

Minutes of the Witney & District Twinning Association AGM

Thursday 15th September 2016 Held at the Witney Town Hall.

Present: Mike Breakell, Tony Perkins, Eleonore Bruyere, Margit Kail, Mark Pengelly, Keith Harris, June Tayler, Jane Campbell, Jenny Smith, Chris Bamford, John Thornton,

Apologies: Leslie Morris, Valery Calthorpe, Jeanette Baker, Francine Barnby.

Welcome: The Chairman Mike Breakell opened the meeting by welcoming all those attending.

Minutes of the 2015 AGM: Mike Breakell apologised for the absence of last year's AGM minutes but due to unfortunate circumstances our secretary was unable to produce the required information.

Chairman's Report: We have had a quiet year after the great celebrations of the previous year. We have also had to think about our country's recent decision to leave the European Union but we have simply concluded that for us it will be business as usual. With this in mind, and thanks to Eleonore in particular, (our Vice Chair and Le Touquet representative) we produced a leaflet about the society and for the first time took a stall on the Leys for the Witney Carnival in July to display our wares. The new Mayor was photographed visiting our stall too and we are pleased to say that he will be joining us for the forthcoming coming visit to Le Touquet at the end of September.

We are always pleased when the mayor can visit our twin towns and we are very grateful that Jim King and his wife were able to visit Unterhaching last November and that Andrew and Pauline Carter were also able to visit Unterhaching in July to participate in the annual BeerFest and twinning celebration. Thanks go to Margit our Unterhaching linkperson and to Mark Pengelly who has produced a website that we are proud of over the past year. We are always pleased to welcome visitors from our twin towns especially for the official visit for the Remembrance service in November.

Kate and Anne Marguerite and Bernard from Le Touquet were able to come to Witney three times this past year on short visits to help organise the great TwinTown Challenge which took place in May. This event, as you will hopefully have seen in the local press is a great charity car rally held bi annually for vehicles purchased for under £500 which goes to Le Touquet via Silverstone and Abbeville in France. The cars had a great send off early one morning at Blenheim involving some 77 vehicles with a wonderful array of characters as drivers and passengers and most cars made it to Le Touquet and came back for auction for charity at the Witney Car Action. Thanks to our twinning colleagues there was much conviviality including a street party arranged in Le Touquet with music provided by the Village Idiots band from Stonesfield. Thanks largely to Brendon Cross, the key organiser and lots of supportive businesses, many from the Witney area, the event raised over £275,000 for the Charlbury charity Special Effect which provides technology based leisure activities for severely disabled youngsters from all over the UK. There is a wonderful full length film of the Twin Town challenge which was launched at the Witney Cinema this month (and is available on DVD too in which our French colleagues star in speaking (in English) roles!! We are very proud to have been so closely associated with this event this year and hope to be further involved in future years. We also intend to further develop our school links in due course and thanks go to John who is looking further into this matter.

Once again a sincere thank you to the Mayor, Councillors, and staff of Witney for supporting us so effectively in the past year, and as ever thanks to a loyal and diligent Committee and especially to Tony who has acted as both official Treasurer and unofficial Secretary over the past year.

Hopefully someone will offer to relieve him of the temporary Secretarial role soon!

Mike Breakell Chairman.

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer, Tony Perkins, presented the annual report a copy of which is shown in the above attachment. The Treasurer whilst assuring the members that our balance was still in a healthy state stated that that our expenditure was at the moment in excess of our income which meant our balance for the past year was slightly below that of the previous year. With this in mind a proposal was made to increase the annual subscription to £10 for individuals and £14 for family members. This proposal was duly passed.

German Rep's Report: Margit Kail presented this report from Pauline and Andrew Carter who represented Witney at the Unterhaching beer festival in July this year. Other nations represented included visitors from France, Poland and USA. Apart from the two evenings at the beer festival our hosts treated us to a camel centre and organ museum in Bavaria as well as two meals in two local restaurants. The weekend finished with a spectacular fireworks display in the Sportpark where the beer festival was being held. Our hosts did of course want to know about Brexit but our view after the weekend was that the Brexit Decision would not affect the personal friendships and existing ties that we have with our twinned towns.

Margit also said that Bernie Maidment would be representing Unterhaching and laying the wreath at the war memorial on Armistice Sunday.

French Rep's Report: Eleonore Bruyere reported that, in response to an invitation from Le Touquet, arrangements had been made for a visit of three members of the Twinning Association, along with the Mayor of Witney and his family who were to represent the town in the forthcoming celebration of the 50th anniversary of the of Le Touquet and Winterberg in Germany. This would be taking place at the following weekend 23-25 September.

Election of Officers: The following officers were elected or agreed to continue in their present roles.

Chairman- Mike Breakell

Deputy Chairman- Eleonore Bruyere

Secretary- John Thornton

Treasurer- Tony Perkins

German Rep.- Margit Kail

French Rep-

Eleonore Bruyere

Website Controller- Mark Pengelly

Newsletter- Jenny Smith.

Committee Members- Lisa Filosa, Jim King,

Honorary Member- Chris Holliday (Witney Town Mayor)

Leys Carnival Stall: Eleonore Bruyere reported that for the first time our association's history we had a stall at the Witney Carnival this year. We agreed to have a stall so that we could promote the aims and ideals of our twinning association and to make our presence known in our town and surrounding area. Our twin towns supplied us with brochures, photographs and general information. We produced a flyer, also for the first time in order to bring our organisation and its aims to the attention of our community.

Twin Town Challenge: Mike Breakell reported that the Twin Town Challenge taking £500 cars to LeTouquet had been a great success. This event organised by Special Effect to raise money for their charitable organisation actually raised £275,000 which exceeded even their high expectations. The committee agreed that moves would be made to try and get the 'rally' to start or go through Witney when it is next held in 2018.

Schools Liason: In response to a request from Unterhaching Twinning to host a German student John Thornton had approached Colthorpe School who seemed very keen on the idea. As the school had been on holiday when he visited John was going to return after the holiday and report back his findings.

The meeting closed at 21-00 hours.