

BRIDGWATER- MARSALA TWINNING ASSOCIATION MEETING

August 5th 2014. Held at the Mayors Parlour.

Present- Steve Morgan, Pat Morgan, Joseph Abela, Mike Grabner, Tricia Brown, Steve and Stella Austen.

Apologies- Helmi Holder Wolfe, James Morgan and Di Grabner.

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

Chairman Report- MG Welcomed all and thanked Steve and Stella for the use of their parlour. He hoped all had a good summer and Thanked **HH-W** for attending the Mayors inauguration, **JA** apologised for being unable to attend. **MG** thanked members for attending the International evening held at St George's Hall where all the other twinning groups in town and Mayors from Czech Republic and Italy attended and helped to entertain us. (These Mayors had come for the inauguration of Steve)

MG and **PM** had attended a Twinning Forum meeting on Weds 23rd July where all the others groups French, German, Czech and us were represented. There are also 2 new countries who would like to join us who are linked with the Czech group to make 3 way links. They are Italy and Hungary and have councillors from Town Council to represent them. We all gave information about what is happening with our twinned towns and any plans. Peter Johnson had literally just driven back from Germany so was very up to date! **PM** was able to report that she and **SM** had recently been to Malta and met up with council members and had been shown great kindness and hospitality but as had gone with a friend that is unwell it was a very quiet holiday so had not been to Marsala.

There is a proposed Twinning Conference and after much debate as to when to have it – March 2015 was decided. The idea is for each group to present their own area in as many ways as possible- the area/country, food, drink art, music, sport, education but we will need to present a firm plan. Also who else could we involve promoting Marsala? - will talk further later.

All the Core Grants of £300 from Bridgewater Town Council were handed out.

MG wondered if it would be possible for Steve and Stella to go to Malta in their year of office. They have already been to Czech for a long weekend and possibly to Italy. **SM** had tried hard to get organised for the Marsala Regatta but prices were very expensive and were not viable. We will need to contact Marsala to see if the Art Exhibition in April would be a better opportunity as Steve and Stella are both keen to go as Mayor and Mayoress. It was discussed that September 21st is the 50th anniversary of Malta's Independence and will be a big celebration.

Vice Chairman's Report- JA had put a picture on Facebook of the Art work we had given Marsala Council to celebrate the opening of their new council offices. It has been hung in the Foyer so will be seen by all who visit the offices. On his visit there **JA** was presented by a beautiful souvenir to commemorate the opening of the new offices by our President the Prime Minister of Malta Dr Joseph Muscat. The Association accept it with gratitude and with permission of our Mayor Steve and Mayoress Stella it will be hung with pride in the Mayors Parlour. Photos were taken.

Secretary report- PM reported problems with her computer which had stopped working after printed out agenda and her son will try and resolve the problems. I had emailed Somerset County Council about our twinning name being missed from a new sign that had been replaced on Bristol Road after mayor roadwork's had been completed , I had a routine email but nothing since so have emailed again- awaiting a reply !

The Association has had an invite from our Mayor for 2 members to attend the Civic Service on 21st September at 10.30 am with a lunch after. To be held at the Salvation Army in Moorland Road. Need to reply by 5th September. We will sort out names at next meeting. As already mentioned we went to Malta very last minute booked on Friday and flew out on Tuesday! Dominic Spencer was kind enough to drive us to and from the airport which helped our friend who was exhausted. We were met by all which included Marsa Mayor really kind as we had been delayed for 2 hours. We did not go far from the hotel but we had visitors on 2 nights and were invited to Dominic's caravan for a BBQ and met both their parents. Francis (Mayor) and Carmen also came to us on our last night .Dominic will try again to contact the football nursery (this is where linking with the Twinning Forum may be useful as the leader Councillor Brian Smedley has arranged many football tours) There is some thought that there may be elections in March which may alter the Marsa council but was not certain. I had seen pictures of Dominic on Facebook and asked what he was doing – it was a conference about sustainable tourism which included Marsa.

Treasurer report- SM reported we were in credit with £920.62p in the bank. He thanked the Town Council for the £ 300 core grant and will send receipt back to Alan Hurford (Town Clerk)

Membership Secretary- TB reported that she had sent us all an updated membership list. She has had no replies from schools. She has had severe problems trying to contact Penrose School as they are in temporary accommodation while the school is being rebuilt. Danny is the teacher from St Marys school who is interested in twinning but as yet has not been to a meeting (we only have his email at school and of course it has been summer holidays) we were wondering what he expects and **TB** wondered if he would like us to go into school and talk to the children which **PM** had done when St Georges were first getting involved. **PM** was happy to do again.

Twinning Forum/ Conference.

Bridgwater International which is run by Councillor Brian Smedley appears to have a wealth of experience arranging exchanges, accessing accommodation and EU monies also has many contacts in the EU. We were wondering if joining may be able to further our cause. **PM** will, when able send out all the information and minutes of the Forum meetings so everyone will have time to read it all, study and can make a decision.

Ideas for the Conference display.

Francis Debono Mayor of Marsa- professional photography and many contacts in Marsa /Malta

Marsa – need their help-what they could provide

Food and Drink- **SM** has a contact but **JA** said much can be got from Amazon. Typical menus.

Scouts

Historical and Cultural Society Marsa/ Bridgwater

JA has many CD/DVD about Malta and Marsa which can be run through a lap top as he did for Fair 2 years ago.

Maltese Tourist Board London and Valletta.

Maltese High Commissioner in London His Excellency Mr Norman Hamilton. **JA** knows him from the past and has plans at some stage to go to London and introduce himself and the Association. Apparently he is interested in tourism so may be able to help. **PM** will draft a formal letter of introduction for **JA** to take with him.

SM suggested Mdina glass (may have a contact through the Marsa Regatta Club) for information

?? Air Malta again information, visual props.

To all think what we may be able to do as next Forum meeting 1st October

Any Other Business.

PM explained that one of the 1st Bridgwater Scouts Rachael Wise who went with us to Malta has been through a vigorous selection procedure and been selected to go to the World Jamboree which is being held in Japan in 2015 . She has to raise £ 3000 .**PM** wondered as she had come with Grace and gave us a talk after their visit to Malta if we could give her a small donation to help with her fund raising. A general discussion and **MG** suggested we gave her £ 50 as long as she tells others that she has been to Malta and we (the Twinning Association) have enabled her to go to Japan. This was agreed by all. **SA** suggested that she asked Sedgemoor District Council as she may be able to get a grant from them- she should contact Rob Semple.

PM to arrange suitable time and place to present cheque with photos to publicise us and Rachael's fundraising efforts.

Place Date and Time next Meeting

Mayors Parlour Thursday 4th September at 7.30 hrs.