

COMBERTON-LE VAUDREUIL TWINNING VISITS

Minutes of meeting at 73 Swaynes Lane on 23rd September 1999 to receive feedback on Twinning Ceremony weekend, 18-19/9/99, and discuss future plans.

Present:

Malcolm Wright (Chairman)
Ivan Brown (Secretary)
Peter Mitton (Treasurer)
Marion Fraser (Committee Member)
Janet McCabe (Committee Member)
Mary Catlin
Gillian Gresham
Paula Hollick
Sally Maynard
Lillian Swift
Anne Webb
Mike Winney

Nerys Wright
Brenda Brown
Barbara Mitton
Margaret Hardy
Brian McCabe
Mark Collins
John Gresham
Andrew Hollick
Mandy Ray
Jane Wakelin
Steve Webb

Apologies for absence:

Angela Ayling
Melanie Collins

Derek Catlin
Paul Hardy (Committee Member)

1. Feedback on French visit, 18/19 September.

- 1.1 There was general agreement that the weekend's timetable worked well (although it was observed that the French coach had been seen in Barton quite some time before the scheduled meeting time of 9am on Saturday 18th). There was general satisfaction with the events selected to entertain our guests. Their visit to the Horticultural Show seemed to be particularly appreciated, as an indication of community spirit in Comberton. No problems were reported with communication between host groups before or during the weekend.
- 1.2 Hosting arrangements appeared to work well and Nerys Wright was congratulated on the efficient way she had dealt with the many changes made by the French to their guest list during the run-up to their visit.
- 1.3 Table arrangements for the Twinning Ceremony evening were not considered ideal in terms of conversation between members of host groups. This would need to be reconsidered for any future twinning evening in the Village College. The buffet supper was felt to be excellent and the entertainment by the pianist, Meridian Theatre and Comberton Cantabile was considered brilliant. Several of our visitors were very impressed by the high standard of the performers. Certain speeches before the Charter signing demonstrated our need to improve our French conversation, but Malcolm Wright was thanked for his courageous efforts and Paul Hardy for his translations of the announcements. There was general agreement that Paul Hardy should be asked to produce copies of the Charter and that these should be framed and hung in various public buildings around the village (Village College, Primary School, Village Hall, church, etc).

2. Plans for visit to Le Vaudreuil.

- 2.1 Friday 5th to Sunday 7th May 2000 appeared acceptable to all those present. The plan is to hire a coach, depart late afternoon Friday (arriving in Le Vaudreuil, say, around 11pm) and leave around mid-afternoon on Sunday to arrive home at about 11pm. The actual schedule would obviously depend on the plans of our French partners and advice from the coach company.
- 2.2 All those present expressed an initial interest in the visit. Nerys Wright suggested there would be a nucleus of 28 adults plus 9 children.
- 2.3 There was a general preference for families to visit as guests of the people they had hosted here, although some people who had already visited Le Vaudreuil had considered exchanging hosts. Nerys Wright emphasised again the difficulty of matching hosts and guests, especially in regard to gender and the ages of children, and the need to have a firm commitment to the visit.
- 2.4 Malcolm Wright had sounded out some coach companies and the hire charge for a 49-seater executive coach with on-board toilet, coffee machine, etc, plus driver ranged between £1650 and £1800. The charge per person would probably be about £35.
- 2.5 A provisional booking would be made immediately and January was seen as the deadline for confirmation of passenger reservations and firm booking of the coach.
- 2.6 Malcolm Wright explained that Le Vaudreuil could request a grant from the European Commission to cover certain costs of Twinning Visits. Receipt of a grant was not guaranteed, as the Commission's funds for this purpose were very limited, but we would be reminding Le Vaudreuil to submit their application in good time (minimum 3 months in advance of a visit; which is another reason for individuals to confirm their interest by January at the latest).
- 2.7 Preliminary suggestions for a suitable present for Le Vaudreuil were requested. Sculpture by Quin Hollick and Gillian Gresham's model of the Show were considered possibilities. Other ideas would be sought.

3.0 Proposed formation of an Association.

It has been proposed that we might form a Comberton Twinning Association with an annual membership fee of, say, £10, following the example set by Le Vaudreuil. This would affirm people's commitment to participation in twinning activities and produce funds to support Association initiatives. The idea of small bursaries to support visits by youngsters who might not otherwise be able to participate in exchange visits was accepted as one possibility.

It was agreed that a Twinning Association would require a written constitution with provision for elections to Committee membership and a possible enlargement of the Committee to deal with the variety of activities envisaged (see Minute 4 below).

4. Any other business.

Ideas were discussed for a number of activities that might produce smaller, more specific exchanges between partners. These included rowing, golf, bridge, football, tennis, boules, ornithology, rambling and Scouts.

Fund-raising activity in the form of an 'Auction of Promises' was suggested by Nerys Wright, which could be quite enjoyable. Other social events for Members could be held.

5. Date of next Committee meeting.

Thursday 30th September, 7.45 at 9 Kentings.

6. Acknowledgements.

The meeting closed with thanks by Malcolm Wright to everyone present for the magnificent job they had done in making the twinning weekend a great success. Committee members in particular were thanked for their hard work in bringing about the twinning; Ivan Brown for all his secretarial efforts, Paul Hardy for producing the Charter and the Ceremony Evening programme, Marion Fraser for raising the sponsorship and for organising the raffle (with the help of Barbara Mitton), Janet (and Brian) McCabe for producing the tickets and the poster, and Peter Mitton for taking on the job of Treasurer. Brenda Brown and Nerys Wright were thanked for their major contributions to the evening's entertainment and to the hosting arrangements/ticket sales, respectively. Mike Winney was thanked for producing all the photographs used in the collage given to Le Vaudreuil.

Janet McCabe proposed a vote of thanks to Malcolm Wright for his initiation of the twinning arrangement and for all his hard work in bringing the twinning to fruition. This was passed unanimously.

Finally, Malcolm Wright thanked Paula and Andrew Hollick for their hospitality in hosting the present meeting.