

## **Minutes of the OBFA Board meeting held at the residence of Shawqi A Sultan in Qurum on 21st July 2014 at 1:00 pm.**

Those present were:

Maqbool A Sultan (MAS) – Chairman  
Shawqi A Sultan (SAS) – Secretary General  
Khalil Khonji (KK) – Member  
Saleh Taleb Zakwani (STZ) – Member  
Chris Breeze (CB) – Member

Apologies were received from Ahmed Al Araimi, Nicholas Pattison, Andrew Long and Pankaj Khimji

MAS opened the meeting by thanking and then welcoming the members to the first OBFA Board meeting. The agenda had been circulated so he proceeded to the first item.

### **1. London Visit.**

The first event on the morning of the 18th June 2014 was the House of Parliament visit hosted by Kate Hoey MP (KH). That meeting was attended by a number of MPs from both Houses and SAS had requested, via Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, the Chairman of OBFA UK, a list of all those present at that meeting. This will be circulated as soon as received. A very useful and constructive dialogue had ensued between the MPs and the visiting Omani OBFA delegation and it was agreed that KH would look at the possibility of hosting a reception in the summer of 2015.

A reception at the Anglo-Omani Society (AOS) in the presence of HRH The Duke of York, HH Sayyed Haithem bin Tarek Al Said, the two Chairmen and all the visiting OBFA delegation and invited guests totaling almost 130 people, took place that same evening at the HQ of the AOS. By every account it was an unmitigated success. A letter of thanks will be sent to the AOS.

On the 19th a selected number of visiting OBFA delegation (due to restricted places) attended a luncheon at the HQ of the D Group. The guest speaker was HE Salem bin Naser Al Ismaily and the majority of those present were the top management of companies that were either active in Oman or were interested in setting up an activity there. Attached please find the names of those present and their positions in their respective organizations.

Earlier that morning a meeting with the two Chairmen of the visiting OBFA delegates was held at the AOS HQ. It was a briefing and summing up of the past two days' meetings.

On the 27th of June the two Chairmen accompanied by SAS went to meet Viscountess Penelope of Cobham. She is the Chairperson of Visit England an organization that promotes tourism to Britain. The idea behind the meeting was to learn from the vast experience of that setup and to see how they can be of assistance to the Omani tourism. It was an extremely fruitful meeting and it was agreed that the head of their Middle East Office, Ms. Sumathi Ramanathan (in Dubai) would visit Oman at an appropriate time.

### **2. Membership**

The letters to members have been sent by SAS and already there has been a response from a number of them who sent their cheques of RO 500 for their annual subscription to OBFA. 2 members so far out of 50 (Hamza Al Asfoor and Khalil Lashko) have decided not to renew their membership. It was agreed that SAS will circulate the list of existing members and the Board will wait till end of September to find who is willing to continue before writing to

them and also before inviting a further 100 new ones in order to choose 50 more. It was also decided to contact the British Business Group (BBG) and see if they would be interested in joining.

### 3. Next OBFA Event

As discussed in London it has been decided that the next event in Oman will be in February 2015 but thereafter in January of each year in Oman and in July of the same year in the UK. The one in Oman could discuss for example, Logistics and In Country Value. SAS to write to members and get their view on any other subjects to be discussed. For the summer UK visit a number of organizations have shown interest in inviting OBFA. MAS wondered if HRH the Duke of York could also be invited for the winter event. This is to be discussed with the UK Chairman and get his views on the matter.

4. Brochure, Website and Bank signatories It was agreed that there was no need for a brochure but when travelling abroad or whenever an event is taking place, a flyer could be prepared for that occasion. With regards a website, it already exists but needs to be updated and enhanced. SAS to contact Malak Shibani and PIM and get a quotation from them both. The question of whether a Facebook account is to be opened was discussed. SAS to ask members their views on the subject. The present signatories to the account at HSBC are Yahya Nasib (ex Chairman) and SAS. The latter had been to meet the new CEO Andrew Long and had explained the change and had also taken with him copies of relevant documents. New forms were given which now need to be filled by MAS and a new member of the Board. It was agreed that Nicholas Pattison could be the third signatory so that any two can sign.

### 5. Stationary

Visiting cards for Board Members and new letterheads are to be printed. The same design and logo is to be used. SAS to organize and get quotations from a number of printing presses.

### 6. Letters of Thanks

SAS to draft "thank you" letters to the Anglo Omani Society, the D Group, Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, HE Ambassador Abdulaziz Al Hinai, Viscountess Penelope of Cobham and HMA Jamie Bowden.

### 7. AOB

Though Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles had spoken to Ewan Stirling, the ex CEO of HSBC Oman to help with OBFA's administrative issues in the UK, he has not officially asked him yet to act as the Secretary General. This role has got to be cleared with the main Board of HSBC and will be done at the most opportune moment.

Should the UK also have a bank account and formalized membership as Oman has? While in London this was discussed between the two Chairmen and the members at the meeting held on the 19th of June but without drawing any firm conclusions. It was left to the UK Chairman to investigate and report to the main OBFA Board. The matter will be discussed and finalized after receipt of the UK Chairman's findings.

There being no other business MAS once again thanked everyone present for attending and closed the meeting at 2:15 pm.