

Twinning, now and in the future.

Engaging younger people

It was suggested that where there is another fairly local Twinning Association with some young people, the two could work together, taking part in each other's visits so that, some young people being there, it might attract more.

Going into schools. This has not generally been very successful especially with the effect of present reduced finance. It is always difficult to engage with the parents. One association has taken a French breakfast into their primary school.

It was suggested that the school be asked to find one or two families who could be funded to join in a twinning visit.

A free cheese and wine party for younger adults has been tried and gained some interest in twinning, yet to be consolidated.

Free membership for young people and/or discounted membership for families were both recommended

Remember that young people use social media for their information although some groups report little response from Facebook.

Websites, social media & zoom

Having a website is important but it must be maintained. Some associations have one for their own use; others have a joint website with their twins where either side can post information with some form of translation.

Some associations have a page on their council website. Others have a link to or from that site.

Social media, i.e. Facebook etc is seen as a link to younger people but associations with this facility generally find it is not very much used.

Zoom is used for committee meetings and also by some associations for meetings with their twins. When arranging this it is useful to have a theme for the meeting.

Email remains the main means of communication.

Social media was suggested as a way to open up twinning to those who are unable to entertain overseas visitors because the house is too small, or other reasons. But friend or foe? We do not want it to replace actual contact with our twins.

Community involvement.

Local councils. Grants from most local councils have now stopped though many will make a small grant for special occasion if asked. Level of interest varies from place to place.

Contact with non-twinners. This is through parish magazines, social media and, importantly, by word of mouth.

Fund raising activities. These use local facilities and try to involve as many non-twinners as possible in quizzes, lunches, barbecues etc

Twinners arrange other social activities apart from the activities of other local clubs and societies. Most charge a membership fee though some (especially in villages) regard all local residents as twinners...

Cultural & sporting links.

Our towns and villages have a wide range of cultural and sporting clubs/societies. Some do not yet know what their twins have but will investigate. Some twins simply do not have any – their villages are smaller than ours and people go to the nearest town for sports teams, choirs, drama groups etc.

It was thought that cultural links were more promising than sports events as the latter can involve some latent aggression.

One association has taken various groups to their twin town; Morris dancing and bell ringing have worked well.

Is there any future with paired interest in cooking, photography, gardening etc?

One association has had a photography exhibition. One has arranged a behind the scenes visit for a group of overseas catering students to a

prestigious restaurant. One association has tried a cycling group which didn't quite take off so they will be trying again.

It was suggested that quiz groups are a great way of learning about another country's history, art, culture etc.

Travel.

There have been no visits during the pandemic for a couple of years. Many associations have not yet restarted but have plans for 2023.

Some have already travelled this year or have received visitors though most have reported reduced numbers.

Problems reported were: changed flight times and long waits at airports, foot passengers being unable to book cabins on Brittany ferries, a paper copy of a covid passport is required - vaccination record not adequate, increased cost of coach hire means that several groups are changing to use of private cars. For our visitors, French ID cards are not accepted – a full passport is required.

On the positive side, visits have been much enjoyed and the ferry trip regarded as a social occasion with a meal together on board. Brittany Ferries will give some reduction for twinning groups. Their Club Voyage gives greater reductions (the membership fee can be recuperated on one trip) but we understand it is not easy to join at the present time.

It was noted that many countries require a mask to be worn on all public transport.