

Foxton Twinning Association

Chair's Report – 24 January 2018

Welcome to this, the first Annual General Meeting of Foxton Twinning Association. I have a brief report to give summarising the key moments in the Twinning Association's short, but incredibly busy history.

This has been the inaugural year of the Foxton Twinning Association. Following some preliminary meetings in the winter the Twinning Association took its current form in February 2017. There was no gentle introduction as a visit was planned for later in the year and a launch event – the French Soirée – for the following month. I know that many, if not all of you, will have been to that event and it proved a great start to our fundraising activities. Our counterparts across the channel receive local funding from the Mairie for their twinning efforts, but here in the UK there is no central funding – all our work is supported by fundraising alone which is why your continued support at these events is so essential.

Following the soirée, we welcomed the Montigny committee to Foxton. We were successful in engaging a huge number of Foxton associations in the visit and of course, so many of you. A visit to the school on the Monday before the committee left, helped cement the now-blossoming link between our two primary schools. The visit of the Montigny committee seemed to set the tone – everyone was so friendly, accommodating and enthusiastic on both sides, and here, the association took to organising our part of the first exchange with vigour, thanks in the main to the coordinating skills of Jill and Anne. We put together a constitution, available on our website, to formalise the workings of the association and adopted it in June.

We kept the focus with a Car Boot and Café in September and then came the big moment: when 25 of us set off across the channel to experience our first exchange. I think it is fair to say, that none of us on the committee quite expected such an exceptional weekend. I think, on the committee we were all a little nervous – would it work, would people get along, would the language prove too much? But there was little doubt, our fears were unfounded. I won't go into detail about the visit as it has been well reported, but during the visit to the two associations signed a joint twinning charter which sets out our vision for the twinning project in the years ahead and of course we were able to present the school in Montigny with one of Peter's fantastic creations. Dianne visited the school, further supporting the educational links between the villages.

We are, of course, hungry for more and it is fantastic that the return visit is in our diaries for the weekend of 28th/29th April. We are going to need funds to support us in hosting this visit and so I'd like to draw your attention to another French Café – this one on Sunday (that's the 28th January) from 9am to noon in the Pavilion, and also a film night on Saturday 3rd March – both well worth attending I'm sure you will agree. There are some flyers around the room should you need to take a reminder home.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank all the members of the committee for the excellent work this first year. I'm sure the theory goes that the subsequent year should be easier, but it looks like there is going to be plenty to do. I'd like to thank the Parish Council for their

continued support of the twinning project, and of course, all of you for attending events, contributing to the association and being a part of this exciting venture. Thank you.