



**Hal Balzan Local Council**

# **Annual Administrative Report**

**2012**



**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%
Dr. Trevor DeGiorgio	95%
Mr. John Cassar	100%
Mr. Guido Borg	100%
Mr. Desmond Zammit Marmara	100%
Mr. Stephen Gatt	100%

The Council held 19 meetings during the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012. 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. Mario Cini	From Community Work Scheme started work with us on 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2009.
Mr. Charles Azzopardi	Labourer (from the Ministry of Rural Affairs and Resources) started on the 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2012.
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 €255,421.

Income from the LES Joint Committee amounted to € 4792.83.

General income included income from temporary permits, income from the printing of notices and other income which amounted to € 4570.17

Expenditure:

Operations and Maintenance amounted to € 137,856. Of this amount € 110,350 was spent on contractual services which were mainly in the collection of refuse, road and street cleaning.

Personal Emoluments amounted to € 62,397.59

Administration costs and other expenditure amounted to € 28,975. Professional services for the year 2012 amounted to € 5308.

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 205- Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 Operational Programme I.

Urban Improvement Funds which amount to € 73,000 were not utilised as our application for the reconstruction of pavements of Balzan Valley at the junction with Main Street was not approved. It is the intention of the Council to utilise these funds for the installation of decorative lanterns in the older part of the locality.

## **3.2 Operations Review**

### **Major Projects**

#### 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 on the project. Part of the funding has been utilised to restore the statue of St. Mary.

#### 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 151 persons during 2012. The vaccine was administered after arrangements were made with the Primary Health Centre. The vaccines were given during November 2012. These were provided free of charge.

### **Services**

#### New lamps approved and installed

No new lamps were installed during 2012. Street lamps were delegated to Council and the council started replacing street lamps and during 2012 45 lamps were reported as needing repairs.

#### New Traffic Signs and Road Markings

During 2012 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 a year 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.

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 depending from the funds available. In December 2012 the Council has decided to utilise part of the funds allocated by the Central Government falling under the maintenance of roads for the maintenance of the pavements in Sisner Street, Pope Alexander VII, Sir Mikelangelo Refalo, Annunzjata, Idmejda, Imdina, Vjal il-Bon Pastur, Old Railway and St. Francis Street.

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. 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 estimative 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 whose 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 Frenzo Street, Qarcilla Street and Patri Guze Delia Street.

### Bulky Refuse Collection

During the year 2012 we had 1218 calls for the collection of bulky refuse whereas during 2011 we had 1159 calls. During 2012 the calls increased by 5% over the previous year.

### 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 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 2012 the Council received 982 payments with regards to fines collected, of these 672 were for Balzan, whilst 310 were for other local councils.

### Trading Licences

During the year 2012, 21 licences were renewed at the local council office.

### Government Rent Payments

During the year 2012 we received 23 payments with regards to government rents.

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

During 2012 the Council issued 91 permits for the placing of skips and bins-on-wheels whereas during 2011, 54 permits were issued. This is an increase of 68% over the previous year.

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

During 2012, 652 temporary permits were issued whereas during 2011, 497 permits were issued. This is an increase of 31% over the previous year.

### Local Enforcement by Wardens

During the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012 a total of 73 tickets were issued by wardens in the locality of Hal Balzan.

### Customer Care

The number of complaints received during 2012 amounted to 644. Of these complaints 473 fell within the responsibility of the local council whilst 171 fell within the responsibility of the Central Government or some Authority. 70 complaints of the 644 complaints received during 2012 were still pending on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2012. This means that 89% of the complaints were settled in the same year.

During the period of 2011 complaints received amounted to 793. This means that during 2012 complaints decreased on average by 23% over the previous year.

### Kartanzjan

During 2011, 97 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 2012, three (3) editions of the council newsletter were published. The newsletter will be published regularly during 2013.



## **Other Matters**

### Issue of Tenders for works and services

During the year 2012 the Council allocated the Tender for the 'Collection of Bulky refuse' for a period of three years. Another Tender was issued for the 'Cleaning and Upkeep of Public Convenience' for a period of three years and finally there was the necessity to issue the Tender for the 'Services of a Handman' with the Council for a period of four years.

### 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 2013.

### 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, 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 is still a big problem.

In 2012 the Council with the approval of Transport Malta introduced for the first time the 'Residential Parking Scheme' in various streets around the locality which are prone to parking problems. It is still early to arrive at any conclusions whether this scheme was a success but hopefully this year the Council would be in a better position to do so

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 2012 and applications amounted to 36. During 2011 applications for aerobic classes amounted to 48. This shows an increase of 33% 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 2012". We were given funds to organize 16 sessions of aerobic classes.

The Council applied for funding for the restoration of the three churches cross paves under the "Restawr ta' Postijiet Storiċi Zgħar". We were given funds from the Department of Local Councils to do the restoration.

## **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 and Mini Club Tour Hal Balzan

Jum Hal Balzan was celebrated during the weekend of Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2012. 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 to Mr. Reuben Degabriele, involved in the youth community centre of Hal Balzan and was the main highlight of this day of commemoration.

For the first time the Council organised “The Lejla Interkulturali Balzanija” which was celebrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> October, 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.

The Council also organised with the collaboration of the Malta Mini Owners Club the “Mini Club Tour Hal Balzan 2012”. During this activity there was a display of various mini minors and touring around the locality by these mini minors. Unfortunately participation from the residents was to be desired.

Mark Mallia  
Executive Secretary