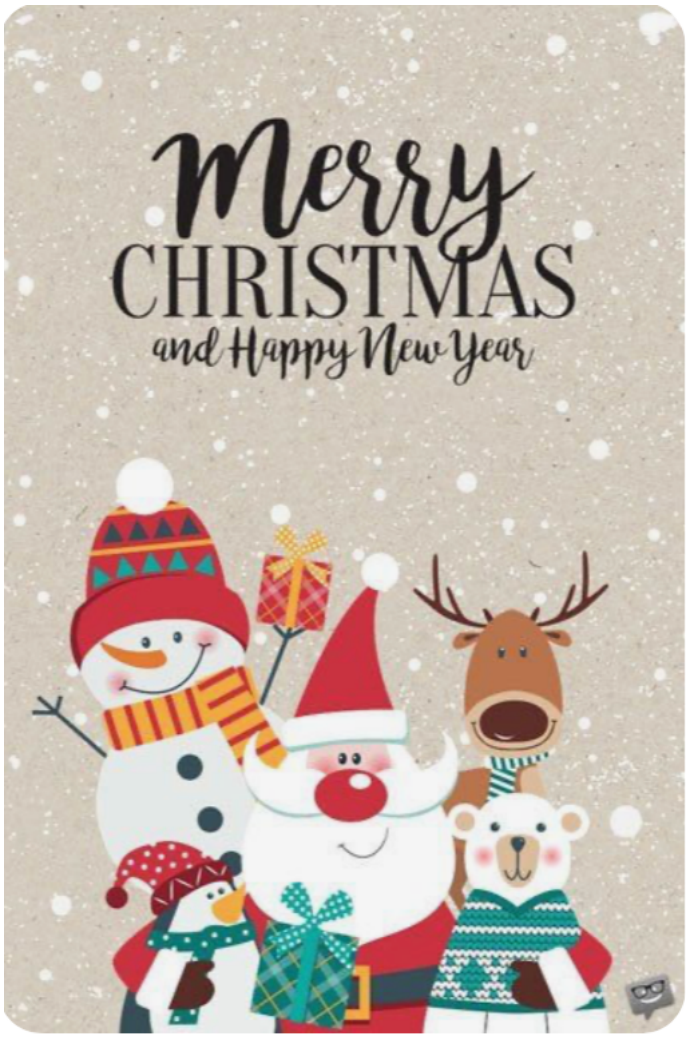
DEVON & SOMERSET TWINNING CIRCLE

HOME FROM HOME

WINTER 2026



Dates for your diaries

The next meeting of the Devon & Somerset Twinning Circle will be hosted by Dawlish Twinning Association, on **Saturday 10th April** at 2 pm.

3rd July 2027	**Bampton**
October 2027	**Tiverton**
April 2028	**Crewkerne**
July 2028	**Taunton**

This newsletter contains

- Christmas Quiz
- Member news
- Twinning Circle – Facebook Group
- Visit to Terracina
- A busy year for Clevedon Twinning
- Clevedon looking ahead
- Christmas Wordsearch
- How Bampton operates
- Tiverton Newsletter
- Survey results
- Teignmouth explores twinning link with Bistrița in Romania

Contributions to the newsletter

Remember you will be entered into the Monica Saunders Competition and could win £50 plus another £50 if judged the overall winner of the year.

Please send articles, reports, photographs by email to babenton52@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

(Answers will be on the new Twinning Circle Facebook Group – so join up!)

