

WIMBORNE-VALOGNES TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on Tuesday 14th February 2024 at St Catherine's Church Hall, Wimborne

Present

Committee Members

Damaris Eaton (President)	Peter Brooks (Treasurer)	Mike Shapcott (Secretary)
Louise Hinks (Town Council Representative)	Malcolm Lowe (Archivist)	Graham Richards (Minutes Secretary, IT Officer and Editor)
Barbara Wathen	Chris Webb	

Other Members

Pauline Benton	Helen Brooks	Maya Chatterjee	Michael Evans
Sue Hansen	Graham Hansen	Dinah Ingle-Finch	Christine Letchford
Horace Letchford	Diann March	Jeanne Mills	Anthony Oliver
Christine Oliver	John Roberts	Zena Roberts	Pauline Wheeler
Terry Wheeler			

Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies

Damaris Eaton, President, opened the meeting at 07:30.

Apologies for absence were received from: Sally Andrews, Pam Bryon, Peter Bryon, Cornelius Cornes, Luise Cornes, Steve Johnston, Alison Johnston, Ian Lawrie, Jenny Lawrie, Philip Maul, Janet Maul, Peter Rock, Freda Smith, Jenny Stoffell

Item 2 – Minutes of the previous AGM

The 2023 AGM minutes had been made available on the WVTA website for several months. There were no comments from the floor. The minutes were approved, proposed: **Michael Evans**, seconded **Antony Oliver**.

Item 3 - Treasurer's Report

Peter Brooks, Treasurer, distributed printed copies of the Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2023 to the members present. Peter reported a surplus over the year, largely down to the successful Hello Bonjour event in October.

We bought a quantity of wine for the Wine Tasting evening based on a full capacity attendance. As a result we have some bottles in stock to use at events this year.

We have written off the Gazebo, Sound System and Table Lights bought at the end of 2021.

The increased subscription rate has brought in some money but we need more members.

There were no questions from the floor. **Barbara Wathen** proposed that the accounts be adopted.

Item 4 – President's Report

Damaris started her report by going back to events before she was elected President at the 2023 AGM. She felt that we had overlooked that **David Emes** put in an enormous amount of his time and energy in promoting and nurturing the WVTA. **Damaris** asked to place on record our thanks for his big contribution to the Association during his years as President.

2023 events

New events in 2023 were the games and pancakes evening, the evening of talks and the President's picnic at Pamphill. Also, in October we held the most ambitious event, Hello Bonjour! In December we took the Wine Tasting to a new location, the Minster Room at CLARC.

In September, 28 of us spent a wonderful weekend with our hosts in Valognes with a full programme of visits including a Château garden, dinner in the Panoramique restaurant and a visit to an ancient mill. Thanks go to Mike for organising this with Philippe in France.

2024 events

We have introduced further new events in 2024. There are two afternoon meetings at the Little Pickle Cafe at Walford Mill. There is also an evening of French dance with live music and dance tuition. Members are invited to take part in the dancing but there is absolutely no pressure.

On the 22 June there are celebrations in Valognes marking the 80th anniversary of the liberation. We are not sure what part we will play but we will keep you informed.

In July, **Peter Rock** has invited us to his lovely garden again. Last year's barbecue took place during a July of disappointing weather and we realised that most people attending were committee members and partners. **Damaris** asked if members would prefer afternoon tea and invited discussion at the end of official business.

Damaris also asked members if they like what we are doing and asked them to let us know or send a letter to the Newsletter.

Damaris concluded that all the events have been a joy to put on. The reward comes in a successful, well attended evening. The events are held for the enjoyment of our members, and also to raise funds to enable us to host our French visitors, repaying their hospitality shown when we go to France. This has been so since the founding of the Association in 1968. However, we cannot do this without a good response and attendance, and repay the work and enthusiasm put in by committee members. It is also doubly important that our events are supported as venues are getting more expensive. Even so we try to keep our ticket prices as low as possible whilst making a modest profit to go towards the exchange visit. So a big thank you to all those that come along and support our social calendar.

Thanks

Throughout the report **Damaris** thanked members:

the **Committee members** for their support and enthusiasm,
Chris and family, Louise and others for providing food at the events,
Mike and **Barbara** for organising the Hello Bonjour event, and **Mike** for liaising with **Philippe**,
Graham and **Chris** for the Newsletter,
Malcolm for keeping the Facebook page up to date.
and **Ted Orchard** for a splendid presentation of wines in December.

Item 5 – Re-election of Committee Members

Maya is standing down from the Committee, having done the minutes for a number of years.

Louise Hinks has come to the end of her term as our Council representative.

The remaining committee members are willing to continue.

Item 6 – Volunteers to join the committee

We need a few more on the committee to share the load and to inject new ideas. **Damaris** asked for more volunteers to come forward, adding that it is a good way to get to know people and make friends

Item 7 – Encore Hello Bonjour

Mike Shapcott reported on this event from last October. Due to the success of last year's event, it was decided to do it again this year.

The Allendale is booked for 24 October 2024, just before half term. We hope more schools will take part and we have already floated some ideas with them. To improve the ticket availability there will be afternoon and evening performances. Having two performances will make it more relaxed and there should be more time to recruit members.

John Roberts asked if the tickets could carry an advert for membership and a link to our website. **Mike** explained the ticketing is done by the Allendale and he will take this suggestion up with them.

Michael Evans asked if we had ever offered reduced membership for the first year. **Mike Shapcott** said people joining half way through the year had been offered free membership in the past. **Damaris** said that it is hard to hang on to new members. She hoped that events such as the dance evening would help new members to integrate. **Graham Hansen** suggested appointing existing members to "buddy up" with new members. **John Roberts** suggested that during the Covid lockdowns and working from home, people had got used to staying in.

Item 8 – French visit in May

We have a draft programme based on the dates of 17 to 20 May. This assumes that most French guests will arrive on the Friday and return on the Monday.

Anthony Oliver said that this year is the 200th anniversary of the RNLI. There are open days at the RNLI College in Poole on the Saturday and Sunday.

Mike asked people hoping to participate or prepared to host to sign a list and give their e-mail address and the names of the French people whom they usually host. He will then match up the list to the one provided by our French guests.

Item 9 – Any Other Business

Evening of Talks on Thursday 14th March

Maya asked for volunteers to do a talk on a French theme for 15 to 35 minutes. **Damaris** thought it would be interesting to hear people's experiences of hosting.

WVTA Archive

Malcolm asked members to supply him with anything they wanted to share with others through the archive such as photographs. He invited anyone who wants information or wants to borrow something from the archive to contact him.

WVTA Facebook page.

Malcolm encouraged members to visit our Facebook page and "like" items to raise the page profile. The page can be found by following the link on our website or by searching in Facebook for the Association name.

Malcolm thanked **Louise**, who is standing down from the committee, for being our Council representative for about five years. Finally he thanked the President, the committee and all members for doing a fantastic job with the events over the year.

Damaris closed the business meeting at 8:22 pm.

Item 10 – Refreshments and informal discussion

The A.G.M. was followed by convivial discussion and drinks.

Graham Richards (25 March 2024)