

Minutes of OBFA Members' Meeting held at the residence of Shawqi Sultan on 24th January 2017 at 4:30 pm.

Present:

Maqbool A Sultan (MAS) – Chairman
Shawqi A Sultan (SAS) – Secretary General
Chris Breeze (CB) – Board Member
Andrew Long (AL) – Board Member
Pankaj Khimji (PK) – Board Member
Nick Pattison (NP) – Board Member
Ahmed Al Araimi (AA) – Board Member
Khalil Khonji (KK) – Board Member
Abdul Hussain Jaffer (AHJ) – Member
David Graham (DG) – Member
Majid Al Toky (MT)– Member
Maqbool Hameed Al Saleh (MH) – Member
Hani Mohammed Al Zubair (HZ) – Member
Kiran N Asher (KA) – Member
Murtadha Hassan Ali (MHA) – Member
Faisal M Alyousef (representing Qais (FA) – Member
Sh. Yousuf Y Al Harthy (YY) - Member

AGENDA

Website

Accounts/Membership Fees

UK 2016 and 2017 Summer Visit

Activity/Programme in Oman

AOB

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming the attendees.

WEBSITE

MAS requested SAS an update on the issue. SAS explained that the Website was up and running and that the members would have all received registration notification from the Web administrator. He added that the following day they would post minutes of today's meeting.

ACCOUNTS/MEMBERSHIP FEES

SAS reported that the Audited Accounts are almost ready. The delay was caused because HSBC, OBFA's banker could not identify 2 entries credited to the account. AL requested that in future any member crediting OBFA's account in cash must request from the tiller to put the member's name as a reference. SAS also said that a few members paid their fees only recently and there were still 2 who had not yet.

Membership fees for the year 2017 will be asked for after 3 months. The Accounts will be posted as soon as they are finalized.

UK 2016 AND 2017 SUMMER VISITS

MAS said that he had written to the Anglo-Omani Society (AOS) to thank them for the very successful reception held at Sackville Street on 21st July 2016. Hopefully there will be a reception this coming summer but the venue could be Buckingham Palace. MAS will be meeting HRH Prince Andrew in February and hopefully they will finalise the dates, which could be either the 7th or 17/18/19 of July 2017. Members will be notified once they have been confirmed.

At last summer's reception Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles (SC) spoke of the formation in the UK only of the Oman British Business Counsel (OBBC). This was necessary in order to convince the large British Corporations that OBFA was more of a business forum than a social or cultural one. A letter had gone to HE The Omani Ambassador to the UK and to the President of the AOS and the formation is under process. OBFA in Oman will remain unaffected.

MAS explained that unlike the previous years this year there would be no "Mansion House" type conference. He requested that members should come up with suggestions of areas of investments in Oman in a particular field. Specialists from field could then visit the UK during the summer and at the reception a dozen or so potential investors could be invited to meet them. A small one-on-one meeting could then take place between them at a venue to be agreed upon.

The conference in July 2016 at the Mansion House was very well organized by Michael Thomas of Pathfinder and was also well attended. A few members voiced their concern that there was no follow-up to it. SAS commented that there is no infrastructure within OBFA in the UK to do that. However, this issue has now been discussed with SC who has agreed to come up with a plan, which would be presented to the Board on his next visit to Oman, scheduled for 30th January 2017.

ACTIVITY/PROGRAMME IN OMAN

MAS then spoke of the idea, which was discussed at the last Board Meeting on the 12th January 2017, of having Sessions in Oman. He requested the Members to put their thinking caps on and come up with topics that could be discussed in a small (max 50 participants) group, taking place maybe 3 times a year, with an invited keynote speaker specializing in that field. He suggested that the first one, perhaps in March could be on FUTURE ENERGY, a subject he had discussed with CB. There could be others that would follow on subjects like, Inward Investment, Venture or Eco Tourism, Tanfeedh, Private Sector Education and Training and Outward Bound. OBFA members should be encouraged to communicate their thoughts through the Website.

MAS was asked why the British do not do more in the Private Sector or with Technology in connection with some dream projects. He said he would discuss this with SC during his forthcoming visit.

AOB

KK raised the question of the formation within the Oman Chamber of Commerce an Oman British Business Committee chaired by Sh. Ahmed Bahwan. MAS said that he will arrange for a meeting with him to find out more.

DG said that an excellent speaker by the name of Marcus Child (MC) would be visiting Oman as a guest of Oman Sail for an event to be held from 9-11 March. He would encourage members to attend and will be sending out invitations soon. The main subjects MC talks about revolve around strategies within companies. A member suggested he could be one of the keynote speakers at one of the sessions but HZ thought he could be a better supplementary one.

MT was asked about the British Scholarship Fund. He said that he had discussed this with MAS and will keep the members posted on any progress.

There being no other business MAS thanked the Members for their attendance. The meeting closed at 5:45 pm.