

DEVON & SOMERSET TWINNING CIRCLE
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN UFFCULME VILLAGE HALL, ON SATURDAY APRIL 25TH 2026

Ahead of the meeting, Amanda Weldon made a presentation to Yvette Cottrell who has recently stepped down as Chair of Uffculme Twinning Association after over 20 years in the post.

1. **Chair's opening remarks.** Sue welcomed everyone to the meeting thanking Uffculme for providing a well decorated venue and wonderful lunch.
2. **Attendance and apologies.** There were 52 members present representing 18 member associations: Bampton, Brampford Speke, Braunton, Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Chard, Crewkerne, Dawlish, Exeter, Exmouth, Kenton, Moretonhampstead, Newton Abbot, Sampford Peverell, Starcross, Taunton-FOK, Taunton-Lisieux, Tiverton and Uffculme.
Apologies were received from: Abbotskerswell, Clevedon, Instow, Newton Ferrers & Noss Mayo and South Molton.
3. **Minutes of the July 2025 General Meeting** were approved and signed.
4. **Chair's report.** Sue requested that everyone take a look at the website as it is full of interesting information, with suggestions of days out and places to visit etc.
5. **Secretary's report.** Bruce reported that Taunton-Lisieux have joined the Twinning Circle and Martin Straus was welcomed to the meeting. Newton Abbot and Bideford have rejoined.
The contacts for all groups have been checked and updated where necessary and everyone in the room confirmed the email communications are being received.
A new permanent secretary is required. The role is not time consuming as there are only three meetings a year to manage. Please contact Bruce to register interest and obtain more information of what is involved.
6. **Treasurer's report.** Claire reported that there is currently £10,070.05 in the account. It was hoped to subsidise the cost of insurance to use some of this money, but this did not happen due to the addition of groups to the Twinning Circle this year. The insurance quote for 2026/27 for the Twinning Circle is still awaited and it is expected to rise but the costs to groups will hopefully be the same as this year.
It was agreed to increase the reimbursement to £300 for hosting the Twinning Circle meeting. This is a great incentive to host a meeting as funds can be raised with the profit from the lunch, a bar and a raffle.
7. **Webmaster's report.** As requested last year, a page was created on the website for groups to advertise their travel arrangements so that other groups might consider joining forces to reduce the costs. After the initial interest from 4 groups, no further details have been submitted. Bruce asked members to seriously consider looking at this with ever increasing costs and fewer travellers in the groups. In addition, non-

members might just want a few days away at your venue and come along for a ride which will reduce the overheads for the group.

In the last 90 days there has been 86 visitors to the website. Bruce suggested that the statistics from the website company are debateable or members are not viewing the website, especially when this is now the only route to see the newsletter. A show of hands did suggest that the majority in the room have looked at the newsletter. Bruce reported that there were no articles submitted for the spring newsletter and asked for everyone to provide articles for future newsletters to make them more interesting. The best article (voted by the committee) wins £50 per newsletter with an annual award of a further £50 and a trophy.

Bruce asked for any thoughts, ideas and comments regarding the website and they would be appreciated.

- 8. Matters arising from committee meeting.** Sue reported that Bampton had recently made over £2000 for their fundraising by running a race night with equipment they designed themselves. If anyone needs any information on how this works, please contact Bruce.

- 9 Winner of the Winter Newsletter Monica Saunders Award.** Taunton-FOK

10 Future Meetings

Braunton – July 4th

Clevedon – October 17th AGM

Dawlish offered to host in April 2027

- 11 Any other business.** A representative from Crewkerne advised that they are celebrating their 50th anniversary this year.

Sue asked members to inform Bruce on their experiences with ETIAS this year so it can be reported in the newsletter.

Alex Melbourne (Taunton) spoke about a talk he attended in Bristol with the German Ambassador to the UK. It was arranged by the German department at the university, Bristol Anglo-German Society and the Bristol-Hanover link.

The meeting ended at 2.55 pm.

Following the meeting, there was a talk by Martin Halse, CEO of Coldharbour Mill that started producing woollen cloth in 1797. <https://www.coldharbourmill.org.uk>
Today it's one of the finest working wool museums in the country.

SIGNED

DATE

Chairman