



Minutes of the AGM held on 23rd June 2023 at 7pm at The Meeting Place

1. WELCOME & ROLL CALL

- a. A Small introduction was given by President Annabelle Xerri. She thanked all the members for attending the AGM and explained the agenda.
- b. A note was taken of all attendants present. 27 people were present, 5 of whom were committee members, 2 of whom were non-members, and also 2 sign language interpreters Ms Eleanor Grech & Ms Rita Portelli, who interpreted the AGM.

2. COMMITTEE MEMBERS & EMPLOYEES

- a. AX went through the committee members for 2022-2024, namely Annabelle Xerri (President), Loran Ripard Xuereb (Vice President), Sarah Bezzina Wettinger (Treasurer), Emma Ripard Xuereb (Secretary) and David Xuereb (Board Member), which were elected the previous year.
- b. AX also mentioned that we have 2 Employees, Gianmarco and Riccardo

3. MINUTES

- a. AX explained that the minutes of the 2022 AGM were sent via email to all members. A short video summary of the minutes was also shared.
- b. No questions were asked
- c. The minutes were approved by 16 members & 5 committee members. 4 members abstained.

4. DEAF YOUTH ASSOCIATION MALTA

- a. A presentation was given by DYAM.
- b. Joann Spiteri (JS) gave a short introduction on DYAM and presented the Agenda. Joann explained that it has been almost 3 years since its appointment, and that the team includes Joann Spiteri, Melissa Aquilina, and Loran Ripard Xuereb. JS thanked the committee and the sign language interpreters as DYAM works together with them.
- c. JS presented the activities held by DYAM during 2022. These included:
 - i. The Kahoot online activity was organised for youth on 9th February
 - ii. A video was created with young Deaf women and published for women's day on 8th March
 - iii. Joann and Melissa attended the EUDY General Assembly in Sofia Bulgaria from 2nd to 5th June. JS explained that at EUDY there are 2 types of membership: Full Membership or Observer's Membership. Malta was not a full member yet so delegates were unable to vote. However, Joann and Melissa were able to participate as observers.
 - iv. International Youth Day on 12th August
 - v. L-Ghadira 9th July - a summer beach activity that was attended by a good number of youth

Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Address: 181, Melita Str, Valletta, VLT 1129

E-Mail: info@deafmalta.org

Website: www.deafmalta.org



- vi. It's Job Week 19th July
- vii. International Deaf Week and EU Language Day 25th September - DYAM participated with DPAM and KLSM with a stand at the Language Feast held at Sliema.
- viii. Cooking activity 23rd December - children and youth were invited at The Meeting Place to bake cookies.
- d. Melissa Aquilina took over the presentation and explained that DYAM held 10 sub-committee meetings during 2022. MA said that some meetings were held online since JS was in Denmark.
- e. MA presented the upcoming activities that DYAM will be organising in 2023:
 - i. EUDY Camp and GA in Portugal - August 2023. Melissa and Petra will be participating.
 - ii. EUDY Erasmus+ Project Cyberbullying - kick off meeting to take place in Malta in September 2023.

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:

Karl Borg asked why DYAM is not a full member of EUDY, and he asked whether with an observer's membership DPAM would have to pay for the flights and accommodation of participants. JS explained that EUDY needs Malta to be an observer member first, until a full membership is approved. JS further explained that DPAM does not cover any travelling and accommodation costs of participants. JS said that the aim is to become a full member and that we hope to have the membership fee reduced due to Malta being in Group A.

5. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2022

- a. The financial accounts were presented by Sarah Bezzina Wettinger (SBW).
Highlight points:
 - i. This year the income is €30,714 lower than last year.
 - ii. In comparison to last year the expenditure has seen a significant increase. However we still managed to make a surplus.
- b. Facts:
In summary, as at 1st January 2022, the Association had €146,606. During 2022, the surplus was that of €9,825 (€102,387 income - €92,562 expenditure = €9,825 surplus), ending the year with an accumulated fund of €156,431.

