1. Council and its meetings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A P Azzopardi</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Micallef</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>J G Pace</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>M R Sammut</td>
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<tr>
<td>J K Soler</td>
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<td>D Soler</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>M A Borg</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Galea</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>P Sciortino</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Mifsud</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>P Mallia</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>(till October 2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F P Calleja</td>
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<td>(from November 2002)</td>
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Seven meetings were held since the last AGM of 16/4/2002. Council members' attendance was as follows:

Following Council elections, Council posts were assigned as follows during the Council Meeting following the AGM on 16/4/02:

- Dr Denis Soler  
  President
- Dr Joseph G Pace  
  Vice President
- Dr Mario R Sammut  
  Honorary Secretary
- Dr Anthony Mifsud  
  Honorary Treasurer
- Dr Michael A Borg  
  College Registrar
- Dr Wilfred Galea  
  Secretary for International Affairs
- Dr Anthony P Azzopardi  
  Secretary for Quality Assurance
- Dr Jean Karl Soler  
  Secretary for Research and Publications

- Dr Philip Sciortino  
  Secretary for Education
- Dr Pierre Mallia  
  Secretary for Ethics
- Dr Adrian Micallef  
  Assistant Honorary Secretary and Secretary for Communications.

Council agreed that each secretary (namely International Affairs, Quality Assurance, Research & Publications, Education, Ethics, Communications) was to prepare a strategic report outlining proposals for the next 3 years, and identify key people as members of his team. However, the only reports presented and approved were those for the International Secretariat and for the College Journal (in May 2002 – see below).

In October 2002, Dr Pierre Mallia resigned as Council member due to other increasing commitments, while staying on as member of the College’s Ethics and Education sub-committees. In November 2002, Dr Frank P Calleja was informed him that, in accordance with Section 6.6 of the College Statute, he was automatically elected as a member of the College Council. In December 2002, Council welcomed him back into its ranks and offered him the post of Secretary for Ethics (instead of Dr Mallia), which Dr Calleja accepted.

2. Presentation of three-year strategic plans:

- In May 2002, Council approved the International Secretariat’s Strategy presented by Dr W Galea, which focusing on the following two issues:
  - Obtaining international endorsement for MCFD Membership by Examination;
  - Disseminating information to members re implications of proposed Malta membership to the EU, specifically through a meeting organised/funded with the help of MIC.

- Also in May 2002, Dr J K Soler presented a Strategy for the College Journal. The main problems were highlighted as follows:
  - The possibility of making a loss through a lack of adverts. Council agreed that each Council member tries to find a new advertiser.
  - Poor web presence. Council agreed that past and future Journal articles be put on the College website.

3. MCFO-RCGP Teachers’ Course, Vocational Training Scheme, MMCFO by Examination:

- As had been announced by College President Dr D Soler during the last AGM held on 16/4/02, a Teachers’ Course was organised locally by the College in collaboration with the University Department of Family Medicine, not only for Departmental lecturers, but also for any others who were interested in view of a future need for tutors in family practice. In fact, the three modules of this course were held on the 24-26 May and 20-22 September 2002 (both at the Forum Hotel, St Andrew’s) and on the 1-4 May 2003 (at the Coastline Hotel, Salina). The coordinator was Dr Philip Sciortino, while the RCGP tutors were Dr John Howard (for the first module only), Dr Marek Jezierski, and Prof. Rosslyne Freeman (for the second and third modules). The participants were...
Dr Anthony P Azzopardi, Dr Michael A Borg, Dr Frank P Calleja, Dr Doreen Cassar, Dr Wilfred Galea (in the first and second modules), Dr Pierre Mallia, Dr Anthony Mifsud, Dr Joseph G Pace, Dr Mario R Sammut, Dr Denis Soler (in the first and second modules), Dr Jean Karl Soler and Dr Vincent Zammit (in the first module only).

• In May 2002, a Teachers’ Course Subcommittee was formed to draw up recommendations on the way forward. The members were Dr Philip Sciortino as Chairman, Dr Pierre Mallia, Dr Frank Calleja, Dr Doreen Cassar and Dr Vincent Zammit. The remit of the subcommittee was as follows:

  o **Short-term**: initial recommendations, including the organisation of a follow-up meeting.
  o **Medium-term**: follow up MCFD Membership by Assessment/Examination scheme and prepare a working document (in collaboration with Hon. Treasurer Dr A Mifsud regarding costing);
  o **Long-term**: initiate provisional preparations for Vocational Training in Family Medicine.

