

**DEVON TWINNING CIRCLE**  
**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**HELD AT THE BRIDGE, YATTON,**  
**ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 12TH 2024**

**1. Chairman's Opening Remarks.** Hello, and welcome to the Devon Twinning circle AGM 23/24

Over this last year, we have met three times and had some very good lunches provided by other twinings thank you very much. We have also met at commercial venues which have also worked.

There have been a number of closures of Twinning associations across Devon and other areas for a variety of reasons some on the British side and some on the European side. However, we remain in good heart. Last year we had 51 members of the Devon Twinning Circle this year, we have 57 member associations,

Unfortunately we had to cancel the social event this year as there wasn't enough support. This may have been due to the date in August which can be difficult for some people. It would be good to know if people would like another social event and if so we would perhaps organise it in a different month.

We've had some good work on the committee, and I would like to thank Jenny Worsfold for her invaluable support to the committee, and to me. We've had a new look at our webpage under our webmaster, Bruce Benton and I would urge you to have a look at it as there is a lot of information that is very useful. In particular I like the links of the Twinning Association that take you to their webpage. Many thanks. Also thanks to Claire Benton for keeping our monies straight and accountable. Claire is going to undertake the insurance officer post as Pam is standing down. Many thanks to Pam for all her work. Also thanks to Mary Lowther for stepping up as vice chairman, when I was unable to attend the last meeting, I would also like to thank the other committee members who help keep us on the straight and narrow with their continued support

**2. Attendance and apologies.** There were 22 members present representing 9 associations: Chittlehampton, Clevedon, Crewkerne, Exmouth, Northam, Sampford Peverell, Taunton, Tiverton & Totnes Apologies were received from 7 committee members: Pamela Bines, Josie & Maurice Mardon, Claire & Bruce Benton, Mary Lowther & Dill Cameron (the last 2 having been present for the committee meeting and lunch but unfortunately had to leave before the AGM) and 14 associations: Abbotskerswell, Braunton, Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Chard, Chudleigh, Cheriton Fitzpaine, Holsworthy, Kingsteignton, Newton & Noss, Portishead, Starcross, South Molton, Stokeinteignhead & Uffculme.

**3. Minutes of 2023 AGM.** These were approved, with the addition of Northam to the list of apologies.

**4. Matters arising.** There were no matters arising.

**5. Secretary' report.** It has been a year of contrasts. I hear from associations that are flourishing and do exciting things, but also from some that have folded due to declining numbers, sometimes here at home, or sometimes the problem is in their twin towns or villages. However we do now have six more associations in the Circle than last year, so that is good news.

I have been contacted by Chris Arundel, the press officer for the Anglo-German Family History Society, because he thinks there may be significant numbers of people with German heritage involved in the UK's British-German town-twinning associations but who have not heard of the society. If interested, I do have information or you can find their website via Google.

Dawlish TA has asked me to mention their Anglo-French musical evening on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November. I will send details out to fairly local groups. Do support them if you can.

Dawlish will also be hosting our next meeting in April and South Molton have offered to host the July meeting, but we do need more offers please.

I shall be standing for re-election as Secretary this year but would like it to be known that I think I will have done my shift by this time next year and would like someone else to take over. There is a fair bit of work before and after meetings, but the rest of the year is quite peaceful, and I do get to know a lot more of you, which is a real bonus. So do please have a word sometime if you might be thinking of volunteering, or know someone who would.

**6. Treasurer's report.** There was quite a slow start for the uptake of the insurance this year however we did manage to cover the cost with a slight profit.

Unfortunately, the BBQ had to be cancelled as we did not reach the minimum number to make it viable. I do wonder if it was because it was in the school holidays. I know myself I am often very busy looking after grandchild during this time.

At Braunton's meeting they had a speaker from ChemoHero. This wonderful charity gives a box of kindness to patients receiving chemotherapy in the Seamoor Unit at North Devon District Hospital. There are over 40 different items in each box, like pill pots, head scarves or beanies for when the patients lose their hair, thermometer, puzzle books, drinks & snacks. Each box cost over £100 which is paid for by donations therefore we felt we would like to help by donating £100.

I apologise for being absent, but my holiday was booked before the date was announced.

In Claire's absence, Sue talked us through the accounts for 2023-4 which showed our balance at the start of the year were £11,111.34 and at the end of the year £10,537.85. The balance at 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 was £11,020.51.

**7. Insurance Officer's report.** 54 associations have taken out insurance this year. Pam is now retiring as Insurance Officer. We offer her our very sincere thanks for the work she has done.

**8. Webmaster and Newsletter Editor's report.** I have made several updates to the website since the last meeting.

I have added the country of each twinning town, made amendments to the Home page, updated the News & Minutes and Monica Saunders Award pages as information became available, added the information for our new member, Street Twinning Association, updated the 'Places to Visit' page and added their website links.

Looking at the statistics provided by WIX the site gets very little traffic

In the last 30 days (up to 30<sup>th</sup> September) there have been 24 views (19 new visitors).

8 Twinning Circle viewers were from Plymouth, Tiverton, Exeter, Okehampton & Barnstaple.

There was more interest from USA, France, Philippines, China & Bangladesh with 9 views! There were 7 other places in the UK, outside of our Twinning Circle.

I would have expected more activity from Twinning Circle members looking to find the answer for the competition in the Autumn newsletter. I am extremely disappointed that there were no entries for the competition

Sue asked everyone to look out for a competition in the next edition.

**9. Matters arising from the Committee Meeting.** Assuming this meeting agrees the proposed change of name to include Somerset, we shall be working on the design of a new logo. Input from any members, especially from the Somerset associations, will be very welcome.

The winning entry in the Autumn newsletter was from Bampton.

**10. Amendments to the Constitution.** The amendments as circulated were all agreed.

**11. Election of Officers and Committee.** The following were elected, Chairman: Sue Moreton, Vice-Chairman: Mary Lowther, Secretary: Jenny Worsfold, Treasurer: Claire Benton, Committee members: Maurice Mardon and Brian Chislett. Mike Boyle remains on the committee as immediate past chairman. Jean Aplin, Dill Cameron and Josie Mardon were elected last year to serve for two years. Bruce Benton as also serves on the committee as webmaster & newsletter editor.

**12. Presentation of the Monica Saunders Award and Don Leech Tankard.** The Monica Saunders trophy for the best newsletter contribution 2023-4, was presented to Crewkerne Association for their articles telling us of their visit to Igny and Bures-sur-Yvette, and the epic cycle ride of two of their members to get there. The Don Leech tankard was presented jointly to Ken Priest, Andrew Winter and Lorna Scudder, the authors of the 2 articles.

**11. Any other business.** None.

Meeting closed, 2.30 pm.

There followed a session of sharing problems that can arise on visits and suggestions for good places to visit.

SIGNED

DATE