

ROMSEY TWINNING ASSOCIATION

MINUTES of the COMMITTEE MEETING held on 13th March 2025

1. **Present:** Denise Amery, Angela Bernhardt (Minutes), Karen Bolton, Debbie Evenhand, Kathrina Gwynne, Roland Matthews, John Parker, Judy Phillips, Phil Thomas
2. **Apologies:** none – full committee present.
3. **The Minutes** of the previous Committee Meeting held on 9th January 2025, were agreed.
4. **Matters Arising:** Under previous Matters Arising 8) Future of Twinning update.
Roland stated that now all the exchange visit dates have been agreed he will contact his opposite numbers. He has already mentioned the subject to Gian Battista during the recent visit from Treviglio, and Gian Battista had also expressed concerns for the Twinning future with regards to age, numbers etc. Roland will write to Jean-Luc in advance of Romsey's visit to Paimpol in May so that he can discuss the issues with Jean-Luc then. He will also write to Dagmar in Battenberg.
5. **Treasurer's Report:** a) John reported a healthy bank balance. There are sufficient funds to pay the balance of the Brittany Ferries bill for the visit to Paimpol by 23rd March, but he is awaiting payments from those members partaking in the visit. Karen is overseeing the finances of the visit and will be contacting members for their contributions.

b) Roland has secured a £350 grant from TVBC under the Councillors Community Grant scheme, with endorsement from Cllr Mark Cooper. It will be recorded by John as offsetting the Hampshire Record Office donation.

c) John reported that the accounts for the Treviglio visit were almost complete. He had received one invoice from Unity for the February journey (£118.20) but as the second journey took place in March that invoice is yet to be received. The travel costs will almost be met by the funds handed over by Gian Battista. John expects the total expenditure for the visit to be between £700 and £800.
6. **Membership:** John reported that we have one new member. He had encountered a problem with their Standing Order mandate in that it was returned online but that was not acceptable as the Bank needed a hard copy signature. Karen will ensure that the information is amended on the website to specify that the form must be returned by post or by hand to John. He will chase those who have not yet renewed

their memberships. John also mentioned that any change of Twinning's banking arrangements should be done at a less busy time, possibly after the AGM when the cost of membership might have changed. John feels that the admin involved could be increased when members would have to change their standing orders.

7. Website and Publicity

Website

Referring to the notes of the Website working group, John asked if there was a variation on the name of the website, but it seems there was a spelling error. Karen explained having additional email addresses was not justified by the extra cost. She reported that few people were looking at the website; data showed mainly viewers from USA and Poland! Karen is happy to maintain the website for the time being.

Karen requested that when members wish to send photos for the website they should do so by email and not by WhatsApp, and ensure they are the bigger size. Any photos of the twin towns will be acceptable even if they are not connected to formal visits. Karen will put a notice to this effect in the Newsletter.

Judy asked about the large green area on the Calendar page. Karen will remove this once she has finished editing the page.

The members area can be accessed through a link and the password is BridgeTheGap24. Steve Hunter has set up the Photo Gallery within the members area and it is accessed via an external link and the same password must be re-entered. Karen will be in discussions with Steve as he is currently paying £102 for the ownership. A decision will have to be made by Twinning if they want to incur such a charge in the future or if the current website can withstand more photos than Karen has already uploaded. We have used 625mb out of a possible 2GB. Kathrina suggested we could have a gallery on a Facebook page which would incur no costs. John stated that he has a link to Treviglio on FB.

It was agreed not to set up a Blog. Karen stated that her son Dominic had been a great help on the technical side, and he is also willing to offer contributions or talk to us about Twinning and the younger generation perspective.

John remarked that the date at the bottom of the web page was still stating 2023. Karen will investigate and have it changed.

Publicity

Karen thanked Phil for the Treviglio report. She asked that any articles for the Advertiser should be submitted to her first and she will forward them to her contact.

Roland stated that his current contact is Kimberley Barber, the Editor. Karen will submit a Paimpol report following the visit in May.

Karen requested articles for the Newsletter.

Brochures

Karen has been in contact with Nick Hatchley who is willing to design a bi-fold brochure if we provide the copy. We don't require a new logo as that exists with our three country symbols. Design and supply would be £150.

Kathina suggested an A4 poster with a QR code might be sufficient. Karen will ask Nick for a quote.

VE Day Celebrations: John gave some information about the VE celebrations due to take place in Romsey on the Sunday (May 4th) before VE Day. Various organisations will be setting up stalls so it was agreed Twinning should take the opportunity to have a presence on the day. John will let us know further details as soon as they are known and ideas for our stall can be discussed then.

Kathrina is now sending out a meeting invitation from the twinning email once the date of the next meeting has been agreed. Some committee members had not responded and Kathrina wished to check if everyone was in receipt of the email. The idea is that once the next committee meeting date has been set then members can be notified with the opportunity of responding yes/no. Particularly useful to inform those committee members who were not present at the meeting. It was suggested that the Twinning website address should be added to emails as a signature.

8. Twin Town Reviews

Treviglio

10 visitors from Treviglio had visited Romsey from 27 Feb to 3 March. In the event there had been no additional party from their Mayor's office.