• In March 2003, Dr D Soler revealed that the call for applications for a coordinator and trainers for the proposed Vocational Training Scheme was awaiting the Prime Minister’s endorsement, which will not be forthcoming before the April 2003 general elections. Regarding the MMCFD by Examination, Dr D Soler noted that other countries around the world are negotiating with the RCGP for certain concessions to allow local trainee GPs to do the highly-reputable MRCGP. The College Council agreed to a proposal by Dr Soler that this be the way forward for Malta instead of the College reinventing the wheel by developing an expensive local course and examination. The MCFD would have a role through the Teachers’ Group in preparing local candidates for the exam.

4. Family Medicine as an aspeciality in the Health Care Professions Act:

- In October 2002, it was agreed by Council that the College stand on the matter was:
  o The College sets the criteria for registration/specialisation as a family doctor;
  o Vocational training in family medicine is required for practise both with the government and privately;
  o No doctors can be registered in more than one speciality;
  o The College has full membership in the Specialist Accreditation Committee.

- On the 26th November 2002, two meetings were held by representatives of the College Council (Dr D Soler, Dr J K Soler, Dr P Sciortino, Dr A Micalle and Dr M R Sammut - the latter for the second meeting only) with Dr L Deguara, Minister of Health, and Dr R Busuttil, Director General (Health) respectively. As a result of these meetings, it was confirmed that Family Medicine would be listed under such name in the list of specialties in the HCPA.

- In December 2002, Council recommended that Dr M R Sammut write as College Honorary Secretary to the General Secretary of the Medical Association of Malta to declare the College’s position regarding the HCPA, namely: (1) that Family Medicine be put at par with other specialties in the list of specialties; (2) family doctors on the specialist list be nominated by the Specialist Accreditation Committee (SAC) on the recommendation of the College; (3) doctors on the Medical Register and not on the specialist list can practise as medical doctors but without the appellation of ‘Family Doctor’. The Medical Association of Malta replied on 27th January 2003 agreeing with all three points.

5. CPD Activities:

- The Spring CPD Meeting was held on the 24-26 April 2002 at the University of Malta Medical School and entitled ‘Family Medicine Revisited’. Charles De Giorgio Ltd. accepted to be sponsors of the meeting, with the programme as follows:

  o **Wednesday 24th**: ‘Primary Care in Malta: Provision, Problems and Proposals for Reform’ – Dr Mario R Sammut, Family Doctor; ‘The Cumulative Patient Profile: a Useful Tool in Patient and Practice Management’ – Dr Wilfred Galea & Dr Fred Demanuele, Family Doctors.
  o **Friday 26th**: ‘The Domain of Family Practice in an International Perspective: Empirical data collected with ICPC’ – Dr Inge M Okkes, Department of Family Practice, University of Amsterdam; ‘Malta is no longer an Island in Family Practice: First Experiences with Transhis as an Electronic Patient Record’ – Prof. Henk Lamberts, Department of Family Practice, University of Amsterdam.

- Prof. H Lamberts and Dr I Okkes visited Malta for 2 weeks during April-May 2002 and organised 2 workshops for Transhis users, participated in the Spring CPD meeting (as described above), and gave a presentation to members of the College Council as well as of the Department of Family Medicine.

- The Autumn CPD Meeting 2002 took place on 2-4 October 2002 at the Medical School, and was sponsored by Schering-Plough. The meeting was entitled ‘Manifestations of Atopy: an
Accelerating Epidemic of Interrelated Conditions', and had the following programme:

- **Wednesday 2nd**: Asthma: Dr Michael A Borg, Family Doctor, Concepts and Cases; Dr Stephen Montefort, Respiratory Physician, New Evidence & Developments; Dr Mario R Sammut, Family Doctor, Skills & Practice Management.
- **Thursday 3rd**: Allergic Rhinitis: Dr Doreen Cassar, Family Doctor, Concepts and Cases; Dr Mario Said, ENT Surgeon, New Evidence & Developments; Dr Frank P Calleja, Family Doctor, Skills & Practice Management.
- **Friday 4th**: Atopic Eczema: Dr Jean Karl Soler, Family Doctor, Concepts and Cases; Dr Dino Vella Briffa, Dermatologist, New Evidence & Developments; Dr Anthony Mifsud, Family Doctor, Skills & Practice Management.

On the 9th November 2002, a lecture on 'Dementia in Primary Care' was given to College members at the Phoenix Hotel, Floriana, by Dr Carmelo Aquilina, a Maltese Consultant Psychiatrist based in the UK, under the sponsorship of Servier.

