

# Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Deaf People Association (Malta)  
45, Lascaris Wharf  
Valletta  
VLT 1921  
Malta



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## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 27th May 2016 at 20:30 at the Deaf Club.

Meeting started at 20:35

21 members, 4 non-members present (excluding 5 committee members).

### Welcome

President Steven Mulvaney welcomed members, thanked them for coming.

### Introduction from the President

SM introduced the agenda. SM explained that the Association has been very active over the past year.

Highlights of the past year:

- Finalising accounts - now up-to-date
- Increased membership.
- LSM recognition

### Financial Report presented by Accountant Joann Vella.

Ms Vella has been doing the Association's accounts for the past 5 years.

Interpreters no longer employed by the Association.

Computer equipment was donated to the Interpreters Association as the funds came from interpreting budget.

2015 two interpreting accounts were closed - this accounts for the large difference in the accounts between 2014/2015.

### Minutes of last AGM held in May 2015

Minutes were sent to members by email prior to the AGM.

Steven Mulvaney read out the minutes to members as no one was willing to approve them.

Minutes were approved by Dorianne Callus and Karl Borg.

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### Interpreter's Report

Sharon Mifsud explained that Interpreting service is no longer administered by the Deaf Association and that it is now run by Agenzija Sapport, as a result the interpreters will not present a report as they have in previous years.

Video was shown about the new service to show members how to book.

Email: [sli.sapport@gov.mt](mailto:sli.sapport@gov.mt) Mobile number:

Question: George Vella - how can I encourage more children to use Sign Language?

Response: Sharon Mifsud - Everyone wants more children to learn sign language however the problem isn't one of interpreters. Parents have a great lack of information because the first thing they hear from the hospital is about cochlear implants. Unfortunately the service Sharon is currently doing a Masters in Disability Studies about the support (or lack of) for parents of deaf children. Problem is also lack of resources.

Comment: Madliene Acquilina - explained that the information from hospital is against the use of sign language. Problem doesn't come from parents but from the medical profession.

Comment: Keith Callus - I remember when I went to speak to the Cochlear Implant team and the meeting was useless as they wouldn't listen.

Question: Keith Callus - How long should be expected to wait for a response about my interpreting request? Sometimes I have to wait a long time for a response.

Response: Sharon: If the appointment is in the morning we have to see whether we can We need more interpreters. Very often we have bookings in the evening and at weekends too. We try the best but we can't have one diary because we don't know what the others are doing all the time. We can perhaps try to make a rule that within 2 days you will have a response.

Comment: Dorianne - perhaps someone else (not an interpreter) could take care of bookings?

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Response: Rita - we try to divide the appointments between us. Problem is that we are only 4. Problem is lack of interpreters. How can we choose between exams, court and health. They are all important. Often we cancel leave to attend appointments.

Comment: Sharon - we will take these back to our manager.

Comment: Matthew - they can't reply to mobiles while at work interpreting!

Comment: Sharon - Info about meetings is all confidential so we can't decide which is more important.

Comment: Petra's Mum - Obviously there aren't enough interpreters for children in education. They need more contact time so they can have a good education. An interpreter is much better than an LSA who might only know basic signs.

Comment: Madlene - we have meetings in school called IEPs where we discuss important issues. Our children have a right (as do adults) to the interpreting service. We are also upset when the children's sessions with the interpreters are cancelled due to other appointments.

Comment: It would be ideal if each child had a full time interpreter

Comment: Madlene - who can we complaint to about not enough service.

Comment: Steven Mulvaney - We should never forget that on 16th March 2016 LSM was recognised as an official language, the LSM council will be appointed soon. We understand the interpreters' lack of resources and we appreciate the work that they do. George made a very good point about the need for more awareness about LSM. The new law will help us with this and help us create more awareness among people who work on the front line at hospitals and in public services.

Gozo Association for the Deaf have contacted the Association and would like to collaborate on Activities and have started a sign language course in Gozo. Hopefully in the future there will also be interpreters working in Gozo on a regular basis especially in schools.

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Interpreters asked Deaf people to fill in contact/information forms for Agenzija Sapport.

### Administrative Report (2015 - 2016)

Steven Mulvaney presented the association's activities over the past year.

