

WIMBORNE-VALOGNES TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 13th February 2025 at St Catherine's Church Hall, Wimborne

Present

Committee Members

Damaris Eaton (President)	Peter Brooks (Treasurer)	Mike Shapcott (Secretary)
Malcolm Lowe (Archivist)	Graham Richards (Minutes Secretary, and Editor)	Barbara Wathen

Chris Webb

Members

Ann Marie Appleton	David Appleton	Helen Brooks	Maya Chatterjee
Michael Evans	Sue Hansen	Graham Hansen	Stephen Johnston
Alison Johnston	Christine Letchford	Horace Letchford	Diann March
Jeanne Mills	Anthony Oliver	Christine Oliver	John Roberts
Peter Rock	Jennifer Stoffell	Zoe Cheney	

Guests

Stephanie Guerrero	Vincent Guerrero	Linda (surname not known)
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Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies for absence

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

Apologies for absence were received from:

Sally Andrews	Pam Bryon	Peter Bryon	David Emes
Sheila Gibbs	Dinah Ingle-Finch	Ian Lawrie	Jenny Lawrie
Janet Maul	Philip Maul	Velda Payne	Edith Powney
Ian Sandy	Mary Shapcott	Freda Smith	Jacki Wharfe
Mike Wharfe	Pauline Wheeler	Terry Wheeler	Liz White

Item 2 – Approval and adoption of the Minutes of the previous AGM

The 2024 AGM minutes had been made available on the WVTA website for several months. There was one correction; the date of the 2024 AGM was Thursday 8th February. With this correction the minutes were approved, proposed **Malcolm Lowe**, seconded **Peter Rock**..

Item 3 - Treasurer's Report

Peter Brooks, Treasurer, distributed printed copies of the Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2024 to the members present. We spent £3809.23 on the dinner for the French exchange visit and recouped £3,112.76 at events during the year. In addition we received a £500 grant from the Town Council towards the Encore Hello Bonjour! event.

We purchased a card reader for a one-off cost of £154.80 and this has been working smoothly. There is no monthly fee and there is a 1% cashback on transactions.

Malcolm Lowe asked what our gift to the Valognes Jumelage had been this year. Damaris said it was three rose bushes with English names that had been supplied by a French branch of David Austin Roses. The bushes have been planted in a garden in Valognes that marks the founding of the jumelage association.

There were no questions from the floor. **Chris Webb** proposed and **Malcolm Lowe** seconded that the accounts be adopted.

Item 4 – President's Report

Damaris briefly described the 2024 events before appealing for feedback and ideas for future events. Our small committee of eight can become overstretched and we need to call on the members to contribute to the running of the Association. Any members who can help were asked to enter their name in the attendance book under "Willing Helpers".

Boules

We would like to revive boules on Thursday evenings in Redcotts as a purely friendly get together. If anyone would like to organise this we would be delighted to hear from them.

The **Encore Hello Bonjour** event was successful but it is a big undertaking and ideally should be done on alternate years when we are not also hosting a visit from Valognes. Therefore we hope to look at this again in 2026.

Item 5 – Re-election of Committee Members

All committee members were willing to continue. The meeting agreed that they should stand for another 12 months.

Item 6 – Volunteers to join the committee and

Item 7 – Helping at events

These were covered in the President's report.

Item 8 – June 13 to 15/16 Visit to Valognes

Mike asked for members to let him know if they wanted to take part in this year's exchange visit. It would help if members indicated if they wanted to stay with a particular host.

The return dates are flexible, members can return on the Sunday or Monday.

David Appleton asked if fare concessions were available from Brittany Ferries. Mike Shapcott explained it was difficult to make concessionary bookings, one person would be responsible for the booking and payment of the whole group, and there is no flexibility to allow some passengers to travel on different days. Mike pointed out there is always the option of car sharing to help keep the costs down. There is also the "Club Voyage" scheme which can offer savings for regular travellers and their friends and family.

Item 9 – Any Other Business

Mike mentioned an event at St Michael's school on Tuesday 18 March. We have been asked to provide eight French speaking people to sit with a board of 16 children and answer prepared questions. Mike and Chris Webb will be two. We need another 6 volunteers.

Website cost

Graham pointed out that the annual website hosting charge had gone up from £40 in £2022 to £180 in 2025. There are two reasons: Firstly the hosting company based in Europe doubled their charges and secondly we needed to purchase a security certificate at a cost of £70 per year. We tried sharing the hosting with Wimborne Civic Society but this created administrative problems. We changed to a local hosting company with a single point of contact, Andy Clayton. The ongoing annual charge should be around £180. This includes the security certificate which is supplied and managed by Andy.

Peter Rock put out a display of French books that were being cleared out by a friend of K Brady. Members were invited to browse and choose any that they wanted.

Malcolm Lowe asked the members to donate to him any items for the historical collection of the WVTA.

Malcolm thanked Damaris for her work, along with the committee, and Peter Rock for hosting the summer garden party.

Item 10 – Refreshments and informal discussion

The meeting was followed by convivial discussion and drinks.