

NEWTOWN TWINNING ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SUNDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2020

DOLERW PARK

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

At the time of our 2019 AGM last July we were busy preparing for the Newtown Food Festival in early September. For the last few years we have welcomed friends from Les Herbiers who have joined us to stage 'The French Village' marquee, a joint French/Gallic venture, selling French food & wine products from the Vendee and also items from local Welsh producers who in the past have sold their produce in Les Herbiers at their Food Festivals. The stand was as successful as ever and we had a great weekend with our French visitors. During the visit, we celebrated the 20 years of twinning between Newtown & Les Herbiers with a Reception hosted by NLTC on the Festival field where gifts were exchanged to mark the occasion.

In early October, as in recent years, several members of Hafren Cycling Club went over to Les Herbiers to take part in the annual Chrono Cycle Race. This is a great link which NTA initiated but which HCC now organise themselves. Newtown Twinning was represented there by Andrew & Alwena. Later that month we held our Annual Dinner at the Waggon & Horses. We enjoyed an excellent meal and then welcomed Stuart Owen from Open Newtown as our guest speaker. He explained the ideas for development of the open green spaces in our town and it was just great to see what was being proposed (most of which is underway and nearing completion now).

During the autumn and winter months we ran our popular Film Evenings with a series of 4 French speaking films (with subtitles!). We enjoyed meeting old and new friends over a glass of wine and refreshments before each, very different, film was shown.

In late February, the highlight of our winter season activities was a visit of 29 French rugby fans from LH. The occasion? Wales v France at the Principality Stadium for the Six Nations Competition! With the help of Dai Davies of Newtown Rugby Club we had secured 50 tickets for the match and on 22nd Feb a coachload of hopeful French and Welsh supporters travelled to Cardiff. The Newtownians were gracious in defeat and the Hebretais delirious with their country's win, a diplomatic reward for their exhausting 4 day whistle-stop visit!

And then COVID-19 hit and brought everything to a brick-wall halt!

From that point, all our 2020 planned events have of course had to be cancelled.

Our main event of 2020, the return Music Visit to Les Herbiers in April with over 100 participants was the main casualty. It was with a very heavy heart that we cancelled this but fortunately within the time limit to cancel without loss to Newtown Twinning and we were able to return all but £5 per head monies to those who had signed up to go. We, and Les Herbiers Twinning, are very determined that the visit will be re-arranged at some future date.

During the spring, we did manage to enjoy fortnightly online House Party meetings with some of the LH committee until lockdown was relaxed. We had jointly-organised quizzes which were enjoyable and chaotically hilarious in equal measure! It's these sort of things that cement twinning relationships!

It just remains for me to thank the officers, committee and supporters of our association over this difficult year and also to recognise the financial support of NLTC for which we are most grateful.

By its very nature, Twinning revolves around and depends on social interaction so, as you will appreciate, at this moment we are unable to plan for any future events but you can rest assured as soon as we can, we will be back in action.