



Hal Balzan Local Council

Annual Administrative Report

2015

2.0 The Council

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%
Dr. Ian Spiteri	100%
Mr. Andre Grech	100%
Mr. Daniel Muscat	100%

The Council held 19 meetings during the financial year ending 31st December 2015. 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 Agent Executive Secretary as from 1 st December 2015
Ms Mariella Casha	Part-time Executive Officer started work on the 18 th August 2008.
Ms. Doriette Farrugia	Part-time Executive Officer started work on the 18 th May 2009 and on Full-time as from the 1 st September 2011.

Seconded workers:

Mr. Hector Camilleri	Slinger (from IPSL) started on the 10 th January 2008.
Mr. Anthony Bray	From Community Work Scheme started working with us on 3 rd January 2013.

3.0 Financial and Operations review

3.1 Financial ReviewIncome:

The government allocation for the year amounted to € 257,557 and Supplementary income was € 12,180. Other Government Income was € 13,183

Income from the Local Enforcement Systeem amounted to € 3847.

General income included income from tender documents amounting to € 1427. Income from temporary permits amounted to € 5618. The remainder € 915 is income derived from other sources.

Expenditure:

Operations and Maintenance amounted to € 115,785. Of this amount € 90,864 was spent on contractual services which were mainly in the collection of refuse, road and street cleaning.

Personal Emoluments amounted to € 73,443

Administration costs and other expenditure amounted to € 42,548.

Capital Expenditure

Urban Improvement Funds which amount to € 93,744 were invested in 2015 for the installation of decorative lanterns in various streets around the locality.

CCTV's around the three Bring In sites found in Balzan and Gnien A. Stellini were purchased and installed. The sum invested amounted to € 13,920.

3.2 Operations Review

Major Projects

Urban Improvement Funds – Balzan Valley with Main Street Junction

Urban Improvement Funds which amount to € 93,744 were utilised in 2015 for the installation of decorative lanterns in various streets around the locality.

CCTV's around the three Bring In sites found in Balzan and Gniën A. Stellini were purchased and installed. The sum invested amounted to € 13,920.

Influenza Vaccination

During the past year the Council, for the eighth 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 101 persons during 2015. The vaccine was administered after arrangements were made with the Primary Health Centre. The vaccines were given during November 2015. These were provided free of charge.

Services

Streetlighting repairs

Street lamps were delegated to Council and the council started replacing street lamps where during 2015, 47 lamps were reported as needing repairs.

New Traffic Signs and Road Markings

During 2015 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 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 2016, the Council will carry out studies on the implementation of a traffic management system for the locality of 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 or 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 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, Qarçilla Street and Patri Guze Delia Street.

Bulky Refuse Collection

During the year 2015 we had 1227 calls for the collection of bulky refuse whereas during 2014 we had 1259 calls. During 2014 the calls decreased by 0.03% over the previous year. This is being paid for by the Council.

Cleaning and Other Services

The contract for street sweeping was allocated to Mr. Owen Borg in January 2014. The new contractor is using a small sweeping machine which was a huge success as cleanliness improved.

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-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. Enforcement by green wardens was requested to solve this persistent problem.

Office Services

LES Payments Collected at the Local Council office

During 2015 the Council received 1248 payments with regards to fines collected, of these 198 were for Balzan, whilst 1050 were for other local councils.

Trading Licences, MTA and Land Rent payments

During the year 2015, 72 licences were renewed at the local council office.

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

During 2014 the Council issued 122 permits for the placing of skips and bins-on-wheels whereas during 2014, 97 permits were issued. This is a increase of 26% over the previous year.

Permits for the placing of Cranes, and other activities

During 2015, 615 temporary permits were issued whereas during 2014, 672 permits were issued. This is a decrease of 9% over the previous year.

Local Enforcement by Wardens

During the year ending 31st December 2015 a total of 117 tickets were issued by wardens in the locality of Hal Balzan.

Customer Care

The number of complaints received during 2015 amounted to 148. Of these complaints 55 fell within the responsibility of the local council whilst 93 fell within the responsibility of the Central Government or some Authority. 3 complaints of the 55 complaints that fell within the responsibility of the Council received during 2015 were still pending on the 31st December 2015. This means that 95% of the complaints were settled in the same year.

During the period of 2014 complaints received amounted to 288. This means that during 2015 complaints decreased on average by 95% 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.

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 2015, the new Council decided to issue a detailed magazine on an annual basis.

Other Matters

Issue of Tenders for works and services

During the year 2015 the Council allocated the Tender for the 'Collection of Bulky Refuse for a period of three 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.

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, 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 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 2015 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 2015 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. Hal 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 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 Festa Kultura

Jum Hal Balzan was celebrated during the weekend of Sunday, 28th June 2015. 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.

For the first year the Council organised "The Balzan Arts and Festival" which was celebrated on the 14th September 2015, 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

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

