

**Baldock Town Twinning Association**

**Eisenberg : Baldock : Sanvignes-les-Mines**

  

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019**

This AGM concludes my fifth year as Hon. Chair and yet again I have to say that I am pleased with how the year has gone and I hope that you have also enjoyed the things we have done during the course of 2019.

**Membership**

Last year we welcomed Brian Noble as a new member, and he immediately participated in many of our fundraising events. Welcome Brian. Our overall membership remains strong in terms of numbers at 38 and is enthusiastic in terms of supporting our fundraising programme. However, attracting new and if possible, younger members continues to be our biggest challenge and I would ask all members to do whatever they can to introduce new members for the long term good of the Association.

One encouraging piece of news on the ‘younger front’ is that the pen-pal project between St Mary’s Junior School and schools in Sanvignes has continued into its second year. We will keep a close eye on its development.

During the year it was very sad that both Alan Evens and Diana Bage passed away. Alan was a founder member of Twinning in Baldock and although restricted in being able to participate in our events, he was always interested in the association and the people both here and particularly in Eisenberg. Diana, with Malcolm, made a considerable contribution to Baldock Twinning and together they were committee members for many years.

Both Alan and Diana will be sadly missed by us all.

**Financial**

Last year things got back to normal after the previous two years of anniversary celebrations. We generated considerable income from our subs and the fundraising programme, particularly the Murder Mystery evening, plus we also had a generous award made by the Baldock & District Area Committee. As a result, we generated a healthy surplus of income over expenditure. Humphrey will go through our financial results in his Treasurer’s Report. For the moment our reserves are sufficient and will sustain us for the immediate future.

**Twinning Exchange Visits**

Our exchange activities went extremely well in 2019. In July, 18 people visited Eisenberg, unfortunately, Sue and I were unable to visit this year due to Sue’s impending hip replacement operation. Again, an interesting programme was enjoyed by those attending which included a day out consisting of a visit to Andernach, a town on the River Rhine, followed by a short cruise along the River, and a walk to the area of an old geyser!! The Geyser erupts every 2 hrs, and is the world’s highest coldwater geyser, reaching heights of 30 to 60 metres, the day concluded with a return by boat to Andernach and a late lunch at a traditional German restaurant.

In August, 16 visitors, including two teenagers, from Sanvignes visited Baldock. The programme started well with a welcome reception at Greta and Ray’s which got the weekend off to a good start. The day out took us to Peterborough Cathedral and Flag Fen, both places were very much enjoyed, and the guided tours were well appreciated. The following day was spent at leisure with hosts and in the evening we had the ‘official’ dinner at Letchworth Golf Club where, following speeches and an exchange of gifts, we enjoyed an excellent meal and were then entertained by the DJ Robert who provided music for those who had put on their dancing shoes.

On the Sunday we began with a coffee get together in the morning, hosted by Humphrey and Margaret. It was then time to say ‘bon voyage’ to those visitors travelling home to Sanvignes, those not leaving for home stayed on with their hosts to spend additional time together.

**Fundraising**

Last year we had a very good fundraising year with the programme being well supported and generating higher income than in the previous year. The Murder Mystery attracted 92 people, considerably more than in 2018 and it raised in excess of £1,400, thank you to everyone for their part in organising, supporting and participating in this event and special thanks go to Viv for writing the play. My thanks also go to Rob and Eileen who hosted a bbq in June. Thanks again to Mary and Michael, for hosting and Helen, Manjula and Sue for assisting with another excellent French Lunch and Greta and Ray for hosting the very successful and enjoyable Afternoon Tea. Thank you also, to all those people who assisted in making these events so successful. Greta and Ray were kind enough to donate the entire proceeds from the tea to the Twinning Association and I thank them for their generosity. These events were all enjoyable, successful and profitable due in no small measure to the efforts of the hosts and their band of helpers.

**Committee**

The committee, which meets quarterly, continues to work hard to provide an active and sustainable association and my thanks go to everyone who contributes their time and considerable effort. We are not anticipating any changes to the committee for the next year but at next year’s AGM we will be electing a new Chairman and Treasurer. In line with the constitution Humphrey and Paul will step down from their positions after having completed six years in office.

As a result of these changes we will need to find people to fill these positions and finding additional committee members would be a step in the right direction.

**Programme for 2020**

As we look forward to 2020 the committee have put together a programme of fundraising events which will take place throughout the year. It will again include a Murder Mystery evening as part of the Baldock Festival. **So, make a note in your diaries, Saturday, 9th May at St Mary’s Church Hall**. The play has again been written by Viv and continues the story of the Grant family, this time into the second world war. The cast have started rehearsals so you can expect another entertaining evening.

We have thoughts about having a stall at the Festival Street Fair on Saturday, 23rd May, but we will need a rota of people to support it. There is a sign-up sheet. I will decide if it is viable after I see the response.

Greta and Ray have kindly offered to host a coffee morning, which will be on **Sunday, 7th June** and Mary and Michael will host a French lunch on **Sunday, 5th July**. We will change the pricing for this lunch this year, it will be £18 for members and £20 for non-members, again it will be a ticketed event so tickets will need to be purchased in advance.

In October or November, date tbd, Stephen is working on a music and sketches evening and in February next year we are planning for a brand-new event. We are looking at putting on an ‘International Friendship’ event to encourage people to come together to share experiences, stories, poems etc about their international friendships. Viv would you like to say a few words.

So quite an exciting programme and we hope that as many people as possible are able to attend these events.

Regarding this year’s exchange visits, I will talk about them later in the agenda.

To finish with, I would like to offer my special thanks to everyone on the Committee for their support and hard work during the year and to everyone who has helped and supported our fundraising activities.

I look forward to another successful year in 2020, and I am committed to work with the committee to ensure the continued viability of the association. But at the end of the day our success or otherwise will depend on the number of members we have and the level of support from that membership. So, I hope to see as many people as possible at our various events.

Thank you.

Paul Luckett (Hon. Chairman) 10th March 2020