

Annual General Meeting

on

*Thursday 10 October 2019 at the Pavillion, Welwyn
at 7.00 p.m.*

Minutes

<u>Present</u>	President - David Nice
	Chairman - Nigel Jeffery
	Secretary - Susan Nice
	Treasurer - Graham Middleton
	Committee Member - Linda Curiel

18 other members

David Nice welcomed members to the meeting

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from 14 members.

2 Notification of items of Any Other Business

None.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 October 2018

Approved unanimously.

Matters arising None

4 Review of the past year

Nigel thanked members for attending what will be his last meeting as Chair. It has been another successful year with a good mix of events. We did not do well in the petanque last October but we introduced a plate for those teams who didn't reach the knockout stage; Royston won both (but we won back the plate this year). At our Christmas get together we were a little cramped and will ask for the larger room this year. The quiz in January was well supported and successful financially. We have asked Simon Edwards back again for 2020. The Wine Tasting was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended and we must pay tribute to Graham Howat and to XO Wine Merchants. We had yet another excellent talk on Around the Coast of France by Michael Bunn, and a good talk on Agincourt by Gary Fisher. We had an enjoyable Twinning Weekend in France and the extra day worked well for us.

As regards publicity, we had set out to redo our leaflet but this did not happen, so it will be a priority for the committee this year. Graham Howat put together an excellent Welcome Pack for new members. Some of his leaflets were given out to parents at St. Mary's school, though disappointingly there was no response from parents to join. We have money available for investing in marketing.

Our relationship with St Mary's has moved up a notch, initially thanks to Graham Howat's efforts. We attended the Christmas Fayre, which was very hectic, and unfortunately didn't generate any new members. In Champagne, Barry Bracken and Nigel had a very positive meeting with a Head there and we hope to have a dialogue between classes in the two schools.

A number of thanks are due; firstly, to the Parish Council for their generous support regarding free room hire and grants which support the Twinning weekends here. Thanks to our members for attending events; to Dave Clarke for printing the tickets, to Rob and Vernonne for their posters, which are second to none, and to Howard Hill for the ticket sales. We must also thank Ruth for the website and Janice for running the French conversation group, which attracts new members. We are most grateful to the Boardmans, who bring wine from France for us. Final thanks are due to the hardworking committee, and to the 'shadow committee'. For the future we need to focus on getting younger members.

Reflecting on his years as Chair, Nigel said that he has enjoyed the responsibilities but now it is time for others to take over. He is especially pleased to be leaving us in a strong financial position. Event co-ordination has got smarter and smoother and we have provided good refreshments. He has tried to ensure French themes where possible. We have now established the annual custom of a Repas de Noel and a Bastille Day celebration. He is pleased with how we have hosted the Twinning Weekends. The French have enjoyed them and we now have the English also going on the outings.

Nigel was particularly grateful for the committee's understanding on the occasion of M. Candoni's funeral in France, some years ago, when he and Dave Clarke had only 30 minutes to take the decision to go to France to attend.

5 Approval of the Accounts for the year to 31 July 2019

Graham stated that it was a successful year financially. All events exceeded their targets. We started the year with reserves of £8,747 and ended with £10,794. However, subs fell from some £350 to £315.

Martin Gerty, as independent examiner, has reviewed the accounts and was impressed with the paperwork and agreed them.

The accounts were approved unanimously.

6 Election of Officers and Appointment of other Committee Members

Nigel reported that Graham Howat, who was previously on the committee, has offered to rejoin and Martin Gerty has offered himself for election. Both were approved unanimously.

Nigel reported that Barry Bracken has agreed to be Chairman and Graham Howat Vice. He will steer the ship in Barry's absence. Barry will deal with the French and be involved when he is in the

UK. This was approved unanimously. Sue, Graham and Linda will all continue.

7 Election of Honorary Independent Examiner

Graham reported that, as it cannot now be Martin Gerty, a former neighbour of his, Mark Slater, a retired tax inspector, has agreed to take the role.. It was approved unanimously.

8 Approval of the level of subscriptions for 2020 -21

Nigel reported that, although the amount has not changed for a long time, the committee are happy to leave it at £10 and £5, with free membership for the first year. Geoffrey Boardman suggested payment by standing order, though Nigel thought this may put people off. Raul wondered about doing away with subs altogether. But it was felt that they indicate a commitment to the Association Susan Boardman questioned why the subs were fixed a year ahead but Nigel explained that the twinning year starts in August, ahead of the AGM. However, we need to decide if it is time for an increase. Denise also wondered about scrapping subs. Nigel said that as the budget for standard events is around £150, so the subs are equivalent to two events.

The proposal to maintain Subscriptions at £5 and £10 for 2020-21 was approved unanimously.

9 Future events – information and discussion

Graham outlined plans for the year, starting with Living with the Rosbifs on 25 October. The venue for the Christmas meal is not finalised as it is not certain if the Plume of Feathers is offering the Golden Oldies menu this year. The quiz is on 25 January and we have a wine tasting on 13 March. On 24 April there is an event to be arranged. Nigel said that he had been advised to contact Cambridge University for possible speakers. Graham Howat suggested a talk on Berkhamsted Castle, which has French links.

The Twinning Weekend will be 21 – 24 May. We will try again to take them to Windsor for the outing.

There is also the Street Market in June.

Graham Howat thought that we need events that are attractive to families. He wondered if the French teacher at St. Mary's should be invited to join the committee; maybe we can establish an informal group at the school

Presentation to Nigel

David made a speech thanking Nigel for his fantastic contribution to the Association over the last 14 years. Graham presented Nigel with some gifts to mark this.

The meeting closed at 8.50 and was followed by wine and refreshments.