

DESTINATION GOZO

Gozo Tourism Association Newsletter
January - February 2026



Contents Table

- Gozo Tourism Awards 2025
- GTA Annual General Meeting 2026
- Formation of the GTA Council 2026
- GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs
- Latest Statistics



Gozo Tourism Awards 2025

On Thursday 6th February 2026, the Gozo Tourism Association, organised the sixteenth edition of the Gozo Tourism Awards. These Awards were bestowed to the Gozo Tourism Worker of the Year, the Gozo Young Tourism Worker of the Year, the Gozo Tourism Entrepreneurship Award, the Gozo Business Niche Tourism Achievement Award and the Gozo Cultural Niche Tourism Achievement Award. The main objectives of these awards are to acknowledge, commend, encourage and thank all the workers, Entrepreneurs and Entities who distinguish themselves in the performance of their duties and activities in the vital touristic industry in Gozo.

Mr Trevor Portelli, Culinary Director at the Kempinski Hotel San Lawrenz, won the Gozo Tourism Worker of the Year Award 2025, whilst Mr. Nigel Tabone, the Head Chef at Ta' Vestru Restaurant won the Gozo Young Tourism Worker of the Year Award 2025.



Tourism Worker of the Year Award



Young Worker of the Year Award



Entrepreneurship Award

This year's Gozo Tourism Entrepreneurship Award 2025 was won by Mr. Andre Refalo of l-Eremita Boutique Hotel. The Gozo Business Niche Achievement Tourism Award 2025 was awarded to Mr. Chris Vermaak of Kayak Gozo, whilst the Gozo Cultural Niche Achievement Award 2025 was won by the Dwejra Tower managed by Din l-Art Helwa.

The winners were officially announced by Ms Rebecca Bonnici, Chairperson of the adjudicating board which also included, Ms Naomi McDonald and Mr Ronald Sultana, the Director for Tourism within the Ministry for Gozo and Planning.

Gozo Tourism Awards 2025

The Gozo Tourism Association Council also awarded the Lifetime Achievement in Tourism Award to Mr Abraham Said, for his investment and achievements in the tourism sector over the years, which continue to contribute towards job creation and economic growth on Gozo. The Special Recognition Award in Tourism was jointly awarded to Mr Alfio Rapa and Mr Renato Rapa, whilst the Gozo Tourism Commitment Award this year was conferred to the Gozo Highspeed Limited.

These awards were presented to the respective winners by Dr Charles Mangion, Chairman of the Malta Tourism Authority, Mr. Mario Borg, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, and Mr. Paul Scicluna, Chairman of the GTA.



Gozo Business Niche Award



Lifetime Achievement Award



Gozo Cultural Niche Award



Special Recognition Award



Gozo Tourism Commitment Award



Special Recognition Award

Gozo Tourism Awards 2025



The Awards event was opened by the Chairman of the Gozo Tourism Association, who emphasised the importance of human resources to the Gozitan tourism sector, noting that one of the main purposes of these awards is to retain, encourage, and attract workers to this vital economic industry. He also highlighted the crucial role entrepreneurs play in sustaining a vibrant sector and expressed solidarity with establishments that suffered damage during Storm Harry, in January 2026.

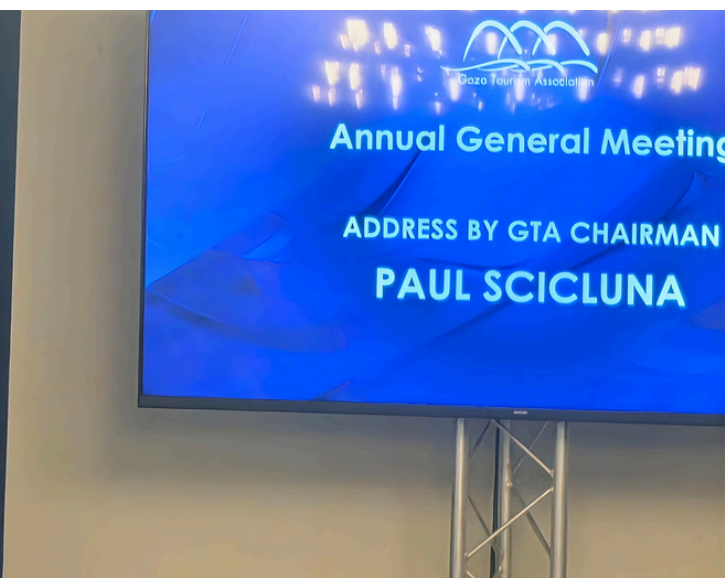
The concluding address was delivered on behalf of the Minister for Gozo and Planning, Hon. Clint Camilleri, by Mr. Ronald Sultana, Director for Tourism and Economic Development. In his remarks the Minister highlighted the year-on-year increase in tourist arrivals to Gozo, noting particularly encouraging double-digit growth during the winter and shoulder months. Supported by a robust, year-round cultural calendar, these gains indicate that seasonality is being steadily mitigated. The Minister reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to the island's tourism sector, congratulated all winners and nominees, and expressed his gratitude and encouragement to the workers and entrepreneurs who drive the Gozitan tourism industry.

