

**DEVON TWINNING CIRCLE
MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING
HELD IN ST BRANNOCKS CHURCH ROOMS, BRAUNTON, ON SATURDAY APRIL 27TH 2024**

- 1. Chairman's opening remarks.** Sue welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked everyone for their continued support.

Some associations are going strong but not all. There has been no further contact from Ottery Twinning Association although Sue contacted them on their closure to see if any remaining members would like to join with Exmouth.. However, there has been good active contact with Woodbury Twinning Association, also faced with closure, and hopefully that will continue well.

Please have a look at the Devon Twinning Circle website. It has useful information and is a great resource for us all.

We're all looking forward to active visits this year and it will be useful to have feedback as to how we get on.

- 2. Attendance and apologies.** There were 24 members present representing 11 member associations: Bampton, Braunton, Chard, Chittlehampton, Exeter, Exmouth, Sampford Peverell, Tavistock, Teignmouth, Tiverton and Totnes.

We also welcomed two representatives from Chemohero, a North Devon charity who spoke to us following the business meeting.

Apologies were received from: Bruce Benton, Pam Bines, Dill Cameron, Mary Lowther and from the following Associations: Ashburton, Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Chudleigh, Crewkerne, Horrabridge, Ilfracombe, Newton & Noss, Northam, South Molton and Uffculme.

- 3. Minutes of the General Meeting** held in July 2023 were approved and signed.

- 4. Matters arising.** None.

- 5. Chairman's report.** This was covered in covered in Sue's opening remarks.

- 6. Secretary's report.** I have been receiving good news, bad news and requests for information. The bad news has been the closure of a few twinning associations and others who tell me they are struggling to continue. On the good news side, a few who have been struggling have pulled back from the brink and that is always good to hear.

One of those is Newton and Noss Trebeuden TA who also wrote to tell me that they took advantage of the information we sent out from entertainer Jim Causley and they can highly recommend him. "Jim, of course, must make a living and does charge for performances. However, Jim is worth and deserves every penny and more!"

One request for information came from Uffculme TA who have recently discovered that American forces stationed in Uffculme, from November 43 until May 44 went on to liberate their twin town, Caumont in Normandy, via Omaha beach. They now have photos taken in 1943/44 of the soldiers in Uffculme, sent from their contacts in the

USA and will be sharing all this interesting information with their friends in Caumont when they visit in July for Bastille. They would like to know if they are twinned with Caumont by coincidence or if this was known to whoever was involved in deciding which town twinned with Uffculme in the 70s. Are there records stored somewhere? *(Would anyone with any information please contact Yvette directly at yvettcottrell@aol.com)*

A further request related to entry requirements for visitors to France. Tourists and business travellers can enter France using just a British passport. A visa is not currently required (but is expected to be by next year). **The passport must be valid for at least 3 months beyond the expected date of departure. UK passports should not be older than 10 years.** Further regulations, which have always been the case for non-EU citizens entering France, are that you are expected to be able to show proof of having travel insurance and evidence of being able to support yourself financially during your stay. The funds required are assessed in three possible ways. For those staying in a private home), an attestation d'accueil (proof of accommodation) may be obtained at a cost of €30 per person per visit. Arranging this is onerous for the host, who must provide details of each visitor to the Mairie. (It could make a difference if the Mairie is your host!) With attestation d'accueil the funds required are €32.50 per person per day. If staying in a hotel or guest house (evidence of booking required) then the sum required is €65 per person per day. If neither of these applies, then the sum required is €120 per person per day. A suitable credit card could provide evidence. We do not yet know of anyone being asked for this evidence but would be pleased to know about the experience of those who go (as twinned or individually). *(Information on this to the Secretary please at jenworsfold@tiscali.co.uk)*

Finally, our next meeting will be in Bampton on 13th July and the AGM in Clevedon on 12th October. Offers to host meetings in 2025 will be warmly welcomed.

- 7. Treasurer's report.** The accounts prepared by the Treasurer were circulated. Our balance on 1st April 2023 was £11,111.34 and on 31st March 2024, £10,537.85. As little money as possible is kept in the Current Account as we now gain interest on the Reserve Account.

Claire reminded us that, following the success of last year's barbecue, there would be another one on 11th August, with a charge of £5 per person, remaining costs paid by DTC.

- 8 Insurance Officer's report.** Pam was unable to be with us today but wishes to stand down as Insurance Officer at the AGM in October. Please consider whether you, or someone you know, could take on this, not too onerous, task.

- 9 Webmaster's report.** Bruce reported "The website, managed by WIX.com, was transferred from Dennis to me in January. WIX is a new product to me so it's all a bit trial and error at the moment, but I'm getting there slowly. If there is anyone who is a confident user of WIX, please get in touch, as I will probably appreciate some help at some stage. Looking at the statistics provided by WIX the site gets very little traffic.

In the last 30 days (up to 22nd April) there have been 9 viewers from Devon (Kingsbridge, Plymouth, Barnstaple, Exeter and Cullompton). There has been 10 viewers from other parts of the UK (London, Llanelli, Oxford, Coleraine, Radlett, Padstow and Amersham), 5 from USA and 1 from Paris!

It is important to find out what you need, and what you believe potential new twinningers might need, from the website.

Please let me know, via my email address, babenton52@gmail.com or the contact page within the website.

If no one is going to look at the website, there is no need to have one!

My work so far has concentrated on bringing the website up to date with the latest information, rearranging the menu so the important items can be accessed quicker, adding the details for the Officers and Committee members and merging the information on hosting a Devon Twinning meeting.

I have taken the liberty of trawling the internet and searching through Facebook to find your individual twinning group's sites and pages. These are now accessible via the website, currently on the "page under Construction". Unfortunately, this page doesn't format correctly when viewed on a phone.

Please take a look at what other groups are doing – it might inspire you to do something similar.

Please check your information is accurate and up to date – any potential new members might be missed if the contact details are incorrect.

If you don't have a website and/or Facebook page, then maybe you will feel inclined to join the 21st century.

I am open to any thoughts and ideas you may have for the website – I just do as I am advised!

One area that I am keen on, to save everyone re-inventing the wheel, is to capture the information of how you fundraise, so it can be shared with other groups.

Also, more detail I would like to share, is how we entertain our twinning visitors. We have lists, but this gives no clues on costs, logistics, suitability, a good experience (or not). I have an idea, let's call it TWINADVISOR to record reviews! I'll think about how to do it - if you are favourable then please provide the information, even retrospectively from past visits.

10 Matters arising from committee meeting. All mentioned in Officer's reports.

11 Winner of best article award in Spring 2024 newsletter

Crewkerne TA

12 Any Other Business. None

Following the business meeting we had an interesting and inspiring talk from representatives Chemohero, a North Devon charity helping cancer sufferers.

Next Meeting: this will be on July 13th, hosted by Bampton Twinning Association.

SIGNED

DATE

Chairman