



NOTICE is hereby given that the 1st Annual General Meeting of the Cyprus Third Age Association will be held on Thursday 6th May 2010 at The Episkopiana Hotel, Episkopi at 10.30 a.m

From Paphos take 2nd exit from motorway, after the tunnel. Hotel approx ½ km on the right.

10 a.m Registration and Complimentary Coffee and Biscuits.

Please remember to have a valid membership card with you. Your subscription must be paid up to date for you to be entitled to vote.

10.30 a.m Annual General Meeting.

Agenda, motions and accounts, will be forwarded separately.

**Brian Ray.
Acting Chairman
Cyprus Third Age Association Committee**

**Lapithou 5
Tala
Paphos 8557**

From:
Brian Ray
Acting Chairman C3A

Please read this letter. It affects you as a member of the C3A

Dear Member

As you will be aware, the Annual General Meeting of our newly constituted organisation was postponed. The acting committee has arranged a new date and venue. The AGM will be held on May 6th at Episkopiana Hotel at 10:30 am. Before this meeting it is necessary to clarify some points.

The transition from U3A Cyprus, to an organisation which complies with the law in Cyprus was finally achieved, after prolonged efforts, with registration in Spring 2009. At every stage my predecessor, Dorothy Hulley, took care to keep members informed through the

website, attendance at Branch meetings and via the chairman of local committees who were also members of the acting Executive Committee.

The C3A has a legal constitution which provides a tool to allow us to organise a “U3A” style of activity in Cyprus. Registration of the C3A, as required by Cyprus Law, was obtained on March 19th 2009.

All looked to be going fine until some of the local “branches” which pre-date the constitution felt that they were losing some of their independence. There followed some negotiation with Branch Chairmen as to whether their views could be accommodated. Unfortunately there was little sign that this could be accomplished. The two postponements of the AGM were in part to allow time for these negotiations and in part due to certain branches failing to provide essential information needed to make the AGM legitimate.

In Cyprus an association with more than 20 members must be registered and the chairman (or president) is considered in law to represent that association. (The penalty for being a member of an illegal organisation is up to 3 years in prison) The consequence of doing things the Cyprus way is that the C3A chair and his (or her) committee MUST have seniority over branch committees. The branches do NOT and cannot have a separate legal existence. (Incidentally, many UK organisations do also operate this way, including the Scouts, Guides, Women’s Institute, etc)

What would this loss of autonomy mean to the existing branch structure? Very little. As part of the legal C3A, branches would have a high degree of autonomy, to collect subscriptions and organise courses and social events for their members. However it is difficult to see how the C3A central committee can perform its legal function without the following constraints imposed on any branches which are operating under the new registered constitution:-

- Branches must adhere to Cyprus Law and the C3A constitution.
- Branches will need to submit annual details of their finances and assets.
- Branches will need to submit their membership details (This is within the data protection laws)
- Branch committee minutes will need to be available to both the membership and the central committee. (No room for secrecy)
- Branches will not have the authority to enter into any contract which commits the C3A to future payments. (For example, long term rental of premises) Such contracts would need to be signed at central committee level, probably after taking legal advice.

Unfortunately some of the previously established branches have indicated that they will not accept these constraints. In one case they wish to decide which laws they obey and in another they have changed their application form to remove the Greek Language and to state that membership details will not be passed to the C3A. One branch committee is recorded as having openly discussed engineering the dissolution of the C3A. Incidentally, if the C3A were to dissolve then all branches would cease to have a legal existence and central and branch assets would be frozen. The lawyers would have a field day!

So, what is the way forward? I suggest the answer is to use our constitution. This constitution is based on a standard Cyprus template which works elsewhere and has stood the test of time. We need to have an AGM within 15 months of the registration of the association. At that AGM the membership needs to vote for a chairman and committee. This must be a vote of all members present. There is nothing in the constitution which gives previous branch committees any special role in these elections.

At the AGM we will ask all members to sign in. Members who are not on record as being part of an existing valid capitation arrangement will have the opportunity to pay a membership fee of 1 Euro for 3 months membership of the C3A (central). I apologise for asking some of you, in effect, to pay twice but this has been brought on by some existing

branches withholding membership records. A membership card will be issued. It is important that we have a legitimate AGM and elect a legitimate new committee.

Capitation payments are disliked by some existing branches and unless the branch passes the membership details to which the capitation refers, then this activity cannot be audited. At least one registered Cyprus association, when met with this problem, has modified its way of working such that all membership fees are paid centrally and money passed out to the branches afterwards.

The main purpose of the May AGM is to elect a new committee. If the rebelling branches wish to be part of the C3A in the future, they will have to reach agreement with this elected committee. If they decide not to do this then they cannot continue to use the name C3A and the validity of their assets will be in question. They will not be able to use the C3A registration number for any purpose including giving it to local banks. If any previous branch which is no longer part of the C3A, acts in a way suggesting that it is part of the C3A or brings discredit on the C3A then the Chairman will have to initiate legal action to protect himself and the C3A otherwise he (or she) might be held legally responsible for these actions.

We may need to assist branches who wish to split into ongoing C3A compliant branches for those members who wish to remain as part of the C3A and separate independent organisations for those who value local autonomy above membership of the C3A.

Clearly the new committee will need to consider amendments to the constitution. Some of these will need to address internal inconsistencies whilst others may strive to achieve a better alignment with our aims and objectives. Please remember that it is the Greek version which is the legal document, the English translation is purely for the convenience of members who do not speak Greek. These amendments will have to be brought to a General Meeting open to all members, for approval by the membership, before handing to our lawyers for translation and submission to the Ministry.

Please look out for the calling notice for the first AGM of the C3A. This will include the nomination forms and agenda.

Regards,

Brian Ray (Elected Vice-chairman and acting Chairman)