The numerous guests present were also addressed by Dr Charles Mangion, Chairman of the Malta Tourism Authority.

Annual General Meeting

The Gozo Tourism Association held its 27th Annual General Meeting 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 Mr. Mark Busuttil and the presentation of the financial report by GTA Treasurer Mr. Konrad Scicluna.

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



Annual General Meeting

In his speech, GTA Chairman Mr. 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. Mr. 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 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, Dr. Charles Mangion, provided insights into the results achieved during the past year and highlighted the importance of the diverse tourism experiences offered by Gozo, the "jewel" of the Maltese destination. He outlined the additional efforts being undertaken by the MTA to promote Gozo's niche tourism segments and emphasized the strong collaboration between the MTA and the GTA in positioning Gozo as a distinct destination.

Annual General Meeting

The Opposition Spokesperson, Dr. Chris Said, also addressed the meeting. He commended the GTA for its achievements and noted the continued growth in tourist arrivals to Gozo, which reflects the island's enduring appeal. Dr. 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.

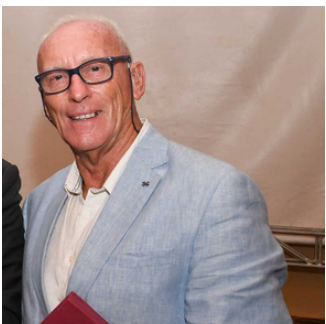
The meeting concluded with a message from the Minister for Gozo and Planning, Hon. Clint Camilleri, delivered by Mr. Ronald Sultana, Director of Tourism. He highlighted the double-digit growth in tourist arrivals during the winter and shoulder months of the past year. Minister Camilleri reaffirmed the 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 jam-packed cultural calendar and a sustainable tourism strategy.

During the AGM, the following members were approved to form the Gozo Tourism Association Council for 2026: Borg Marvic, Busuttill Mark, Farrugia Joseph, Gatt Ludgard, Grech Ryan, Kisling 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.



Formation of GTA Council 2026

During this Annual General Meeting the following members were approved to form the Gozo Tourism Association Council for 2026: Borg Marvic, Busuttill Mark, Farrugia Joseph, Gatt Ludgard, Grech Ryan, Kising Ana, Loporto Mario, Macdonald Naomi, Meilak Leanne, Mercieca Joe, Mifsud Ivan, Scicluna Konrad, Scicluna Paul, Spiteri Pauline, Veranneman Amand.



GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs

The Gozo Tourism Association commenced 2026 with active participation in four major international tourism fairs held across the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Spain during January and early February. These engagements form part of the Association's continued strategy to strengthen Gozo's visibility in key source markets and reinforce its positioning as a distinctive Mediterranean destination.

The year began with participation in Destinations: The Holiday & Travel Show in Manchester, held from 15th to 18th January 2026 at Manchester Central. The Association was represented by Ms Temida Magrin, GTA Office Manager, who engaged with travel enthusiasts and industry professionals, promoting Gozo's cultural heritage, boutique accommodation offering, diving, gastronomy, and year-round experiences.

During the exhibition, the Malta stand was also visited by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Dr Ian Borg, together with H.E. Professor Stephen Montefort, High Commissioner of Malta to the United Kingdom, highlighting the continued importance of the UK market for Malta and Gozo. The UK remains a leading source market for the islands, making this engagement particularly significant.

This was followed by participation in the Holiday World Show in Dublin, held from 23rd to 25th January 2026 at the RDS Simmonscourt. The Association was represented by Mr Ryan Grech, GTA Vice Treasurer, who met with prospective Irish travellers, travel agents, and tour operators. The fair provided a valuable opportunity to showcase Gozo's authenticity, tranquillity, and accessibility to the Irish market.



