

Minutes of Bridgwater-Marsa Twinning Association

Annual General Meeting

Friday 23rd November 2018 at 7.30pm at the Mayors Parlour.

Present-Mayor Diogo Roderigues, Steve and Stella Austen, Ian Tucker, Joseph Abela, Margaret Evans, Gordon and Barbara Taylor, Pat Morgan, Mike Grabner, and Ivor Butt.

Apologies- Jennie and Pat Parker, James Morgan, Di Grabner, Chris Tottle.

Minutes of EGM read and received –nothing raised from them.

Chairman's Report-MG welcomed all who had arrived after the Christmas Lights switch on and all the celebrations. He expressed our thanks to Mayor Diogo and the council for the use of the room.

Sadness due to losing two of our very active members Helmi Holder Wolff who lost her life to cancer and Tricia Brown who had been a very hard working Membership Secretary who had worked tirelessly to connect schools with some success in the past but is now unable to attend meetings due to ill health.

The Association has been visible throughout the year at the Mayor Making, Rugby Tour which was wonderfully hosted by Diogo and the junior rugby branch of The Bridgwater and Albion Rugby Club. Also as previous years we attended the Remembrance Service at Kings Square where we laid a Poppy Cross and then to church after. Like all Associations it appears to be the faithful few as there appears to be problems with new members, what should we do? We have the web site need ideas. **MG** does not want us to fold, we are always active trying to make new links. **JA** has done so much with The Maltese High Commission, it was wondered if the distance to Malta makes it more difficult that those countries on the continent. Everything we have done is valued past and present and we have achieved a lot in Marsa and them here. We have also had great support from our previous Mayors and councillors which results in our pride. **BT** felt that people think we may be able to provide cheap holidays but when given explanation lose interest as have several people who joined and then left once they had information to help them, our ethos is friendship. It was asked if there were hostels in Malta that would be suitable- not sure. **SA** asked **DR** as he was very involved with Youth Services if he had any ideas?-We could raise awareness via The Youth Council who meet monthly perhaps a written presentation that could be taken back to the schools for discussion. Social media has been very useful to **DR**, we do have a Face book page but need some assistance, and there is also Instagram. **JA** feels we need more media coverage but photos' were taken of the Rugby visit but not seen in the Mercury, on Remembrance Sunday no one took photos of us. **JA** also suggested that to promote ourselves at the Old Folks Show that we offer a raffle prize as each prize is explained who gave it, he also suggested a small carnival group to go to Malta, we had tried before with The British Flag but they did not appear interested so perhaps a small group would be better as there are many in town. He also had an idea that if our honorary Vice President in Malta the Prime Minister Joseph Muscat could maybe promote some Maltese dancers to come for the Old Folks Show or even carnival. Another idea was an event where we invite people directly to promote ourselves with the bonus of a free drink. Possibly a talk to the U3A.

Secretary's Report-PM as a follow up from EGM she did hear back from The George Cross Association. This year we have not heard from The Methodist Church Christmas festival.

We have had a request from our French Twinners to see if the school in Marsa would be interested in linking up with the new Northgate Primary School, I contacted Councillor Dominic Spencer in Marsa and heard back that the head of San Gorg Precca Marsa Primary Mr Norbert Pulis is very keen so I contacted Keith Giles from the La Ciota group and he will be visiting the school on Friday 30th Nov .I will contact Marsa and copy in Dominic and Keith.

We had tried to plan a visit to Malta but people had fallen out and it appeared too expensive after a lot of investigation by **MG.JA** had information about garden tours to Malta by local horticulturalist Roy Cheek which were very expensive £800-£1,000 run by Saga .**JA** suggested we contact Saga about us.

THE Twinning week that was held in the Library –a lot of information about Malta was taken but no new members. The evening event was a great success despite no one from any of our twinned towns attending. Next year it is planned to link it with the Quayside Festival on July 20th as thousands come to the town then. It was wondered if more of our partners would come as it is in the summer .there will be an event in the evening at the Arts Centre, **PM** hopes it will be open as closing for 6 months for repair of the theatre roof and revamping of other areas.