A C.P.D. Meeting entitled 'Ethical Issues in Family Practice - Future Perspectives' was organised in collaboration with the Bioethics Consultative Committee and the Malta Chamber of Pharmacists on the 9-11 December 2002 at 8.30 p.m. at the Medical School, G'Mangia. Sponsors were Delta and Leo-Pharma, and the programme was as follows:

- **Monday 9th**: The Changing Face of General Practice: Prof. Maurice Cauchi (opening address read on his behalf by Chairman), Dr. Pierre Mallia, Ms. Marianne Ciappara, Prof. Gerrit Kimma - University of Amsterdam. (Chairman: Dr Mario R Sammut).
- **Tuesday 10th**: Family Medicine within Primary Care: Dr. Anthony Fiorini, Ms. Mary Anne Sant Fournier, Dr. Philip Sciortino. (Chairmen: Dr. Pierre Mallia / Mr. Max Borg Millo).
- **Wednesday 11th**: The Family Doctor as a Specialist: Dr. Jean Karl Soler, Dr. Pierre Mallia, Dr Denis Soler. (Chairman: Dr. Philip Sciortino).

The Winter CPD Meeting was held on 12-14 February 2003, at the Medical School, G'Mangia. It was entitled "The Future of Family Medicine in Malta and the Role of the Malta College of Family Doctors", and the sponsor of the meeting was Delta Ltd. The programme was as follows:

- **Wednesday 12th**: The Doctors' Directives: ED regulations on the medical profession – Dr Adrian Micallef, MCFD; The Speciality of Family Medicine in Europe – Dr Tonio Xuereb, MAM; Specialist Training in the European Union – Dr Stephen Fava, MAM.
- **Thursday 13th**: The academic role of the Malta College of Family Doctors – Dr Philip Sciortino, MCFD; College research and publications: past, present and future – Dr Jean Karl Soler, MCFD.
- **Friday 14th**: Family Medicine and the draft Health Care Professions Act – Dr Ray Busuttil, Director General (Health).

A series of lectures on Paediatrics is being organised this year with the Maltese Paediatric Association. These consist of 3 evening lectures, each a joint presentation by a family doctor and a paediatrician. Dr P Sciortino is coordinating on behalf of the College, with sponsorship provided by Astra-Zeneca. The first took place on 2nd May 2003 at the Corinthia Palace Hotel, Attard, and was entitled 'Paediatric Emergencies – An Interactive Exercise'. The joint speakers were Dr S Attard Montalto and Dr M R Sammut.

The College also approved requests for accreditation of the following activities under its CPD Scheme:

- GSK's 'Take Care 3' Lectures on Psychiatry held during April-May 2002;
- Dr Robert Xuereb's symposium on Cardiac Rehabilitation held on 10th May 2002.
- A seminar on "Doctors and Disabled Persons – Towards a Better Understanding" organised by the Health Division on 28th February 2003.

6. Local news:

- In May 2002, Dr Joseph Dimech from the Department of the Elderly gave a presentation to the College Council regarding the introduction of specialised team geriatric services in the government homes for the elderly (starting with Mtarfa Home) and the role of the family doctor in this team.
- In May 2002 the Council nominated Dr A P Azzopardi as its representative on the Speciallist Accreditation Committee, which post Dr Azzopardi accepted.
- On 29th August 2002, Dr M R Sammut and Dr A Micallef represented the College in a seminar entitled 'Introducing a National Drug Policy in Malta' organised by the Medicines Policy and Audit Unit of the Health Division.
- In October 2002, the Council nominated College member Dr Tanya Melli Fenech as the College's representative to the Breast Care Support Group committee.
- In October 2002, the College Council nominated Dr Pierre Mallia to prepare feedback on the College's behalf on a draft code of ethics entitled "Sharing the News" prepared by National Commission Persons with Disability.
• In October 2002, Dr A Mifsud confirmed that he was attending on a regular basis meetings of the Health Division's National Antibiotics Committee in his capacity of College representative, and updated Council on recently discussed topics.

• In November 2002, Council agreed that the College assist in the identification of at least 10 family doctors (through the MCFD Newsletter) to participate in an influenza sentinel surveillance system that is to be set up by the Department of Public Health.

• In December 2002, Council agreed that a Report on Influenza Vaccination in Childhood commissioned the Maltese Paediatric Association, be circulated to College members in the MCFD Newsletter.

• In December 2002, following the termination of the previous hosting arrangement with Capua Palace Hospital, the College Council agreed that the MCFD enters into an agreement for the use of premises of the Malta Federation of Professional Associations as from 1st January 2003 at the rate of Lm 200 a year, with expenses (water and electricity) to be shared pro-rata and the hall to be used against extra payment.

• In December 2002, Council agreed that snippets on the EU Directives regarding family medicine be sent electronically to College members. Dr W Galea with Dr A Micaleff coordinated such mailings.

