

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

gozo today

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Qbajjar Battery to be given to Din I-Art Helwa

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DIN I-Art Helwa council member Daniel Cilia has welcomed the decision to hand over Gozo's abandoned Qbajjar Battery to the NGO Din I-Art Helwa for restoration and management.

Speaking to GozoToday, Cilia described the decision as a "dream come true," saying it follows 19 years of dedicated effort. He added that there are already plans for the site once restoration is complete. According to Cilia, the battery could serve as an excellent venue for concerts as well as other cultural events.

The decision followed a meeting at Auberge de Castille between Din I-Art Helwa President Patrick Calleja, the Prime Minister, Minister Owen Bonnici, and other members of Din I-Art Helwa. During the meeting, the Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the work being carried out by the NGO, and discussions also touched on the future of Fort



Din I-Art Helwa council member Daniel Cilia (inset) welcomed the decision to give the Qbajjar Battery to the NGO



Tigné. Ministers Clint Camilleri and Owen Bonnici then made the announcement on Tuesday on Facebook.

Constructed by the Knights in the early 18th century, the Qolla I-Bajda Battery formed part of a

chain of coastal defences. It remains the only surviving artillery battery of its type on Gozo.

Last year, attention was drawn to the Grade 1 scheduled landmark as it had been subject to neglect, deterioration, and vandalism.

In April 2023, Din I-Art Helwa

said that despite the government's pledge to transfer the property to the NGO, delays in the process were so prolonged that urgent restoration works risked coming too late, by which time the building could be destroyed.

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Farm waste dumping forces WSC to halt Gozo new water production

THE Water Services Corporation (WSC) has suspended New Water production in Gozo after illegal discharges of farm slurry into the public sewer network disrupted operations at the island's sewage treatment plant.

"The dumping of farm slurry into the public sewer is a breach of applicable waste and water regulations and causes direct harm to critical national infrastructure," WSC said. "Anyone caught doing so will be processed for damages."

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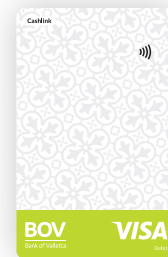


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What's happening in Gozo

MARCH 6 @ 08:30 - 20:00

The Gozo Boat

Xewkija Windmill 8 Triq Il-Mitħna, Ix-Xewkija, Gozo, Malta

Step back in time and explore the rich history of the Gozo Boat through a unique philatelic exhibition featuring postcards and stamps. This exhibition traces the vital role of the Gozo Boat in connecting islands, people, and messages, as reflected in historic postal material and visual memorabilia. From early maritime routes to everyday island life, the collection highlights how postcards and stamps captured the spirit of travel, communication, and heritage linked to this iconic vessel. A celebration of Gozo's maritime and postal history, seen through the lens of philately.

MARCH 6 @ 09:00 - 14:00

Wirja Golgota

Xagħra Band Club - Soċjeta' Filarmonika Victory A.D. 1898 Triq Marija Bambina, Ix-Xagħra, Gozo, Malta

An exhibition featuring sixty finely crafted figurines depicting salient moments from the Passion of the Christ, carved in clay by local artist Manwel Gaudi. Commissioned by Eżekiel Grima, the figurines are set against evocative scenery meticulously designed and built by him, creating a powerful visual narrative that guides visitors through the sorrow, sacrifice, and redemption at the heart of the Passion. Together, the artistry of the figurines and the carefully constructed settings offer a profound meditative experience, inviting reflection on Christ's suffering and its enduring spiritual significance.

MARCH 7 @ 08:00 - 23:55

Is-Salib, Ġesù u Int

Pjazza Madonna Ta' Loreto Triq Simirat, Għajnsielem, Gozo, Malta

During this Lenten season, a large cross will be exhibited with a surrounding garden—a modern yet traditional way of the Cross reflecting contemporary life. The cross is dedicated to those facing difficult times, honoring the struggles of individuals and communities in today's world. It invites all who visit to pause in prayer

and reflection, to walk in compassion, and to find hope amid suffering. Rooted in faith and shaped by present-day realities, the display serves as a reminder of Christ's journey, the shared weight of human hardship, and the promise of renewal that emerges through love, mercy, and solidarity.

MARCH 7 @ 09:00 - 12:00

Is-Sagra ta' San Girgor

Ta' Kerċem Parish Church Triq L-Avukat Anton Calleja, Ta' Kerċem, Gozo, Malta

A children's activity starting with a mass in the parish church and followed by a procession animated with singing and music.

At the end, children will be entertained with games and traditional sweets, among which St Gregory's Nougat. In the evening, there will be a procession by St Gregory Band and other organisations ending with the statue of St Gregory being placed on a pedestal accompanied by fireworks.

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MARCH 7 @ 09:00 - 12:00

Form, Feeling & Fusion - Art Exhibition

Banca Giuratale Pjazza Indipendenza, Il-Belt Victoria, Gozo, Malta

Join us for an inspiring art exhibition by George Cas-

sar, where structure meets imagination in a captivating blend of realism and abstraction. This collection explores the dynamic interplay between defined forms and expressive gestures, inviting viewers into a world where clarity and ambiguity coexist in harmony. Through layered compositions and thoughtful contrasts, the works reveal a balance between precision and spontaneity, offering both visual depth and emotional resonance. Each piece encour-

ages reflection, drawing the audience into a dialogue between the familiar and the unexpected. Don't miss this opportunity to experience a compelling artistic journey that celebrates creativity, perspective, and the transformative power.

