

FRIENDS OF OIGNIES TWINNING ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF AGM held Saturday 12 October 2019

- Present:** Derek Thomas, Peter Bloomfield, Susan Quas-Cohen, Karen Done, Anne Johnson, Ian Calvert, Sue Hodgkinson, Ian Hamilton, Chris Clegg, plus Members.
- 1. Notice of Meeting:** Sent on 23 September 2019
- 2. Apologies:** The Mayor of High Peak (Association President), J & V Marriott, J & S Jacobs, C & M Kitchen, Sarah M Matthews, N & J Patterson, Jenny Johnson, Jane Rothery, Alison Hales, Mary Fairhurst.
- 3. Minutes of Last Meeting:** Minutes and Treasurer's Report of AGM on 13 October 2018 were approved by Anne Johnson and seconded by Ian Morris.
- 4. Chair's Report:** Derek began by welcoming everyone and thanking them for taking the time to come this evening. He then began his report by recording the sad passing of two of our Members during the last year: Eva Fell and Don Ward and the meeting then toasted their memory. He continued, he has been pleased to serve as Chair for another year, the highlight being the hosting of our friends from Oignies, including some new members and also to have received the new mayor and her husband. We have listened to feedback from our members over the past year and taken on board some suggestions and ideas. In order to take this a step further and to continue to evolve we intend to open up our monthly committee meetings by inviting a contribution from one or two members each month. Please speak to any of the Committee whether simply to pass on suggestions to benefit the Association or to take a spot on the Agenda at a meeting. We have already started making plans for our hosting in 2021 although the final details will be dependent on our ongoing fundraising efforts. Please support us wherever you can. In the meantime the coach is already booked for our visit to Oignies in May next year and it would be extremely helpful in our planning if you could indicate as soon as possible if you will be participating in the visit and whether you intend to travel on the coach or independently. There are new families in Oignies looking to host so let us know if you know of anyone who would like to join us on the trip. In closing, thank you to the entire Committee for all their hard work throughout the year. Thanks also to Peter Quas-Cohen for his support and expertise in scrutinising the annual accounts, and also to Paul for preparing and running a great quiz. He thanked everyone again for coming this evening.
- 5. Treasurer's Report:** Peter presented the Balance Sheet for 2018/19 showing a balance in hand of £2,300. It was unanimously agreed to adopt the Balance Sheet. However, we need to ensure we actively fundraise in time for the French visit here in 2021. We have very low ongoing costs but we do need cash in the bank for fundraising expenses and to subsidise the next French visit. So please attend/support events, especially as May will be the 80th anniversary of the events in France which gave rise to the twinning. He reminded members that all fees should be paid by the end of the month. Subs remain at £20 this year, but see separate Agenda item (9) below. Finally, we can now do electronic banking and have the proper checks in place to manage the payments. This saves us a lot of time and allows us to pay expenses and services quicker and easier. But the choice remains as always.

At this point the Committee stood down pending the election of a new Committee. All posts were available for nominations from the floor. In the absence of our President, The Mayor of High Peak, the business was conducted by Derek T and Sue QC.

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6. Election of Scrutineers: The meeting agreed that none were needed.

7. Election of Officers: **Chair: Derek Thomas** was nominated and seconded. **No other nominations and elected unopposed.**
Vice Chair: Ian Hamilton was nominated and seconded. **No other nominations and elected unopposed.**
Secretary: Sue Quas-Cohen was nominated and seconded. **No other nominations received and elected unopposed.**
Treasurer: Peter Bloomfield was nominated and seconded. **No other nominations received and elected unopposed.**
Publicity Officer: Chris Clegg was nominated and seconded. **No other nominations received and elected unopposed.**

8. Election of Committee: Anne Johnson, Ian Calvert, Karen Done, and Sue Hodgkinson were **proposed and duly elected. No further nominations for Officers had been received.**

The newly elected Chair and Committee reconvened.

Derek told members that for the visit to Buxton in 2021 we would like to hold our main event in The Crescent, with the arrival reception in the Pump Room. The Committee will work hard to try and raise the monies required but we will need members' support of fundraising activities.

He also mentioned that through our website, thanks to Chris, Mike Somerville, the son of a soldier in the Sherwood Foresters Regiment, had contacted us as he is writing a book and wished to visit Oignies. Derek put him in touch with Les Amis de Buxton and he has subsequently had a successful visit to Oignies. We were also contacted via the website by Andrew Timms. Two of his father's cousins were killed on the 26 May 1940 and he was looking for more details of the events in Northern France around that day. We put Andrew in touch with Michael Somerville, and hopefully he also found the information relating to the action at Oignies on the website useful.

9. Annual Subscription: Derek reported that £100 per member is needed to cover hospitality over the French visit here. We do value supporting members who do pay full subscriptions and it is proposed that this remain at £20 this year.

In response to a question from Graham Oakley Derek replied that this had remained at £20 for the last three years. Adding that whilst we do not want to drive members away, in the event that we do not receive fundraising support then the subscriptions will have to increase.

There then followed discussion and suggestions from the floor:

IM suggested a 10% increase to £22 whilst LJ thought £5 was a reasonable increase. GO asked how much money would £2 generate and was in favour of £5. IM thought that, from a psychological point of view, this would be too much and that those members who were not at the meeting would not pay an extra £5. PQC said that Committee members were subsidising events and if more members got involved we wouldn't need to increase the subs. JC thought that hosting was proving expensive but Derek pointed out that we are fundraising precisely to help hosts financially and we would rather not have to raise the subs in order to do this.

Following these discussions a proposal was put forward by IM and seconded by MW to increase subscriptions to £22. Following a vote of those present the Motion was carried: therefore as from September 2020 subscriptions will be £22.

10. Election of Accountant: Derek advised that Peter Quas-Cohen had again volunteered to stand as independent scrutineer. This was seconded by GO.

There were no objections and all present were in favour. The proposal was carried.

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11. AOB:

MW proposed a vote of thanks to the Committee.

Sue QC gave a reminder of the Dickensian Market on 16th November and asked members for donations of good quality bric-a-brac, jewellery, fashion accessories and Christmas gifts. Also donations of suitable plates to make cake stands.

Ian H wished to make a note of thanks to Robert Harris at Morrisons for the donation of bread and cheese for this evening.

The wine for this evening was mainly courtesy of Les Amis de Buxton.

Peter B and Helen have organised trips to France this year taking donations and gifts of English food for sale at their Christmas market. Further donations gratefully received and future proposed trips, including their September dance and Christmas will be put on the website.

Derek thanked all present for their attendance and involvement in the meeting. Details of our proposed dinner dance in the New Year will be available on the website in due course.

Meeting Closed