

BRIDGWATER-MARSA TWINNING ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 5/11/2014

At The Mayor's Parlour.

Apologies-James Morgan and Di Grabner

Present-Mayor and Mayoress Steve and Stella Austen, Mike Grabner, Steve and Pat Morgan, Gordon and Barbara Taylor, Tricia Brown, Joseph Abela, Helmi Holder Wolff, Danny Houton.

Welcome by the Chairman- Mike Grabner welcomed all. He introduced us to **Danny Houton** who is a teacher from St Mary's school. He thanked **Steve** and **Stella** for the use of the Parlour again and making us so welcome. He thanked us all for our regular meetings and our commitment to the association. He thanked **PM** as an excellent secretary who works so hard and maintains all the many links. Without her hard work the association would not be so good. He thanked **Joseph** (Vice Chair) **Steve** (treasurer) and **Tricia** (Membership secretary) for all their work also.

MG also talked briefly about the Town Twinning Forum which we are engaging with to help us (will mention later) He also talked about the Mendip Community Support Group which he has joined us with as it will increase our profile as documentation is available on their website www.mendipcommunitysupport.org.uk password available on request

If it becomes unviable there would be a charge of £1 liquidation cost.**SA** pointed out this was a normal charge. **MG** read out the aims and objectives- he had received many emails and hopes that something may come out of joining. **TB** showed the Local Reach Magazine which had the article **PM** had submitted re the AGM.

Town Twinning Forum- **MG** and **PM** had been attending these meeting and **PM** has been sending any information on to our members. At the last meeting we had been given your permission to discuss with Councillor Brian Smedley the pros and cons of joining Bridgwater International which does incorporate some of Bridgwater twinning associations. **MG**, **PM** and **SM** met with **BS** at **SM's** home We discussed in detail coming under his umbrella .In essence **BS** felt we were a well established group, he was interested in our history and explored how we operated as opposed to the others. He would not want to interfere but would help us if he could -offered help to achieve trips to Marsa as he has a large experience. He would take full responsibility .**SA** and **Stella** have been on trips organised by **BS** to Italy and Czech and he is a great organiser, keeps costs very low (very good value for money) and very busy! **BS** needs a contact in Marsa and explained that Councillor Dominic Spencer has the special interest in Twinning- **PM** had given **BS** his contact addressee's but **BS** would wait to hear from **DS**. Holmberg (German twinning) is not included in Bridgwater International and **MG** explained to **BT** as she had asked before that there will be no financial implications for us. She felt pleased we would maintain our independence but pleased (as everyone expressed this) that **BS** has offered th help us which is a great relief to us all.**BS** would like us to write and summarise this - the meeting agreed.

As **BS** has taking choirs to other regions it was wondered if it could be arranged for the Marsa Art Exhibition in April as there is a wonderful concert on the opening night. **JA** also explained there was a Morris dancing Group in Bridgwater which would certainly be a very English (and local)

traditional musical/dancing. **DS** had also suggested an Oompha band in Malta that always pay for them travelling etc, **SM** had suggested Carnival but the Mayor and Mayoress are planning an Easter event.

The Town Twinning conference planned for March 7th at the Arts Centre – **BS** needs £50 towards hiring the centre and advertising- the meeting agreed to this and **SM** will arrange to get the cheque to him.

MG pointed out it was Marsa Mayor Francis Debono Birthday today so wished him a very Happy Birthday as did all the members.

Minutes from AGM 2013- all received and happy with them.