MARCH 8 @ 09:30 - 17:00

Wirja Tal-Passjoni

Xagħra Band Club - Soċjeta' Filarmonika Victory A.D. 1898 Triq Marija Bambina, Ix-Xagħra, Gozo, Malta

An exhibition organised by Austin Masini with the assistance of Noel and Eżekjel Grima featuring a set of twelve tableaux representing the Passion of the Christ. Crafted using paper-mâché, in Lecce, Italy and mounted on beautiful, locally-made walnut stands, the statues represent the stations of the Passion of the Christ and are adorned with embroidered quotes relating to the Passion of the Christ.

MARCH 8 @ 13:00 - 14:30

Art Workshop: Moonlight Cat

Chrysalis Studio Viviani Court, Mgarr Road, Ix-Xewkija

The popular art workshops with a fund-raising initiative. This time, Chrysalis Studio is partnering with Carers for Abandoned and Stray Felines (CSAF), a local NGO that takes care of more than 300 cats at its sanctuary.

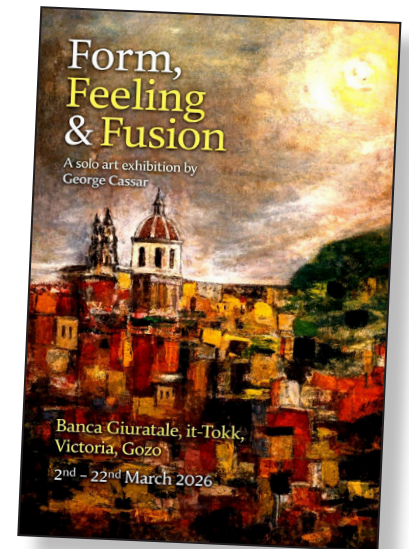
Participants have the unique opportunity to create a beautiful yet user-friendly acrylic painting thanks to the guidance of a local professional artist. A portion of the sales will be donated to CSAF. One-on-one tutorship is provided and the fee includes supplies furnished by the studio.

MARCH 10 @ 09:00 - 17:00

Dija

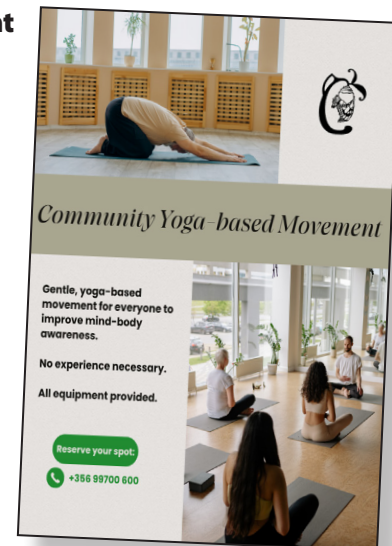
Il-Ħaġar Gozo Museum Triq il-Karita, Il-Belt Victoria, Gozo, Malta

This solo exhibition meditates on light in times of grief, hope, memory, celebration, and the mundane. The body of work on display reflects on how light weaves



through humanity's lived experience. Azzopardi is drawn to the presence of light in two primary spaces: the home and the expanse of the sea. Indoors, it transforms a space into a sanctuary; outdoors, the sea's surface mirrors this play of light, constantly shifting.

In her practice, Azzopardi explores how these motifs serve as metaphors for her own experiences of light. Her work embodies its presence, offering a sense of refuge—a pause amid life's flux. The exhibition captures these fleeting moments, reminding us that, in a world of constant change, light remains an anchor for reflection.



MARCH 11 @ 19:00 - 20:00

Community Yoga

Chrysalis Studio Viviani Court, Mgarr Road, Ix-Xewkija

The public is warmly invited to experience yoga-based movement sessions where everyone is welcome and no prior experience is required. These thoughtfully guided classes offer a gentle yet enriching approach to movement, breath, and relaxation in a supportive environment. For your comfort and convenience yoga mats, yoga blocks, blankets, refreshments, and air conditioning are all provided—simply arrive as you are and enjoy the experience.



Did you know?

Ta' Sannat lies in the south of the island of Gozo. The name is probably derived from that of an Arabic-Greek family that moved to Gozo from Sicily. Ta' Sannat is best known for the Ta' Cenc plateau on the edge of the village and its spectacular Ta' Cenc cliffs, the highest cliffs in Gozo. The plateau is typical Maltese garigue rich in flora and fauna. It is also the site of a number of prehistoric remains, including sparse remnants of L-Imramma Temple and three dolmens (made up of, a roughly shaped horizontal limestone slab supported on three sides by blocks of stone standing on end). The plateau overlooks the Hanżira valley, a natural gorge with steep rocky sides separating Ta' Sannat from the village of ix-Xewkija, of which there are excellent views.



Illegal farm slurry discharges into public sewers disrupted operations, WSC says

Water Services Corporation says illegal farm slurry dumped into Gozo's sewer network shut down new water production at sewage treatment plant

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Farm slurry carries an extremely high organic load and cannot be safely introduced into the standard sewer network. WSC already operates a dedicated facility in Gozo specifically for the lawful reception and treatment of farm waste, which is open to the farming sector five to six days per week. Despite this, farm waste has been entering the sewer network through the urban drainage system, bypassing the controlled intake process entirely.

Photos from the Gozo facility shows farm slurry solids in the fine-screen area, confirming contamination. Production of New Water is fully halted to prevent further damage to membranes.

