

**WIMBORNE-VALOGNES TWINNING ASSOCIATION**  
**Annual General Meeting 2016 Minutes V1**

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026**  
**at St Catherine's Church Hall, Wimborne**

**These minutes are for approval at the 2027 AGM**

**Present**

**Committee Members**

|                           |                           |                                                    |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Damaris Eaton (President) | Mike Shapcott (Secretary) | Graham Richards<br>(Minutes Secretary, and Editor) |
| Malcolm Lowe (Archivist)  | Barbara Wathen            | Chris Webb                                         |

**Members**

|                       |                |                 |                   |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Ann Marie de la Mothe | David Appleton | Maya Chatterjee | Michael Evans     |
| Sue Hansen            | Graham Hansen  | Richard Hovell  | Dinah Ingle-Finch |
| Diann March           | Jeanne Mills   | Anthony Oliver  | Christine Oliver  |
| Peter Rock            | Terry Wheeler  | Pauline Wheeler |                   |

**Guests**

Nicky Israel

**Item 1 – Welcome and Apologies for absence**

Damaris Eaton, President, opened the meeting at 07:35.

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

|               |                 |                  |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Sally Andrews | Peter Brooks    | Helen Brooks     | Peter Bryon     |
| Pam Bryon     | Zoe Cheney      | Steve Johnston   | Alison Johnston |
| Louise Cornes | Jenny Lawrie    | Ian Lawrie       | Janet Maul      |
| Philip Maul   | Chris Letchford | Horace Letchford | Velda Payne     |
| John Roberts  | Ian Sandy       | Mary Shapcott    | Freda Smith     |
| Jackie Wharfe | Mike Wharfe     | Liz White        |                 |

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

The 2025 AGM minutes had been made available on the WVTA website for several months. The minutes were approved, proposed by **Anthony Oliver**, seconded by **Michael Evans**.

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**Item 3 - Treasurer's Report**

Printed copies of the Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2025 were distributed to the members present. Income was £2,578.99 and expenditure £1066.18 giving a surplus over the year of £1512.81. This gives us a total balance of £5,323.53 which Damaris said felt comfortable for us to host our friends in June.

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

**Item 4 – Re-election of Committee Members**

All committee members were willing to stand again. Damaris had just completed her third year as President and at one point she had felt that three years was enough. She announced this in the Newsletter but she now felt that she would like to stand again to be better prepared to hand over to the next President, and asked the meeting if she could change her mind. There was warm approval for this. Dinah Ingle-Finch asked if anyone else wanted to put themselves forward; there were no volunteers. The meeting agreed that all the committee members should continue in office.

**Item 5 – Volunteers to join the committee**

Cornelius asked if anyone thinking of standing for President in future years could go on the committee now? Damaris said that anyone who would like to take part can come along to our next committee meeting on 25 February at her house. The committee meets about once a month.

**Item 6 – President's Report**

Damaris reported on the events over the year, including what goes on behind the scenes.

The first meeting of the year was the Petit Prince book reading which went so well that we offered to present it to pupils at Queen Elizabeth's School (Mike Shapcott reported on this later in the meeting).

The meeting at the Little Pickle cafe in May attracted a good attendance.

In June members experienced the exchange visit to Valognes. Damaris thanked Michael Evans for standing in for her and delivering her speech of thanks to the Mayor and our hosts in Valognes.

The Bastille Day Garden Party was blessed again by good weather and included live music and songs from Vinnie.

Also blessed by the sun was the picnic and walk at Pamphill.

In September the French dance evening was cancelled owing to lack of numbers. Possible reasons are that it wasn't to everyone's taste and that it coincided with the end of the Summer holiday period. We were fortunate that both the dance leader (Stephen Earwicker) and St Catherine's Church Hall kindly waived their charges. Damaris was sad not to hold this event, partly because of the organisation that had gone into getting venues and

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busy people to coincide which is quite an achievement in itself, and because it seems an appropriate event for a French twinning association. If we do it again we should bill it as a demonstration of French dance implying you only get up and dance if you want to.

The Quiz Night is always popular. Damaris was pleased to see teams from various local groups, in particular one from the Poole Cherbourg Twinning Association, including their Secretary who is also President of our umbrella organisation: the Dorset Twinning Association.

At the Wine Tasting evening, marvellous wines were presented by the very knowledgeable Ted Orchard and a substantial supper was provided by Louise and helpers, plus a performance by Vinnie, all in the comfortable surroundings of the Wimborne Community Centre.

### **Behind the scenes**

Damaris explained how the WVTa had been active behind the scenes and in the town's community.

In March we were invited to Allenbourne Middle School when pupils from the Félix Buhot school in Valognes visited to meet their pen-pals. Damaris attended along with a few committee members and Mayor Jeff Hart, to help welcome the pupils from our twin town.

On Tuesday 1 April Damaris attended the Annual Town Meeting of the Wimborne Minster Town Council. All residents are welcome to attend and the WVTa, along with other community groups, are invited to present a summary of what we do in the town. It is good for us to be present; we need to be seen and heard.

In March a group of our members organised by Mike Shapcott, visited St Michael's Middle School, met up with a group of children to speak French.

On Sunday 11 May we were invited to attend the civic thanksgiving service in the Minster to mark the end of the mayoral year for Jeff Hart.

On 13 December, six members joined the Save the Children Christmas Parade, walking through Wimborne decorated in tinsel and carrying the WVTa banner.

### **Other topics**

Staying alive is our theme for this year. Keep going! We need new members.

In May, the Allendale Centre is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we will be there with our publicity stand.

Carlton Care operate five or six care homes in the area and want to support local organisations, for example, by sponsoring raffle prizes.

Damaris concluded by thanking her committee members individually and also thanking all of the members for their support during the year.

### **Contact with local schools**

Damaris handed over to Mike Shapcott who reported on two contacts with local schools. The first was at St Michael's Middle School where the French teacher sent us questions that the students were going to ask us and we supplied our answers. We met the pupils at The Reef, next to the school. The pupils said that they really enjoyed it.

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The second was a repeat presentation of our Petit Prince evening at Queen Elizabeth's School. We read extracts in French and in English. Malcolm gave additional information about the author. The students were appreciative of what we had presented.

We hope to visit Queen Elizabeth's School again this year to help them with their French.

**Item 7 – Visit to Wimborne from Valognes, 5 to 8 June**

Mike Shapcott asked for members to sign up to host French families this year.

A number of activities were suggested for the exchange visit:

- The Etches Collection at Kimmeridge
- A tour of the Minster, which is built with French stone
- The RNLI headquarters (could combine with a walk along the Quay from the old lifeboat station)
- Poole Museum, which has recently been refurbished
- Dean's Court
- Get together with the Poole Cherbourg twinning Association

Damaris asked if hosts should have free time to take their guests out on the Sunday, or should we organise an activity? Peter Rock said it was good to have one activity available as an option.

**Item 8 – Questions and suggestions from the floor**

Cornelius suggested including Ferndown in our catchment area.

Peter Rock thanked Damaris and her committee for doing a great job.

**Item 9 – Any Other Business**

Malcolm asked for contributions to our archive which he maintains. He also intends to investigate the archive held in Valognes. Damaris suggested displaying at future AGMs some of the presents that we have received over the years from the people of Valognes. Barbara added that we could also do this at the community event at the Allendale.

Malcolm thanked Damaris for all her work over the year.

The business part of the meeting closed at 20:28

**Item 10 – Wine and cheese quiz**

The meeting was followed by a tasting of 10 French cheeses with a drink and convivial discussion.