

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Bridgwater-Marsa Twinning Association.

10th November 2016 at the Mayors Parlour

Present- Alex Glassford, Mike Grabner, Joseph Abela, Pat and Steve Morgan, Tricia Brown Ian Tucker, Helmi Holder Wolff, Christine Homewood (teacher from St Mary's school)

Apologies- Di Grabner, Steve and Stella Austen, Pat and Jennie Parker, James Morgan, Sonia Tucker, Barbara and Gordon Taylor.

All were welcomed by the chairman **MG** who thanked **AG** and the Town Council for the use of the room.

Minutes of the last meeting-All had received and agreed.

Mrs Christine Homewood- who explained it had taken a while to start the link between St Mary's school and the Government school in Marsa but she is now teaching Year 5 children (9-10 year olds) all the children had now written to Marsa. E learning is in the process of being set up and hopefully Skype next year. They are planning to send another letter before Christmas. The children had been delighted to receive a goodie bag about Malta (**PM** and **SM** had taken much information from Visit Malta .com) which had been sent to help promote Malta when we held the Twinning Conference.**CH** asked if we could give the children a talk after Christmas as this term is very busy. They had Goggled the school but we think it may have been the wrong one! They are looking forward to planting the seeds in the school allotment in the spring. It was a very good link as both sides spoke English so no language barrier. **IT** asked if the school awarded badges but they do not, as one boy in Marsa had been very interested in the badges that Adam Tucker had on his uniform blazer and it was explained to him you had to work hard to achieve them in senior school. **CH** also asked **JA** for the correct pronunciation of Mr Norbert Pulis name as they were unsure- **JA** explained it as in English it sounds like Police.

Chairman's Report- **MG** said he was sad to see that the **AGM** was poorly attended but understands prior commitments. He thanked all the committee, members and especially **PM** as she works tirelessly to promote the link with Councillor Dominic Spencer in Marsa and all the organisations involved. He thanked **JA** as he has worked hard and tirelessly he has enabled many links and given a very valid input .We are very grateful for all his knowledge, we are very sorry that he has given up the Vice Chairman's post and in gratitude **MG** presented him with a beautiful accolade printed in a frame. **JA** was overcome and will always treasure it and take it with him when he finally goes back to Malta.**MG** thanked **SM** for keeping a close eye on the budget, **TB** as membership secretary , special thanks for all the work she has done organising the link with St Mary's school. We are a small group that has achieved quite alot. The Twinning Conference – we had a very good display as did the other Twinners and it was deemed a success. The old guards from Germany looked splendid in their old costumes/uniforms. It is planned to take part again next year on 22nd April. The evening at the Arts Centre was a success; Dominic, Claudette Spencer's and their girls went down a storm and stole the show! The biggest surprise was when Francis Debono (Mayor of Marsa) arrived for a 36 hour visit. The Maltese love coming to Bridgwater, the town and its people.

Our 10th Anniversary- **PM** worked hard with Cannington College to arrange the planting of the Maltese National plant (which is on the world rare list) It had been grown by **JA** and called the Maltese Rock Centaury and is marked with a special sign (in English and Maltese)in the Mediterranean greenhouse.**DS** planted it with a royal spade, only used by Prince Edward when the gardens were reopened. The plant is doing extremely well. A wonderful cream tea was provided by the College for the many guests who attended, others twinning groups, family and council members. The College have offered their support in the future.

The anniversary trip to Malta, MG thanked **Alex** for taking time to come which was very much appreciated by us all. Thanked **Pat and Jennie Parker, Ian, Sonia and Adam Tucker** for joining **M and DG, P and SM** who spent 2 weeks there. We had a very busy visit on 21st October we went to Marsa for the unveiling of a statue to celebrate the 100 years of the Capuchin brothers coming to help the poor people of the town **MG** met the artist . We had a meeting with 8 groups, clubs, associations and scouts who explained their aims and explored like minded groups in Bridgwater. **MG** was invited by Raymond Montebello one morning to help celebrate the 15th Anniversary of the Marsa Historical and Cultural Society, an olive tree was planted by **MG** and **FD** overseen by **RM** and the local priest who blessed the tree, we went then to their HQ where we were shown photos and relics of old Marsa, had a talk from a local entomologist who showed us artefacts and a crab that was now extinct in Marsa but existed elsewhere in Malta. We were then given poetry readings of poets that linked England and Malta, after we were treated to refreshments.**RM** presented **MG** with art work he had produced.