Update from Vice Chairman- Joseph Abela thanked **PM** for placing 2 articles and pictures in the Mercury (local paper) One of **JA** presenting plaque from Marsa new council offices to Mayor **Steve Austen**. The second was when **MG** and **PM** presented £50 to scout Rachael Wise to help towards raising money to go to World Jamboree in 2015. **JA** had posted them on Facebook on his and several different Marsa pages. **JA** replied to **PM** the name of the Maltese High Commissioner is Mr Norman Hamilton who **JA** knows from many years ago. He has an interest in Tourism- his own company in Malta .**PM** understood that **JA** had hoped to visit him in London but circumstances had not been able to at the moment. She wondered if she should write a letter to introduce the Association and explained about the Twinning Conference. **MG** wondered if **JA** could email the High Commissioner to see if he would like to meet up with **JA** or with members. **BT** suggests we send a Charismas Card from Bridgwater- apparently can get from the Blake Museum.

Update from Secretary- Pat Morgan explained about the road sign on the approach to Bridgwater on the Bristol Road. Welcome to Bridgwater has twinned towns but is missing Marsa I contacted Lawrence Hacking as suggested at the last meeting and he replied that he had forwarded it to Daniel Mawer of Somerset County Council who promptly replied on 13/10 to say he will chase it up at the next meeting with the developer's agent. I had this type of reply back in June! **SA** asked if I could forward the correspondence to him.

PM has contacted Marsa council, Francis (mayor) and Dominic (councillor with special interest) about twinning conference on March 7th. They had hoped to bring a delegation but the Government has announced an election in March. Dominic is planning to come but is awaiting a programme from **BS** to put before the council for funding.**PM** has offered him accommodation.

PM thanked **JA** for placing pictures on Facebook-there was a comment from Alex Borg from the Marsa Football youth nursery who asked if we could help with a link. We are now "friends "on Facebook so will wait and see.**BS** has arranged several football trips so may be able to help.

PM had a message from **DS** in Marsa as he was concerned as they had been trying to contact St Mary's but had not had a response- I explained it was half term and that **Danny** did get his emails via his phone. Marsa are keen to start the link. I am still waiting to hear re talking to the children.

Danny then explained he is in contact with the teacher of year 5 in Marsa there are 23 pupils in **Danny's** class and 18 in Marsa. They both have computers in class and are setting up a website.

PM has lots of updates from **BS** re all the visits that have taken place to various twinned towns so

will forward them to our members.**SA** said there is now a page on Facebook for Bridgwater Mayor that the deputy Mayor Leigh Redmond has started .Please look at it !

PM has purchased the Poppy Cross (£15) for the Remembrance Day Parade on Sunday 9th **SA** invited us all to join him and **Stella** in the Mayors Parlour from 9.45hrs before we parade to Kings Square to the memorial for the service.

We have been invited to join in the Christmas Tree festival at the Methodist Church which is the 12th-14th December. This will be the 3rd year we have taken part. There will be musical entertainment on the Friday evening. **PM** thanked **TB** for organising it last year as they were in Malta. Everyone agreed and it was suggested that perhaps St Mary's school may be interested to take part also.**PM** will reply.

PM pointed out the list of events coming in the town which Alan Hurford the Town Clerk has forwarded to her- she has printed them out for all to see in pack with Agenda and Accounts.

PM has also contacted Dominic to ask the date of the Marsa Art Exhibition

Treasurer Report- Steve Morgan explained the audited accounts were printed on the 3rd page of pack. They had been kindly audited again by Venetia Acland. She has in the past refused a thank you gift but it was suggested we gave her a flower arrangement-all agreed.

We have an income of £1,259.16p

Outgoing £378.54p

Balance of £880.62p

Main outgoings were the print for the new council offices in Malta and packaging.**SM** thanked **JA** for taking it to Malta and presenting it. Explained it was hung in there foyer there for all to see and Marsa council had framed it for which we are very grateful.

We also gave scout Rachael Wise a donation to help raise £3,000 to enable her to go to World Jamboree in 2015.**SM** also thanked Bridgwater Town Council for the Core Grant of £300 which we all agreed.**SM** pointed out he would collect subscriptions at the end of the meeting.

