

2020

BLUE LIVES

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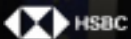
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When the going gets tough

A year has passed since we published the first edition of this magazine; and what a year it has been!

Over the past months, people have been advised to work from home, avoid unnecessary outings, and practise social distancing while, in no time, we were requested to play an important role as first responders in the most unprecedented time our generation has ever known.

For this year's edition, the magazine board thought of rebranding completely this publication by limiting adverts and introducing the concept of sponsored ads in order to create a more engaging and user-friendly design. Undoubtedly, this has not been an easy task, considering that we were working on this publication in the midst of enforcing COVID-19 regulations, along with an administrative change and our daily police duties. However, we are proud to welcome you to the 2020 edition because, when the going gets tough, the blue lives are the ones who get to keep on going. Enjoy.

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Inspecting the Minister's Vision

Hon. Byron Camilleri Minister for Home Affairs, National Security & Law Enforcement

At 32, Byron Camilleri is one of the youngest persons to ever occupy the role of Minister for Home Affairs. Looking back on these past few months since he has been in office, it has been no easy feat. From the outbreak of COVID-19, to the selection of a new Police Commissioner, one can safely say that Minister Camilleri has had to face numerous challenges during his first days in office. Blue Lives magazine met with the Minister to delve deeper into his vision for the Police Force. We asked him 10 questions to get to know him better.

You've been Minister for Home Affairs for 4 months. What's your impression so far?

I am extremely satisfied with the effective teamwork shown by the Malta Police Force, especially during the outbreak of COVID-19. Over the past few years, the Police Force has faced growing public scrutiny and backlash, which was justified at times, yet also unjust at others. During these 4 months, my personal experience of dealing with the police on a daily basis has shown me that our officers are ready to rise to any occasion. I've also seen them willing to embrace change.

Does the Police Force play a role in affecting Malta's reputation?

The Police Force is crucial in ensuring that the country is perceived positively. If the Force loses the public's trust, this would not only tarnish the country's reputation, but would also jeopardise the ability of the police to keep the public safe. As a Government, we need to send a clear message that the Police Force is equipped with all the necessary resources to do its job effectively. We have already changed the way a Police Commissioner is appointed from now on. This means that, for the first time in history, the Police Commissioner will be selected through a public call.

Should the Police Force try and attract more professionals?

Of course! Not only professionals, but also specialists who can provide their expertise. I truly believe in the civilianisation of the Police Force. Recruiting more professionals can help equip the Force with the expertise it currently needs to bolster its talented Force. Areas where this can be done are Victim Support Unit, Cybercrime, and Economic Crimes.

What would you choose? More officers patrolling the streets, or in police stations?

Without a doubt, I would prefer having more officers patrolling the streets of our neighbourhoods. In no way would this mean closing all police stations; however, we must rethink the current system, and see what works better for the reality we are living in today. My vision is to extend community policing across all localities. Building relationships with the community will be more effective in the long run.

How can the police communicate better with citizens?

By being direct. Perhaps throughout the years, the police have been cautious to showcase their work, and it's understandable. We are referring to extensive and thorough investigations which often affect the lives of many people. On the other hand, I am a firm believer in transparency and open communication. Effective public communication efforts enable citizen participation, while contributing to the establishment of trust between the Police Force and the community.



Do you see more women joining certain sections in the Force, such as CID?

Definitely! Firstly, I would like to see more women join the Force ideally in all sections. In fact, I was especially pleased to hear that a female officer has joined the traffic branch for the first time in over 30 years. At the end of the day, we should not look at gender, but at talent and potential.

Will the Police Force go green?

Decreasing our carbon footprint should be a priority for all of us, not just the Police Force. However, I would like to see more eco-friendly investments by the Force. Purchasing sustainable vehicles, implementing more sustainable office practices, or perhaps relying less on paper in day-to-day operations. This may require some adjustments; yet, it's the leap forward we must make in the months and years to come.

Are there plans to launch new units in the Police Force?

We will always keep investing in the Force. In the coming weeks, we will be launching a specialised unit for domestic violence. We will also be investing in other areas and making a change.

What value do you think is the most important for police officers?

Integrity. Police officers must uphold the values of the service, and strive to do the right thing in all situations.

Why should people trust the Police?

Circumstances have shown that, in the country's time of need, the police were on the frontlines, keeping our people safe.

From the Commissioner's Office

Mr. Angelo Gafà

Commissioner of Police

Fresh in his new role as Commissioner of Police, Angelo Gafà has been interviewed by Blue Lives magazine to understand his vision for the Malta Police Force.

You had been the Force's CEO for more than three years before being appointed Police Commissioner. What one thing are you really proud of throughout your role as the CEO?

As CEO, I worked relentlessly to reinvigorate the Police Force, and it fills me with great satisfaction that we are just weeks away from the finalisation of an EU-funded Transformation Strategy intended to transform the current police organisation into a flexible, efficient, data-driven, community-centric, and outcome-focused modern police force.

Your appointment was part of a historical process. What is the main factor which led you to apply for the post?