WSC said it will continue to monitor the situation and provide further updates.

Anyone with information about illegal farm waste dumping is encouraged to report it anonymously by contacting WSC's Customer Care Centre on 80076400.



Photographic evidence from the Gozo facility shows farm slurry solids in the fine-screen area, confirming contamination

Gozo ministry rejects Peter Agius's accessibility claims at Gozo sports pavilion

THE Ministry for Gozo has rejected claims that the Gozo Indoor Sports and Aquatic Pavilion is not accessible to persons with disability, insisting that substantial investment has been made to ensure full inclusion.

In a statement issued in response to remarks by PN MEP Peter Agius, the ministry said that, contrary to what was alleged, the pavilion was designed and equipped to address the needs of persons with disability.

The ministry said part of the pool has been fitted with a system that allows the water level to be adjusted from 2.3 metres down to five centimetres, enabling easier and safer access. A specially designed staircase has also been installed to facilitate entry for individuals with mobility difficulties. In addition, a hoist specifically intended for wheelchair users is expected to arrive in the coming days, allowing users to enter the pool safely and with dignity.

The complex, the Ministry

added, includes three lifts compliant with the requirements of the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), four toilets and showers designed specifically for persons with disability, and a further eight wheelchair-accessible toilets.

The Ministry also pointed to a training camp held on 24 and 25 January at the pavilion, organised by the Malta Trust Foundation and the Malta Paralympic Committee in collaboration with Italian coaches. The initiative provided specialised aquatic training and competitive opportunities for 16 children with disability from Malta and Gozo.

The statement was issued after Agius raised concerns in a video message about the accessibility of the facility on Tuesday. While describing the pavilion as a positive investment for Gozo, the MEP alleged that persons with physical disabilities were currently unable to use the pool and said he had been informed that the com-



Left to right: PN MEP Peter Agius and Gozo Minister Clint Camilleri

plex had not been certified by the CRPD. He called for authorities to ensure full compliance so that the rights of persons with disabil-

ity are safeguarded.

In reply, the ministry maintained that the measures implemented demonstrate that the

pavilion is accessible and reiterated its commitment to ensuring inclusive sports infrastructure in Gozo.

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GozoToday is a weekly newspaper focused primarily on Gozo. It hopes to serve as a source of information on business, culture, entertainment and of course current affairs. Gozo has a special charm about it but it is also a bustling island with an identity of its own. GozoToday is published every Friday and is available to numerous outlets in Gozo and on the ferries that carry so many visitors to Gozo from Malta and beyond.



Strong tourism growth for Gozo amid calls to safeguard island's identity

TOURIST arrivals to Gozo continued to increase in 2025, reflecting a positive trajectory for the island's tourism sector, it was stated during the 27th Annual General Meeting of the Gozo Tourism Association held on Thursday, 26 February 2026, at the Santa Lucia Boutique Hotel Gozo.

The agenda included the reading of the previous AGM minutes by GTA Secretary Mark Busuttil and the presentation of the financial report by GTA Treasurer Konrad Scicluna.

In his address, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Ian Borg, highlighted that the sustained growth in tourism reflects deliberate strategies, strong collaborations, and targeted initiatives that have enhanced Gozo's visibility and appeal. He emphasised that tourism remains a cornerstone of Gozo's economy and called for continued synergy among all stakeholders to further strengthen the island's touristic offering. He also thanked the outgoing GTA Council for its work and welcomed the newly appointed council, expressing confidence in continued productive collaboration.

GTA Chairman Paul Scicluna acknowledged the positive tourism results achieved in 2025 but stressed that several challenges continue to affect the sector. He expressed concern that Gozo's distinct charm is being eroded by rapid development. While improvements to the tourism product are welcomed, unchecked construction risks undermining the island's unique character. Scicluna also noted the rising operating costs faced by tourism operators, which could threaten the destination's competitiveness if not addressed. He further remarked that although Gozo's hospitality is rooted in authentic, warm service, businesses are increasingly dependent on employees from across Europe and beyond. He underscored the importance of safeguarding the authenticity of the Gozitan tourism product through a well-trained and skilled workforce.

MTA CEO Mr Carlo Micallef delivered a presentation on the tourism results achieved by the Maltese Islands in 2025. He outlined the various marketing campaigns undertaken by the MTA and explained the strategic shift



The GTA General Meeting took place on 26 February 2026

toward targeting specific niche markets.

GTA Chief Executive Officer Mr Joe Muscat presented an audio-visual overview of the Association's performance during 2025. His presentation included an analysis of Gozo's tourism performance over the past year and a review of the initiatives carried out by the Association throughout 2025.

The Chairman of the Malta Tourism Authority, Charles Mangion, provided insights into the results achieved during the past year and highlighted the importance of the diverse tour-

ism experiences offered by Gozo, described as the "jewel" of the Maltese destination. He outlined the additional efforts being undertaken by the MTA to promote Gozo's niche tourism segments and emphasised the strong collaboration between the MTA and the GTA in positioning Gozo as a distinct destination.

The Opposition Spokesperson, Chris Said, also addressed the meeting. He commended the GTA for its achievements and noted the continued growth in tourist arrivals to Gozo, reflecting the island's enduring appeal. Said stressed the need for a holistic

approach to renewing the Gozo Channel fleet and upgrading port infrastructure, noting that connectivity is essential for the sector's development. He reiterated the importance of developing the rural airfield and highlighted the valuable work carried out by the Malta Tourism Authority, the Directorate for Tourism and Economic Development, and the GTA. Dr Said also remarked that Gozo's selection as the European Cultural City for 2031 presents a significant opportunity for the tourism sector, provided that it results in long-lasting cultural projects and legacy initiatives.

