Fenech Square and surrounding areas under the Operational Programme 1, Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, part-financed by the European Union and Local funds, the Tender was allocated in November of this year.

For the third consecutive time the Local Council had to issue the Tender for the 'Services of a Project Administrator' in connection with the project mentioned above. This Tender is being financed by the Local Council.

Initiative by residents

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 it's contribution to the initiative.

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, enforcement of the 90minute parking signs 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 Wegħa Prof. Guze' Aquilina is still a big problem.

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 2011 and applications amounted to 36. During 2010 applications for aerobic classes amounted to 42. This shows a decrease of 16% over the previous year.

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 2011". We were given funds to organize 10 sessions of aerobic classes.

The Council applied for funding for the installation of fencing under the "Improvement in Existing Playing Field". We are still awaiting a reply from the Department of Local Councils.

The Council also organized in collaboration with the Local Council of H'Attard, the Festa tal-Frott activity which was held in April 2011 and was part financed under the Scheme 'Events Initiatives for 2011'

We also submitted an application for the installation of a photovoltaic system for the local council office and for the preparation of a SEAP report under the "alternative energy scheme". Funds were allocated by the Department of Local Councils.

The Council also applied for funds under the ERDF to upgrade Church Square and neighbours streets which was accepted.

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 and Lejla Balzanija

Celebrated during the weekend of Sunday, 1st May 2011. 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 Gieñ Hal Balzan to Mrs. Mary Fenech, pensioner and involved in the community of Hal Balzan and Mr. Silvio Cassar, committee member of San Gabriel Band Club and ex-player of Basketball National Team was the main highlight of this day of commemoration.

Lejla Balzanija was celebrated on the 29th July the activity included a variety program with various established singers. Food and drinks were available, together with bingo always make this evening a success.

Locality meeting

The Locality meeting, open to Balzan residents, was held at Maria Anninziata Band Club on the 9th December 2011. During the meeting the Council will give feedback about the work carried out during the year and the proposals for the following year.

Reporting to Council

Annual Administrative Report for the year 2011

The Annual Financial Report for the year ending 31st December 2011 was presented and approved by council during the meeting held on the 8th February 2012.

The Budget

The Budget for the year 2011 approved during the meeting held on the 17th January 2011.

The Business Plan 2011-2013

The Business Plan 2011-2013 was presented and approved during the meeting held on the 17th January 2011.

Quarterly Financial Reports

The Quarterly Financial Reports for 2011 were presented to Council on the 13th April 2011 for the 1st Quarterly Report, on the 13th July 2011 for the 2nd Quarterly Report and on the 26th October 2011 for the 3rd Quarterly Report and the Fourth Quarterly Report was presented on the 8th February 2012.