We had a visit to the local school which is linked with St Mary's (where **DS** girls go) and were shown around and saw all the research the children had done and the work produced was on many of the walls. We visited 2 classes and gave them information about Bridgwater. **AT** gave a very good talk to one class who were very interested and asked many questions (it was his 16th Birthday and the class sang to him)

We were invited to a formal evening of celebration in the council offices; there were a very large number of people there, all the council, members of all the groups clubs etc including the Regatta members who were all presented with awards. The evening did start with the planting of a Yew sapling by **MG, AG and FD**. The event was to have been held outside but a storm was expected so indoors, **AG** was surprised by having to unveil and plaque to commemorate the event. **MG** was presented with a silver plate to celebrate.**MG** had made a beautiful framed dedication which was presented to **FD**. There was entertainment after speeches and other presentations to local people by the council. The entertainment was a local family band that played traditional instruments. There was food and drink to enjoy.

We were all taken out to an evening meal in a restaurant under the bastions of Valetta, with all the council, staff and families where we renewed many friendships. It was planned to have a boat trip in a traditional boat from Marsa through the Grand Harbour to Birgu but the storm was in full force so we were taken there by bus where we visited the St Lawrence Museum where there were some fascinating exhibits including the George Cross. We went to a high point overlooking the harbour and could hardly stand up! We were then taken to the National Maritime Museum (in the old Bakery of the Royal Navy) which was extremely interesting as so many links between our countries. The final day for 4 of our group we were taken to all the various groups' headquarters to see them in

their own environment with refreshments in many! We also visited the museum of the Holy Trinity Church which few people get to see and the HQ of the Feast

Secretary Report-PM had checked and there had been some 14,253 hits on the website this year.

We have been invited to take part in the Methodist Church Annual Christmas Tree celebration It was decided we would **PM** and **SM** will arrange. Remembrance Service **PM** has obtained the Poppy Cross, to meet at the Mayors Parlour before to parade to King Square at 10.30 am. At the last Twinning Forum meeting it had been suggested that the town has a signpost with directions to all twinned towns and distance- Brain Smedley will bring it up at next meeting. The idea for next year's Twinning Event will be on 22nd April hopefully in Angle Place during the day (as there may be more footfall) and the Arts Centre in the evening with each group providing some entertainment. Our trip to Malta as you have heard was a success, **D and CS** were wonderful hosts providing all 10 of the group with lunch on one occasion and an evening meal on another all on the roof of their home. Plus as it was **DG** birthday she had a birthday cake! On our last evening we entertained our Maltese family at our hotel.

There was a thought that **PM** could contact Alan Jeffery as he did have connections with Morris Men who perhaps could link up with maybe the local group who entertained us at the council offices. She will also email her contact at Visit Malta.com for information for the next conference.

Treasurer Report- SM pointed out the Audited Accounts print out was with the Agenda that **PM** had provided. A total of £398.92 outgoings and a balance of £827.53p the only expenses for the trip to Marsa were £63.70 and £12 for books as gifts. The trip for those who took part was all funded out of our own pockets. All Bank statements and invoices were with **SM** for all to see.

Membership secretary-TB asked all to fill in form so she has everyone's details.

Membership Fees-MG said there were 4 choices 1.Keep the same. 2. Raise them. 3. Lower them or 4. Not have any

At the moment £5 per Adult and £10 corporate

A general discussion was held **SM** pointed out that we are in credit with membership fees and Core Grant from Bridgwater Town Council, if we needed a large expense we would have to fund raise. A vote was held to keep the same Proposed by **HHW and 2nd by JA**.

MG then asked **AG** to chair the meeting for the

Election of Officers-

Chairman- Mike Grabner was proposed by **SM** and seconded by **JA** and accepted

Vice Chair- MG suggested to leave to the next meeting.

Secretary- Pat Morgan was proposed by **JA** and seconded by **MG** she accepted.

Membership Secretary- Tricia Brown was proposed by **SM** and Seconded by **HHW**- she accepted.

Treasurer- SM proposed by **JA** and Seconded by **HHW**—accepted

Any Other Business-JA informed us that he would be going to Malta in February.

A Christmas meal was discussed but decided to hold after Christmas as many people busy before, perhaps in late January or early February.

Press releases, **MG** will write to the Mercury as **PM** has sent in articles that have not been reported, he feels that ours are positive events held in the town and are good news.

AG expressed his enjoyment and feeling of privilege on his first visit to Malta and Marsa; he was treated so well and plans to go back privately but will make sure he visits Marsa. **JA** thanked all who had visited Marsa. **Ian Tucker** had loved his visit and will certainly be going back again. He will make enquiries with our Sea Cadets as they have a band and could link with a band in Marsa.

MG explained he had found out that Marsa Dock No 3 in the Grand Harbour is called the Somerset Dock after the extension was funded by the Earl of Somerset.

PM explained she was due to have extensive surgery to her foot on 14th November so will be out of action for a while.

Date and Time next Meeting

Thursday 12th January 7.30 at the Mayors Parlour.