

**Minutes of the March Twinning Association Annual General Meeting**

**held on Wednesday 4th July 2019 in the Town Hall at 7.30pm**

**Present***: Andrew Clarke (Chair), Ann Braithwaite, Trisha Pescud, Hilary Butler, Derek Wisbey, Tina Elener,* *Olga Mitcham, John Gowing, Mike Thomas, Rebecca Toogood, Enid Dickinson, Dorinda Franklin, Rachel and Andrew Beeson, Ray Jack*

*Minutes taken by Trisha Pescud*

**1** **Apologies :** *Dorothy Hiskett (Treasurer), Chris Hill, Rodney Crabb, Terry Hiskett, Toni Morley, Lizzie Owen, Solange Kraus, Ray Pescud, Christine Wisbey, Alastair Woodruff*

1. **Confirmation of minutes of last AGM, 25 July 2018**: Proposed Derek Wisbey, seconded John Gowing

**3 Matters arising**: From Item 7 - the visitors from St Jean de Braye did not come in November 2018, but in May 2019.

**4 Chairman’s report: Andrew read out his report -**

First of all, a special thank-you to all of you for coming along and for your continuing support and in particular to those of the committee who are here and others who because of other commitments are unable to attend this evening.

At this AGM we shall be saying goodbye to John Gowing, who contributed usefully to meetings, as our March Town Council Representative. We valued his guidance and insight. The committee members are essential in providing advice, encouragement, ideas for events and keeping up with social media, providing films, questions and venues and of course our treasurer in making sure that we are not in the red and fully insured. Having said this, they all look fairly relaxed and we are always ready to welcome new members.

The year from July was one of expectation. The French were coming at the end of October and then at Easter and then finally they came in May. On the French side there have been a number of problems and they hope to give new impetus to their association starting in September 2019.

Shortly after the 2018 AGM we were fortunate enough to have the BBQ at Chris Hill’s on Bastille Day as usual we are very thankful for his hospitality and for all those who provided dishes and a surfeit of puddings. In November we had a film evening with a silent film – so no language problems but plenty of atmosphere. In January just as we were recovering from the excesses of Christmas, we had a hearty and happy lunch at Cassanos. In February we were mentally challenged by the French themed quiz and amazed one another with our knowledge of French football and footballers.

In early May a small but select group of friends from St Jean de Braye came over by Eurostar and Thameslink. Visits were organised to Peterborough with a visit to the Museum to see the artefacts made by French prisoners of the Napoleonic War and to Wimpole Hall during the lambing season.

The highlight was of course the unveiling of the Statue. This was the result of a collaboration started in 2001 between Neale-Wade students and students at St Jean Braye on a statue to symbolise twinning. The English design inspired by the work of Gaudier-Brzeska, a native of St Jean de Braye, and much of which is displayed at Kettle’s yard Cambridge, was then sculpted in sections in France and transported to March. For various reasons it was never displayed and after nearly 20 years thanks to March & District Museum trustees, it at last has a home and can be viewed by the public. It is only right at this point to thank members who helped house it in more recent years and transported it. A special mention and a great debt of gratitude is owed to the stone mason Richard King B.E.M, who assembled it at his workshop in Long Sutton during his own free time and at no cost to the Association. We would particularly welcome any comments from Neale-Wade students who participated in the project.

We have a Facebook page and also our website. We have been working on a local recipe book for our French friends. As with our French counterparts we need to encourage new membership and if we wish to continue going to France every 2 years, we need members who can accommodate guests.

Once Andrew had finished, a comment was passed on from Rodney Crabb that he thought the Chairman had excelled himself in finding a most appropriate home for the statue - perhaps he could now turn his attention to the much simpler issues of sorting out Brexit and world peace! Rodney also congratulated Andrew on successfully arranging the visit from ‘les Francais’.

 **5** **Financial Statement, 1st June 2018 to 31 May 2019, supplied by Dorothy:**

* The Accounts have been audited and signed off. They are available to anyone who would like to see them.
* The account balance was £4,197.91 at the beginning of the year.
* Income from subscriptions amounted to £60 and without the fund-raising events, held through the year, which raised £116.00, we would not have been able to cover our Public Liability Insurance payment.
* We are very grateful for the grant of £574.40 from March Town Council for the entertainment of our French guests.
* £129.95 was spent covering the expenses relating to the erection of the statue at the March Museum.
* The end of year balance is £4,159.04.
* The accounts were accepted: proposed Derek Wisbey, seconded by John Gowing.

 **6** **Election of General Committee**:

* Chair - Andrew Clarke: Proposed Trisha Pescud, seconded Tina Elener.
* Treasurer - Dorothy Hiskett: proposed Hilary Butler, seconded Rebecca Toogood*.*
* General committee - all current members willing to stand again. John Gowing is no longer the MTC representative but willing to stand as he is a member of MTA. Members re-elected en-bloc: proposed Derek Wisbey, seconded Hilary Butler.
* Councillor Ray Jack will represent MTC as an ex-officio member: Andrew welcomed him onto the committee.

 **7 AOB**:

* BBQ at Chris Hill’s on Sunday 14 July, 3pm, £5 per ticket.
* Possible Boules competition on a Sunday in August: The Vine in Coates is a possible venue.
* Visit to France Thursday 19th September to Monday 23rd September: there is a party flying to France. Numbers are limited because there are few hosts.
* There will be a film show on 4th October at the Town Hall.
* There will be a Sunday lunch at Cassanos in January.
* The annual quiz evening will take place in February.
* It is intended to produce Quiz sheets as a fund-raising exercise.
* Subs are now due! Andrew would like everyone to encourage new members to join.
* Mike Thomas requested that the AGM minutes with Chairman’s & Treasurer’s reports be posted on the website.

 **8 Next committee meeting**: Monday 9th September at 24 Gordon Avenue, 7.30pm.

Meeting closed at 8.04pm.