There is no denial that the Malta Police Force is at a crossroads, and we need to change the way we operate. While Malta has experienced a 10% reduction in reported crime over the past three years, trust ratings have plummeted to all-time lows. I feel indebted to a Police Force which has given me so much fulfilment, and thus, I felt it opportune to roll up my sleeves and face these challenges with an aim to regain public trust, while ensuring a safer and secure society for everyone.

Will the MPF have a new uniform under your charge?

Funds permitting, the answer is a clear yes. A final design has been agreed upon subsequent to necessary consultations. The proposed new uniform seeks to strike a balance between authority, safety, practicality, gender neutrality, and comfort, considering the physical aspects of patrol work and the particular Maltese climate.

During your first day in office, you chose to meet the media during a press conference and answer any questions thrown at you. Why do you believe the media should be given such priority on the first day and the future?

I consider the media as a strategic partner in our operations. On the first day, I wanted to send a clear message that the Police Force at my helm will be more transparent and approachable. It was also a good opportunity for the media to grill me the day following the formal hearing in Parliament.

You have been mentioning the MPF Transformation Strategy as one thing on your top priority to-do list. In tangible terms, what is this about?

While the principles of policing remain constant, the environment in which we operate has over the years changed significantly. As an organisation, we have to adapt to shifting crime patterns and increased public expectations. The Transformation Strategy will seek to modernise the Force into a more transparent and agile police organisation guided by principles of efficiency and effectiveness. The Strategy will focus on several important areas, including communications, accountability and good governance, digitalisation, core duties, restructuring, and quality of employees' lives. It will ultimately contribute towards increased trust, confidence, and legitimacy.



What is the biggest challenge perceived so far in this role?

Police organisations tend to be highly conservative. Given my emphasis on the need to modernise the Force, I am aware that we will encounter resistance along the way. Nevertheless, through effective communication, we can win the hearts and minds of our officers, who will ultimately come to understand that a transformed police force is a better organisation both for them and society in general.

Despite having one of the largest numbers of police officers per capita in the EU, people usually complain about the lack of police presence. What are your plans about this?

Small states like Malta and Cyprus suffer from an inability to exploit economies of scale. Nonetheless, the Police Force under my headship will be placing a stronger emphasis on police visibility as a measure to provide our citizens with a greater sense of security. This can be partially achieved through civilianisation and outsourcing of certain non-core police functions, hence freeing certain officers from non-core business, enabling the organisation to dedicate more resources for beat duties.

As the youngest Police Commissioner ever appointed in Malta, how much importance do you plan to give the youth police?

Policing youths is a challenging task worldwide. Energetic youth police are best placed to deal with citizens of their same age group as they could relate to each other with greater ease. However, youth police require adequate mentorship from experienced exemplary officers. This is part of our planned strategy to ensure that rookies are given adequate initial on-the-job training which enhances their initial recruitment course.

You were requested to draw a 4-year plan for the Police Force. List those changes the public should see within your first year.

We will be implementing the GRECO recommendations, sending a clear message of good governance within a more disciplined police organisation. Investment in financial crimes investigations will be a priority, while community policing will be given a boost. Victims of domestic violence and hate crime will be referred to a centralised department, thus ensuring a more professional and emphatic service. The introduction of body cameras and other digital tools is deemed to enhance effectiveness, while ensuring greater transparency and accountability.

Your short message to the public.

The Police Force under my headship will treat you as a valid partner in policing. We are committed to delivering, and we count on your contribution to ensure a safer Malta together.



112



A specialised B2B team within GO plc caters to the communication needs of the local business community. Our team of highly experienced technical experts is on hand to help businesses meet their communication and IT requirements, offering bespoke support for any challenges they may face. For more information, and to get in touch, visit us at www.gobusiness.com.mt.



A Local Emergency

Don't feel Nervous to use the Service

The introduction of the single European Emergency number 112 was intended to allow citizens in distress to contact the emergency services, such as the police, armed forces, ambulance service, and civil protection department, by using the same number across Europe, including Malta.

In an emergency situation, the citizen may not be in a position to search and establish the appropriate emergency number to call. It is thus important that citizens are aware of the number 112 to dial it immediately in case of need. This is why the education of citizens and dissemination of information about the European emergency number is crucial. In this regard, the Malta Police Force organises talks in various schools around the island, amongst other initiatives, to create awareness of the number 112 among children.

A 112 Control Room is also known as a Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP), and it is considered the first link in the chain of emergency services. In Malta, the 112 Control Room is situated within the Police General Headquarters in Floriana. On a normal day, this room receives an average of 850 calls, with the majority being of a non-emergency nature. Nonetheless, we always emphasise that this number is used only in emergency situations.

These calls are answered by trained police officers who dispatch emergency services according to the nature of the reported incident. Since a particular incident may require the intervention of one or more emergency service, a state-of-the-art communication system has been set up in collaboration with GO, where the operator is able to disseminate the information received to other emergency services in real time. Users with disabilities can also access the emergency services by sending an SMS on **79770112** and the **112mt** application, including Flag mii web service for geo-localisation purposes.