General	**Food and drink**	**Films**
1. Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree? 2. How many gifts are given in the song 12 Days of Christmas? 3. How many of Rudolph's fellow reindeer start with the letter D? 4. What colour are mistletoe berries? 5. If you're born on Christmas Day, what's your star sign?	1. Which country created Eggnog? 2. What's lucky to find in your Christmas pudding? 3. What fruit is usually placed in stockings? 4. Which Christmas cocktail has advocaat, lemonade and ice in it? 5. What should you eat on each of the 12 days of Christmas if you want good luck?	1. What city is the movie Miracle on 34th Street set in? 2. According to It's a Wonderful Life, what happens every time a bell rings? 3. Which airport was the location for the opening scene of Love Actually? 4. Who plays Ebenezer Scrooge in the film Muppet's Christmas Carol? 5. Dr Seuss's The Grinch attempts to steal Christmas from which unsuspecting town?
TV	**Music**	
1. In Friends, what does Ross dress up as when he can't find a Santa costume? 2. Which British monarch delivered the first ever Christmas message? 3. What cartoon family has a pet dog called Santa's Little Helper? 4. The first Doctor Who Christmas special was broadcast in 2005, featuring which actor as the Doctor? 5. In which year did the first John Lewis Christmas advert air?	1. According to the song, what was Frosty The Snowman's nose made out of? 2. Who duetted with Bing Crosby on Little Drummer Boy/Peace on Earth? 3. What were the boys of the NYPD choir singing in The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl's Fairytale of New York? 4. In 2009 an online campaign helped which band secure Christmas number one? 5. Which band sang that they 'wish it could be Christmas every day'?	

TWINNING MEMBER'S NEWS

STREET DISBANDING IN 2027

"Although we have 35 members, all actively involved in our visits to France and Germany, we do not have anyone who is prepared to take over key Officer roles. A number of us have been Chair, Secretary and Treasurer a number of times over the years but we wish to follow other interests and members are not coming forward to run events.
There is still a desire to maintain friendships built up over many years but on a personal level. The village of Street will continue to be twinned with the two towns."



Let's Stay Connected – Join Our New Facebook Group!



Devon & Somerset Twinning Circle has launched a new private Facebook group to help members stay connected between meetings.

Open to **all members of participating twinning associations**, the group is a place to share news, events and activities, exchange ideas, seek advice and explore opportunities to work together. Planning a coach trip to your partner town? You might find another association interested in sharing the journey!

We encourage both individual members and official twinning association Facebook Pages to join.

How to join

Use this link https://www.facebook.com/groups/1103307349285769 or Search Facebook for **Devon and Somerset Twinning Circle**. Select the group and request to join. You'll be asked which twinning association you belong to and will need to agree to the group rules.

Having trouble joining as your association's Facebook Page?

We've discovered that Facebook Pages with age restrictions cannot join groups. Even if you haven't knowingly applied a restriction, it's worth checking your Page settings.
To check or change this:

1. Switch to your association's Facebook Page.
2. Go to Settings & privacy → Settings.
3. Select Followers and public content.
4. Find Age restrictions and click Edit.
5. Change the setting to Public / Anyone (13+) and save.

You should then be able to request to join as your association's Page.

We'd love to see as many associations and individual members involved as possible. The more we share, the stronger our twinning connections become!

Visit to Terracina Review

September 2026

I have long ago lost interest in travelling solely for sightseeing. So, when Beryl told me about the opportunity to stay with Italians in their homes, I jumped at the chance to join the trip to Terracina. What could be a better way to experience a place and a different culture than with the locals and of course because this is twinning, we do not just experience a different culture and see interesting places we develop friendships and make connections. We go not as tourists but as friends.
I was not disappointed. The welcome, hospitality and generosity of our hosts was incredible, like nothing I have ever experienced, not even matched by my own friends and family in Italy!
I provide here a very brief description of a couple of the highlights. Words cannot convey how rich and full the trip was (on all levels).

Terracina is a beautiful city, situated about 100 km south of Rome on the Mediterranean and at the foot of the Volscian hills. It has a very long history and was a place of importance in Roman times. Overlooking the town (the Sanctuary of Monte Sant'Angelo) is a large temple complex (from Roman times) but the place is believed to have been used since the Bronze age.
Of course, whilst it would have been tempting to have spent the whole time by the sea on the pristine beaches particularly as the daytime temperature did not drop below 33 degrees. Our hosts had organised a full programme of visits in and around the city to ancient sites, a hilltop church, museums, neighbouring towns, nature areas and "agriturismo".
Of particular interest was the visit to the medieval 13th Century Abbey- Fossanova, where the Italian priest Friar and philosopher Thomas Aquinas stayed towards the end of his life. It is a huge complex including a cloister and large Gothic Church and visiting allowed us to imagine how perhaps Glastonbury abbey would have looked like.

