

DEVON AND SOMERSET TWINNING CIRCLE
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT THE BRIDGE, YATTON
ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 17TH 2026

Prior to the meeting Clive Sanders gave an interesting and informative talk about his role, the Poet in Residence for Never Such Innocence <https://www.neversuchinnocence.com>

Never Such Innocence provides tools for children and young people (9-18) to reflect on the realities of war and conflict.

They nurture the next generation of thinkers, leaders & peacebuilders through the arts; inspiring cultural exchange & dialogue.

They amplify the voices of children and young people all over the world.

1. Chairman's welcome and report.

Sue welcomed everyone and offered many thanks to Clevedon for hosting the Devon and Somerset Twinning Circle meeting.

This was her last meeting as the Chair of the Twinning Circle.

Sue said "It has been very enjoyable, and I am very heartened by the continued enthusiasm for twinning. I am very pleased that we became Devon and Somerset Twinning Circle. I think this has been a very positive move. Not all twinning associations have survived, and it is always sad when the clubs close. This is not an unusual pattern across our society, times are changing.

I have been very well supported by the committee, and I thank them for their support and enthusiasm. In particular the two other officers, Bruce our temporary secretary and Claire our very able treasurer.

Sadly, three of our committee members have had to step down. Jean Aplin has broken her hip and feels she must step down for the moment.

Also, Josie Mardon died last week. She had very much enjoyed her time with twinning. Upon learning how unwell she was, we sent flowers and we thanked her for her enthusiasm and commitment. Maurice her husband has also stepped away.

I think coming together and having the chance to share experiences greatly enhances the efficiency and well-being of our clubs.

I thank all of you who have contributed to the newsletter which has been very ably collated by Bruce Benton, it always makes good reading.

Best wishes to all"

2. Attendance and apologies. There were 26 members present representing 11 associations: Bampton, Chard, Clevedon, Dawlish, Exeter, Exmouth, Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Taunton Lisieux, Taunton Königslutter, Tiverton, and Uffculme. Apologies were received from committee members: Bruce Benton, Jean Aplin, Maurice Mardon and 11 associations: Abbotskerswell, Branton, Chittlehampton, Crediton, Crewkerne, Ilfracombe, Kingsteignton, Newton & Noss, Sampford Peverell, South Molton, and Totnes.

3. Minutes of the 2025 AGM. These were approved and signed.

4. Secretary' report. 28 associations have completed the survey, and the findings will be published in the Winter Newsletter. Further returns will be accepted until the 13th November.

Will someone please take on the Secretary role! Saturdays are not normally a suitable day for Bruce so he cannot guarantee being available for the meetings.

Future meetings are scheduled for Dawlish in April 2027, Bampton – 3rd July 2027,

Tiverton – October 2027, Crewkerne – April 2028 Taunton – July 2028

Offers for future dates will be gratefully received.

5. Treasurer's report. Seven associations have not yet paid but we are hoping that they will.

The balance sheet for 2025-6 was circulated. On 1st April 2025 we had £82.63 in the current account and £10,512.14 in the reserve account, making a total of £10,594.77. On 31st March 2026 we had £310.88 in the current account and £9,759.17 in the reserve account, making a total of £10,070.05.

The current balance sheet for April 1st to October 16th 2026 was also circulated. This showed £266.06 in the current account and £8,994.90 in the reserve account, making a total of £9,260.96.

6. Webmaster & Newsletter Editor's report. There was nothing much to report on the website updates apart from, having checked the twinning individual websites and Facebook pages, very few are maintained and up to date, so it was suggested they are regularly updated to help promote their own groups. Each group could nominate a media/publicist to progress this.

No articles have been received so far for the Winter newsletter so winning £50 for the Monica Saunders award might not be too tricky!

7. Matters arising from the Committee meeting. Winner of the Monica Saunders award for the Autumn Newsletter article is Newton Ferrers & Noss Mayo.

8. Amendments to the Constitution. The amendments as circulated, confirming only 3 meetings a year, was agreed by all.

9. Election of Officers and Committee. The following officers were elected,

Chair: Claire Benton (Bampton), Vice-Chair: Mary Lowther (Dawlish),

Secretary: Emma Eabry (Clevedon), Treasurer: Martin Straus (Taunton-Lisieux & Taunton-Königslutter),

Committee members: Dill Cameron (Dawlish), Janice Eagles (Uffculme),

Beryl Whidden (Exeter). Sue Moreton becomes a member committee as the past Chair.

There remains 1 vacancy.

10 Presentation of the Monica Saunders Award and Don Leech Tankard. The Monica Saunders trophy for the best newsletter contribution 2025-6 was presented to Crewkerne Association and the Don Leech tankard was received by Rob Grimond, on behalf of Lorna Scudder the author of the best article, who was unable to attend.

11. Any other business.

Arrangements to travel to meetings Sue commended Clevedon for setting up a Facebook page for registering interest on offering or requiring a lift to our meetings.

Twinning Travel Plans Sue reminded everyone that a page was setup on the website, to advertise details of travel arrangements to their twinning hosts, so costs can be reduced by sharing coach & ferry costs by combining trips together. In addition, there is an option to offer travel to other people who just want to travel and make their own arrangements for a visit.

Claire added that some Uffculme members joined the Bampton twinning visit to Normandy for a social weekend for themselves and now the two French towns are now considering sharing coach and ferry travel arrangements to Devon in 2027.

Emma advised that Clevedon are hoping to organise a visit to Epernay in 2027 and details will be circulated at a later date.

William the Conqueror Martin advised that 2027 sees the 1000th anniversary of the birth of William I <https://gov.gg/yearofthenormans>

Helicopter Museum Sue recommended a visit to the museum <https://helimuseum.com> at Weston-Super-Mare.

Museum of Somerset Martin reported that visitors were taken to the museum earlier this year and he promoted an exhibition of the Chew Valley Hoard next year.

<https://swheritage.org.uk/museum-of-somerset/chew-valley-hoard/>

SIGNED

DATE