The team at GO has been instrumental in the setting up of the emergency communication system, assisting the authorities with this connectivity setup thereby ensuring that the local community can be assisted in the best way possible in case of any emergency.

“We receive an average of 850 calls on 112 every day of which 79% are not real emergencies. Call 112 only in the case of a real emergency.”

Street Smart

Drive a road - follow the code

We often see the traffic police riding their reliable 'stallions', their big motorbikes that can easily whizz through traffic, bringing order to the chaos our roads can descend to during rush-hour traffic. In recent years, they were joined by another team that rides mechanical stallions, namely, the riders from the land enforcement directorate of **Transport Malta**.

It seems like ages ago, the times before COVID-19, when our roads were packed to the brim with cars, making it hard for us to go to work on time. The dedicated teams on bikes roamed from one junction to the next, helping us get through to our destinations on time. That time will hopefully return, albeit hopefully with less traffic, and the esteemed teams will be back to fulfilling those duties.

Even though traffic relented during the times of COVID-19, the police and TM officers did not stay home. In fact, every single day, irrespective of the pandemic, the officers exposed themselves to its perils and still reported for duty. Both teams cooperate together in order to make our roads safer.

They go hard on the reckless who break the road rules to enjoy themselves, while selfishly putting their lives and the lives of the rest of us in danger. We have heard countless stories of lives shattered, lives whose course has been forever changed because of some reckless driver. These 'knights' on bikes often have to be our first line of defence.

We have now become used to reading statistics on the news about those few eager to test their vehicles' prowess going to 'racing hotspots' and relentlessly exceeding the speed limit, thus imperilling lives in the process. Both the Police Force's traffic branch and Transport Malta's enforcement work hand in hand to set up points and monitor the roads with mobile speed cameras. We are certain that these excursions are helping save lives.

The riders are also among the first to arrive on the scene of an accident. Several times, they are indispensable in helping the ambulance get to the scene and leave as quickly as possible. They are instrumental in helping traffic get by an accident and avoid the chaos that might ensue after a road is blocked.



Transport Malta is the Authority for all transport in Malta. Besides its enforcement section on land and at sea, it is responsible for registering all vehicles, ranging from cruise liners, airplanes, to micro scooters. The Authority is currently running a number of schemes to encourage more owners to switch to environmentally friendly vehicles. Visit transport.gov.mt for more details.





Simulated Scenario

The rapid advancement in simulation software and its realism has made it possible to apply this technology to training, offering a cost-effective solution which is adaptable to the user's requirements. Laser Shot Simulations is one of the global leaders in providing affordable, alternative training solutions for military and law enforcement professionals, offering the most realistic and practical firearms simulators, crew training simulators, and live-fire facilities available to professional trainers. Its systems are used by several military and law enforcement authorities across the globe.

Laser Shot offers progressive training solutions for all skill levels, while focusing on the core principle 'train as you fight', and being adaptable to individual customer needs. Its training solutions augment existing programmes with safe alternatives, technologically-advanced simulations for immersive training, or cutting edge live-fire range facilities. Trainees use perfect replicas of their own firearms, and the system reacts to the way they are deployed, recording results for analytical purposes. The background scenarios may be recorded locally to provide trainees with the ultimate realism.



Virtual recreation of a situation

The Malta Police Rapid & Special Intervention Unit is a first responder on most sensitive incidents, whose officers must take split-second decisions in circumstances which they may be encountering for the first time. The newly installed Laser Shot system can simulate multiple scenarios, which can escalate from a mere traffic stop, which officers encounter frequently, to a complex active shooter incident, all depending on how the officers apply their communication skills and approach. Moreover, the system provides the officers with an array of weapons systems, which are used in their daily duties,

ranging from less-than-lethal equipment, such as, taser and pepper spray, right up to firearms. Officers are rigorously trained to make their choice of weapon depending on the scenario created by the simulator. A thorough debriefing is carried out after the simulation to review the officers' actions, the effectiveness of their various levels of response, and their shooting skills.

The proper training of police officers presents logistical and financial challenges. However, training is fundamental to ensure that the police are always prepared to protect our citizens.



Phoenix Group Ltd. is a specialist provider of military and law enforcement equipment and services, including firearms, ammunition, personal protection, uniform items, training solutions, and consultancy. The company is the owner of the 'Lock, Stock & Barrel' brand, under which it operates its outlet for the commercial sale of sporting firearms, historical arms, and accessories.



Your need for safety doesn't stop during difficult times, and neither do we. Our teams work hard to ensure safety and peace of mind, while offering uncompromised protection. Our level of care and passion starts from the first call, and continues in the years ahead protecting what matters most to you. Keep safe. www.alberta.com.mt

Home Theft

Dealing with asset stealing

Prevention is better than cure

When speaking about preventing theft from properties, we want to share some guidance on how to enhance security and reduce the risk of becoming victims.