The meeting concluded with a message from the Minister for Gozo and Planning, Clint Camilleri, delivered by Ronald Sultana, Director of Tourism. He highlighted the double-digit growth in tourist arrivals during the winter and shoulder months of the past year. Minister Camilleri reaffirmed the Government's commitment to continued investment in the tourism industry, noting that the strong results achieved in 2025 reinforce the drive to further enhance the tourism product. The objective remains to position Gozo as a distinct, year-round destination supported by a robust cultural calendar and a sustainable tourism strategy.

During the AGM, the following members were approved to form the Gozo Tourism Association Council for 2025: Borg Marvic, Busuttil Mark, Farrugia Joseph, Gatt Ludgard, Grech Ryan, Kissing Ana, Loporto Mario, Macdonald Naomi, Meilak Leanne, Mercieca Joe, Mifsud Ivan, Scicluna Konrad, Scicluna Paul, Spiteri Pauline, Veranneman Amand.

Also present for the meeting were the Director for Tourism and Economic Development, the CEO of the GRDA, officials from the MTA Gozo Office, and the NSO Gozo Office, as well as other distinguished guests and GTA members.

Gozo Business Chamber calls for stronger connectivity and economic diversification

THE need for stronger connectivity, economic diversification, and sustainable development for Gozo was highlighted during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Gozo Business Chamber held on Thursday, 26th February 2026, at the Auditorium of the Queen Mary University of London Malta Campus in Victoria, Gozo.

Opening the meeting, GBC CEO Daniel Borg emphasised that the Gozo Business Chamber is not an entity that operates in isolation, but one that has developed within the Gozitan community. Over the years, he noted, the Chamber has continuously evolved in order to adapt to changing economic, social and global realities.

“The Gozitan community is changing, businesses are changing, and the world around us is changing. The challenges of today are not the challenges of yesterday,” he stated. Within this context, the AGM serves as an important moment of reflection and forward vision — a time to review the work carried out over the past year and to set clear priorities for the future. He reiterated that the Chamber is not merely a business association, but an institution embedded within the socio-economic fabric of Gozo, which must remain relevant and responsive to the needs of the island.

During the AGM, the financial and administrative reports of the Chamber were presented.

A key highlight of this year’s



AGM were the keynote interventions by Mario Borg, Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, and Ivan Falzon, Chief Executive Officer of the Gozo Regional Development Authority.

The meeting also featured an address by Chris Said, Parliamentary Spokesperson for Gozo for the Opposition.

In his closing address, GBC President Michael Galea outlined a clear and forward-looking vision for Gozo’s development, centred on connectivity, diversifi-

cation, sustainability and stronger regional governance.

He described connectivity between Gozo and Malta as the island’s economic and social lifeline, reiterating the Chamber’s consistent position in favour of permanent connectivity, while stressing that such a project must be accompanied by sound planning, environmental safeguards, strong governance and public trust.

“The question is not whether Gozo should strengthen its connectivity, but how we prepare



GBC President Michael Galea described connectivity between Gozo and Malta as the island’s economic and social lifeline, reiterating the Chamber’s consistent position in favour of permanent connectivity

the island for sustainable growth. Connectivity must go hand in hand with intelligent planning, environmental protection and strong governance,” Galea stated.

President Galea further emphasised the need for sustained investment in strategic infrastructure and essential services, describing such investment as fundamental to quality of life, economic competitiveness and long-term resilience.

Economic diversification was identified as a priority for Gozo’s future. While tourism and construction remain important pillars, he stressed the need to broaden the island’s economic base through digitalisation, knowledge-based sectors and innovation-driven activity, while

continuing to support small and family businesses that form the backbone of the Gozitan economy.

Referring to youth, President Galea highlighted the importance of the Youth4Entrepreneurship initiative, now in its seventh edition, as a concrete example of how the Chamber is actively contributing towards building an ecosystem that empowers young Gozitans to innovate, create and contribute to the island’s future economy.

Concluding, President Galea reaffirmed the Chamber’s commitment to building a resilient, competitive and sustainable economic future for Gozo through collaboration at local, national and international level.

Five historic statues in Victoria to be restored

RESTORATION works on five historic statues located around Victoria will begin shortly after the completion of the tendering and adjudication process, the Victoria Local Council has announced.

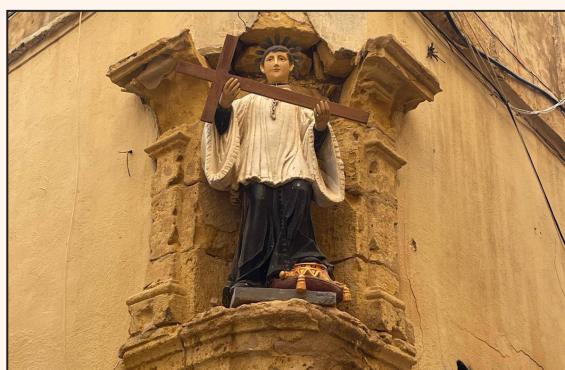
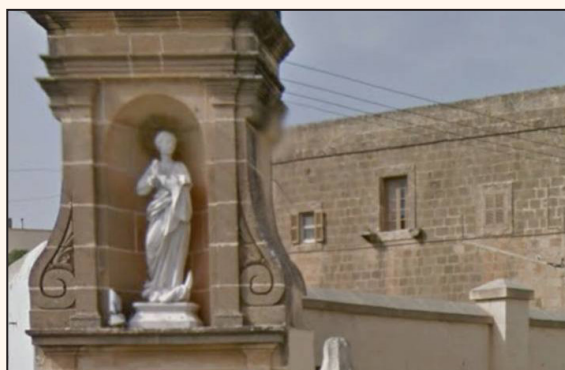
Taking to Facebook, Major of Victoria, Brian Azzopardi said the project will see the monuments undergo conservation works aimed at preserving their structure and appearance as part of efforts to safeguard the city’s cultural heritage.

