

DEVON AND SOMERSET TWINNING CIRCLE
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD AT HALBERTON VILLAGE HALL, TIVERTON,
ON SATURDAY OCTOBER 18TH 2025

- 1. Chairman's welcome and report.** Good morning to everybody, thank you very much for coming today. The past year has been busy again for the Devon and Somerset Twinning circle. Our big news is that we moved from being the Devon Twinning circle to the Devon and Somerset Twinning circle. Some of the smaller associations continue to decline, but we have had a surge in some others. The circle offers public liability insurance at a reasonable rate and also the chance to swap information share ideas and come together and talk about Twinning generally. I wrote to a number of organisations across Somerset who weren't in the circle, and I hope that that might bear fruit and that they will join us. I would like to thank Jenny Worsfold, our secretary who is standing down today. Her support has been invaluable, and we thank her for her contribution. We also have an able treasurer, Claire Benton and webmaster and newsletter editor, Bruce Benton, and I thank them also. I would also like to thank all the committee who contribute and also everybody who comes to the meetings and make some interesting and informative and worth the trip. Please take time to look at our website, as much information is contained on there, and also much information was contained in the last newsletter. The committee has worked hard to provide venues and support. What we have not had is any nominations for permanent Secretary. I'm very pleased to say that Bruce Benton has offered his services as a temporary Secretary and we thank him for this. I hope that a more permanent solution can be achieved very shortly. At this point, I also need to give notice I should be standing down as chair this time next year so I hope somebody will consider this very enjoyable post.

The Secretary was then presented with flowers and a gift token as a thank you for her work

- 2. Attendance and apologies.** There were 29 members present representing 15 associations: Bampton, Chard, Crediton, Crewkerne, Cullompton, Dawlish, Exeter, Exmouth, Okehampton, Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge, Milverton, Sampford Peverell, Taunton, Tiverton, and Uffculme. Apologies were received from 2 committee members: Bruce Benton and Brian Chislett and 12 associations: Ashburton, Branton, Chittlehampton, Chudleigh, Instow, Kingsteignton, Milverton, Newton & Noss, Northam, South Molton, Stokeinteignhead, and Totnes.

- 3. Minutes of the 2024 AGM.** These were approved and signed.

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

- 5. Secretary's report.** As one association asked me to find out what other associations did about catering, I got engaged in significant correspondence – mostly shared with everyone – I hope some of you found it helpful.

I have received several very positive comments regarding the most recent very useful newsletter which I have passed on to Bruce, our editor.

As I am now retiring as Secretary, I should like to thank you for the help and support you have all given over the past 7 years and hope we will find someone – hopefully younger - to take over.

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

The balance sheet for 2024-5 was circulated. On 1st April 2024 we had £366.53 in the current account and £10,171.32 in the reserve account, making a total of £10, 537.85. On 31st March 2025 we had £82.63 in the current account and £10,512.14 in the reserve account, making a total of £10,594.77. Claire told us that she keeps as little as possible in the current account as the reserve account pays interest. It was agreed that we can afford to keep next year's subscription at £15 and the insurance at £105 although the insurance we pay will be going up.

The balance sheet for April 1st to October 16th 2025 was also circulated. This showed £615.98 in the current account and £9,713.13 in the reserve account, making a total of £10,329.11.

7. Webmaster & Newsletter Editor's report. I have added the latest newsletter and updated the News & Minutes, the Monica Saunders Award pages and the members list with new recruits and leavers. As we discussed at the last meeting, I have set up a page for Twinning groups offering to share travel costs to reduce prices. Details for Northam, Clovelly, Upper Culm and Bampton's visits in 2026 are on the website.

In the last 90 days, there have been 160 visitors (80% new, 20% returning) to the site, (100 from Devon & Somerset, 51 other UK, 9 outside UK).

If you have comments on the website, good or not, or any ideas on what can be included please let me know.

The Autumn newsletter was a bumper edition which was great to see so many articles being sent in.

Some email providers have a limit in the size of attachments, so I provided a 'lite' version with several photographs removed; however, I understand this was too big for one or two recipients.

I propose going forward that once the newsletter is available on the website, we advise twinning associations with the link and let them view the newsletter directly on the website.

8. Matters arising from the Committee Meeting. The winning article from the Autumn Newsletter was from Braunton.

9. Amendments to the Constitution. The amendments as circulated with additional "and Somerset" being inserted in a couple of places were all agreed.

10. Election of Officers and Committee. The following were elected, Chairman: Sue Moreton, Vice-Chairman: Mary Lowther, Secretary: Bruce Benton (until a permanent Secretary can be appointed), Treasurer: Claire Benton, Committee members: Josie Mardon and Jean Aplin to serve two years, Dill Cameron to serve one year (replacing Brian Chislett who wished to resign). Maurice Mardon was elected last year to serve for two years.

11. Presentation of the Monica Saunders Award and Don Leech Tankard. The Monica Saunders trophy for the best newsletter contribution 2024-5 was presented to Bampton Association and the Don Leech tankard was received by Claire, on behalf of Bruce Benton the author of the best article, who was unable to attend.

12. Any other business. Beryl Whidden from Exeter mentioned a town in Italy that is seeking a twin town in Devon. Representatives from Uffculme offered to explore the possibility. And Cullompton is possibly seeking a new twin town in France as they are having problems in getting any response from their current twin town.

There followed a session of sharing experiences, ideas and problems that arise when visiting or hosting.

SIGNED

DATE