	2022	2021
Income	102,387	133,101
Expenditure	(92,562)	(39,838)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	9,825	93,263

Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Address: 181, Melita Str, Valletta, VLT 1129

E-Mail: info@deafmalta.org

Website: www.deafmalta.org



Accumulated Fund at 1st January	146,606	53,342
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	9,825	93,263
Accumulated Fund at 31 December	156,431	146,606

c. Income:

- i. Similar to 2021, the majority of the income also came from Erasmus+ projects.
- ii. This year showed an increase in Membership, Donations and Sales - we had a significant increase in donations.
- iii. Interest has also increased, since we had more money in the banks

	2022	2021
Erasmus Projects Grants	99,845	51,876
Membership, Donations and Sales	2,210	1,172
Interest Income	138	39
Other Revenue	194	80,015
Total Income	102,387	133,101

d. Expenditure:

- i. SBW explained that €1337 for the Subscriptions, Fees & conferences is made up of the membership fees for WFD, EUD & EUDY.
- ii. The majority of the expenses, namely general and office expenses, refreshments and catering, travel as well as wages, consulting and professional fees, were mostly due to the Erasmus+ projects (Banoffee & Sign Links). SBW explained that these were paid from the projects themselves.
- iii. SBW also reminded the members of last year's Christmas Gala Event, which was free for those attending, but which was naturally paid for by the Association. This expense is included in the refreshments and catering.
- iv. SBW also explained that the travel expenses were all related to the Erasmus+ projects coming to an end, and that they were all paid for by the projects.
- v. It was explained that the Association incurred legal expenses due to issues arising from the will of Gillian Doe. The issues arose from the

Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Address: 181, Melita Str, Valletta, VLT 1129

E-Mail: info@deafmalta.org

Website: www.deafmalta.org



existence of two different wills, one in English and one in Maltese. As these wills did not align, the Association had to hire a lawyer. SBW explained that the Association will ultimately be reimbursed for these legal expenses once funds are received from the will.

- vi. It was clarified that the wages expenses primarily consist of the salaries of DPAM's two employees, Gianmarco and Riccardo, who have been instrumental in securing project wins. Additionally, this expense category includes reimbursements provided to Deaf individuals for their contributions to various projects.
- vii. SBW also elaborated on the Jobs Plus scheme, which covers half of Riccardo's wage.
- viii. SBW reminded all the members that everyone is welcome to participate and work on different projects.

	2022	2021
Small Equipment	0	395
Subscriptions, Fees & Conferences	1,337	2,235
General and Office Expenses	4,811	1,187
Refreshments and Catering	8,389	1,610
Travel - International	8,673	2221
Legal Expenses	3,092	0
Wages, Consulting and Professional Fees	52,197	32,049
Bank Fees, Tax and Duties	102	57
TOTAL	92,562	39,754

e. Balance Sheet:

- i. SBW explained the balance sheet to the members, clarifying that the grant prepayments are a result of Erasmus typically disbursing funds in advance for projects. This explains the fluctuation in the Association's financials, where one year may exhibit a significant surplus, followed by a comparatively lower surplus the next year.

	2022	2021
Assets	Euro	Euro
Inventories of Batteries and Alarm Clocks	281	362
Cash at bank and in hand	127,817	212,961
Liabilities	75,523	208,917
Grant Prepayments	2,620	193,564
Net Assets	156,431	146,606

Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Address: 181, Melita Str, Valletta, VLT 1129

E-Mail: info@deafmalta.org

Website: www.deafmalta.org



QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Karl Borg asked why the Liabilities & Expenses show different amounts. SBW replied that these are two different categories, with accountants determining which expenses fall under liabilities. Additionally, SBW also explained that the accounts were also reviewed externally by an auditor named Joseph Zammit, ensuring the accuracy of the financial statements. Furthermore, SBW noted that the accounts undergo further scrutiny by the VO office, which verifies their correctness.

The financial accounts were approved by 22 members, while 3 members abstained.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT FOR 2022

The Administrative Report for 2022 was presented by Emma Ripard Xuereb (ERX). She gave a run down of the Activities that were organized in 2022:

- a. Heritage in Valletta (February)
- b. Luzzu Restaurant (March)
- c. SignTeach Online in Italy (March)
- d. Mass with Pope Francis (March)
- e. DeafBlind awareness (April)
- f. Banoffee Meeting in France (April)
- g. Deaf Awareness at School (April)
- h. Banoffee event in Ghadira (May)
- i. Pancake Meeting in Italy (May)
- j. EUD GA in France (May)
- k. SignLinks meeting in Greece (June)
- l. Bingo activity (June)
- m. Banoffee meeting in Greece (June)
- n. EDBY Camp in Belgium (June)
- o. SignLinks closing event (August)
- p. BBQ with AILSM (August)
- q. SignTeach Online meeting in Iceland (September)
- r. Impact of Sign Language (September)
- s. EU Language Day (September)
- t. SignLinks training event (October)
- u. Pancake meeting in Scotland (November)
- v. Mons Mikiel Azzopardi Award (December)
- w. AGM 2022 (December)
- x. Gala 50th anniversary (December)
- y. ERX also said that the committee had 6 board meetings throughout the year, which were held on 17th February, 30th March, 3rd May, 5th July, 10th October, and 6th December.



QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Karl Borg jokingly suggested the possibility of organising the free gala every year! In response, ERX acknowledged the appeal of such an idea, expressing that holding a fee-free gala annually would be beneficial. However, ERX highlighted the challenge in doing so, emphasizing the committee's need to exercise caution regarding expenditure. ERX also stressed the importance of having more Deaf (and not just hearing) members attend the events.

Joann Spiteri reminded the committee that Joann and Petra went to birdlife at Salini to give a deaf awareness session.

The Administrative Report was approved by all members.

7. OUR PROJECTS

- a. 2022 Projects Loran Ripard Xuereb (LRX) presented the projects that the Association worked on during 2022.
 - i. Banoffee - LRX explained that the project, which focused on the creation of new signs to different bird species as well as information about these species, finished successfully in 2022. The project may be accessed on the banoffee website <https://banoffee.eu/>. LRX thanked all the participants that made this project possible, which included himself, Emma Ripard Xuereb, and Sarah Bezzina Wettinger.
 - ii. Sign Links - LRX gave an explanation of this project, which focused on Deaf Role Models and which aimed to give information to parents of Deaf children. The project finished in 2022 and the participants included Annabelle Xerri, Sarah Bezzina Wettinger, and Dorianne Callus. The project may be accessed on the sign links website <https://signlinks.eu/>.
 - iii. Sign Teach Online - LRX explained that this project had a team of 4 participants from Malta, including LRX, Emma Ripard Xuereb, Joann Spiteri, and Dorianne Callus. The project focused on enhancing skills related to teaching sign language through online platforms. LRX said that the project has finished and will close successfully in August 2023. The project may also be accessed on the sign teach online website <https://www.signteach.eu/online/>
 - iv. Pancake - LRX gave an explanation about the project, which focused on making information about plants, flora, and nature accessible for the deaf community. He said that he was the only participant. He said that this project has also finished and will also close successfully in August 2023. The project may be accessed on the following website: <https://foemalta.org/blog/pancake/>

Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Address: 181, Melita Str, Valletta, VLT 1129

E-Mail: info@deafmalta.org

Website: www.deafmalta.org



- b. LRX provided a comprehensive explanation of the process involved in securing funding for projects. According to LRX, this process follows a uniform procedure across all European countries. Initially, the concept is conceptualized and formulated into a project, adhering to established rules and regulations, including project duration and budgetary requirements. Subsequently, the project leader reaches out to various EU organizations to gauge their interest in collaboration. Once all partners are confirmed, the leader proceeds to submit the application via the EU Portal for Erasmus+ projects. Upon approval of the application, funding is disbursed, enabling the commencement of project activities. However, in the event of application rejection, the leader revisits the application to identify areas for improvement. The application is then revised and resubmitted in the hopes of attaining approval.
- c. 2023 Projects - LRX presented the projects that the Association will be working on during 2023:
 - i. Reboot Scheme (an approved project with Agenzija Zghazagh) - a project written with the help of Riccardo. A budget of EUR3000 was given to the Association
 - ii. Cyberbullying (an approved Erasmus+ project with EUD) - a project written by EUD, with Malta as leaders. The kickoff meeting will be in September 2023.
 - iii. MUFFIN (Erasmus+) Awaiting Approval - Marine, Underwater and Fish For INclusion. LRX explained that an application for this project was already submitted and rejected, but we improved the application and resubmitted it.
 - iv. DIGIT (Erasmus+) Awaiting Approval - Deaf Inclusive Games and Informal Training
 - v. ADAPT (Erasmus+) Awaiting Approval - Art, Deafness And Pilot Trainings
 - vi. Access Visuel (Erasmus+) Awaiting Approval - French Deaf Blind Organisation is the leader.
 - vii. COST - confirming partners from 20 countries and will focus on deaf research required in each partner country.

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Joann talked about participating in the Sign Teach Online project and said that it was a very good learning experience. Joann said that payment is given to participants by the project's funds for their participation and work and encouraged others to participate in projects not just for money but also for experience. AX added that participants will be paid according to hours spent working on the projects, and that travelling for projects is free (flights and accommodation).

Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Address: 181, Melita Str, Valletta, VLT 1129

E-Mail: info@deafmalta.org

Website: www.deafmalta.org



Karl Borg asked the committee to give more information about how much time is required to be spent on a project, and for how long one would be required to travel. AX explained that first a project needs to be approved, then the participants will decide how many meetings are needed, eg an online meeting once a month, and travelling would also depend on the meetings required in different countries, for example 3 or 4 times a year. AX further elaborated that in instances where designated participants are unable to travel, alternate representatives may be sought to gather pertinent information in their stead, with primary participants retaining the option to engage remotely. A special letter can also be prepared for the participants' manager at their full time employment. LRX stressed the importance of steadfast commitment from project participants, emphasizing the need for individuals to remain dedicated and involved until the project's conclusion, thereby ensuring its successful execution and preventing potential complications from changes in personnel.

Dorianne said that when she participated in the Sign Teach Online project together with 3 other Maltese participants, they took it in turns to travel, and therefore there was no need for each participant to travel each time and there would be more flexibility. This approach is better than assigning sole responsibility to a single participant for managing the entire workload, offering a more collaborative and distributed approach to project management.

Sarah Bezzina Wettinger explained that from when the project is written until its actual start, it is edited and changed many times to ensure it is clear, concise, and correct. Moreover, she explained that the funds come from EU not from Maltese government, and in order to obtain these funds the objectives / goals written in the project need to be completed, as otherwise the project would lose the funds.

8. ACTIVITIES 2023

Loran Ripard Xuereb briefed the members on the upcoming activities planned for the months ahead in 2023:

- a. MCVS Malta Trade Fair - Public Service Expo (June 2023)
- b. Pancake Event (June 2023)
- c. WFD GA South Korea (July 2023)
- d. Joel Barish (July 2023)
- e. BBQ / Comino Summer 2023 TBC
- f. Reboot Scheme (August 2023)
- g. Deaf Week & International Day of Sign Languages (September 2023)
- h. Sicily (October 2023) TBC
- i. Archery (November 2023)
- j. Human Library (end 2023)

Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Address: 181, Melita Str, Valletta, VLT 1129

E-Mail: info@deafmalta.org

Website: www.deafmalta.org



QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Joann asked the committee for more information about the Reboot Scheme. AX clarified that the funds provided by Agenzija Zghazagh for the project will be allocated for a two-day retreat in Gozo during August. This retreat will afford the committee ample time to strategize, discuss, and prepare materials, enhancing overall preparedness. By the conclusion of 2023, committee members will orchestrate a Human Library event at a school, engaging with hearing students to distribute materials and foster dialogue on deaf awareness, aligning with the groundwork laid during the August preparations.

9. PROPOSALS

The Association has two proposals as follows:

- a. Dissemination of administrative and financial reports to members - these reports are to be made available for distribution to members who were unable to attend the AGM but express interest in accessing them.

This proposal was approved by all members.

- b. Change in Association's email and website www.deafmalta.org and info@deafmalta.org (previously known as www.deafmalta.com and info@deafmalta.com). AX explained that there will also be finance@deafmalta.org for finance matters and projects@deafmalta.org for project matters. This is to make the Association look more professional (since its an organisation hence .org and not a company .com) and also to reduce costs.

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Karl Borg asked how much it would cost the Association if it kept the .com option. SBW explained that for .com we pay annually, whereas with .org we would pay just one time at the beginning. SBW further explained that with .com, if we need to create an additional email, it would come at an additional cost. Meanwhile with .org, we can create as many email addresses as we need, and these would not come at an extra cost. Dorianne said that many emails can be confusing. AX explained the importance of having different emails allocated for different matters, for example, to contact the Minister, we can use president@deafmalta.org, for communication regarding funds, we can use finance@deafmalta.org, for project-related matters, we can use projects@deafmalta.org.

Two members abstained whereas the rest of the members approved this proposal.

Għaqda Persuni Neqsin mis-Smigh

Address: 181, Melita Str, Valletta, VLT 1129

E-Mail: info@deafmalta.org

Website: www.deafmalta.org



10. CONCLUSION

AX expressed gratitude to all attendees for their presence and active engagement in the AGM. She extended appreciation to the committee members for their dedication and commitment, acknowledging their efforts amid busy personal schedules. AX conveyed pride in being part of such a great team and offered special thanks to Riccardo and Gianmarco for their unwavering dedication and support, which has contributed to the gradual yet steady growth of DPAM. Additionally, AX expressed heartfelt thanks to the sign language interpreters for their invaluable service. She concluded by expressing appreciation for the participation and attendance of all members, highlighting the importance of their opinions and suggestions.