Funding for the initiative

amounts to €30,000, which was secured by the Victoria Local Council through the Ministry for Gozo and Planning.

Council officials said the restoration programme reflects their commitment to maintaining important cultural landmarks and ensuring they are preserved for future generations.

Further details on the timeline and the specific statues included in the project are expected to be announced once works commence.



Din l-Art Helwa says decision is a 'strong message' that Malta and Gozo's are not for sale

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In January 2025, the Lands Authority and Heritage Malta stated they would undertake works to "eliminate danger" within the structure.

Din l-Art Helwa Ghawdex welcomed the decision, confirming that the government would be signing a guardianship deed entrusting the NGO to "restore, preserve and manage the historic Qbajjar Battery in Gozo with access to the public and visitors to our islands hand in hand with the Żebbuġ Local Council."

The Qbajjar Battery is an artillery battery built by the Or-

der of Saint John in 1715 as part of a series of coastal fortifications around the coast of the Maltese Islands and is one of only two left in Gozo and one in Comino.

Both of these the St Anthony Battery in Qala and that of St Mary Battery in Comino have been in the past already restored by Din l-Art Helwa.

In the 1970s, the Battery was handed over for private use as a nightclub and disco. Significant damage was inflicted through excavations and later accretions, which severely compromised the fabric of the building. In recent years, it has



In the 1970s, the Battery was handed over for private use as a nightclub and disco. Significant damage was inflicted through excavations and later accretions, which severely compromised the fabric of the building

been left exposed to the elements, with a real risk of total loss. With unrestricted public access, it has also been used for camping and summer squatting and has effectively become a dumping ground.

In October 2005 the Superintendence for Cultural Heritage suggested to the Lands Department that the battery should be passed over to Din l-Art Helwa,

for the building to be maintained properly, to have all the illegal additional constructions removed, and to open the battery to the public.

The NGO said that "several successive administrations have since made promises to Din L'Art Helwa that the Battery will be passed on the the NGO but various reasons the situation remained stalled for

many years while the Battery continued to deteriorate."

"We take heart from the consistent support extended to us by the Żebbuġ Local Council to preserve this architectural structure and and the increasingly strong message from so many across Maltese society that Malta and Gozo's history and patrimony are not for sale," the NGO said.

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FREE EVENT

GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR GOZO
AND PLANNING

Karmena Abdilla on Honeymoon in Gozo!

This production sees Maria Cassar and Karl J. Buhagiar reprising their roles as Karmena and Pa' ifku. Other key performers include Jamie Camilleri as Uncle Fred, George Sacco as Ninu, and Lara Xerri Mompalao as Perpetwa



THE Don Bosco Oratory in Gozo is set to bring Il-Honeymoon ta' Karmena Abdilla to local audiences on the 25th and 26th of April, 2026. This hilarious stage play, originally written by Charles Clews, sees the return of the iconic Karmena Abdilla and her new husband Pa'cifku, this time on their honeymoon!

After the success of It-Tieg ta' Karmena Abdilla two years ago, the Don Bosco Oratory is putting on the sequel – Il-Honeymoon ta' Karmena Abdilla – a beloved Maltese comedy that will have audiences in peals of laughter! Once again, the production has been entrusted to a team of youths from the Oratory under the direction of Matthias Mercieca.

This production sees Maria Cassar and Karl J. Buhagiar reprising their roles as Karmena and Pa'cifku. Other key performers include Jamie Camilleri as Uncle Fred, George Sacco as Ninu, and Lara Xerri Mompalao as Perpetwa.

"I can genuinely say that Il-Honeymoon ta' Karmena Abdilla will be a unique production that offers a spectacularly entertaining evening for

the whole family. It's a production which, whilst combining established and emerging local talent, will give audiences a fun theatrical experience. The show is full of comedic scenes and comic moments that portray the storyline in a light and enjoyable way. Of course, there will also be some sweet surprises that continue to build on the fun atmosphere, and will keep audiences hooked from beginning to end." – Matthias Mercieca, Director

Il-Honeymoon ta' Karmena Abdilla will be produced at the Don Bosco Oratory Theatre, Victoria, Gozo. The two shows will be on the 25th of April at 7:30pm and the 26th of April at 6pm.

Tickets start from just €15 and can be booked online at <https://theatre.donbosco gozo.org>. Tickets will also be available from the booking office every day from March 15th onwards, between 5pm and 6:30pm, on 21556616.

This is a must-see comic production for anyone who loves a good laugh – and who doesn't? Book now and you will not be disappointed!



