

COMBERTON TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Chairman's Report for AGM - Wednesday 13th June 2019

Introduction

This is the 20th anniversary year of the twinning with Le Vaudreuil, and my third year as chairman.

Twinning Visits from France

We welcomed a contingent of 37 French from Le Vaudreuil on 5-7 April 2019, for what was generally felt to be a very successful twinning weekend. As this was the 20th anniversary of the start of the twinning, there was a busy programme of activities including a tour of Cambridge with Blue Badge guides (in French and English), a commemoration lunch at Girton College on the Sunday with a tour of the college and its art, and a pot-luck supper with entertainment (by twinning members) at the Village Hall on the Saturday.

Twinning Visits to France

In 2018 we broke the habit of having a visit each way each year. Our visit to France was in June rather than the Spring, to coincide with the millennial festivities in Le Vaudreuil. This combined with the general difficulties of getting enough members to take part in visits, so we did not host a visit from France in 2018.

Arrangements are in place however for a visit to le Vaudreuil for 20-22 September 2019, by coach and Eurotunnel as usual, to continue to celebrate 20 years of twinning and to reciprocate the April French visit. Our hosts are planning events, including a probable visit to a chateau. It is important to get sufficient of us going to pay for the coach, so please come, and encourage friends and neighbours to take part.

Social Events

Our annual barbeque was again hosted in the delightful gardens of Manor Farm by Godfrey and Pauline, this time appropriately on Bastille Day. Thanks to them, and to all the committee that organised and prepared food. We are again invited there on the 7th July this year for our BBQ.

Our main fund raiser was the quiz, again ably organised in November by Peter Mitton, although we had fewer teams than previously – we need to spread the word about this event by word of mouth and get more groups involved.

Instead of an annual dinner, we were kindly invited by Brenda Brown to a New Year party in January, with shared food and music. This was a very enjoyable evening, which was appreciated by the many attendees.

Publicity

On the publicity front, we have had adverts for the twinning in the village magazines of most of the 11 surrounding villages which feed Comberton Village College. We had a stand at the Church fair, and at the Village Hall Christmas and Easter fairs, but without any direct recruits. It is however important to keep the existence and activities of the twinning known round the villages, so attending these events is worthwhile.

Personal recommendation is by far the best way of getting new members. We have a web site – see <http://CombertonTwinning.org.uk>, with information and downloadable posters – a resource for all of you to point your friends at.

Fund raising

During the year, we have tried to raise funds for the association by applying for grants. Brian and Malcolm have worked hard with some success but less than we had hoped. Brian's application for Lottery funding was rejected twice, initially because of an overseas travel component, and then because it was not seen as being inclusive enough, being for a membership organisation. We were turned down by parish and local community schemes. Malcom was however successful in getting £240 from Waitrose green token scheme, and £50 from the local accountants. We need to continue our efforts to raise funds from outside the membership.

Constitution and policies

At the previous AGM, we adopted a revised the constitution of the association, to bring it up to date and include the various clauses that are expected for a non-profit organisation these days.

During the year, we've added a couple of formal policies to add to our previous data protection one. All policies are available on the website.

- Equality and Diversity
- Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults during twinning activities

Future of the Twinning

We are still struggling to recruit and maintain enough members to keep the twinning viable into the future. Slightly to our surprise, our French equivalent is also having difficulties in getting enough members involved in trips to Comberton. We had thought that learning English as the World language was a good enough incentive to keep their membership full, but that appears not to be the case.

We currently aim to continue the twinning from next year with one visit a year instead of two, so to welcome the French in 2020 and going to France in 2021, but your opinions on the future of the association are requested – there is an agenda item at the AGM for this, or by email.

Thanks

A big thank you to all my committee – nothing would happen without them! Thanks also to all of you members, for hosting visitors and supporting the twinning association.

Paul Hardy, 30-May-2019