

BATHEASTON TWINNING ASSOCIATION

2015 Annual General Meeting Monday March 23rd at the Rhymes Pavilion at 7:30

MINUTES

Present: (Committee) David Gledhill, Brin Johnson, Forbes Roberson, Sally Robertson, Peter Davenport, , Kathryn Eardley, Martin Veal (late arrival)

(Members) Pam Blanking, Cherie Cooper, Diana Pidgeon, George and Jane Riley, Susanne Hagen, Emma Adams, Sue Oldfield, Carol Wilkinson, Brian Kallender, Jean Connor, Carole Bond.

1. Apologies and welcome

Apologies were received from Tim Davies, Lisa Brown

David opened the meeting by welcoming what was a very pleasing increase in the normal number of attendees.

2. Minutes of last AGM 13th March 2014

The minutes were circulated in advance by email. They were accepted as a true record and approved by Carole Bond and seconded by Peter Davenport.

3. Matters arising from the minutes None.

4. Chairman's Report

The report is transcribed below:

Many of you will have received the note from Tim Davies and whilst it should be read out when it comes to the election of the committee, because it forms the basis of much of what I have to say, I will, with your permission read it out now:

(It read as follows)

I am not standing for re-election this year.

I have been a member of the Committee for eight years and was deputy chairman for the first six of those.

I have told David that, if needed, I am happy to help with the end of May fundraising event and the Oudon visit this July.

I thoroughly enjoy the annual get togethers with the Twinning people of Oudon and Batheaston; here and over there.

I look forward to taking part in those long weekends for as long as they last.

I fear however that the combination of the apparent lack of interest shown during the past few years for our fundraising events and the small number of people outside the Committee who are prepared to host

*our Oudon guests is threatening the future of the Twinning.
I want to use this opportunity to ask people who have previously been involved to get involved again
and to ask those who haven't to give it a go.
The most important point is that both here and over there the long weekends are the best fun; so are the
fundraisers for the few that bother to turn up
Having said that, more people need to get involved with the fundraisers and the organisation of the
visit from Oudon and our visit over there
I have got to know people from Oudon who are now real friends. Kathy and I see them not just at the
Twinning weekends and we were touched to be invited to their daughter's wedding a few years back
I want to use my "resignation" to say to people that there is so much fun to be had in meeting ordinary
people from Oudon who are people like us –from all backgrounds- decorators, physios ,lorry drivers,
teachers, builders- they just happen to be French !
Please get involved.
Unless you Use it you will Lose it
Thank you
Tim Davies"*

I fully endorse everything that Tim has said and I myself have considered long and hard my position as chairman of this association and whether I should put myself forward for another year.

It is a superb association with splendid aims – to further our links and friendships with the people of Oudon – but as Tim points out the continuance of those links falls on just a handful of people, so much so that events rarely include more than a few familiar faces and the majority of those are already members of this committee.

I am aware there is a genuine fear among many that to be a member of this association is to talk and understand French. Not so. Believe me there are plenty of us on both sides of the channel that cannot speak the visitor's language, but that does not hold us back

Last year we travelled to Oudon where we were treated like visiting Royalty or perhaps not, given French history. We were wined dined and taken out as a group to visit a vineyard and most of us went on a most enjoyable bike ride (some went on an even longer bike ride, but you did find us again eventually, didn't you Brin).

We were lucky enough to be in Oudon for the annual Fete de la Musique – a music festival that takes over the whole village for one evening bringing in crowds of people from across the area. Possibly more this year than normal as one of the attractions was a band made up of three members of this committee, plus two other female vocalists, Carole Bond and Cecilia Lepoer Power

This year the Oudonnaise will be visiting us here in Batheaston to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the twinning over the weekend of July 11/12th and not to be outdone we are hoping to organise our own Fete de la musique that will involve local people providing local music and dance in local venues.