At a time when physical travel and cultural engagement were restricted, the initiative sought to find innovative ways to bring Malta's and Gozo's heritage closer to people through digital means



Launch of Wonders of Gozo – A new virtual reality cultural experience

THE Wonders of Gozo virtual reality experience was officially launched on Friday 27th February 2026 at Gozo College Sir Arturo Mercieca Primary School, Victoria. The initiative forms part of the virtualmalta.com project and represents a significant step forward in the digital promotion of Gozo's cultural and natural heritage.

The project was developed through collaboration between the Eastern Regional Council and the Gozo Regional Council, with the support of the Malta Tourism Authority.

Addressing those present, the President of the Eastern Regional Council, Anthony Chircop, explained that the concept for the project originated during the COVID-19 period. At a time when physical travel and cultural engagement were restricted, the initiative sought to find innovative ways to bring Malta's and Gozo's heritage closer to people through digital means. What began as a response to unprecedented challenges has now evolved into a forward-looking cultural and tourism product.

In his address, the President of the Gozo Regional Council, Samuel Azzopardi, emphasised that this project stands as a clear example of how regions can work together without

barriers. He noted that there should be no borders between regions when it comes to promoting national heritage and strengthening cultural identity. Wonders of Gozo, he stated, demonstrates what can be achieved when institutions collaborate with a shared vision and common purpose.

Through immersive virtual reality technology, the experience showcases some of Gozo's most iconic landmarks, including the Cittadella, Gozo, the Ta' Pinu National Shrine, and the island's renowned opera houses, Teatru Astra and Teatru Aurora, along with various rural landscapes and cultural sites.

The initiative aims to make Gozo's heritage more accessible, both locally and internationally, while strengthening the island's cultural and tourism offering through innovation.

The launch event included official addresses, a presentation of the project's vision, and live demonstrations allowing attendees to experience the immersive VR tours firsthand.

Please find the full project video here: <https://youtu.be/ST1wG0cm-nAY?si=Nct-GmU4hZodUNCd>



Charity car boot sale set for Sunday in Victoria to support FSEG

A charity car boot sale in aid of the Friends of the Sick and the Elderly in Gozo will take place next Sunday morning in Victoria, raising funds to support the organisation's work with vulnerable members of the community

A fundraising car boot sale in aid of the Friends of the Sick and the Elderly in Gozo (FSEG) is scheduled to take place next Sunday at the football ground adjacent to the main car park in Victoria.

The event will run from 7.30am until around midday, providing an opportunity for the public to buy and sell second-hand goods in support of the organisation's work.

Local charity sales such as this are held regularly to raise funds for FSEG's activities as-

sisting vulnerable members of the community, with participants typically encouraged to bring unwanted items to sell and shoppers invited to look for bargains.

Sellers generally set up stalls on the day of the event, and buyers attend early to browse through a variety of items on offer.

The car boot sale is one of several fundraising initiatives undertaken in support of the organisation's mission in Gozo.



The event will run from 7.30am until around midday, providing an opportunity for the public to buy and sell second-hand goods in support of the organisation's work