Phil reported that the visit was a great success and was enhanced by the lovely sunny weather. Phil mentioned some of the excursions which guests made with their hosts: Stonehenge, Salisbury Cathedral, Highcliffe Castle via the New Forest. The main group visit was to Fishbourne and Chichester. Friday evening the Italians were treated to a typical pub quiz at the Nightingale, something quite new for them, which they won and thoroughly enjoyed. On the Saturday evening some of the party attended the Mayor's Charity concert in the Abbey and on Sunday evening a group meal was held at the Mortimers Arms. The Civic Reception took place on

Monday morning before the visitors left on Monday afternoon. Some of them were spending a couple of nights in London before returning to Italy.

Phil thanked Roland for organising the meal at the Mortimers Arms, Julie for the decorations and Kathrina for the Unity minibus journeys. Denise thanked Roland for hosting her guest as she was unable to host.

Kathrina raised the point that she had not been contacted regarding hosting for the Treviglio visit. Phil offered his apologies if that was an oversight on his part. It was agreed that all members should be contacted not just regarding hosting but also for inclusion in group activities during visits. Communication needs to improve and that will be addressed in future.

Paimpol: 19 members are set to visit Paimpol 22nd-26th May. Two couples will be travelling independently by car – the remainder are booked on the ferry crossing from Portsmouth to Caen (not St Malo as that ferry was fully booked as it was the Bank Holiday weekend). The Unity bus has been booked, Hosts are not known yet. Karen has been alerted to building works at the terminal but that shouldn't affect the outward journey. Timings will be confirmed but most likely the group will meet at the Romsey bus station at 6am to be at the ferry terminal 6.30 -7am for the 8am ferry. Karen will advise members to take small suitcases as the minibus usually carries 16 passengers without luggage.

The inward ferry is due back in Portsmouth at 9.30pm but disembarkation will take longer than usual as there is no overhead gantry due to the building works. Karen will send out an email regarding the costs so that John will have funds available for expenses. Karen believes it will be less than £250pp. John requested a list of the members going.

Karen said that as Twinning has been registered with Brittany Ferries it is possible for any member to have a discount of 5% when making a booking.

Battenberg:

Visit to Romsey Friday 12th September – Monday 15th September.

Debbie has been in contact with Fred Inacker. 13 guests are interested in visiting Romsey. Currently they are investigating prices for flights and coaches before making a decision on their travel options.

The group outing will be to the Romsey Show on Saturday 13th September.

9. **2025 Diary Dates: Annual Dinner:** Angela reported that 29 have booked for the Annual Dinner on Friday 28th March. Included in that number are the new Chief Officer of Romsey Town Council, Helen Klaassen, and John and Tessa Parker who will be attending as guests in John's capacity as Town Mayor and the association's current President. Menus have been sent out for pre-ordering meals.

Summer Boules event: Judy reported that there is a Boules facility at Hatches Farm, West Wellow. It had been used in the past by Wellow Twinning Association which has unfortunately dissolved recently. Their ex-chairman dealt with bookings so Judy will investigate further regarding the site's availability.

The date for the AGM was fixed for Wednesday 24th September. Judy will investigate the availability of a suitable venue.

Roland suggested that the constitution be changed so that the association was not bound to hold the AGM before the end of September.

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10. **Romsey Festival 2026:** Following a meeting she attended on 27th February, Judy reported that although the dates are 4th – 19th July the boundaries are flexible should an organisation wish to hold an event outside of those dates. The website is now up and running with an event registration form. The Festival colours are maroon and gold. Ticketing will be available through Oasis. The Plaza will use Ticketsource. Statistics will be required on how many people attended each event and how much money will have been made. As has been reported previously the proposal is for Twinning to invite artists from each of the twin towns to present their work in the context of the Festival, and ideally to be in Romsey at the same time. All art forms can be considered, though the Festival is keen that the programme should not be too focused on music. Roland is contact each twin town inviting them to submit ideas for visiting artists. Judy was thanked for attending the meeting.

11. **Any other Business:**

a) Link with Ukraine: John has suggested an e- link with Ukraine in partnership with the Town Council. Possibilities will be explored. John said there is obvious support for Ukraine as shown by recent social events. Roland will do further work on this and report back.

b) Mayor's Charity Quiz: Debbie reported that Twinning was represented at a recent Quiz event in Romsey. Catering was supplied by Court House Catering which was very good so it might be worth considering if required for any of our future events.

12. **Date of next meeting:** Thursday 5th June, 2.45 at 70A Winchester Road, Romsey

Romsey Twinning Web-site Meeting 18th February 2025

Present: BJB, KDB, RJBM, JCB

We met to review how the website functions

1. The changes made to Members Area are now available
2. Home page, there's been a change to lay out, sliders for photo display – keep this format
3. The Key Docs in "About Us" to go in "Join Us", maybe move all the sub-headings from "About Us" to "Join Us"
4. We discussed combining Home and About Us pages? We decided not to do this
5. Check the website display on a mobile phone, maybe the changes Karen has made on her computer don't display well on a phone
6. Remove captions from under photos on Home Face
7. Roland to check the text in "About Us" and maybe make it more "catchy/funky"
8. Should we have a blog? Probably not, it would need to be monitored
9. KB to add details of the Treviglio visit from 27th February - 3rd March 2025 to the Romsey Facebook page. Links to Romsey F/B page to be discussed at next committee meeting
10. Tidy up the Join Us page, no drop-down boxes needed, all options now to go on one page
11. Review stats and webpages on a regular basis (maybe monthly)
12. Email addresses: we will need to pay Wix if we want more email addresses, under the current charging scheme we do have