

Minutes of Witney and District Twinning Association

Thursday 25th September 2025 @6.30pm-The Fleece

Present

David Bates (Chair-and minute taker)), John Thornton (co-Chair) Mark Pengelly, Owen Collins

1. Apologies

Andy Wolf, Mike Breakell, Rachel Crouch, Fliss Hill

2. **Actions from previous Minutes(not covered in agenda)** Mark has updated our website, and would like to include a report on the Youth Council visit in July (and pictures)

Action- David to check with Kate Landry and liaise with Mark

Action-Mark-To check our website maintenance costs up to date

3. **Current finances.** After a lot of work chasing, David is now receiving monthly statements and handling Twinning Association finances . Latest balance at 18/9/25 is £1592 less cheque paid to John for £90 in respect of expenses from Anniversary visit and Beer festival lunch

4. Visit of Le Touquet Youth Council + Mayor and Councillors to Witney on 8th and 9th July

David shared a very positive report back from Kate Landy(who organized)- as follows:

"...our visit to Witney with the Youth council was great.

Accommodation : just right for our group - basic but they could make (some) noise and they had the place to themselves. The staff and welcome we received were absolutely fantastic. Breakfast and picnic lunches very good.

Reception at town hall : wonderful evening. The kids from Witney town council and our councillors got on really well. Communication wasn't a problem and Instagram account details were exchanged! Now we need to turn that into something positive. Having the Lord High Sheriff of Oxfordshire present added glitz and photo opportunities and he was very kind. Also made contact with language teachers from Woodgreen for a 6th form visit. The fish and chips dinner worked out well.

The next day at St Mary's church was excellent. Our hosts were lovely and made it a great experience for the students, finishing up with juice and biscuits. Thankyou so much for setting this up for us David.

We then let them loose in town before eating our packed lunches on the Green and going on to The Kings school where we were again made very welcome by all the staff with participation in a sports lesson. Cricket and football. Our sporty kids loved this.

Finally we continued on to Oxford for a guided visit, some shopping and dinner.

Our last morning Daniel Fasquelle met up with Andy Bailey for coffee and a chat and a last group photo with the kids.

It was a whirlwind trip and we packed a lot into it ! Success !

Andy will probably come over on the 11th November for Armistice day ceremonies.

Photos in next mail !

Thanks for everything...all of your help and Hilary's too was very much appreciated!"

And Ruth Smith emailed encouraging news of continued conversations

..“members of the youth council, whom I teach, told me this week, at school, that they still text the young people from Le Touquet who came over and asking when they are going to France!

As a Twinning Association we agreed it would be good to do what we can to encourage that ongoing contact and support where we can and help facilitate any return visit by the School

5. **Remembrance weekend- 8th and 9th November** We would anticipate attendance by representatives from Le Touquet and Unterhaching. Names and numbers to be confirmed

Action

- John to liaise with Le Touquet and Unterhaching contacts, check on numbers and names attending, and whether they need any help booking accommodation

Owen- To check formal invitations have been issued

David- To check on and arrange meal for the Saturday night the 8th November, at the Plough

John- To make arrangements for home cooked Sunday lunch

Owen- to check whether Andy will be attending the German remembrance commemorations . John has offered to act as translator for the event-Town to pay his flight costs in exchange?

6. **Christmas Lights switch on**

Witneys Christmas lights switch on and Christmas market will be on the same weekend, 27th-30th November. Christmas Lights switch on, the 28th, and Christmas Market 27th-30th November at Marriots walk

Actions

David to let Le Touquet contacts know

John to let Unterhaching contacts know

It is only 3 weeks after Remembrance weekend but it may be a different group/individuals may be interested in coming across for.

7. Future Funding and visit costs

John felt strongly that we should be seeking grant funding to pay for the costs in full of at least one person to visit Le Touquet and Unterhaching each year.

There then followed some discussion as to whether those wishing to make a Twinning visit should pay their own way, or be paid for.

We were all agreed however that the cost of going to our Twin towns as a Twinning representative should not be a barrier to going, and as a minimum we should in such circumstances look to match fund costs ie Twinning would pay half with the remainder being raised by the person going.

Meeting closed at 7.45pm