

ROMSEY TWINNING

MINUTES of the COMMITTEE MEETING held Friday November 14th 2025

1. **Present:** Angela Bernhardt (Minutes), Karen Bolton, Kathrina Gywnne, Roland Matthews, John Parker, Judy Phillips, Phil Thomas
2. **Apologies:** Denise Amery, Debbie Evenhand
3. **The Minutes** of the previous Committee Meeting held on September 4th 2025, were agreed.
4. **Matters Arising:**

i) Quiz: Roland reported that the event had been a success. There were concerns that bookings were slow to begin with and that there were no bookings via the website which would need addressing for future events. Roland suggested an 'early bird' price could be offered as an incentive, but John didn't feel that would work on such a low-priced ticket. Whilst this could be tried, putting back the cut-off date might also help to bring earlier bookings. Roland felt that some comments Mike Bull made following the Quiz, might suggest that he would not be able to continue as quizmaster. If that did happen Kathrina suggested an 'in house' quiz could be organised, and the committee agreed that this could be a possibility. Phil commented that the parking at Crosfield Hall made it an excellent venue.

ii) Roland reported that he had laid a wreath on behalf of Twinning at the Memorial Park on Remembrance Sunday.

5. **Treasurer's Report:** John reported that cash held is £2448.51 with no payments outstanding. He also stated that he has produced a mandate change form to include Kathrina. There would continue to be three signatories namely Roland, Judy and Kathrina. Following previous discussions on the possibility of changing banks, Kathrina had carried out some research. As Twinning is currently with Barclays Bank it was felt that a move to an ethical bank would be preferred. John had been trying to find a bank in Romsey but with various closures it was becoming impossible. Of the four which Kathrina researched the Co-operative Bank was deemed the most suitable. Roland proposed that Twinning change from Barclays to the Co-operative Bank and the committee agreed unanimously. Kathrina offered to help any member setting up a new standing order. As the current standing orders are due on 5th January the change might not be possible before that date.

Waitrose has reintroduced its token scheme and Roland will speak to someone at the store to investigate the possible inclusion of Romsey Twinning.

6. **Membership:** John had nothing to report as there have been no changes. Two people had expressed interest in joining Twinning via the website and Roland had sent out further

information but had not heard back from either of them. Both Roland and Kathrina felt that one of the potential members would not be suitable as a member of Twinning. Roland suggested that the committee needed to have a procedure for dealing with such a situation. It was decided that we could in the first instance amend the membership form and constitution by adding 'At the discretion of the committee'. The constitution could be further amended to include the statement that 'Twinning is a non-political organisation'.

7. **Romsey Festival:** Roland had received an encouraging response from Paimpol twinning to the request for visiting artists: a Breton music trio and two craft artists. Nothing had been forthcoming from Battenberg. In Treviglio Gian Battista had put the matter in the hands of the Town Hall, but Roland had heard nothing from them. As time was getting short and it would now be very difficult to find suitable and available venues Roland proposed, with regret, that Twinning should abandon its plans for participation in the Festival. This was agreed by the Committee. Roland will keep in contact with the Breton group and the craft artists, to see if they were interested in still coming over. Kathrina suggested that perhaps the visit due next year from Paimpol could coincide with Beggars Fair, when possibly the Breton musicians and the craft artists might also be present.

8. **Twinning Visits in the Future:** Information sheets detailing comments from the membership and the Twin towns regarding the proposed changes to Twinning had already been distributed to the committee. In their absence Roland read out comments from Denise and Debbie concerning the proposed changes. It was decided not to have a committee vote at the meeting, but that everyone would be able to vote once the proposal was sent out to the whole membership. Roland felt that we needed to get a response rate of at least 50% of the membership in order to have a mandate to proceed. Judy suggested that if the vote was finely balanced then the Committee could have the casting vote. Roland had arranged to meet with a member of Unity to discuss how a secret ballot would be arranged. However, the committee felt that it wasn't necessary to go to such lengths and an email from the Chairman would be sufficient, in which case responses would only be seen by Roland. He will draft an email for the Committee's approval, following which it will be sent out to the membership. A simple 'Yes' or 'No' to the proposal would be required and a deadline for responses given. Joint memberships would have two votes. A grid showing proposed visits 2026 – 2029 1) without any change and 2) with the proposed change would also be sent out. 2026 would now be a regular year, with three visits as previously. John felt that there could be challenges ahead regarding the reciprocal agreement if one Twin town couldn't come to Romsey in any year, Battenberg perhaps the greatest one at risk, particularly from the logistical point of view. Roland felt that their cancellation this year highlighted the need for change. Members on both sides could make their own private arrangements even in a year when there was no visit. John made the point Romsey has a commitment to three Twin towns whilst our opposite numbers don't.

Judy suggested that the Chairman should receive some financial input from Twinning for his participation in visiting our three towns. John said he was not in favour of such a move. John suggested that the email to the membership could also give details of the change of

bank and the requirement for a new standing order, but it was agreed that this would be the subject of a separate email.

9. **Twin Town Updates:**

a) **Treviglio:** Phil had nothing to report. Karen reported that she had visited Cupernham School to give a talk on Treviglio. The children had had worksheets and Karen had left some leaflets. She would put a full report in the Newsletter.

b) **Paimpol:** Karen reported that Claude Chatton wrote to her concerned about the possible changes. Karen informed him that nothing had been decided yet and that 2026 would probably be a normal year for Twinning. Karen will write to him and suggest they come over for the Beggars Fair weekend. Karen will write to Cupernham School to request an update on the correspondence link with Paimpol schools.
John asked if Karen had been in contact with Romsey Abbey school as French is also taught there. Karen said she will make contact.

c) **Battenberg:** Battenberg had recently been in touch regarding the proposed changes to the pattern of future visits, but no plans had been outlined yet for a group visit in either direction.

10. **AGM Review:** No further comments were raised.

11. **Diary Dates 2026:** It was decided to hold the Annual dinner again at the White Horse, Ampfield. Friday 20th March the suggested date and Angela will contact Gayner to check availability. Once confirmed Angela will contact Karen for publication in the newsletter and website. Date of the Quiz to be discussed next time. Roland suggested a Bric-a-Brac sale. John suggested it would be a good idea to coincide it with the Antique and Collectibles Fair and he will investigate further. Roland said he has two prints of Steam Engines still from Paimpol which were part of the Twinning memorabilia. The Committee supported his proposal to offer them to the Signal Box.

12. **Publicity:** Karen has written an article for the Romsey and District Society. She will also send it to various other local publications. John will post it on the Romsey News and Information Facebook page.

Karen is also investigating the replacement of the Twinning banner with a roller banner. She will be contacting Lime Signs in Romsey for quotes.
A newsletter is due before Christmas and Karen asked for contributions.

13. **Any other business:** John reported that Geoff Cooper had suggested the possibility of Romsey forming a twinning link with a town in Ukraine. A small group, including John, Roland and a Ukrainian living in Romsey was meeting to take this forward. In the early stages no exchange visits would be possible, for obvious reasons, so contact would have to be online and by other means. Although he supported the idea Roland felt that any such initiative should be driven by the Town Hall. John will explore the idea with fellow town councillors.

14. **Date of next meeting:** Friday January 16th 2026, 2pm, 70a Winchester Road, Romsey.