North of the city is the hilltop town of Sonnino which before the unification of Italy was on the border of the Papal states and the Kingdom of Naples. The town is famous for its lawless bandits (brigands, both men and women) and home to the famous Antonia Gasborrone (the Italian Robinhood)). We were given a private tour of the Borderlands museum by a young man whose grandmother knew intimately the brigands and their ways.

Our last evening was spent feasting and dancing to Italian folk tunes at the house of one of our hosts. What a perfect way to end what was a very memorable and colourful visit.

Laila Jhaveri.
Exeter

A Busy Year of Friendship and International Connections for Clevedon Twinning

2026 has been another wonderfully busy year for Clevedon Twinning Association, with visits, celebrations and exciting projects bringing together people of all ages from our three partner towns of Ettlingen in Germany, Épernay in France and Middelkerke in Belgium.



Ettlingen Intern with Host Family

Our international activities began in April, when we welcomed Franciska, a young student from Ettlingen, for a two-week work placement at Clevedon Pier. Staying with a local host family, she had the opportunity to experience working life in the UK while strengthening the friendship links between our towns

In June, we were delighted to welcome six students and two teachers from Ettlingen as part of our exciting poetry exchange project with Clevedon School, supported by the charity Never Such Innocence. Students from both towns had been exploring the theme "In Someone Else's Shoes", using poetry to reflect on empathy, understanding and different perspectives. The visit included opportunities for the young people to share their work, culminating in a poetry performance at Clevedon LitFest.



Clevedon & Ettlingen Poetry Reading



Britsol Harbour with Épernay Friends

June also saw us celebrate the 35th anniversary of our partnership with Épernay. We welcomed a delegation from France for a weekend of friendship and celebrations, including a civic reception, visits around Clevedon and a day exploring Bristol's historic harbour. Our French friends presented a commemorative plaque and a beautiful rose for the Community Centre gardens, marking 35 years of lasting connections between our communities.

In August, we travelled to Ettlingen for the town's annual Marktfest. This lively music festival is always a highlight of our calendar, bringing together representatives from all four partner towns. Once again, our members ran a popular Pimm's stall in the Schlossplatz, alongside our friends from Middelkerke selling their famous Jus de Mer and Épernay showcasing Champagne. It is a fantastic opportunity to celebrate our international friendships while enjoying the lively German festival**.**



Pimm's Stall at Ettlingen Marktfest



Biking along Middelkerke Promenade



Official Reception at Middelkerke Town Hall

Our final overseas visit took place in September, when a group travelled to Middelkerke to celebrate another 35th anniversary. We received a wonderfully warm welcome from our Belgian hosts, with a programme that included a brewery visit, traditional Belgian food, a civic reception at the Town Hall and the town's popular agricultural festival, Landbouwweekend. As always, staying with host families was a particular highlight, strengthening the personal friendships that are at the heart of our association.

Clevedon Twinning Looking Ahead to 2027

There is certainly no sign of things slowing down! Plans are already underway for several exciting projects in 2027, with a particular focus on engaging young people in international partnerships.

In May, Clevedon Juniors Under-14 football team will travel to Épernay for a friendly match against Racing Club d'Épernay, creating a wonderful opportunity for young footballers and their families to experience international friendship through sport.

We are also working on two further school projects: a performing arts exchange with Épernay, exploring dance and cultural connections, and an environmental and sustainability project with Ettlingen, encouraging young people to work together on issues that matter to their generation.

And, of course, we are already looking forward to returning to Ettlingen for Marktfest in August! For 2027, we are hoping to organise a coach trip, making it easier for more people to experience this fantastic festival and the warm hospitality of our German friends. Plans are still in the early stages, and we will share further information once arrangements are in place. We would be delighted to welcome members of the Devon and Somerset Twinning Circle who might like to join us for the trip!

After such a busy and rewarding year, we are reminded once again that international partnerships are about so much more than official visits and celebrations. They are about building genuine friendships, sharing experiences and creating opportunities for future generations.