Be vigilant

The simplest precautions taken in our daily routine can sometimes save our lives. Regardless of the time of the day or night, when a stranger knocks on our door, it can be uncomfortable, or even frightening. Therefore, be sure to perform a lock check, and see who it is through your video doorbell or security camera. If the person looks somehow suspicious, call **112**. Take extra precautions with children or the elderly as these are the most vulnerable and potential victims.

Don't broadcast

As airports reopen, we will be easily swept up in the excitement of sharing our travel photos on social media. If you have an intruder alarm system, use it! Ensure to have the police headquarters' telephone number in your alarm dialler system.

Take care of your neighbourhood

Always be on the lookout for anyone who looks suspicious in your neighbourhood. When in doubt, always call **112**, and let the well-trained officers handle the situation.

Invest in security measures

Do we really need a home security system? Is home security worth the investment? Yes, it is. When you are at home at night, away for travel, or commuting to/from work, you may find yourself worrying about your home and valuable possessions. Some personal belongings, no matter how expensive, are of sentimental value, and cannot be replaced, ever.

Additional tip:

When investing in security systems, it is important to keep the following in mind:

CCTV footage must be clear day and night.

Always consider security companies with renowned brands, experience and technical knowledge in the field.

Pay particular attention to inbuilt cyber security related features. With most systems are connected to the web, this feature is often overlooked.

Regular maintenance and regular cleaning is of utmost importance. A non-functional security system is just as good as not having one in the first place.



Crime Analysis

Clearing criminality from our locality

It is a known fact that crime is not randomly distributed, and thus, the identification of hotspots of criminal activity is a worthwhile pursuit. Modern policing practices hence necessitate a focus on targeting the criminal rather than the crime. This latter principle is based on research that shows that a small percentage of active and repeat offenders commit a disproportionately large number of crimes.

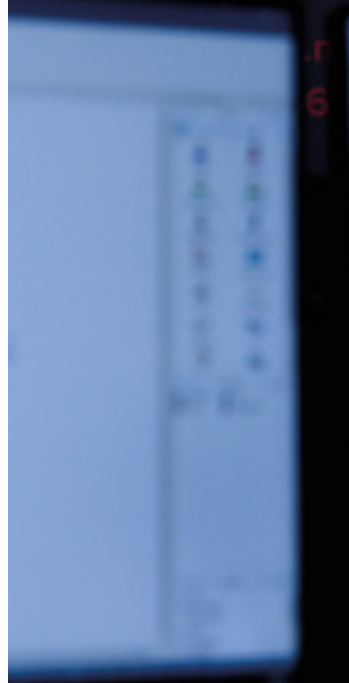
Police managers are more than ever seeking new ways to make better use of their personnel and technology. Thanks to advanced technology, the police can engage in intelligence-led policing practices which facilitate the identification and analysis of problems or threats and leverage resources to address them effectively, thus enabling the police to become more proactive in their operations.

Fully aware of these technological developments, the Malta Police Force is presently in its final stages to fully implement the IBM i2 analytical software financed through the European Commission's Hercule III Funding Programme. This data-mining tool, utilised by many law enforcement agencies across the globe, will intelligently cross-reference data that is captured within separate databases used by different units of the Police Force and other interconnected relevant stakeholders. Therefore, through its powerful analytical capabilities, IBM i2 turns data into actionable intelligence which helps uncover hidden connections and patterns in data.

The work of police analyst teams will become more simplified thanks to the IBM i2 software. Analysts can map out relationships, and trace evidence geospatially and temporally, while having a visualisation of criminal trends and patterns, which may be used for predictive analysis. The software is additionally time-effective, allowing police investigators and analysts to conduct effectively time-sensitive investigations.

Through improved synergy between the various police stakeholders, both internal and external, the IBM i2 project will ultimately aid the Malta Police Force in conducting more effective investigations into serious and organised crimes, most notably, financial crime, hence paving the way for more solid prosecutions in Court. In other words, the IBM i2 software puts the Malta Police Force in a better position in the fight against serious and organised crime.

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Going Green

To Serve and also be sustainable

The Malta Police Force

provides a supplementary service to the community, commonly referred to as extra-duty assignments, by allocating available off-duty uniformed officers to details which do not generally fall within the scope of the on-duty officer's responsibilities.

Such assignments are paid for and contracted by third parties, provided that requests are conditioned on the actual or potential use of law enforcement powers by a police officer. This includes crowd control, plain clothes assignments for the discovery of criminal offences, routine law enforcement for public authorities, security and protection of life and property, traffic control, and pedestrian safety. One such extra-duty assignment includes the recent partnership between the Malta Police Force and the Central Business District Foundation.



Mindful of the impact on the community and the surrounding environment, we are making use of a plug-in Hyundai Kona electric vehicle for our patrols, thus eliminating our carbon footprint on the area. This is the first time that the Force is attempting to use an electric vehicle for active duty. Contrary to passenger vehicles, whose main aim is mostly conveyance from Point A to Point B, Police Patrol Cars have a specific set of unique usage characteristics that need to be fulfilled.

