

Minutes of the OBFA Board Meeting held at the residence of Shawqi Sultan on September 7th 2015 at 4:00 pm

Present:

Maqbool A Sultan (MAS) – Chairman

Shawqi A Sultan (SAS) – Secretary General

Saleh Taleb Zakwani (STZ) – Member

Andrew Long (AL) - Member

Pankaj Khimji (PK) - Member

Nick Pattison (NP) – Member

AGENDA

1. Brief on London conference
2. Cooperation with the Anglo Omani Society
3. Meeting with RIBA
4. Forthcoming event in Oman in February 2016
5. Accounts
6. AOB

Mansion House Conference

SMEs

Ms Malak Al Shaibani, Director General of the National Business Centre (NBC) has contacted Jenny Tooth of the UK Business Angel Association to discuss further the need for an equivalent to the Association with its mentoring and enabling capabilities.

It was agreed that a study would be carried out to analyse the nature of the local needs. Jenny Tooth will soon be visiting Oman to help progress this and will consult, amongst

others, the Youth Fund (Sharakah), the NBC and Intilaaqah.

Experience in the UK suggests that the failure rate of businesses, when supported by organisations such as the Angel Fund can be substantially less, perhaps half that of unsupported businesses.

Public Private Partnerships

It was agreed that a meeting should be held with the Supreme Council for Planning (SCP), SGRF and Omani and British companies with experience in PPPs, both as contractors and operators under the auspices of OBFA to explore the opportunities and to identify the potential problems and opportunities. The utilities sector in Oman has experience and this should also be explored to see what relevance it might have to more problematic sectors such as hospitals and schools.

Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)

The day after the conference some of the Board members had a meeting with the International Director of RIBA - Peter Oborn and some colleagues. The purpose was to identify ways in which Oman construction techniques could be modernised and improved so that costs, and speed of construction could be reduced and so that working conditions could be changed to favour the employment of Omanis. The presentations were extremely interesting and will be distributed to Board Members.

Peter Oborn will be coming out to Muscat, as adviser to the SCP, on changes to the Building Code and talks on how to adopt the necessary techniques will take place then. OBFA will host a dinner for him and his wife, probably on October 9th.

Meeting in February

It was agreed that the proposed Oman-based meeting of OBFA in February, while the theme has to be finally decided, will probably be oriented towards the Construction industry and include architects, consulting engineers and contractors so that the discussions with RIBA can be progressed.

Accounts

John Adcock, Regional Partner for Moore Stephens, has agreed that Moore Stephens should join OBFA. In return for auditing the accounts at no cost to OBFA, it has been agreed that their membership fee should be waived. It is proposed that the first set of accounts would be for 21 months up to the end of 2015. Depending on his advice he

might also produce a summary of accounts for 2014 separately.

AOB

- i. The British Ambassador, Jon Wilks, has invited OBFA Board members plus a few selected other Omanis to a tea-time meeting at 1630 hrs on September 16th at the Residence. His principal interest is the assessment of how the Conference went and how its success could be carried forward.
- ii. A proposal has come from Robert Alston, the Chairman of the Anglo-Omani Society, that they and OBFA should work together on an informally affiliated basis. He will discuss this with Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles.
- iii. The OBFA website is close to completion.