

A.L.P.S. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT 2021

2021 – This year again we cannot say that it was a successful year for our dynamic association which had to cancel nearly the entire social, cultural and civic events that were planned for 2021. This was due to the persisting Covid-19 pandemic which affected the whole world and which of course included the islands of Malta and Gozo too. The spread of the virus had infected a large number of people which resulted also in a number of deaths both of young and elderly ages... It had been envisaged that during the year that has just ended, the council of administration discussed the possibility of organizing its usual annual events, for the ALPS members and friends. The prevailing circumstances however, were put on hold. The association continued to monitor the situation regarding the pandemic and the resultant health authority directives for Malta and Gozo.

The first two virtual council meetings that were held via Zoom in November and December 2020 and on the initiative of life member [*later during year was co-opted as a council member*] Mr Carlo Farrugia. He had offered to host the virtual council meetings by sending the appropriate links for each monthly council meeting during 2021. We have experienced this method of keeping the ALPS members together. It all came about with the help of Mr. Carlo Farrugia as well as the enthusiastic council of administration, by organizing and holding the first visual AGM via Zoom.

The 27th. Annual General Meeting was in fact held on 26th. February 2021. The link was sent to all members and friends of ALPS who are listed on the e-mail address register of the Association residing locally and abroad. This resulted with a most encouraging number of participants from Malta and abroad who managed to joining via Zoom and take part in the Annual General Meeting. With much pleasure we mention that ALPS members from Canada, Australia and England joined the AGM. They included names like Mr. Milo Vassallo who looks after ALPS interests in Canada Mr. Oreste Aquilina who is responsible for the ALPS in Australia.

This tremendous success led to newer ideas, where Mr Carlo Farrugia suggested that similar virtual meetings could be organized of 20 members at a time, to meet each other virtually through Zoom and to discuss various subjects and reminiscing from the old good years at the Lyceum

March 2021 was a special month for the members of ALPS. It was the time when we took delivery from the printers, of the special issue of the ALPS magazine 'THE CHANTICLEER' This for sure was to great satisfaction to our President George Stagno Navarra who had utilized the lockdown period in 2020, when he managed to put all the contribution together from a good number of distinguished members from locally and abroad and in forming/ setting / proofreading of the magazine before going to the printers. Another bold decision was taken by sending to all fully paid members and friends of ALPS, a copy of the Special Edition that marks the 25th Anniversary of our association. With the help of Messrs. Bonavia Offset Printers who were entrusted with printing, & packaging and delivering to Malta-post depot at Marsa, we are pleased to say that this mission was accomplished in a matter of three days. It incurred a hefty expense but it was merited to each one of the ALPS members receiving it at home. ALPS are proud of such an exclusive production full of stories from ex Lyceum students from around the world. Now came the time to collect some contribution from the members enabling to help in a

small way to pay for the printing and posting of the special issue of this magazine. It is to be noted that the association had no revenue due that all events being cancelled in year 2020 . With this in mind a message was sent to all with email through the help of Mr. Oscar Galea who keeps the updates a register of e-mails of all members and friends. A similar request for funds was included on the ALPS web site [www.alpsmalta.com] which is under the care of Deputy President Mr Joseph D. Buttigieg

Over the months that followed after April 2021 the pandemic showed signs of subsiding when lesser numbers were being found positive with the virus The President who is also the Editor for all publishing material of the Association took the lead and started working on an the first ALPS-newsletter edition for the year 2021.

This was published and sent to over 700 members and friends in July 2021 This issue was full of interesting material and news accumulated from the past months . A special appeal was made to all members to contribute a small donation towards the expenses incurred for the printing of the special issue of the 'The Chanticleer' . In his editorial the President urged members and friends of ALPS to stay together and, by means of the newsletter we look forward to better times in the following months. He urged members to follow all the messages sent through the various emails sent from time to time, looking for better times that were being envisaged by the health authorities . The first events to be organised, included besides the ALPSnews, were the holding of the monthly Holy Mass at the Chapel of St. Anne at Pwales starting off from October .