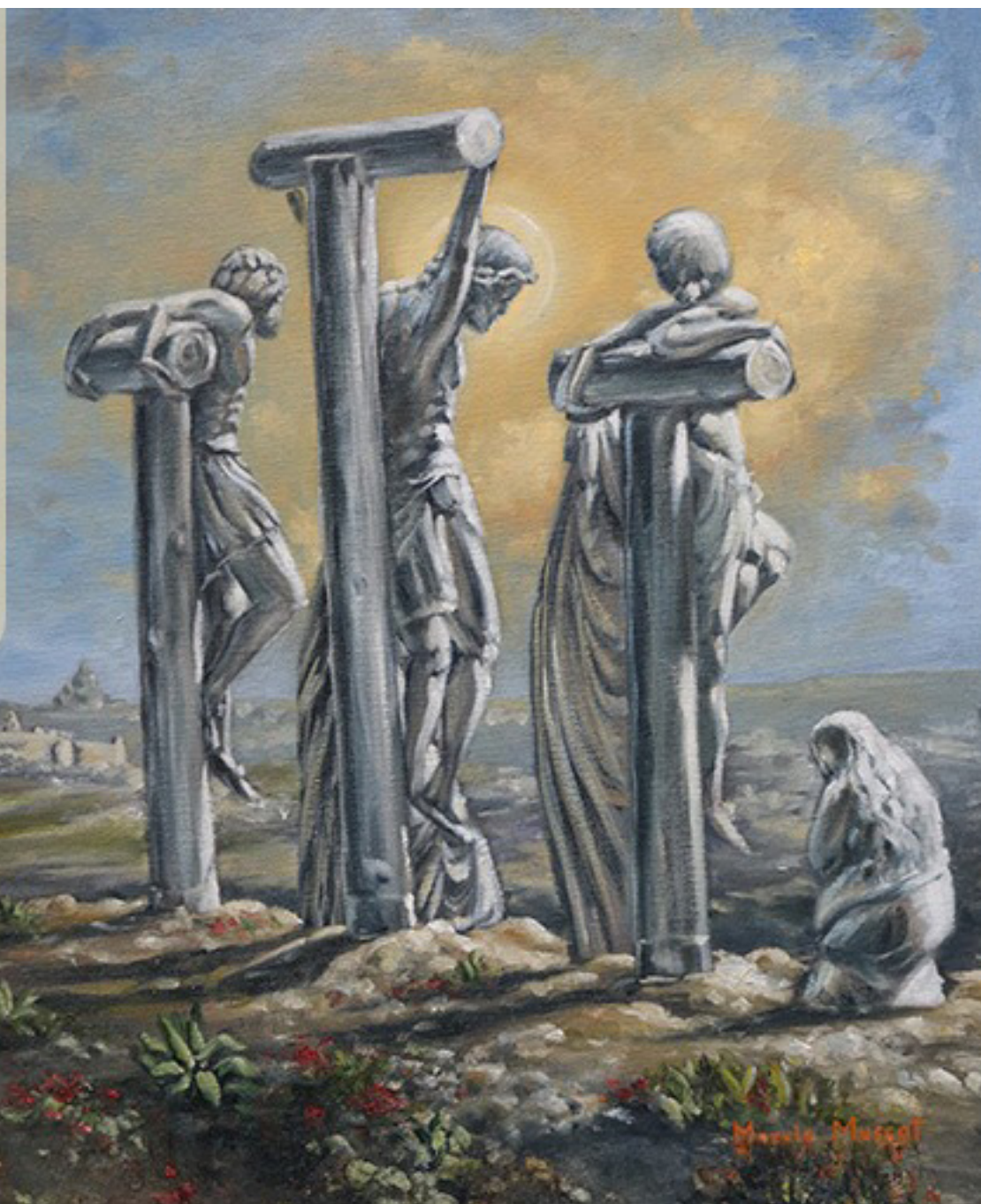


GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR GOZO
AND PLANNING

**L-GHID
F'GHAWDEX**
- EASTER IN GOZO -
06 MARCH - 05 APRIL
2026



FOR PROGRAMME
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Gozo launches its journey as European Region of Gastronomy 2026

Panel discussion at ITS Qala highlights heritage, sustainability and the future of island food systems

THE Gozo Regional Council marked the official start of Gozo's journey as European Region of Gastronomy 2026 during a public event held on 26 February at ITS Qala.

Held under the theme From Past Food to Future Food, the evening brought together representatives from agriculture, education, gastronomy and hospitality to reflect on the island's culinary roots and the direction it is now taking.

The title was formally awarded to the Gozo Region in 2024 by the International Institute of Gastronomy, Culture, Arts and Tourism (IGCAT) during an official ceremony held at the Citadel. The bid was spearheaded by the Gozo Regional Council in collaboration with a number of regional stakeholders, following an extensive evaluation process that assessed Gozo's gastronomic identity, sustainability vision and level of community engagement.

During the evaluation, international experts examined the island's agricultural practices, culinary traditions, educational initiatives and cultural heritage, highlighting the strong connection between food, place and identity. The recognition positioned Gozo alongside other European regions committed to using gastronomy as a driver for sustainable development, cultural preservation and economic growth.

Addressing attendees, Noel Formosa, Vice President of the Gozo Regional Council, remarked that the designation "is not simply about food. It is about who we are." He noted that gastronomy mirrors Gozo's landscape, history and resilience, while acknowledging the contribution of farmers, fishermen, artisans and chefs who continue to shape the island's food identity.

A key part of the programme was a panel discussion focusing on the past, present and future of food in Gozo. Taking part were Jesmond Borg, CEO of a cooking school, agriculture expert Anthony Zammit, chef Philip Spiteri, and gastronome and restaurateur Amand Veranneman.

During the discussion, panelists spoke about how local ag-



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tics and long-term planning. They discussed how agriculture, restaurants and culinary education must continue to adapt to ensure that food production and hospitality remain both environmentally responsible and economically sustainable.

The importance of cooperation across sectors, as well as encouraging younger generations to pursue careers in agriculture and gastronomy, was also underlined.

The evening concluded with a live demonstration of traditional ftajjar preparation, emphasising the value of passing skills from one generation to the next.

Guests were also invited to sample selections from local producers, further celebrating the link between food, community and place.

riculture and dining habits have changed over the years, the risk of losing valuable traditional knowledge, and the importance of safeguarding techniques and dishes that form part of Gozo's culinary heritage.

The conversation also touched on current challenges, including climate realities, technological change, evolving consumer expectations and the impact of social media on food culture.

Looking to the years ahead, speakers highlighted the need for stronger sustainability prac-

Valletta's La Valette Band to stage sacred concert at Aurora Opera House in Gozo

VALLETTA'S esteemed La Valette Band is set to perform a specially curated sacred concert titled Aurea Passio at the Aurora Opera House in Victoria on Saturday, 7 March 2026 at 8 p.m.

Departing from its usual marching band repertoire, the ensemble will present a programme of sacred works and music of religious significance during the performance.

The concert is part of a broader cultural initiative linked to a two-year programme celebrating important milestones for the Aurora Opera House and opera in Gozo — specifically

the venue's 50th anniversary in 2026 and the half-century of opera in Gozo in 2027.

Conducted by principal conductor Dominic Darmanin, Aurea Passio will feature contributions from critically acclaimed Italian conductor and composer Antonino Oddo, alongside local musician Colin Attard. Both Oddo and Attard are scheduled to conduct La Valette Band in their original compositions during the concert.

Although civic bands traditionally focus on secular music, sacred compositions have his-

torically formed a significant part of their artistic output. La Valette Band, one of Malta's long-standing civic musical institutions based in the capital Valletta, continues this tradition through the forthcoming Gozo performance.

The Aurora Opera House is owned and operated by the Leone Band of Victoria, reinforcing cultural links between the musical institutions of Malta and Gozo.

The concert is open to the public with details on tickets and attendance available from the venue.