Mileage and charging times are an important aspect to consider, especially when taking into consideration the 24/7 nature of police work which can't be planned ahead.. Furthermore patrolling, subjects a vehicle to very low speeds for prolonged periods, thus reducing airflow. Coupled with the island's scorching summers this puts immense strain on the cooling system. Therefore the use of the Hyundai Kona is set to serve as a controlled pilot project where we will monitor closely the performance of the car in order to assess the viability of plug-in electric vehicles as Patrol Cars.



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Pit Stop

INSURANCE AGENCY

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The Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) is the central driver of the government's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) policy, programmes, and initiatives in Malta. MITA's role is to deliver and implement the assigned programmes as set out in the Digital Malta National ICT Strategy 2014-2020, and as directed by the Parliamentary Secretariat for Financial Services and Digital Economy from time to time. MITA manages the implementation of IT programmes in the government to enhance public service delivery, and provides the infrastructure needed to execute ICT services to the government. MITA is additionally responsible for propagating further use of ICT in society and the economy, and promoting and delivering programmes to enhance ICT education and the use of ICT as a learning tool.



Phishing

Catch of the day is a price to pay

Taking repetitive things for granted sometimes is the norm. The same happens when it comes to Cyber Security, and oftentimes, we do not realise the importance of securing our digital world.

To explain the threat in real terms, cybercriminals, known as, 'hackers', launch an attack every 39 seconds. Most of these attacks are deployed through the application of what is referred to as 'social engineering', which is the action of manipulating people to give up confidential information, which includes passwords and financial information. These attacks are in most cases labelled as 'phishing attacks' as the attacker masquerades his real intention in order to deceive the victim.

Cyber criminals have mastered the art of social engineering. Notwithstanding human instinct and training to refrain from clicking on malicious links or giving away credentials, the presentation method instinctively urges the user to interact, erroneously believing that this action is actually beneficial to him. This intensified activity is causing a dramatic increase in the number of compromised online accounts and systems, causing reputational and financial damages, running globally into trillions of dollars annually. The Malta Police Force and the Malta Information Technology Agency (MITA) are involved in many joint educational campaigns aimed to promote the best Cyber Hygiene practices. Failing to adhere to these good practices, people will open themselves to undesired communications and interactions that will most often lead to trouble.

- Avoid using public Wi-Fi to access sensitive and personal information;
- Beware of pop-ups;
- Download only from trusted sources;
- Never give out sensitive information (passwords credit card details, security question answers etc.) on sites which are not HTTPS;
- Use multifactor authentication (MFA);
- Always check suspicious emails;
- Use different passwords for each account;
- Keep your systems updated in-line with the latest updates, including your mobile phone;
- **Think before you click**, ultimately your digital security is your priority.

The Cyber Crime Unit can be reached on **22942231** and/or via email on ***computer.crime @gov.mt***



THE GENERAL SOFT DRINKS
CO. LTD.

The General Soft Drinks Co. Ltd. has been operating in Malta for 50 years. It is an independent Coca-Cola bottler, and the sole licensed bottler for products of The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) in Malta. Our Company is responsible for manufacturing a wide range of soft drinks across Malta for brands owned by TCCC, including Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, Coke Zero, Fanta, Dr Pepper, Sprite, Schweppes, and Kristal. Through our sister company, GSD Marketing, we sell and distribute TCCC products manufactured in Malta, as well as import, sell, and distribute other TCCC products, including Cappy Juices and Powerade. We further import, sell, and distribute other leading brands, including Monster, Bavaria, Stella Artois, B.G. Lowenbrau, Leffe, Hoegaarden, Café Mauro, Evian, and Somersby.



Social Responsibility

Where work roles are also squad goals

Last October, more than 70 members of the Malta Police Force participated in 'The Grid' Sprint 2019, which was held at Golden Bay. Participants from different sections within the Force came together, and after fifteen weeks of juggling between work commitments and training, they managed to accomplish a 6-kilometre obstacle race.

In preparation for the main event, €1,575.75c were collected among participants and through fundraising events dedicated to corporate social responsibility, mainly in aid of 'Simon Schembri Blue Light Foundation'. This sum was later rounded up to €2,000 by the Police Commissioner on behalf of the Malta Police Force.

Giving is not simply about making monetary donations; in fact, a team-building clean-up event was also organised by the participants along the Grid's 6-kilometre route at Ghajn Tuffieha. Apart from contributing towards the environment, as part of the activities in preparation for the Grid event, a number of participants also found some time to promote blood donation and donate blood themselves.

Since the main activity was a sport related event, in order to collect funds, other members of the Force and the general public were invited to attend Circuit training classes offered in-house by the Malta Police Force Grid Team. Another objective of these classes was to promote physical activity among members of the Force and the general public.

This initiative showed the commitment of the Malta Police Force to social responsibility, not only through financial support, but also by inspiring others, while instilling a sense of obligation to give something back to the community. The participants' interest and commitment to social responsibility was very strong and a commendable achievement in itself. This initiative further served to strengthen the bond between members of the Force, especially between those within different sections and divisions.

