**Bingham Twinning Association**

**Annual General Meeting Agenda – Monday 6th June 2022**

**When:** 7:30pm Monday 6th June 2022

**Location:** Bingham Bowls club

**Attending:** 22

**President:** Gareth Williams (Town Mayor of Bingham)

One minute’s silence was observed to remember two of BTA’s most influential members: Marlies Sparrow and Jim Morely.

1. **Apologies**

Sue Smith, Nick Smith, Rachel Bray, Katie Lee, Jane Ingram, Ed Crane, Hannah Bond, Marrion Ellis, Maureen Stockwood, Jim and Jan Tennant, Clare Williams, Ian Markwick, and John Stockwood.

1. **Minutes of last AGM**

THe minutes of the previous AGM were approved, proposed by Andrew Shelton and seconded by Jim Costello.

1. **Chair’s Report**

This past year has seen a greater return to normal with 2 successful social events, face to face committee meetings and this AGM.

One of the few positive outcomes of the pandemic, due to the advance of modern technology, has been closer contact with our friends in Wallenfels. Zoom meetings have been a very good opportunity to catch up with them and discuss plans for our trip in August. We have been grateful for Jens’ excellent English.

Covid restrictions had an impact but we were able to overcome them with our BBQ in September, when there was a feeling that life was returning to a more normal situation. We welcomed members, guests and musicians, including members of the Toothill Big Band, to what was a splendid afternoon and evening at the home of Sue and Colin Smith. We are extremely grateful to them for their terrific hospitality.

Our Christmas get together at the WI Hut was also enjoyed by those who came – with ages ranging from 80+ to toddler. The table top horse racing was a great attraction and the mix of German /UK delicacies of mince pies, stollen, gluwein and cups of tea went down well. Nathan and Colin showed an excellent collection of film and photos of Wallenfels to remind us of past holidays and what we can look forward to when we visit again.

Organisation of our trip to Wallenfels continues to be a work in progress. There are over 40 people going by plane, motor home, self-drive and a mini bus. Most are camping, but not all. Some are rafting. Our band will be playing and we know we will be very well looked after by our Wallenfels friends. Unfortunately, we were unable to persuade any of the Toohill Big Band to join us, other than those who are the sons and daughters of members who are going.

Further to last year’s idea of having an exhibition at the library, it was confirmed that this will take place for the month of November 2022. The plan is to raise the profile of Twinning and by showing pictures and photos of Wallenfels and our activities. The travellers were encouraged to contribute their photos of the upcoming trip. A concert on 29th October has been proposed as a lead into this exhibition. It will be similar to the one held just before lockdown in 2020. More details to follow.

There has been some communication between the Primary school in Wallenfels and Carnarvon Primary. Videos of their schools have been exchanged and we hope this can be built upon in the future.

Twinning was asked to contribute an interview for the Bingham Audio magazine. Elizabeth did an excellent job describing BTA.

Following considerable discussion with the Town Council about replacing the deceased Friendship tree on the Linear Walk, two Plum trees are soon to be planted. One is to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee and the other BTA. The Mayor was asked to convey our thanks to the Town Council.

The BTA committee was thanked for their commitment and enthusiasm, the help provided organising events and also the help provided clearing up afterwards.

The intention of continuing the excellent tradition of Bingham Twinning was expressed, as was the desire to arrange events that would appeal to our members. Upcoming events: BBQ on 25th June, to which everyone was invited; trip to Wallenfels.

1. **Treasurer’s Report**

The treasurer’s report was approved, proposed by Jane Costello and seconded by Bob Markwick

1. **Membership report**

Nathan Bray reported that although we have unfortunately lost a few members (reference the start of the meeting), we gained a handful of new members. These are mainly parents looking to gain access to the trip to Wallenfels for their children. Even though they are not able to go this year, in future years we hope to help this happen.

1. **Election of Officers**

The President took over the proceedings to propose the position of Chairman of the Association:

* + 1. **Chair** Judith Swann

Proposed: Jane Costello. Seconded: Jane Duffy

The re-elected Chair took over the proceedings once more.