Students' drawings reveal growing awareness of digital dangers

CLOSE to 500 schoolchildren tapped into their creativity to draw cautionary scenes about online safety as part of a nationwide art competition across Malta and Gozo schools, aimed at inspiring action and policy changes through visual storytelling. One drawing depicts a dark, hooded figure with glowing white eyes sitting ominously behind a laptop, as a young child chats with a stranger. Another portrays a happy, welcoming bedroom with the message, 'Your child's online world should be as safe as home'.

The competition, which was open to students aged six to 14 from Church, State and independent schools, sought to stimulate national dialogue around digital safety from the child's perspective, and encourage children to think critically about their online experiences.

It formed part of a series of initiatives organised by the Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society's Promoting Online Protection Project (P.O.P-UP) to mark Safer Internet Day in February.

The initiative follows the launch earlier this month of the Foundation's nationally representative survey, which found that more than half of students

interviewed (51 per cent) had received unwanted or inappropriate online messages.

The study also showed that while awareness of online abuse was high — 87.3 per cent of children had heard of the term — this had not translated into meaningful harm reduction or increased reporting.

Exhibited at Micas, Floriana, the children's artworks demonstrated a strong understanding of the dangers that lurked online.

MFWS founder and chair Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca said the children's artworks offered a powerful reflection of the issues at the heart of the Social Media Green Paper consultation. "They move the discussion beyond policy language and show the real, lived impact social media has on young people's wellbeing, identity and sense of belonging. What resonated most was the honesty in their work; the clear tension between connection and pressure, and a strong call for kindness and respect online.

"The message to authorities is simple: young people's voices must be central to decisions about their digital lives. Any response must prioritise safety, accountability and environ-



Submissions had to highlight aspects like safe internet use, cyberbullying, protecting personal information, healthy online friendships, and the portrayal of both positive and negative digital experiences



ments that genuinely support children to thrive," Coleiro Preca stressed.

The art competition was announced in late 2025, inviting children to express what online

safety and protection meant to them. Submissions had to highlight aspects like safe internet use, cyberbullying, protecting personal information, healthy online friendships, and the portrayal of both positive and negative digital experiences.

The children's submissions provide valuable insights that policymakers, educators, and parents can use to better understand and safeguard youngsters' digital experiences.

The winners of the nationwide competition are:

Primary:

1st: Ella Castillo, 6, St Joseph's School, Sliema, Grade 2A – No Title

2nd: Elise Mizzi, 7, St Thomas More Zejtun Primary A – Title: Your Child's Online World Should be as Safe as Home

3rd: Daniel Xuereb, 9, Archbishop Minor Seminary, Year 5 – Title: Stop, Think, and Go.

Middle School:

1st: Yaryna Biliuga, 12, MVPA, Year 8 – No Title

2nd: Kyrone Zammit, 12, St Michael's School, Santa Venera, Year 8 – No Title

3rd: Kaya Curmi, 12, MVPA, Year 8 – Think Before You Click

Secondary School:

1st: Giosiana Cardona, 14, Bishop's Conservatory Secondary School, Form 4 - The Weight of a Message.

2nd: Aiden Mercieca, 13, Gozo College, Ninu Cremona Secondary School Rabat – No Title

3rd: Elena Curmi, 14, Girls Secondary, Bishop Conservatory Secondary School, Form 4 - The Mask Behind the Message.

Caponata Di Melanzane



INGREDIENTS

600g eggplants	olives:	vinegar
100g celery	30g salted capers	1 tbsp sugar
1 large onion	30g pine nuts (optional)	Extra virgin olive oil as needed
300g peeled tomatoes	30g raisins(optional)	A few leaves of fresh basil
100g pitted green	2 tbsp white wine	

METHOD

1. Prepare the eggplants. Wash the eggplants, cut them into cubes, and place them in a colander.
2. Sprinkle with coarse salt and let them drain for about 30-60 minutes to remove any bitterness.
3. Rinse the eggplants and pat them dry with kitchen paper.
4. Fry the eggplants. Heat a generous amount of olive oil in a large frying pan and fry the eggplant cubes until golden brown. Drain them on paper towels and set aside.
5. Prepare the base. In a large saucepan, saute the finely chopped onion with a drizzle of olive oil.
6. Add the celery, cut into small pieces, and cook for a few minutes.
7. Stir in the peeled tomatoes, crushing them with a fork, and let simmer over low heat for 10-15 minutes.
8. Add the main ingredients. Add the sliced olives, rinsed capers (to remove excess salt), pine nuts, and soak and drain raisins. Mix well.
9. Create the sweet-and-sour flavour. Dissolve the sugar in the vinegar and pour it into the mixture. Let it cook for a few minutes until the flavours combine.
10. Combine with the eggplants. Add the fried eggplants to the saucepan and gently stir to incorporate all the flavours. Season with salt and pepper.
11. Finish and serve. Turn off the heat and garnish with a few fresh basil leaves.

FREE ENTRANCE
ADDING NEW ATTRACTIONS

5TH EDITION

Lejl unkebbes

EASTER EDITION
CITTADELLA BY CANDLELIGHT

SATURDAY 28TH MARCH 2026

CITTADELLA, GOZO - 18:00 ONWARDS

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

REENACTMENTS

FOOD STALLS

FREE MUSEUMS

LIGHT INSTALLATIONS

IMMERSIVE AREAS

The Duke
BOUTIQUE HOTEL

One of Kinnie

GOVERNMENT OF MALTA
MINISTRY FOR GOZO
AND PLANNING

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