

WELWYN ANGLO-FRENCH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

on

*Wednesday, 10 September, 2014 at the Civic Centre, Welwyn
at 7.30 p.m.*

Minutes

<u>Present</u>	Chairman	- Nigel Jeffery
	Vice-Chairman	- David Clarke
	Secretary	- Susan Nice
	Treasurer	- Howard Hughes
	Committee Member	- John Winchester
	15 other members	

Nigel welcomed members and thanked them for attending our 41st AGM.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from 15 members.

2 Notification of items of Any Other Business

Dave C would like to mention Twinning weekend photos.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 September 2013

Approved unanimously.

Matters arising None

4 Review of the past year

We are pleased overall with how things have gone and a good financial position means that we have scope for future development. We have a greater public presence now, for example in Welwyn week at Singlers Marsh and our more prominent position at the Street Market in Codicote Road. We have participated in events in Welwyn Garden City and are in touch with the Town Centre Manager. We recruited 24 people in 2013 -14.

Nigel mentioned the launch of the 100 Club and of its progress, with the final draw to be made this evening. He thanked John Winchester for initiating this; Nigel will now take it over.

Our President Audrey Maidment is unable to continue for reasons of ill health. The Constitution requires the committee to select a new President at its next meeting. Anyone with thoughts on this matter was invited to contact Nigel.

We decided to do the Twinning weekend differently and the French welcomed the changes, but there were glitches. The service provided by Cozy's was disappointing and Nigel will write to them after this meeting. The fact that one guide did not turn up had a negative effect on the Jack the Ripper tour. It was agreed that the plans were too ambitious and that a simpler programme for the day would be more appropriate next time (a decision the committee had already taken). It was felt that as our financial position was good we should be prepared to spend out in 2016.

The idea of having a Gala Dinner was discussed which, though very good, is hard work and expensive. Nigel B praised the professionalism of the North Star and thought it might make an alternative venue, and Sandra recommended the Mill Green Golf Club.

Nigel expressed thanks to all members who have supported us, and in particular to those who helped during Welwyn week. He thanked the committee, especially David Finn who has now stepped down, and Howard who after 5 years as treasurer will now cover grant seeking and wider poster distribution.

Special thanks are due to Rob and Vernonne for the posters, and hopefully Rob's designs can feature on our marketing material. Vernonne praised Janice Kaye's efforts with the French conversation group and Nigel endorsed that.

Nigel thanked members who had put up our young French friend Nicolas and explained that we had been able to arrange accommodation at a favourable rate, which included a contribution to WAFTA funds.

We did not receive our usual contribution from the Parish Council this Twinning weekend, but the P C itself has suffered a loss of funding which has affected its support of many community groups.

5 Approval of the Accounts for the year to 31 July 2014

Howard said that we have done well financially, in particular with the quiz which raised £944. The wine tasting raised over £400. The insurance has gone up a little. But we have managed a surplus in a year when the French were here (though we spent less than usual on the Weekend). The expenditure 2 years ago was higher because of the cost of the Gala Dinner.

Dave C mentioned the grant from the District Council and thanked Sandra for her role in securing that. It is not yet spent.

The Accounts were approved unanimously.

6 Election of Officers and appointment of other Committee Members

John Winchester was proposed to take over the role of Treasurer and Tatiana (Nina) had been nominated to join the committee; both were approved unanimously as was the re-election of the other existing members.

Nigel invited nominations from the floor but there were none.

7 Election of Honorary Auditor

George Gosling was unanimously re-elected as Honorary Auditor

8 Approval of the level of subscriptions in 2015-16

It was agreed unanimously that the level should remain at £10 for a family and £5 for single members.

Sandra asked about the free membership scheme. Nigel explained that in his experience it has led to more people taking an interest in our organisation. 2 - 3 people have continued as paid members each year, a conversion rate of 10-15%. It was therefore felt worthwhile to continue with the scheme, but annual approval will be sought. The differential pricing of tickets does reward the people who pay the subscription.

9 Future events – information and discussion

David outlined what has so far been arranged for the coming year -

Friday 31 October Michael Bunn's talk on the Railway of the Somme

Sunday 7 December A lunch time Christmas event (though with a different format to last year)

January Our quiz (details to be finalised)

February/March A talk on Japan

April A wine tasting by Majestic

Nigel asked for ideas from the floor and David Finn suggested that we should give a 5 minute presentation about the Twinning at the start of the quiz.

John then spoke about the Development Group, which has done a Situation Analysis; the next step is to form a working party and to devise an Action Plan. Non-committee members may be approached to help. The aim is to increase membership and especially to encourage participation by young people; this is something that grants can assist with. The Group will be subject to review by the committee. It was suggested that strategic issues be looked at as part of their brief, e.g. the impact on the Twinning should the U K leave the E U.

Nigel felt we should be prepared to offer some financial support to identified groups who showed some interest in exchanges but may have limited financial resources.

10 Any Other Business

David requested that, if anyone had photos of the Twinning weekend please could they be made available for the website.

The meeting closed at 9.40 and was followed by cheese and wine and a free draw for a bottle of Champagne.