* + 1. **Vice Chair** Colin Smith

Proposed: Andrew Shelton. Seconded: Sandra Lawless

* + 1. **Secretary** Nathan Bray
    2. **Treasurer** Elizabeth Markwick

1. **Election of Executive Committee**

Chair: Judith Swann; Vice-Chair: Colin Smith; Treasurer: Elizabeth Markwick; Secretary: Nathan Bray; additionally: Bob Markwick, Briony Prior, Gareth Williams, Jan Tennant and newest member, Graham Johnson.

Approval of the committee: all were in favour.

1. **To appoint an Auditor**

Linda Finch: all were in favour.

1. **President’s remarks**

The President reported that it was good to see so many people supporting BTA this evening. He paid tribute to two Twinning legends: Marlies Sparrow and Jim Morley, saying that both worked tirelessly for this organisation, forging the great friendship between Bigham and Wallenfels. He said that it was wonderful that the long-awaited trip was happening in the summer. He reiterated that a positive outcome of the pandemic was the increased frequency of online meetings and chats, resulting in the links with Wallenfels becoming stronger than ever. He thanked everyone associated with the committee for their hard work over the last year and wished BTA all the best with their activities over the next year.

1. **Close of AGM**
2. **Post meeting open forum/ discussion.**

Judith thanked Nathan for the work he had done producing and organising the Twinning Website and Newsletter. She said that we think that we now have all members on the email mailing list – with the exception of Ann Harrison. She asked people who thought they may not be on the list to write down their email address before leaving. James Duffy pointed out he had missed some of the newsletters in the past. Nathan said he would look into this and forward him past newsletters.

Wallenfels trip update:

Colin said he was getting the music together for musicians performing in Wallenfels this summer.

Nathan reported that there are three groups travelling over this year, all at the same time: 29th July-8th August. He said that a coach has been organised at both in UK and Germany. Activities include: rafting, big band performances; the Kirschweih festival, a party at the old folks home; trips into Kronach; walks. There has been lots of communication with Wallenfels, particularly with Jens Korn, the Burgermeister and head of the Twinning in Wallenfels. He reported that there are approximately 50 people going over.

There was talk of a group coming over to Bingham from Wallenfels when we are in our second week over there, but as yet nothing is confirmed.

BBQ:

Colin mentioned the Twinning BBQ on the 25th June. Jane Duffy mentioned that last year’s BBQ was a fantastic event and that it was one of the last Twinning events she was involved with.

The Christmas event:

It was reported that it was such a success last year that there are plans to repeat it again. One comment made was that with all the generations mixing it was a good way for the Twinning generations to be together. The horse racing was a great success.

James Duffy enquired as to whether a horseracing event, as happened in the past, could be resurrected. He acknowledged that it was a lot to organise, but that it was always a hit.

Emails:

It was asked if there was a way to simplify emails with forms attached, eg for BBQ attendance as lots of members find it difficult to print off these forms. A suggestion was made to use the website as a portal for forms and/ or payment methods.

Event:

It was pointed out that the proposed concert on the 29th October clashes with another big musical event at the new leisure centre in Bingham. It was concluded that further talks need to take place before moving forward with the Twinning concert.

Finally:

Nathan informed the meeting of the new connection he had established with the British German Association in London. It is a charity set up to create and maintain links with Germany and promote the German language in schools. The association is affiliated with social clubs, the foreign affairs department of the Government and also has connections at a diplomatic level. An audit of Britain’s German Twinning Association revealed that there is a decline in interest and new members and that the BGA wants to help to address this through best practice documents, direct support and regional information and idea sharing.

Nathan has recently been appointed the BGA regional representative for Nottinghamshire and is looking at how we may all be able to contribute and benefit from this initiative.

One aspect they aim to improve is German teaching in secondary schools, which may be something Bingham can benefit from as Toot Hill School currently offers no lessons as part of the standard curriculum. The members were all interested in where this new connection might lead and were in favour of further interaction. It was requested that they be kept up to date with any developments.