Also keeping with the tradition details of the annual Christmas week end and special Christmas dinner held during early December were announced. Members and friends of ALPS , were asked to pencil the dates in their diaries with further and full details to be forwarded in good time before the event.

During the summer months no council meetings were held .However administrative work continued behind the scenes. Continuous promotion to enrol new members locally and from those past Lyceum Students who had emigrated and had made a successful career abroad mainly found in Australia , America ,Canada and U.K. The President established contact with a Mr Dan Brock who looks after the publication of an E- Newsletter entitled 'Maltese presence in North America'

After making the necessary introduction Mr.Brock very kindly granted space for ALPS President 'letter to the Editor' which included a brief history of the Association and inviting Lyceum past student who had emigrated to Canada and America to make contact with us and enrol as members . Another interesting contact was made with another E- Newsletter from Australia published by Mr. Frank Scicluna as editor. This newsletter reaches many Maltese who emigrated worldwide. Exchanges of e-mails were made between our President Mr George Stagno Navarra and Mr. Scicluna with the possibility that The Association of Lyceum Past Students will be given greater prominence in the e-newsletter, to attract ex Lyceum past students residing in Australia to enrol as members. This newsletter is followed by numerous Maltese families residing in all corners of the world.

Looking forward with optimistic attitude, a number of council members continued to communicate together during the summer days, all putting forward ideas of how to organise social, cultural and civic activities during the year 2022. Lots of ideas had been submitted and these were put on the agenda for the first council meeting in September 2021.

During council meetings that followed between September and November the council of administration of ALPS welcomed and co-opted as council members Mr. Milo Vassallo from Canada, Mr. Oreste Aquilina from Australia and Mr. Carlo Farrugia, who continues to host and direct ALPS virtual meetings via ZOOM or TEAMS. It is envisaged that council meetings may continue to be held each month.

Another ALPS news was published during November 2021. For that issue, the majority of the council members welcomed the appeal from the President to submit a write-up about their experiences and memories during their time at the Lyceum. One may say that this was another successful idea and a good number very favourable comments had been received .

In that issue for the month of November, the ALPS news included information about the much sought event with hotel tariffs and details for the Christmas week which had been always celebrated annually over the past decade. All efforts were made to satisfy ALPS members and friends and various meetings were held with the hotel management to finding the best way to organize said event and always bearing in mind that the pandemic Covid 19 was still with us. For such event, it was agreed that we offer accommodation at the Radisson Blu Golden Sands from 3rd to 5th December at favoured tariffs. However, because of the regulations issued by the health authorities we could not organize the usual Special Christmas dinner in the grand ball room of the Hotel. Fr. William Bartolo the ALPS spiritual director kindly accepted to celebrate Holy Mass at the hotel venue on Sunday the 5th December. We are pleased to mention that it was very well welcomed by all the ALPS members as well as those residing at the hotel. Unfortunately because of the pandemic this event did not reach the desired success when we were hoping to recuperate some of the lost revenue by the holding of raffles to raise much desired some income. About 50 rooms were booked at the hotel either for one or two nights. Daily breakfasts and dinner were held at the Flavour restaurant. It was ever so nice to again see members and friends meeting together after nearly two years. With much regret, we have to mention that during last year, a good number of ALPS members and friends had passed away either as a direct result of the pandemic or from their pre-existing medical conditions they had suffered from. A number of familiar faces were missing during the Christmas event and all were remembered during the Holy Mass held on Sunday morning of the 5th December at the resort as well as at Thanksgiving mass that was celebrated at Pwales Chapel on the 13th December 2021.

God willing, there will be again times when members and friends of ALPS can get together again to enjoy each other's company during the organized events. We continue to have confidence in each other and recognize the importance of the role that our association always offered with social, cultural and civic activities. Each event that we may succeed to organize for ALPS members and friends, will always be considered in a special way as a reunion. I wish to thank the President and the council of administration for their enthusiastic efforts and support throughout the year, by working together as a united team and always creating opportunities to look forward positively in the coming year. Let us be positive in our thinking by staying united in order to fulfil the true aim of the Association of Lyceum Past Students, by meeting, reuniting and reminiscing from the good old days at THE LICEO.