

Minutes of Bridgwater-Marsa Twinning Association

Wednesday 27th July 2016 held at the Mayors Parlour.

Apologies- James Morgan, Pat and Jennie Parker, Tricia Brown, Gordon and Barbara Taylor.

Present- Alex Glassford (Mayor) Mike and Di Grabner, Pat and Steve Morgan, Joseph Abela and Helmi Holder - Wolf.

Chairman's Report- **MG** thanked **AG** and the Town Council for the use of the Mayors Parlour. **MG** felt that Brexit (the UK voting to leave the European Union) will not affect our Twinning Association, our links and ethos will not be effected, we have never had any monies from the EU. He asked **JA** if he had any contact from home (Malta) who said there was some concern how it may affect **JA** but he had heard from the Maltese High Commissioner in London that it should not be a problem as he has lived here for over 6 years. There did not appear to be any worries about tourism.

MG was so pleased that so many people had joined us at the Walled Garden for our 10th Anniversary of the Twinning signing here in April. He thanked everyone for supporting us. There have been some good photos on our webpage. This all happened the day after the Town Twinning Forum that Councillor Brian Smedley had organised that went well for us. The pinnacle of the weekend when the Mayor of Marsa Francis Debono appeared on the Saturday evening before the great evening entertainment- it was a whistle stop visit but so very much appreciated.

We have planned a visit in late October to coincide with the Marsa celebration of the signing done there. **M** and **DG** plus **S** and **PM** have booked a 2 week holiday to be there for the weekend 29th and 30th October. **AG** is planning to go and it was discussed who else was interested- Pat and Jennie Parker and **PM** will contact Steve and Stella Austen, Bill Monteith and his wife, Ian and Sonia Tucker and possibly Graham and Kay Granter (**AG** pointed out that Graham is the Deputy Mayor) **JA** was asked but is going soon for a month so unsure.

MG has organised presentations with **PM** about the Association next year in March for the Civic Society and 19th October for the Senior Citizens Forum. **PM** did speak to Jim who organises Probus talks but has not heard back.

Vice Chairman's report- **JA** explained that he is missing home very much and has given up several of his interests here and with great regret he wants to step down from this post for personal reasons as from now. **MG** put into words our sorrow at his decision and thanked him for all the work **JA** has done over the years very quietly. He has helped so much with his knowledge and contacts. **AG** expressed the councils regret also. **PM** asked him if he would remain a member, **JA** said he would much to all delight as he is very passionate about both the countries. **HH-W** also expressed her thanks and love for all he has done for us, 2nd by all.

Secretary Report- **PM** explained some of the work involved in the planning for the Town Twinning Forum and the planting on the 10th Anniversary of the Twinning in Bridgwater in April. Victor at Visit Malta .com had provided 3 big boxes of information and some posters. **PM** had brought some seeds he had sent called the Maltese Cross which she handed out to members (there are still more left) There is still much left over which will come in useful for the talks arranged. The staff at Cannington Walled Gardens had been wonderful with many emails to get the event arranged (which was a wonderful afternoon) It had also been published in the Mercury thanks to Brian Smedley. There was even one of the ladies there I have been able to put in contact with the French group who are having a very large anniversary this year as she took a group to La Ciotat years ago and her sister has married a man from there and now lives in Paris.

Dominic Spencer (Marsa) asked me about obtaining a Local plant that would live in Malta as he had contacts in the Agricultural Ministry to be able to import it to Malta. I contacted the Walled Gardens who suggested a

Cheddar Pink as that grows on the cliffs in the Cheddar Gorge. I also contacted Monkton Elms (a local garden centre) and Monty Don (a TV presenter who also writes in a Sunday paper) but no reply. Thanks to **JA** who suggested Roy Cheek who is a really knowable horticulturist who travels to Malta with tourists visiting the different Gardens on the island and all over the world. It took some time but he got back to me with 2 suggestions 1.the Glastonbury Thorn (Crataegus Monogyna bi flora)which flowers twice a year and is always sent to the Queen at Christmas(a good link as she loves Malta) The legend goes that Joseph of Arimathea came looking for the Holy Grail in Glastonbury and planted his staff which grew into the thorn. Roy also gave me a whole list of nurseries that have the plant and their contacts. The other choice was a plant he had developed that again would tolerate hot weather called Osteospermum Cannington Roy (Roy developed it when he was in charge at Cannington before he retired)again he gave me a list of nurseries. All this information I sent to **DS** and he is going to investigate.

We have been to the Walled Gardens and the plant which **JA** grew and was planted by **DS** is growing well as are the 2 other spare plants. Roy tells me that the one he has did have buds on it.

TB was kind enough to pass on an email from Christine the teacher at St Marys School who will be teaching the older students in September so I have sent her all the details of the school and explained the holidays and offered to do a talk when she would like it. I have also offered to take any light weight letters etc when we visit in October.

We were sad to hear that the family dog (aged 15) of the Debono family had died .

The Marsa Historical Society have been in touch as they have their 15th anniversary and would like to meet up with us when we are there in October for a Maltese evening ,**MG** suggested it would be a good idea when **AG** is in Malta.

PM just wanted to let everyone know that there was to be a re enactment of the Battle of Sedgemoor on 30th and 31st of July on the Fair field. Battle at 2 pm a free event.

Treasurer report- SM explained we have £658.43p in the bank. He explained we had outgoings for £ 55 for the silver salver we presented to Francis Debono and Dominic Spencer at the Arts Centre during the evening entertainment at the Twinning Forum. **AG** gave **SM** the Bridgwater Town Council Core Funding of £300. **SM** thanked **AG** who will pass on our thanks to the Town Council.

Any other Business-MG suggested we mark the Marsa 10th anniversary when we are there ? with what.

AG will discuss with the Town Council what they may take.

Ideas were suggested –Clock, something wooden, Glass, will need to find contacts for local craft people.**PM** will contact Alan Hurford re beautiful ? paper used for agreements. Maybe contact Arts Centre, Museum Library for Craft people.

Date of next meeting

Tuesday 6th September 2016 at 7pm.

Mayors Parlour.