PM did a radio for Sedgemoor FM with David Ridgway but was not sure if it was broadcast but **ME** explained it was.

There was a very successful visit by the Kavallieri Rugby team who train and play in Marsa. It was led by Patrice, Dave, Jean Paul from Malta and Chris from Taunton. Gifts were given, a book on Bridgwater, Bridgwater mugs for the leaders and small gifts from us and the Town Council in beautiful bags with the town's logo on. Marsa Council received a request from the CEO of the Kavallieri team who would like to link with Bridgwater and Albion, **PM** had sent several emails to the head of juniors and the secretary of the club but no acknowledgment so eventually rang and had conversation with secretary and sent email again. The pictures we took are on the website but official ones were not in the Mercury.

We laid the Poppy Cross which **PM** had obtained from Norman Allen who has retired from the Chairman's post now held by Steve Austen who has given us the correct person to get wreath from next year.**PM** went to church, a lovely service but it took so long to fill the church as so many people, **SA** said he was pleased as so many people were there, it appears more each year but as **BT** suggested it was 100 year since end of WW1.

PM has emailed Mayor Francis to remind him if he had thought of any group that could link with Sea Cadets - **PM** wondered if she contact Denis Grech as he was a band contact but **JA** said when Denis had visited several years ago it was not feasible to bring a band across.**PM** had also talked to the leader of The Voices of The Peoples Choir as **PM** has a link with a choir in Malta but They are not sure about going as already planned for next year's trip.

PM asked if we send calendars of Bridgwater and the new tourist brochure Visit Bridgwater. A general discussion was held and it was suggested we also send Carnival calendars and DVD to various people and the council. also Christmas cards. It was agreed.

PM had advertised this meeting on Face book and Bridgwater news and had contacted radio Somerset and Sedgemoor FM.

MG thanked **PM** for all her hard work.

Treasurer's Report- MG thanked **BT** for taking over 2 years ago suddenly and her work since.

BT informed us we have a good balance of £661.77 at start of year and £925.28 in the bank now. There were not too many outgoings just website, presents for the Rugby Tour members and the Poppy Wreath. We will send what has been discussed to Malta and wondered about a social event.**SA** suggested we need a budget for the Youth Project with lots of interesting pictures (**PM** still has tourist information)

Public Relations Officer report- IT explained he was still waiting to hear back from Mayor Francis in Marsa to see if he could think of someone to link with Sea Cadets but he had very little response from the Sea Cadets. He was finding it very difficult as now not living in Bridgwater to find links and felt he was not doing us justice and would like to resign-**MG** thanked him for all his endeavours. **SA** wondered about the military side in Malta as we have Army, Air Cadets as well as Sea Cadets. As they are liked with the military here it probably would not be too expensive for parents if they could be linked to visit Malta. **ME** asked who would know, **SA** will look into it. **DR** suggested we put more pictures and information on our Face book page. He also asked where we normally meet and suggested it may be advantageous to use Community centres (which may cost) it was suggested Victoria Park, Westfield Church room or Wembdon Village hall or Parish Centre. Also the YMCA is all close. We need to be made more relevant and interesting!

Election of Officers-MG asked **Dr** to take over.

Chairman-MG was proposed by **IT** and 2nd by **JA** was happy to continue.

Secretary-PM was proposed by **BT** and 2nd by **IB** she agreed to continue.

Treasurer-BT is standing down **DG** had agreed to take over and in her absence proposed by **PM** and 2nd by 2nd by **IB**. **MG** thanked **BT** for all her work.

PRO Officer- IT was reluctant to continue .**JA** was asked if he would be willing –he would if he had the finances to do it properly, it was agreed. **JA** was proposed by **IT** and 2nd by **IB**.

DR handed the meeting back to **MG** who thanked him.

Any Other Business-IB suggested we advertise for members in the Mercury again as it did have some results last time.

ME asked how we would find out about military contacts-**SA** will investigate and feed back to **PM**.

JA will do a write up about Marsa and us, he will ask us to edit it and he thanked **IT** for his work last year and is looking forward to his new job.

SA will think of ideas and pass them on to **PM**.

Will arrange a meeting in the New Year unless anything else needs sorting out.