

WELWYN ANGLO FRENCH TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 9th October 2024 at Civic Centre Welwyn at 7.30 p.m.

Minutes

Present

Chairman – Graham Howat

Secretary – Susan Nice

Treasurer – Graham Middleton

Committee Member – Martin Gerty

11 other members

1. Welcome by the Chair

Graham Howat welcomed members to the meeting, something that David Nice has done in the past but he is not standing for reappointment as President. Graham thanked David warmly for his years of service.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from 12 members including Barry and Liane Bracken.

3. Notification of Items of Any Other Business

John Hirons would like to discuss starting a WhatsApp group.

4. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 11 October 2023

Approved unanimously.

5. Review of the Year ended 31 July 2024

Our first event was a talk by Joy Hall on Malta, which was very good. We had our quiz in April (delayed due to the lack of availability of quizmaster Simon Edwards' assistant) which was very successful. Our French friends were here from 4 – 7 May. The highlights were a visit to Knebworth House and the Gala Dinner at Tewinbury. We had a presence at the Welwyn Street Market and Family Fun Day in June, and on 14 July we celebrated Bastille Day with a garden party at Raul and Linda Curiel's house.

Graham then went on to talk about events later in the year. We took part in the Inter Twinning Petanque on 1 September. One of our teams came second. We will have a talk by Raul Curiel on 8 November about the architect Le Corbusier. Our Christmas Lunch will be on 14 December at the White Hart. In the past we

have had a presence at St. Mary's School Christmas Fayre but doubts have been expressed over the usefulness of this.

Graham showed the meeting a list of potential members recruited at the Welwyn Festival. Nigel Jeffery asked if they had actually paid. Graham Middleton said they would be asked after the AGM. But most do not even open our emails. It is disappointing that the response is so poor.

6. Financial Statement for the Year Ended 31 July 2024

The Meeting received The Financial Statement for the Year ended 31 July 2024. Nigel Jeffery (Former Chairman and Chartered Accountant) pointed out that the figures in the Statement were mutually inconsistent. Graham Middleton (Treasurer until the end of the AGM) apologised for the discrepancy. It appeared that the "Deficit for the Year" was actually £120 less than the figure stated.

For the third year in a row there had been a slight increase in income from subscriptions. There had been healthy surpluses from Joy Hall's presentation on Malta and, as usual, from the Quiz. There had also been a useful increase in the interest from WAFTA's deposit account and a useful surplus from the self-catered Bastille Day lunch held in Linda and Raul Curiel's house and garden.

The biggest expense had been the cost of entertaining the French when they came over to Welwyn in May for "Le Weekend du Jumelage." However, the cost was less than on previous occasions because the size of the French group was smaller this time and we didn't have to hire a coach for the day. Hosts took their French guests to Knebworth House and Gardens in their own cars. The cost of WAFTA's public liability insurance was up slightly in line with the general increase in insurance costs.

Nigel re-emphasised the desirability of raising enough money over each two-year period to cover the costs of the biennial French visits to Welwyn. WAFTA's accumulated surplus was sufficient to keep it going for a number of years but would eventually run out unless replenished.

Approval of the Financial Statement was deferred pending investigation of the discrepancy.

7. WAFTA Treasurer Appointment

Graham Middleton introduced Ruth Rankin who will take over as Treasurer from him after the AGM. All agreed that Graham has done an excellent job.

8. Election of Officers and Appointment of Other Committee Members

All the existing Officers and committee members are willing to stand again, apart from Graham Middleton but he will remain on the committee.

The appointments were all approved.

9. Independent Accounts Examiner Appointment

Barry Northrop is happy to carry on; the appointment was approved.

10. Approval of Subscription Rates for 2024/25

It was agreed unanimously that the level should remain at £10 for a family and £5 for single members. Graham Howat explained that it would need a significant increase to make a difference, so it is best to leave it as it is.

11. Recent and Future Twinning Visits

The French came here in November 2022, a visit which restarted the exchanges following the pandemic. We visited Champagne in June 2023 and of course the French were here in May 2024. A visit to Champagne is scheduled for next May.

12. WAFTA's Involvement With Schools, Notably St. Mary's School, Welwyn

Anne Lloyd reported that the year had started well. She and Sandra Saunders, starting in January, have been going into St Mary's and Year 6 children have been reading the French books to them. French teacher Libby has been ill and has not been able to put Anne in touch with other teachers. It is a more encouraging picture than last year.

13. Recent WAFTA and Inter Association Events

Alan Jones advised that the inter twinning pétanque match had taken place on 1 September. We organised it but used Ickleford where the pistes are good. We were handicapped by a lack of practice, partly due to Alan being away. We need a strategy for the future. We need a contact in the WGC Bowls Club. Nigel mentioned the Plough at Datchworth where Knebworth Twinning practice.

14. Future Events – Information and Discussion

Graham Howat advised that basically we will do the same sort of events that we have been doing, such as talks, and the annual quiz. Wine tastings don't make money. The quiz is the most successful though the prize tends to go to friends of the quizmaster Simon Edwards.

Denise Howat wondered if bingo would be something to try. No further suggestions were made

15. Any Other Business

John Hirons suggested that a WAFTA WhatsApp group should be formed. He felt it would be useful for French conversation but also for information about forthcoming events. Nigel offered to be the administrator. We will email members to advise them of this.

There being no other AOB the meeting closed at 8.45 p m and was followed by wine and refreshments.