Report by Membership secretary- Tricia Brown said last year we had 27 members but this year only 18 with 2 corporate members – 1st Bridgwater Scout Group and St Mary's School. She has been desperately trying to contact Penrose School who are still in temporary buildings and still not yet in new build. **TB** left a message for the Head teacher and asked if she would contact as AGM tonight but did not reply. **TB** will try and contact those on list who have not attended tonight to see if they still want to belong. When she has an amended list she will send as all one.

She had an email from Travel Zoo with a holiday to Malta for £199 if anyone interested. She has order forms for polo shirts if anyone needs one. Also a membership list which a couple of people were glad to receive.

TB was pleased to see **Danny** here. **MG** asked him if he was happy to be involved who replied he was and is very happy to continue now he is in contact. His children have school emails and although there are more children in his class than Marsa it should not be a problem. At the

moment it will just be his class until it is well established and then possibly other classes in the future. As a child he had a pen friend and felt he learnt much from that experience (others agreed as they had also) it is advantageous that they both speak English and there is little time difference! **PM** explained that if anyone was visiting Malta they would be pleased to take anything with them for the school. When **PM** visits the school **MG** wondered if **JA** (being Maltese) could perhaps like he did when the scouts visited to teach a few basis words to the children. **JA** agreed and **DH** thought a good idea.

Membership fees- **MG** felt there were 3 options 1-would no fee extend membership?

2. Increase by 50% or 3.Keep the fees the same.

After a general discussion it was decided to keep them the same that is £5 individual and £10 for corporate. **Proposed by TB and 2nd by HHW**

Election of Committee- **MG** asked if our President Mayor **Steve Austen** would take the chair which he accepted.

Chairman- **SA** thanked **MG** for his work this year and asked if he was willing to stand again- **MG** replied yes, he was **proposed by SM and 2nd by JA**

Vice Chair-**SA** thanked **JA** for his work and asked if willing to stand again **JA** would be honoured.

He was **proposed by BT and 2nd by SM.**

Secretary- **SA** thanked **Pat** for all her hard work through the year and asked if willing to stand again-agreed. **Proposed by TB and 2nd by JA**

Membership secretary-**SA** thanked **TB** and asked if willing to stand again-yes **so proposed by MG and 2nd by GT.**

SA thought it would be a quick and easy vote! And handed the meeting back to **MG** who accepted.

Twinning Conference.-MG said we have already started thinking and planning.

Food and drink- we can provide tasters of Maltese food and drink. Apparently you can access from Amazon, **SM** has a contact (that Steve Gill has used in the past) but if we Google may be able to find somewhere more local. Will need sample glasses for drinks. **Stella** suggested we could put a collection "pot" if people want to donate a little.

PM will contact the Malta Tourist Board after Christmas who has been very helpful in the past. We have our banner, posters, and books .**MG** suggests that we all have gifts from Marsa and Malta we could display and he asked if we may borrow gifts given to the council from Marsa council to display also- Yes was a very positive reply.

JA has many DVD's about Malta and CD's of Maltese music. We would ask scouts if we could borrow projector and we have laptops to play through.**PM** has asked Scouts for a small display and **MG** wondered if the School may have something by then to include. We could ask Marsa Council if they have any pictures we could display (maybe photocopies) and of course Francis the Mayor is a wonderful photographer so may be able to provide something also.

PM has thought since the meeting that we could contact the Marsa Cultural and Historical Society who may be able to help us. **GT** has offer some photos taken when he was there in the Navy. All contributions will be gratefully received. If the visit is in the school term it would be nice if any visitor from Marsa could visit St Mary's school.

Any Other Business- MG wondered if we would like a get together before Christmas but some people have a very busy time before so it was decided to plan a meal at the Tudor in the New Year as Stella said they had a good deal if you visit before 7pm. Plan for 16th or 17th Jan 2015. Please let **MG** know if interested. To fund our own meal but some wine provided.

GT thanked the Mayor and Mayoress for their kind hospitality. **TB** has brought in some Christmas raffles for those interested.

Next meeting

Thursday 8th January 2015

Time 7.30 pm

The Mayors Parlour.