• In December 2002, the Director General Health appointed the President of the College (or a representative) to the 'National Adolescent Health Coalition'. Dr A Micaleff accepted to be the College's representative.

• In February 2003, the Director General Health appointed the President of the College (or a representative) to a working group to draw up a 'National Health Strategy for Communicable Disease Prevention'. Dr M R Sammut volunteered to be the College's representative.

• In March 2003, Council accepted a proposal by Dr Pierre Mallia to organise on behalf of the College, and in collaboration with the National Commission Persons with Disability and the Bioethics Committee, a yearly course for doctors on giving bad news to patients, on condition that participants are selected after a call open to all College members.

7. International news:

• Dr D Soler and Dr M R Sammut represented College at the WONCA Europe 2002 ESGP/FM Conference 'Promoting excellence in family medicine' held in London on 9-13 June 2002. Dr D Soler participated in a Council Meeting of WONCA Europe at the same conference. Dr M R Sammut presented two personal papers, one joint paper, participated in a workshop and chaired a session. Both Dr Soler and Dr Sammut self-financed their participation through the help of sponsors.

• In June 2002, a background paper entitled 'Developing a Mediterranean family medicine group', of which Dr J K Soler was the first author, was published in the European Journal of General Practice of June 2002. Among other activities, the group will coordinate papers from Mediterranean family doctors for publication in the College Journal 'The Family Physician - It-Tabib tal-Familja'.

• In August 2002, Dr J K Soler announced that the WONCA International Classification Committee will be holding a meeting in Malta on 5-9 October 2003, and wished to coordinate a meeting with the College on the 8th October 2003 regarding the state of academic family medicine and the use of ICPC in Malta. Council agreed that the meeting with the College be coordinated by Dr J K Soler.

• In September 2002, Dr A W T Loh, CEO of WONCA, wrote to the College (in its role as a WONCA Council member) to request its participation in a Survey being undertaken by the WONCA Task-Force on Tobacco Cessation. Dr M R Sammut completed the survey on behalf of the College, as a result of which it appeared that the College had done very little in the area of smoking cessation. As such, in October 2002, Council accepted Dr Sammut's proposal that the College invite the coordinators of an Irish College of General Practitioners one-day workshop on 'Brief Intervention Training on Smoking Cessation in General Practice' to hold such workshop in Malta, with the workshop funded by a sponsorship from the local representatives of a drug company.

• On the 19th November 2002, Dr D Soler represented the College at an RCGP-International Development Meeting held at the premises of the Royal College of General Practitioners in London. As a result of such meeting, Dr John V Howard, Chairman of the RCGPInternational Committee, on the 2nd December 2002 wrote to Dr Soler as College President, where he confirmed that the RCGP would provide tutors for the 3rd module of the Teachers' Course due in Spring 2003, and suggested a booster 3-day module in 2004 (against a fee). The RCGP also offered its academic support for the Vocational Training Scheme and for the MMCFD by Examination, both also against a fee.
In March 2003, Dr D Soler announced that, in reply to Dr John Howard's letter of the 2nd December 2002 (where he requested that a Memorandum of Understanding regarding RCGP support for academic initiatives be signed jointly by the two Colleges), Dr Howard had been informed that, due to the then uncertainty regarding Malta's membership of the EU, such decision would need to wait until after the national elections due to be held in Malta during April 2003.

8. Membership and Accreditation:

- In November 2002, seven members were deleted from the College register as per Council decision of the 13/9/94, for not having paid their membership fee for 2002 despite repeated reminders.

- Membership at present stands at 153.

- Thirty-four College members were accredited for 2002, 12 of which have maintained their accreditation status for the twelve consecutive years since 1991.

9. College Journal and Newsletter:

- In April 2002, Dr Frank P Calleja was nominated to form part of the Journal's Editorial Board and subsequently accepted.

- The December 2001 and June 2002 editions of the College Journal were distributed in October 2002.

- The December 2001 issue of 'The Family Physician' included the following articles on family practice: 'An Audit of Discharge Summaries', by Vinker, Nakar, Zibulevski, Gorodeski, Schattner & Kitai (from Israel); 'Professional Independence in General Practice' by Svab (Slovenia); 'Perceptions of Residents' Working Conditions in Family Medicine: A Cross-sectional Survey in Turkish Academic Training Hospitals' by Yaman (Turkey).

- The June 2002 issue included the following family-practice related report: 'The Opinion of Family Physicians on their Working Conditions in the Turkish Health Care System' by Ugur (Turkey).

- The MCFD Newsletter continues to be sent on a regular basis exclusively to College members, with local and international news of special interest to family doctors.

15th May, 2003