Convenience Shop

FOR

SUPPORT GROUP

PUTTINU CARES



The Convenience Shop has 70 outlets strategically located across 40 locations around Malta and has recently launched The Convenience Online, a virtual online shop for those who would like their essential needs ordered and delivered in the comfort of their own home. Customer satisfaction is top priority at The Convenience Shop while Corporate Social Responsibility is also key to the Group's philosophy. The Convenience Shop for Puttinu Cares in Qormi was launched in 2019 where all profits from operations are donated to the Puttinu Cares Foundation, which offers support to cancer patients and their families.





Community Policing

An Opportunity through Unity

The first Community Policing Team was established in Mellieha in August 2019, and has proved to be a resounding success. Community policing teams are the link between the police and the communities they serve. The focus is on working closely with the community, partners, and the agencies that are there to help solve problems that affect the quality of life for our local residents.

The teams comprise local officers, who are well-known to the community, and their details are circulated throughout their localities to ensure that they are identifiable to the public. This in turn ensures that a personal link is maintained, while inspiring trust, confidence, and reassurance in the towns and villages of Malta.

Community policing is a proactive and refreshing change to the traditional style of response policing as the officers allocated to the areas remain there for a period of time, thus allowing them to build relationships with the local councils and the agencies in order to influence change for the local community. In order to solve long-term issues, we, the police, need to work closely with these partners for the benefit of residents.

Community officers endeavour to retain low levels of criminality which, in turn, affects our communities on a daily basis. The focus of these officers is on high-visibility foot patrols, problem solving, and sustained efforts in working with their local communities.

The Convenience Shop is a focal point of our communities, providing the ideal opportunity for the community police officers to work closely with them in order to forge closer working relationships and links with their customers. We really value the opportunity to work closely with **The Convenience Shop** for better neighbourhoods.

A Community Policing Team is soon coming to your area. Embrace it, and let's work together.

Front Liners

Keeping people at ease during a disease

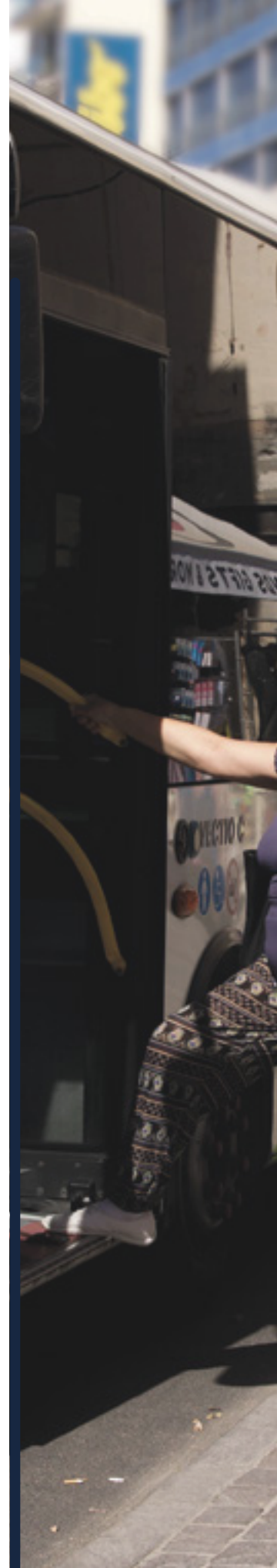
COVID-19 continues to affect all aspects of life, these challenging times are shining a spotlight on how the police and other law enforcement officers are playing a more pivotal role in contributing to the effort to control the disease and promote safety within their communities, while fighting criminals who capitalise on the outbreak.

Officers respond to calls for service related to public health orders. Being in a public health emergency, they are constantly enforcing the new health and social regulations, while ensuring that society continues to function in a civil manner, and navigating their way around restrictions. The '**4 E**', namely, Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce, are embraced by these officers, who engage with their communities, patrol the streets, educate the public about the new restrictions, explain what the measures require them to do, and finally, encourage people to behave responsibly in order to reduce the risk to public safety and health.

As a very last resort, the law is enforced, thus booking those flouting the regulations. Higher levels of compliance, especially regarding social distancing, were acquired through effective partnerships between the police and communities. Places of entertainment, such as, the vibrant nightlife in Paceville, are empty, having been transformed into ghost towns, rendering the area vulnerable to theft and other illicit activity. Yet, the increased presence of the police in these areas is of great solace to the neighbourhood. Some defiant business owners however have continued to ignore the regulations and the state's order to cease trading temporarily.

Police scramble to public places, such as, bus stops and beaches, where people refuse to keep their distance from each other, asking them to separate, while scores are slapped with a fine instead of on the wrist for failing to abide by the mandatory provisions relating to the number of persons in public spaces.