Here's to another year of building bridges and strengthening friendships across borders!

Clevedon Twinning Association.

CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

S	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	O	C	E	D
J	O	L	L	Y	Y	L	I	M	A	F	E
A	T	E	S	N	A	T	I	V	I	T	Y
J	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	P	E
I	A	N	G	E	L	Y	R	A	G	R	G
N	C	A	E	E	R	E	F	C	I	E	O
G	R	E	V	R	G	J	R	E	F	S	O
L	A	Y	E	N	C	N	I	R	T	E	R
E	C	M	A	T	E	M	E	C	S	N	C
B	K	M	T	R	E	E	N	N	R	T	S
E	E	P	H	G	R	Y	D	C	E	S	E
L	R	E	S	S	E	E	S	S	R	A	O
L	S	L	A	M	G	R	I	N	C	H	R
S	S	A	N	T	A	C	L	A	U	S	R

CHRISTMAS
CRACKERS
TREE
DECORATIONS
FAMILY
FRIENDS
GIFTS
MANGER
NATIVITY
MERRY
SANTA CLAUS
JOLLY
JINGLE BELLS
SCROOGE
PRESENTS
GRINCH
ANGEL

BAMPTON WAY OF WORKING

We all seem to run our Twinning Groups in different ways, but I really like the way Bampton does theirs. We have a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and all members get a vote at our meetings. We meet in each other's homes every 4 to 6 weeks. The host lays on supper which is usually made up of a selection of cheeses, dips and whatever else they fancy doing. We take in turns to host which is done alphabetically. Anyone not able to host can donate £30 instead when it's their turn. We can also purchase wine at £7 a bottle. Twice a year our French host goes to his supplier and buys about 180 bottles. We pay just under £5 a bottle and its drinkable!! We also sell this wine at fund raising events for £10 if it's open to the non-members. Going back to our meetings, because they are open to all members it keeps everyone interested and are more likely to get involved with the fundraising events. If someone comes up with an idea, then they organise it. If food is involved the organiser sorts the mains the everyone else either brings a raffle prize or makes a dessert. The meetings usually last between 30 minutes to an hour and the rest of the evening is spent eating, drinking and socialising.

Some groups are struggling to raise funds, but we seem to be doing well. We do have the advantage of being in a small town which I think probably helps. But if you want ideas and would like to come to one of our events or even to a meeting, please contact either myself or Bruce.
One final note we raised over £2000 on our race night and over £1000 on the quiz night.

Claire Benton

Tiverton Town Twinning Association Newsletter

Autumn 2026

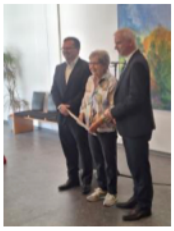
Ei Guda, wie?

..... as they say locally in Hofheim. People sometimes say *"Ei Gude, wie?"*, which loosely translates to "Hey there, how are you? "Ei" can act in a similar way to "hey", and "Gude" is a shortened form of "Guten Tag" or a friendly "mein Guter" (my good friend). Anyway, that's it for today's German lesson! Let's now reflect on the fantastic trip we had in September to see our friends in Hofheim.











Twenty-two guests from Tiverton, including the current mayor, Susan Griggs, were given a warm welcome by our hosts. The very next morning, a day trip by coach to Giessen was on the programme. The first stop was a visit to the Mathematikum museum, where a variety of hands-on experiments proved to be great fun. Two hours flew by in the blink of an eye.

Next, following refreshments at the monastery on the Schiffenberg mountain, a knight in chain mail appeared - the ghost of Jörg Thaddeäus Oswald, born in 1475. The friendly ghost took us on a tour of the site and recounted wonderful stories of life there in the Middle Ages. The party was given three trials during the guided tour, designed to finally set the ghost free, which were passed with flying colours. Couples were invited to exchange a kiss beneath a "magical" balcony. This would ensure their everlasting love and bless their marriage. Finally a superb dinner at the Schiffenberg restaurant!

