



**Media Release**

**22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2017**

### **GTA Annual General Meeting 2017**

The Gozo Tourism Association held its 18<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 at the Grand Hotel, Mgarr, Gozo.

The Agenda of the Annual General meeting, included an address by the Chairman of the Association, Mr Paul Scicluna, the Administrative report by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Joe Muscat, and the Financial report by the Treasurer, Mr Joe Muscat Sammut. The meeting was also addressed by the Hon Minister for Gozo, Hon. Dr. Anton Refalo, the Hon Dr. Edward Zammit Lewis, Minister for Tourism, and Hon. Mr. Antoine Borg, Opposition Spokesperson for Tourism.

In his opening address the GTA Chairman Mr Paul Scicluna said that during 2016, Gozo continued experiencing increases in the tourist arrivals on 2015. Mr Scicluna stressed the fact that the authorities concerned need to address the particular challenges faced by the Gozitan tourism sector particularly in strengthening the touristic product, the human resources in this sector as well as the general cleanliness of the rural areas. In his speech, Mr Scicluna mentioned the connectivity to the Island and he stated that GTA is in favour of more connectivity especially by an airlink, as well as the improvement in digital connectivity through another fibre optic link.

The GTA's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Joe Muscat delivered a presentation on the administration of the Association during 2016. He gave an overview of the Gozitan touristic performance during last year. During his presentation Mr Muscat gave a detailed report of the work and initiatives undertaken by the Association during the course of the past year 2016.

The AGM was also addressed by the Minister for Tourism, Dr. Edward Zammit Lewis. Whilst acknowledging the work being carried out by the Gozo Tourism Association, the Minister for Tourism mentioned the positive results registered on Gozo. Minister Zammit Lewis stated that these increases also showed a shift in the accommodation chosen by the tourists, whilst noting that seasonality remained a challenging issue for Gozo. The Minister for Tourism stated that the positive results being achieved by Gozo's tourism industry are being translated into more investment, in fact since 2013 the Malta Tourism Authority received 35 applications for development in different types of collective accommodation. Finally the Minister Dr. Zammit Lewis commended the GTA for being proactive in contributing to this success story in tourism on Gozo.

The Minister for Gozo, Dr. Anton Refalo, stated that, once again Gozo registered an increase in tourist arrivals in 2016 when compared to 2015. Minister Refalo stressed that in order to sustain these increases, Destination Gozo, needs to continue improving on its connectivity especially with the introduction of a fast ferry service, as well as the investment in another fibre optic link. The Minister for

Gozo stated that his Ministry is putting all its resources to continue improving the cleanliness of the destination especially in the Gozitan countryside. Yet he called for more responsibility from the public at large to stop dumping illegally in rural areas as these are well visited by tourists especially during the lean months. The Minister for Gozo concluded by mentioning that his Ministry is committed to continue supporting the tourism industry in Gozo, which is so vital for the Gozitan economy.

Nationalist Party Spokesman for Tourism Mr. Antoine Borg M.P. also addressed the AGM and said that this is his third opportunity for him to address the Annual General Meeting of the Gozo Tourism Association. He referred to the fact that the numbers in tourism both in Malta and in Gozo are increasing year in year out. However he stressed that no divide exists between Government and Opposition with regards to tourism. Hon. Antoine Borg stated that Air Malta remains concern to all stakeholders involved and stated that the Opposition will remain very cautious on this issue while it is always ready to contribute towards a sustainable solution for the future of the National Airline. The Opposition spokesperson for Tourism called on MTA to review its position and consider the re-introduction of a section within the Authority focusing on Gozo.

During this AGM the GTA council for 2017 was formed. The following are the members: Busuttill Mark (St. Andrews Divers Cove), Cachia Nick (Gozo Spirit B&B), Cassar Chris (Porto Vecchio Restaurant), Gatt Ludgard (Tamarisk Properties), Grech Rosie (Churchill Restaurant), Loporto Mario (Gozo Village Holidays), Meilak Brian (Baron Group), Mercieca Joseph (Country Terrace Restaurant) Muscat Sammut Joseph (Downtown Hotel), Rapa Joe (Ta' Salvina Restaurant), Scicluna Konrad (Links Travel) Scicluna Paul (Gozo Farmhouses), Spiteri Pauline (Mario's Rent a Car), Spiteri Philip (Ta' Philip Restaurant), and Veranneman Amand (Dhalia Real Estate),

Other distinguished guests present for the Annual General Meeting, included, Dr. Chris Said, Shadow Minister for Gozo, Mr. Carlo Micallef, MTA Chief Marketing Officer, Mr. John Borg, Permanent Secretary at Ministry for Gozo, Ms. Esther Bajada, Director Tourism and Economic Development MGOZ, officials from both the Ministry for Gozo, and the Ministry for Tourism as well as Malta Tourism Authority officials, other guests and GTA members from the various sectors of the Gozitan Tourism Industry.

**Joe Muscat**  
**CEO**  
**Gozo Tourism Association**