GTA's Participation in International Tourism Fairs

Simultaneously, the Association also took part in the prestigious FITUR International Tourism Trade Fair in Madrid, held from 21st to 25th January 2026 at IFEMA Madrid. Representing the Association was Mr Konrad Scicluna, GTA Treasurer, who promoted Gozo's tourism product to Spanish and international trade professionals. As one of the world's leading travel exhibitions, FITUR continues to serve as a vital platform for strengthening international partnerships and expanding market reach.

The Association concluded its early-year fair participation with Destinations: The Holiday & Travel Show in London, held from 29th January to 1st February 2026 at Olympia London. Ms Pauline Spiteri, GTA Vice Secretary, represented the Association, engaging directly with British travellers and reinforcing Gozo's appeal as a high-quality, culturally rich, and experience-driven destination.



During all four exhibitions, GTA representatives manned the Gozo promotional desks within the Malta stands, prominently branded in the official Malta Tourism Authority colours and showcasing Malta, Gozo, and Comino. Visitors were provided with a wide range of promotional material, including the Association's publications InGozo Services Directory and Gozo – Island of Myth and Miracles, alongside material supplied by the Malta Tourism Authority and the Directorate for Tourism and Economic Development within the Ministry for Gozo and Planning. This coordinated representation ensured comprehensive visibility for Gozo's tourism product across all participating markets.

Participation in these international tourism fairs was made possible through the continued collaboration and co-operation of the Directorate for Tourism and Economic Development within the Ministry for Gozo and Planning, together with the Malta Tourism Authority.

Through these strategic engagements, the Gozo Tourism Association reaffirmed its commitment to sustaining international market presence while supporting the continued growth and development of Gozo's tourism sector.

Statistics

Collective Accommodation

Domestic tourism in collective accommodation establishments in Gozo registered a strong increase in 2025. Domestic arrivals reached 71,951, representing a 20.12% increase compared to 2024. Bed nights generated by domestic visitors also grew significantly to 155,449, marking a 22.22% rise, indicating longer stays and continued strong demand from the local market.

Gozo	Collective Accommodation			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Domestic Arrivals	56,832	59,898	71,951	20.12%
Bed Nights	124,725	127,185	155,449	22.22%

Foreign tourism also recorded substantial growth in 2025. Foreign arrivals increased to 71,085, reflecting a 27.75% increase over 2024. Bed nights reached 240,836, representing a 14.32% growth, highlighting the continued importance of international visitors to Gozo's accommodation sector.

Gozo	Collective Accommodation			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Foreign Arrivals	50,057	55,645	71,085	27.75%
Bed Nights	189,645	210,660	240,836	14.32%

Overall performance in Gozo's collective accommodation sector shows strong growth in 2025. Total arrivals reached 143,036, representing a 23.79% increase compared to the previous year. Total bed nights also rose to 396,285, marking a 17.30% increase, demonstrating a positive trajectory for the island's tourism sector.

Gozo	Collective Accommodation			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Total Arrivals	106,889	115,543	143,036	23.79%
Total Bed Nights	314,370	337,845	396,285	17.30%

Statistics

Inbound Tourists

Inbound Tourists to Gozo – December 2025 vs 2024

According to the NSO, Gozo recorded strong growth in December 2025 when compared to the same month in 2024, with notable increases registered in both day and overnight visitors.

Day visitors increased by 22.9%, rising from 70,570 in December 2024 to 86,706 in December 2025, confirming sustained demand for same-day travel to Gozo during the winter period. Overnight visitors registered an even more significant increase of 45.5%, rising from 5,188 in December 2024 to 7,545 in December 2025. This substantial growth reflects continued strengthening in extended stays and overall tourism performance.

Gozo/ Comino	December			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Day Visitors	58,144	70,570	86,706	22.90%
Overnight Visitors	3,607	5,188	7,545	45.50%

Overall, between January and December 2025, Gozo recorded sustained growth in inbound tourism compared to the same period in 2024, with increases registered in both day and overnight visitors. Day visitors increased by 13.9%, rising from 1,855,932 in 2024 to 2,113,947 in 2025. This growth highlights Gozo’s continued appeal as a preferred destination for short and same-day visits. Overnight visitors also recorded an increase of 6.9%, rising from 179,675 in 2024 to 192,021 in 2025. While growth in overnight stays was more moderate, the upward trend reflects steady strengthening of the island’s tourism performance.

Gozo/ Comino	January - December			2024/ 2025
	2023	2024	2025	% change
Day Visitors	1,558,415	1,855,932	2,113,947	13.90%
Overnight Visitors	158,757	179,675	192,021	6.90%