On Saturday morning, Mayor Wilhelm Schultze and Ursula Hees welcomed us at a reception in the Town Hall. It was a fitting occasion to present Ingrid Bender with Hofheim's Bronze Badge of Honour in recognition of her many years of commitment to the Hofheim Town Twinning Association.

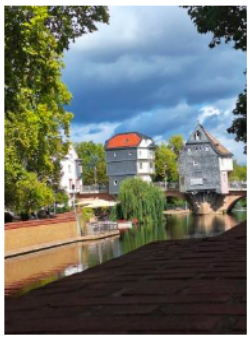
Later that afternoon, everyone met up again at the Uferbar in Okriftel for a 'sundowner'. We had found this informal get-together on the banks of the Main most enjoyable during our last visit, two years ago. Once again, we were very lucky with the weather. Drinks were served at the Uferbar, whilst a finger-food picnic was supplied by our hosts. Plenty for everyone! The Hofheim Big Band, conducted by Roland Augustin provided excellent entertainment, as did the game of "Kubb", or Viking Chess – a type of skittles game designed to be played on a lawn. It was only as darkness fell that the day drew to a close.

For the Sunday, our hosts had organised excursions and sightseeing trips, either individually or in small groups. Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Darmstadt and the Taunus or the Rhine Valley were popular destinations.



Monday's outing was to Bad Kreuznach. On board the 'Bimmelbahn' (a little blue road train) the group was able to explore the spa town, the impressive salt works, and the surrounding area with fantastic views of the Nahe Valley landscape. The itinerary included a stop with panoramic views, where participants could sample a glass of wine from the region.

Back in the beautiful old town of Bad Kreuznach, a walking tour included a stop at one of the many cafés and ice-cream parlours, and, of course, a chance to see the famous bridge houses up close.



That evening the tables were laid at the 'Alter Hof' in Wallau, where we enjoyed yet another delicious and varied meal washed down by local wines. The customary speeches were made by Mayor Schultze who expressed his appreciation of the 46-year friendship with Tiverton; Hans-Jürgen Koblitz, chairman of the Hofheim Town Twinning Association, who looked forward to many more future visits; Mayor Sue Griggs thanked everyone for the invitation and for the many experiences she could take away from her first visit to Hofheim and indeed to Germany; Angie Cockburn thanked the organisers, while I. ended with a somewhat light-hearted speech, reflecting warmly on the huge amount of fun had by all, and looking forward to our hosts' visit to Tiverton in 2027.

Graeme

ttta.org.uk

Don't forget to check out our website for updated photos and twinning information!

✶✶✶✶

The Committee would like extend a big welcome to 4 new members: **Mayor Sue Griggs**, **Tilly Young**, and **Inka** and **Anthony Lee-Wright.** We look forward to meeting them at one of our social meals soon. Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome!

✶✶✶✶

Jean Aplin, our Social Secretary who was featured in the Spring newsletter, had an unfortunate fall a couple of months ago in which she sustained some serious injuries which meant a lengthy hospital stay. Happily, she has made good progress and is now back at home. We send her our very best wishes for a full recovery.

ⓘ TTTA Social Meals 2026 ⓘ

November 1st French Meal - Cassoulet
at 1pm at Halberton Village Hall
December 11th Grand Christmas Meal
at Tiverton Town Football Club as usual

✶✶✶✶



Earlier this year the Committee decided to commission a roller banner to advertise the Tiverton Town Twinning Association. And here it is – standing proudly in the foyer of the Town Hall.

Please mention TTTA to family and friends who might be interested in joining.