Some of you will recall the enormously successful Fete de la Musique in 2006 which was organised by, among others, Carole Bond. We discovered talent in every part of the village – there were gigs in pubs, in gardens, in the church hall. There were professional musicians, amateur musicians and even people who didn't know until a few months previously that they were musicians at all. There was dance, there was singing, and there was a spectacular concert in a marquee in the Glebe fields to cap off a weekend bathed in sunshine.

We can't promise the sunshine this year, but we are hopeful, that subject to funding (some of which has already been pledged by our Parish Council) we will repeat the success and enjoyment of nine years ago.

None of this comes without a modicum of effort. We need people to organise the weekend, we need people to volunteer as hosts, we need people to give us their support not just for the weekend (thought that will be appreciated) but all the year around.

When we are not organising the visits that alternate annually between here and there, we endeavour to come up with fund raising events to make it all possible.

Because this is the tenth anniversary we want to, if possible exceed all that has gone before. But we can't do it without your help

We are in serious danger of becoming a self-fulfilling committee of self-interest. What we organise, we enjoy, which simply isn't the point.

We want the whole village to be involved in this association, but we have repeatedly failed to involve new blood. We have tried poster campaigns, articles in the Parish bulleting and in Local Look. We have tried to involve the local school. We have contacted as many local organisations as we can think of and we have even tried door to door leafletting, but mostly to no avail.

Which is odd, because everyone we have taken with us to Oudon have said they have enjoyed

themselves immensely. Everyone we have talked into hosting have said subsequently that they have had a great time.

So what are we doing wrong? If you know then please do tell us, we are all ears.

I am aware our original membership is now ageing and are reluctant to travel and I am aware that at the other end of the spectrum younger members do not feel they have the space in their houses to reciprocate hospitality. And again we are aware that there are those that think they have to either speak or understand French.

Tim quite rightly sums it up with the phrase Use or you will lose it.

For my part, this will be my last year as chairman (subject to the vote in a few minutes of course), and I really hope that this is the year that we can get the message out that twinning is fun and can at its best not just bring together two villages hundreds of miles apart, but bring together villagers here, be they from Bannerdown, Northend, Elmhurst or the High Street.

The report was accepted by Brin and seconded by Forbes.

5. Treasurers Report

Forbes circulated the figures for the previous year which show a small increase in funds to £4787.73 plus £20 cash.

He discussed the difficulty of fund raising and potential losses but expressed no concern as our funds are at a good level. Fund raising should simply replace funds expended on trips and we should be looking at any additional funding to expand the scope of our activities and encourage new participants.

The risk is that if expenditure outstrips the fund raising we will cease to be able to fund the regular visits.

A copy of the report was issued to the meeting and is filed with these minutes.

The report was accepted by George Riley and seconded by Kathy Eardley.

6. Election of Officers and Committee

The committee reluctantly accepted the resignation of Tim Davies as detailed above. The remaining committee members were re-elected. The committee now comprises:

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| David Gledhill | - | Chairman |
| Peter Davenport | - | Deputy Chairman |
| Forbes Robertson | - | Treasurer |
| Brin Johnson | - | Secretary/Membership secretary |
| Sally Robertson | - | Officer |
| Lisa Brown | - | Officer |
| Martin Veal | - | Officer |
| Kathryn Eardley | - | Officer |

Additional committee volunteers were requested but none came forward. Additional help was urged, especially during the visit coinciding with the Fete. Jane Riley repeated her offer of a day at her home/studio for an art

exhibition.

The visit dates were confirmed as being the weekend of the 11th/12th of July, the visitors staying three nights, Friday to Sunday and that the event now has a Facebook page and is on Twitter. It was confirmed that conversations are in place with Encore to perhaps some of their upcoming production. Sue Oldfield expressed keen interest in involving the local Morris Dancing group, Mr. Wilkins' Shilling.

7. Any other business

There was no other business.

8. Date and venue of next AGM

To be held in February or March of 2016, actual date and venue to be decided.