

## **BRIDGWATER-MARSA TWINNING ASSOCIATION.**

### **Minutes of meeting 20/01/2014.**

**Present-**Mike and Di Grabner, Steve and Pat Morgan, Helmi Holder-Wolfe, Joseph Abela, Mayor Dave Loveridge, Deputy Mayor Steve and Stella Austen, Councillor Adrian Moore ( who was Mayor in the very early days of the formation of the Association ), Barbara and Gordon Taylor.

**Apologies-** James Morgan and Shirley Loveridge.

**Minutes of last meeting-** All had received and no matters arising.

**Chairman's report-** **MG** thanked **DL** for the use of the Mayors Parlour for the meeting. He asked **PM** to help him with describing the wedding of Annalisa Debono ( the Mayor of Marsa's Daughter) to Andrew Pace on 13<sup>th</sup> December to which the Grabner's and Morgan's had been invited. We were transported by taxi to the church in Siggiewi where we joined family and friends for the mass- **MG** recognising some of the Latin from his youth and of course the rest was in Maltese- it was a very interesting service. Annalisa was smiling all the time. We were then taken by taxi again across the island to Naxxar for the reception in a palace for 600 people. We met many people we knew Adrian (Executive Secretary to Marsa council) and his wife Lorraine, Dominic and Claudette Spencer, Joe a councillor who came to Bridgwater on their first visit, and another councillor Noel who was very interested in us. We also met the minister for Culture/Local Government Jose Herrera to whom **PM** gave a Christmas card from the Association. We were also introduced to many members of both families and friends. A wonderful occasion. We were then taken by taxi again back to our hotel.

On Sunday we caught the bus to Marsa to attend their Christmas Festival. We first went to the Bridgwater Playing Field where **MG** had planted a Palm in 2005- it is still growing well and children using the play equipment. At the festival there was a stage where there was singing and dancing acts. There were stalls and rides for children also as **SM** pointed out there was a Christmas cake that was an attempt at the biggest Christmas cake- a huge pole with layers of traditional Christmas cake which **SM** enjoyed a piece. **SA** asked if **SM** had photos- yes he has.

We were taken to the new council office (all in close proximity) which is internally completed; it is accessible for all and will be used to serve the community with computing classes already started. **PM** gave **FD** a letter from **SA** inviting him to Bridgwater. **FD** was very positive.

**Secretary Report-** **PM** explained that after the festival we were taken to Dominic and Claudette home where we were entertained and then taken to Francis and Carmen's home where we met Andrews's parents and later the newlyweds came. Another friend came also so a lovely evening was had.

On Monday we went into Valletta where we went to the Prime Minister's office and we met (by chance) Dr Joseph Muscat (our Honorary Vice President) who was walking around his building. He recognised **PM** and knew who we were which was very satisfying! We were able to hand him a Christmas card from the Association. We then went to an exhibition of cribs which are an important part of Christmas there were about 50 different shapes and sizes and some were moving. On our last evening again we were invited to the Spencer's where Claudette cooked us a wonderful traditional

meal. We were also given a crib each which was fun bringing it home- thankfully Air Malta allowed an extra hand luggage.

**PM** had received an email from Councillor Brian Smedley asking about our Association as he is going to do a presentation to the council about the various twinning associations in the town. He is willing to come and talk to us re Funding/ twinning. **DL** and **SA** explained that **BS** is very knowable and knows how to access funding and is trying to bolster twinning in the town. **PM** had sent all the information he asked for, **SA** asked if she would send a copy to him. The idea of linking with the other groups for a social event had been tried many years ago without much success.

**DL** explained that a contingent from China has visited the town and were hoping to set up a friendship as it is an area that is very interested in Cider production so it will be a business link and they need help to improve to EU standards.

**PM** had received an email from Raymond Montebello (secretary of the Marsa Historical Society) wishing us a Happy New Year and had sent a calendar to **JA** which included pictures of our visit in April, It was passed around the meeting. He was going to contact our Civic Society as they are now in touch.

**PM** asked why the Bristol Road sign had been repositioned without the Marsa Twining addition as a new one is now in position in Taunton which is now on the main sign. She asked who she needed to be in contact with. **DL** said there was still road works that are yet to be completed and he hopes it will be replaced completely.

**PM** thanked **TB** for all hers and Colin's work in placing our Christmas tree in the Methodist Christmas Tree Festival which took place while she was in Malta.

Since the formation of our website in Nov 2007 we have had 78,144 hits.

**PM** also submitted a bill for printer ink.

**Treasurer Report- SM** said we have in the bank £799.58p.

**Membership Secretary report- TB** has tried to contact previous members and is waiting to hear from Graham and Kay Granter and Penrose School and has left many messages at school but has not had a reply.

**Reports from Members-DL** had Christmas cards printed and had sent one to the Mayor of Marsa. Apparently in Malta parents save for their daughter's wedding we felt that must be so as guests were taxied everywhere, a free bar, beautiful buffet, a band etc. **SM** pointed out that he thought the caterers were the same as used at the Art Exhibition as he recognised several people.

**MG** is hoping to hear back from the Carnival President Rita Jones as the committee was having a meeting this month. Dominic and Francis have contacts with the Minister of Culture who appeared very interested in Carnival.

While in the new council offices in Marsa there are many large blank walls- one is going to have a lit Marsa council logo over the stairway, **MG** and **PM** had discussed that we provide something from Bridgwater to help decorate and make a link with us and wondered what we could use. **DL** suggested

we use the beautiful Bridgwater Montage which is hung in the Mayors Parlour the whole meeting thought it would be a good idea. **DL** had recently entertained the artist- **PM** will contact Alan Hurford for the contact details and contact the artist. It was discussed about a dedication plaque and the councillors suggested something with the Town Seal on that can be done by the Town Clerk (**PM** to organise) on parchment. It was suggested we discuss with the artist what it is for **DL** felt he would be pleased that his work would be seen abroad. There was a discussion about framing – **BT** pointed out that if framed and sent it may occur tax but unframed it would not be deemed a work of art. **JA** has contacts in Malta who frame- he will be there February 17<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> March. If we could sort this out he could transport and arrange this.

**SA** suggested and showed us the Town Seal which was very heavy **SA** suggested that if could be made in resin, there was discussion about using Bridgwater Collage Art department but it was felt that the picture would be better from the Association.

#### **Planning for 2014.**

**MG** suggested we have a price to spend for the picture and after discussion a figure of £150 was decided.

**PM** to contact Executive Secretary in Marsa Adrian Attard re official opening date of offices as 9<sup>th</sup> March had been talked about.

**PM** to contact Brian Smedley to arrange date when he could come and talk to us re possible funding from the EU and new ideas for the twinning.

**BT** wondered if we contact the Mercury again to invite people to join.**PM** to do.

**DL** suggested we contact the Manager of Angel Place Shopping precinct Roger Smith if we could have a table and advertise ourselves. A raffle or tombola will attract people. **JA** still has lots of Malta information and suggested if a power point could run CD's of Malta on his laptop. We also have our banner.**PM** remembered that Roger Smith had offered some time ago to help the Association.**AM** suggested we have some Maltese snacks.**SM** pointed out we know of some importers of Maltese food and drink. **PM** to do.

**DL** also suggested that there is a very local radio station which is run from the YMCA called Access FM which broadcasts at least 5 miles around the town and he has heard it as far as Weston. They may be able to do an interview and again publicise ourselves. **PM** to do.

#### **Date, Time and Place Next meeting.**

**DL** offered the use of the Mayors Parlour- a Monday night would be a better one and it was decided early March.

**PM** to contact Brian Smedley to find out when he could be available and will contact all.