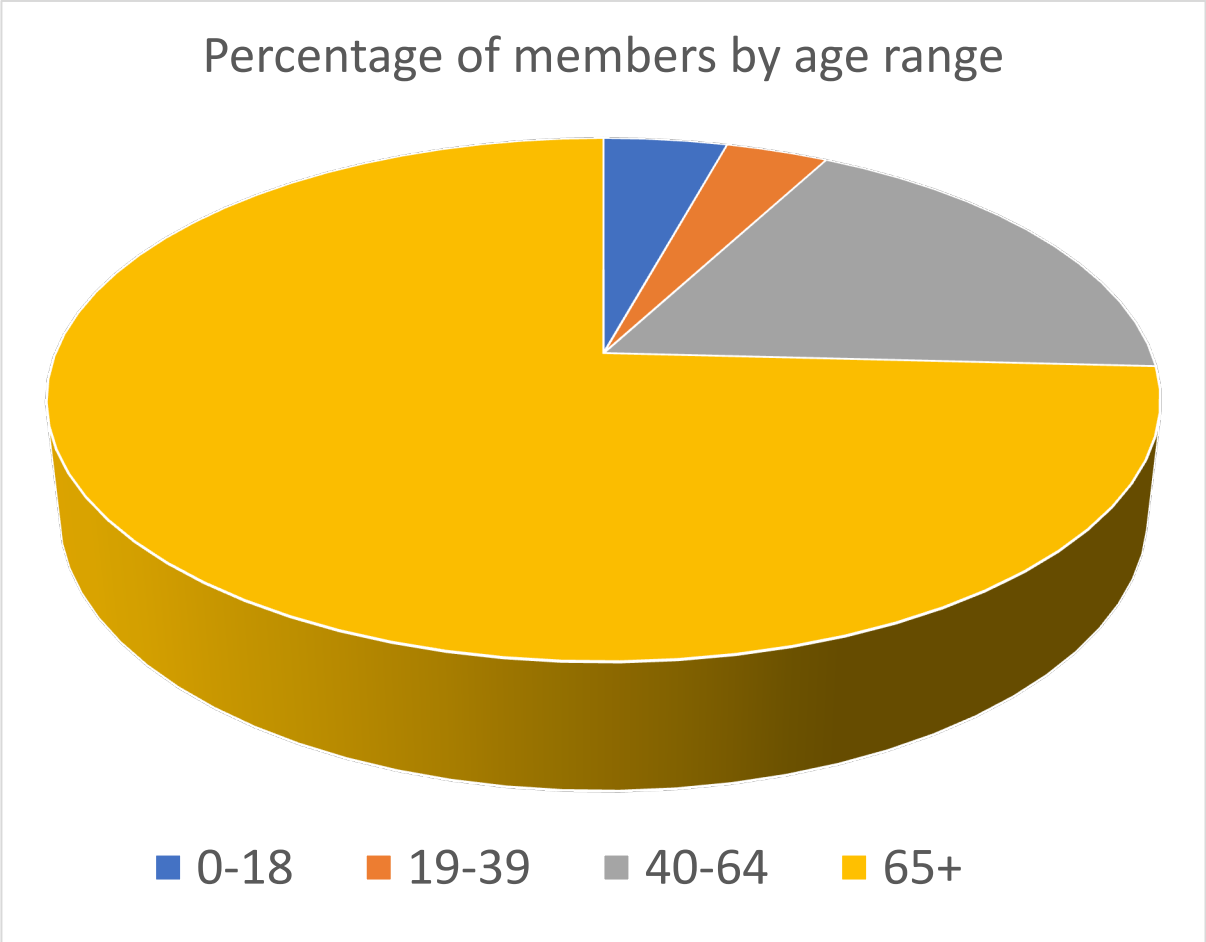
We are sad to record here the passing of
Josephine Mardon
in early October.
May Josie rest in peace.

SURVEY RESULTS 2026

Thank you to the 29 twinning groups that took the time to respond to the survey.

It will not be a surprise to everyone that almost 75% of the members are over 65.

Groups range in size from 21 to 55 members



FREQUENCY OF TWINNING VISITS

Almost every group alternate their visits each year – England one year, abroad the next.

One group, however, both host and visit in the same year.

There are a couple of other exceptions.

One group has two twinning towns abroad, so they alternate the visit abroad each year and host one of the groups each year.

Another group (also with two twinning towns) has an annual August Bank Holiday visit to Germany every year and then alternates hosting and visiting the two towns each year.

TRAVELLING ABROAD

The majority (40%) take the ferry across the channel, travelling by coach to the UK port and onto the twin town.