Malta Public Transport employees, particularly bus drivers, are assisted when there is a physical threat or situation potentially leading to uncontrollable action by passengers found in breach of the obligatory conditions when using public transport services, such as, not wearing a face mask when boarding buses. Front liners are determined to put on a brave face in order to keep everyone going, particularly the vulnerable, during a time of high anxiety, especially because this threat is prolonged, unprecedented, and shared by so many.







Paw in the Law

An Excited Wagging Tail

The Malta Police Canine Unit was established back in 1949, and has had a very exciting journey along the years. The first three dogs were mainly used for crime prevention, performing various patrols in residential and hotspot areas. Today, we have over thirty dogs doing much more specialised work in various fields. These canine teams, which include a dog handler and his loyal canine partner, perform valuable work and assistance to the Force and other entities.

The main three specialisations of the K9 section are narcotic detection, explosive detection, and ensuring protection duties for VIPs and crowd control. It is all about being close to the community and saving lives, while ensuring the safety of our island. A narcotic find implies less drugs in our communities, while prevention of explosive clearance or threats provides more reassurance to our communities, thereby keeping our island a highly safe destination. The K9 section has always strived to act professionally by utilising and investing in qualified canine instructors, while providing the best and appropriate training tools to all dog handlers.



Our partners, the dogs, are not considered merely another tool, but they are our loyal colleagues and friends, with whom we are able to communicate even with a simple wink. This special bond between the dog and the handler is crucial, and is mirrored in the daily police work. One cannot work in silos, and being an open learning unit, we have built fruitful partnerships with foreign law enforcement agencies to exchange valuable knowledge and best practices, thus enabling the unit to respond to today's demands and expectations.

Our numerous public relations activities are also part of our duties, and thanks to the sponsorship of Borg Cardona & Co. Ltd., we have refurbished our training grounds with a new agility kit and freshly seeded turf. Providing a fresh environment is undoubtedly electrifying for all the two and four-legged K9 personnel, as well as our visitors.

The police K9 journey is here to stay, so keep an eye open for that eager wagging tail, full of excitement to keep serving!



The Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) is a national entity which helps vulnerable people by providing a variety of services for free. FSWS is made up of various agencies and directorates, namely, Agenzija Appogg, Agenzija Sedqa, the Agency for Community and Therapeutic Services (ACTS), Directorate for the Child Protection Services, and Directorate Alternative Care. The Foundation offers services associated with children, families, communities, and addictions, amongst others, both in Malta and Gozo. FSWS employs the best professionals in the industry, exceeding 800 persons. The Foundation is committed to developing further its services according to the exigencies and needs of society, while remaining at the forefront, and improving social solidarity on the Maltese Islands.

As A Victim

Coming forth for our support

The Malta Police Force is committed to protecting all victims of crime, and since January 2017, the Victim Support Unit within the Police Force has helped over a thousand victims. This would not be possible without the collaboration of different stakeholders. One of the main pillars is Aġenzija Appoġġ, which offers different services free of charge to vulnerable people.

Notwithstanding facts and statistics showing that the majority of victims seeking support are women, we have helped male victims as well. A case in point was a single parent concerned about his daughter's well-being. Following the sudden death of his wife, his teenage daughter could not handle the new family dynamics, and started exhibiting challenging behaviour. She was sexually exploited by adult men, and was reported missing by her father on numerous occasions. The Victim Support Unit's youth worker immediately intervened with the family, and through the assistance of various professionals, including Aġenzija Appoġġ, we were able to offer them continuous support throughout their difficult journey. A year down the line, the father is now coping much better, while still benefiting from various services and family therapy offered by Aġenzija Appoġġ. He is thankful to everyone involved, and wishes to share his experience for others to seek support as well.

"The Police Victim Support have been supportive by helping my child get back on the right track following such difficult moments. What has also been very useful is having them checking in on us to make sure that we are coping well, and that we have all the support we need. It helps to know that there is someone to fall back on just in case something happens again in the future. I want to encourage others to do the same."

We are here to support you.

The Victim Support Unit can be reached on **22942160** and/or via email address on ***victimsupport.police@gov.mt***
Aġenzija Appoġġ can be reached on **22959000** or ***Supportline 179***



BOV
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Bank of Valletta has a number of Investment Centres across Malta and Gozo, with professional and licensed advisors, who are continuously trained and updated with the latest developments. Appointments with specialised Financial Advisors can be scheduled by contacting one of the BOV Investment Centres; Bir id-Deheb - 2275 1377; Gzira - 2275 1349; Mosta - 2275 1334; Qormi - 2275 1314; Valletta - 2275 1315; Gozo - 2275 1324. Value of investments may go down as well as up, and may be affected by changes in currency exchange rates. Past performance is not a guide to future performance. Issued by Bank of Valletta p.l.c., 58, Triq San Zakkarija, il-Belt Valletta VLT 1130.



Crypto Currency

Verifying your Virtual Valuables

A large part of our daily activities takes place on the internet. From grocery shopping, to online banking, our internet activity is steadily on the rise. Most of us are aware that these activities carry an amount of risk, but the threat might not always be so visible.