Steve explained about the new NGO Evviva representing Disabled Peoples' Organisations.

Steve explained that the Board's participation in the EUD 30th Anniversary was funded by EUD (1 person) and by the Board members themselves as not to waste the Association's funds.

### Questions/Comments about the Reports

- 1) Petra's Mum: There were some activities organised for children over the summer. They weren't included in the Administrative Report.
- 2) Keith: Kudos to the committee for paying for the trip out of their own pockets.

### Administrative Report approved:

By George Vella seconded by Keith Callus

### Financial reports approved:

by Chris Ripard and Seconded by Keith Callus.

### New Committee

No need for elections as only 5 people stood.

- Steven Mulvaney
- Annabelle Xerri
- Matthew Pace
- Loran Xuereb
- Chris Ripard

New for 2016 - a sub committee to help committee.

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### Sub Committee:

Emma Ripard  
Alison Vere  
Madlene Aquilina  
Michelle Bezzina

Can forward ideas to the committee and vote if committee members are absent.

### Proposals:

1) Chris Ripard - D.E.A.F award

A public award to raise more awareness. Award could be given to public figures who have contributed to the Deaf Community over the 2 year term of the committee. This gives public recognition and will give the Association publicity. We need an award because publicity is always a good thing.

e.g. Prof. Marie Alexander

Proposal was accepted by members.

VOTE:

30 in favour

0 against

0 abstain

2) NO SMOKING in the Deaf Club

As we have discussed in previous years we need to keep the Deaf Club smoke free. Smoking harms your health and has an unpleasant smell.

Smokers complain that it is uncomfortable to go up and down the stairs to smoke outside.

If new premises are found perhaps a smoking area could be established. Until then members must go downstairs to smoke. NOT upstairs on the roof or on the balcony.

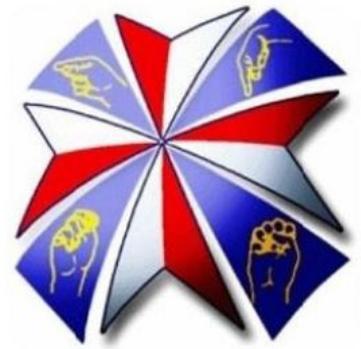
Comment: Mr. Bezzina - I come here because of my deaf daughter and I am allergic to smoke. This is a public place so it should be no smoking.

Comment - it is not a voting matter... it is the law!

Comment - the vote could be on whether Association funds could be used to make a smoking area.

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Comment: George - people should be responsible for their own actions and respect each other. The statute is not of the Board it is of the members - respect it.

Comment: Keith - I realise what Steve is saying about the balcony. It would require a lot of money. We need people to come and help reduce the costs by coming to help with the work needed.

Comment: Dorianne - the smokers should build the area themselves.

Comment: Matthew - the area would only release the smoke into the rest of the Deaf club once the door was opened.

Comment: Karl - law says you can't smoke in public places.

Comment: Dorianne - smoking members should pay for their own area.

Comment: George - check if it breaks the law first.

Comment: Mr. Bezzina - if we vote and it is passed then the committee can get some quotations. Steve could be held responsible for other people's actions - it is not fair. Everyone is adult - let's try and help each other. If we do a smoking area we need to do it well.

Comment: Joann - we don't know how much it will cost. While we are getting quotations people should smoke outside because it smells. Please be patient and wait until the board have quotations.

Comment: Keith - we know that if we move premises the money will be for nothing. Perhaps we can do it if it is cheap to make. If not we need to find the funds. We don't have a lot of members so we don't have loads of money. If we get a fine it will be 1,000 Euro and no one wants to pay that!

No vote will be held.

Smokers **MUST** go outside to smoke.

New board will discuss the matter at the first meeting.

### Any Other Business

1. Deaf Club will be closed on 10th June as bar staff will be in Gozo on a Youth Exchange.
2. Summer closure from 10th June until 23rd September due to heat in the Deaf Club. Check facebook and posters in the Deaf Club for updates.

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### Conclusions

1. The Association would like to thank Julian Zahra for the plumbing of the new toilets.
2. Thanks to Alison Vere for 4 years of work in the committee.

Meeting ended 22:50