Alternatives routes used

- 6% Minibus or Car to UK port, ferry as foot passengers, hiring EU coach abroad to get to twin town.
- 18% Minibus or Car to UK port, ferry as foot passengers, collected abroad by hosts by car or minibus.
- 22% Minibus or car share the whole journey taking the ferry across the channel.
- 12% Return flights.
- 2% Return train journeys

HOW ARE YOU HOSTED ABROAD?

Almost everyone stays with families in their homes.

If there are not enough hosts then arrangements are made to stay in hotels, B&B etc

HOW DO YOUR HOSTS TRAVEL TO THE UK?

The majority (54%) travel by coach, taking the ferry, for the whole journey.

Alternatives routes used

- 20% travel as foot passengers on the ferry, hire coach (visitors pay) to get to host town.
- 10% drive the whole journey taking the ferry over the channel.
- 8% fly to the UK
- 6% travel as foot passengers on the ferry, hire coach (hosts pay) to get to host town.
- 3 % travel as foot passengers on the ferry, hosts collect by car or minibus.

HOW DO YOU FUND THE VISITS FROM YOUR GUESTS?

Visits are funded primarily with subscriptions and fundraising.

18% of groups receive some local council funding

Local councils (7%) fund any civic receptions.

Hosts put their hands in their pockets when not enough funds have been raised.

WHERE DO YOUR VISITORS STAY IN THE UK?

The majority of the visitors are hosted by families in their homes.

If there are not enough hosts, the visitors utilise hotels, B&B and occasionally local volunteer's homes.

DO YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS WITH YOUR BANK?

The majority do not have problems with their bank, although a few get charged a monthly fee.

Other irritations include getting charged for depositing cash and cheques, having to travel to locate their bank and having complications when changing signatories.

DO YOU HAVE A CARD READER?

67% of groups have a card reader.

Members are also encouraged to use online banking to pay for subscriptions, events etc.

DO YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING POLICY?

4 associations currently have a policy in place.

Several groups are considering having a policy while some presume a policy is not required as children are in the care of their parents.

**** Claire contacted the Insurance company about the Health & Safety policy. They replied saying that although they would suggest each group had one, the insurance would not be invalid if they did not have one.

Teignmouth explores twinning link with Bistrița in Romania

Conrad Goss told Teignmouth Town Council how taking part in sporting events in Romania had helped build relationships behind a proposed partnership with Bistrița.He addressed councillors on Tuesday, November 10, as they considered a letter from the Romanian municipality expressing interest in a long-term link.

Conrad described completing a half marathon with the help of leg braces and returning to take part in a five-kilometre event in combat boots while carrying a load.

He said the relationships he had developed with fellow veterans and representatives of Bistrița had revealed shared values, particularly around family and community. “I think it gives everyone tremendous opportunity — a different life, a different culture, great values, great traditions,” he said. He argued that the link could broaden horizons for young people and offer opportunities for businesses and trade. Conrad told councillors he had moved to Teignmouth in May the previous year but had known the town since childhood, when his uncle served as a local police officer. He said he had become involved in community life through the chamber of commerce and believed young people would benefit from greater support and new opportunities.

The letter from Bistrița proposes cooperation in culture and heritage, education and youth, tourism and the local economy, and civic engagement. It suggests exchanges involving schools, youth organisations and sports clubs, alongside artistic collaborations and community festivals. The municipality also proposes sharing experience in tourism, trade promotion, green initiatives and public services. The letter makes clear that it is a statement of goodwill and intent, rather than an agreement creating financial or legal obligations at this stage.

Councillors heard that a local twinning committee had already been established with five members. Town clerk Iain Wedlake explained that the council had agreed in September to provide a representative once the organisation was ready to request one.
The representative would act as a link between the association and the council. During a further discussion at the end of the meeting, Conrad was asked to contact the clerk formally about the appointment and provide a draft agreement for consideration. He also outlined plans to publicise the project through a section of an existing website promoting Teignmouth and through a Facebook page.

No final twinning agreement was signed at the meeting. The next steps were to prepare the paperwork and bring the proposed arrangements back to the council.