Fake websites offer a multitude of services, from foreign trading, cryptocurrency wallets, and data mining, to news that publishes disinformation. Although these websites may look legitimate, or similar to the ones we are familiar with, fake websites are created by fraudsters to defraud people.

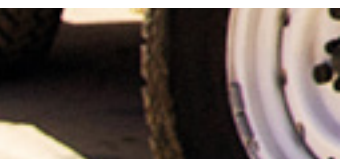
Social media helps us stay updated with the latest developments, but scammers also use it to their advantage. Be cautious and alert, even to the emails you receive, as cyber criminals use fake profiles and email addresses impersonating personalities and companies to influence people before creating fictitious stories that you may believe.

In these times, staying safe also means taking extra precautions on the internet by researching on a product before making a final decision where to invest your money.

Cryptocurrency trading can also be another method that fraudsters use to cover up dirty money. Investigations have uncovered numerous transactions involved in money laundering and terrorism financing. The investor might not be aware of the illegal activity going on behind such investments, but investigations will trace all connected individuals at the various layers of transactions.

Banks have an alert system in place called UTR (Unusual Transaction Report), which initiates an internal investigation to uncover the source or destination of money involved in suspicious transactions. Such transactions should by law be reported to regulators and authorised institutions, such as, FIAU.

We need to be aware of the nature of regulated and unregulated investments, for our own safety and protection, and we should always seek professional advice from authorised institutions licensed to provide investment advice.



Nature

Administrative Law Enforcement

The protection of the environment falls under the Administrative Law Enforcement Unit of the Malta Police Force, also known as ALE, which was set up in the 1990s. To this end, ALE works hand in hand with the **Environment and Resources Authority (ERA)**.

The main liaison with the Police Force within ERA is its Compliance and Enforcement Directorate, which oversees the compliance and enforcement of the various national and international laws protecting the environment, including those on nature and biodiversity. ERA and ALE work together on a daily basis on nature-related issues, such as, illegal wildlife trade, compliance with the Convention on Illegal Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (known as CITES) and related Maltese and EU law, protected species and areas, and the protection of trees and wildlife in general on the Maltese islands.



ALE supports ERA in such direct action operations as raids, where police intervention is essential in terms of law. The Police Force also supports ERA in the subsequent legal procedures in court cases.

While the Police Force ensures adherence to law in general, ERA is also responsible for ensuring compliance with legislation aimed to safeguard protected flora and fauna and various protected areas. Several activities in such protected areas are governed by regulations which very often impose some form of pre-authorisation issued by ERA in order to ensure that no harm is inflicted on the environment or on the species concerned when certain activities are undertaken.

Such authorisations typically incorporate a series of conditions that have to be adhered to in order to perform activities which might not seem harmful at first glance, but may cause serious damage to the environment.

Of course, one of the main challenges faced by any regulator is limiting the gap between such legislation and practice, which is the end goal of compliance and enforcement actions. To this end, the role of both ERA and ALE is crucial to sustain a healthy environment. Unfortunately, this cannot be achieved without the knowledge and care given to the environment by the public in general.



Any acts against the environment can be reported to the Environment and Resources Authority on 22923500, or via email at info@era.org.mt. In case of any emergency related to the environment, ERA can also be contacted on 99210404.

Policing Paradise

Cops of Comino

Perhaps not everyone is aware that police presence extends beyond Malta and Gozo. In fact, the paradise island of Comino, the smallest of the Maltese archipelago, also houses a police station which operates 365 days a year. Comino police duties vary from crime prevention and minor reports, to assisting in serious accidents, while safeguarding the tiny island, which is visited by thousands of local and foreign day-trippers, in cooperation with the **Ministry for Gozo**.

During the summer period, the focus mainly turns to checking swimming zones, fairways, quays, and piers, thus always keeping vigilant for any irregularities. The multitudes of tourists visiting this paradise means that the Comino police unofficially also carry out the duties of an information office since they are frequently asked for information about the island and its places of interest, and the Comino police gladly oblige.

On the other hand, police duties during winter, which tend to be overlooked, can be quite challenging.

Simply crossing over to Comino on the police boat to report to/from duty can be a hurdle when the sea is rough, while constant patrols around the island are still carried out, thus ensuring appropriate behaviour and no unauthorised access by campers in prohibited places, amongst others.

Assistance by the Comino police is not only limited to the individuals who find themselves in difficulty on land or at sea, including a number of unfortunate accidental deaths. Throughout the years, the police have also assisted and rescued a number of animals on this rural island, such as, sea turtles and birds.

One cannot write about police operations on Comino without referring to the only three permanent residents of the island, who are frequently visited and checked in on by the Comino police, while also assisting the small family with their daily needs, such as, delivery of mail.

The smooth operations of the Comino police would not be possible without the support of the Ministry for Gozo, which has upgraded the facilities used to ensure that the police offer a better service to the public, while working in a better environment.



The vision of the Ministry for Gozo is to secure economic and social prosperity for the people residing in Gozo by implementing effectively and efficiently the regional and national strategies and policies within the context of the island's unique characteristics.



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