

Reigate & Banstead Twinning Association

Covering the areas of Reigate, Redhill, Banstead and Horley



Twinning News 2021/2



Important Date for your 2021 Diary

🚩 Summer Picnic ----- 3 July

Brunoy Link

Dear Friends,

At long last, we have an opportunity to meet together in Reigate and catch up with all of our news. The Twinning picnic will be a first step towards normality for our association. Our AGM will be postponed to the Autumn unlike the Assemblée Générale in Brunoy.

In France, the spread of the pandemic is slowing down and the rate of the vaccination increasing, though not catching up with us yet! I expect that, by now most of our friends will have received a first dose of vaccine.

The Brunoy Twinning Association has decided to organise their AGM face to face, after all, following long discussions. It will be on the 11th of June and will be quite a formal affair. As the "association du jumelage" receives a subsidy from the town hall, it needs to follow fairly strict rules regarding its administration and finance. The election of new members of the committee will be by a secret ballot of the membership as long as there is a quorum attending the AGM. I expect that we will see some changes following the resignation of their president, Geneviève Finel for health reasons.

At the moment, travelling to France is difficult, not only because our government does not recommend it but, also, because the French are worried about the Indian variant. Hence, no planned visit for this year. Next year? We'll see!

I look forward to seeing many of you for the Twinning picnic. A très bientôt.

Monique and Anne

Monique Pottage (Joint Chairman & Brunoy Link) (01737 221073) mpottage@hotmail.co.uk
and **Anne Miller** (01737 913542) anne.miller@mail.com

Eschweiler Link

Dear Friends

After all this time it will be so good to see you all again face to face! Monique and I do hope that as many as possible will feel able to come along to our Twinning get-together picnic on 3 July. We thank Ros and John Borkowski very much for offering us the use of their garden for this event and we will do our best to make it as Covid-safe as possible for everyone.

The weekend of 5/6 June was when we were due to visit Eschweiler to celebrate the anniversary of their Twinning Association. Sadly, that has not proved possible but we wish them all the best and hope that we will all be able to meet in person before too long. We already have an invitation for the postponed event next June. Life goes on and we all hope for some better weather now that we can make more use of outside opportunities. The Committee have been in contact via Zoom and we decided to delay our AGM until the Autumn, when the virus situation will hopefully have improved. Of course we keep in touch with our friends in Eschweiler and Ute Peter has written a short piece below about what is happening there.

I was invited by the German Embassy/British German Association to join a Zoom call, together with representatives from 10 other Twinning Associations in Surrey. Previously this was a nationwide event held in London but will now be held on a regional basis. The call was hosted by Julia Gross, Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy, John Hobley from the BGA and the Guildford Twinning Association. The theme was "Fulfilling the purpose of Twinning" broken into three parts: Educational and Cultural initiatives; Involving young people in Twinning and Drawing different strands of the community into Twinning.

After an introduction by Julia Gross, in which she reiterated the Embassy's support and gratitude, three members gave presentations, followed by a discussion.

I found it interesting and motivational to talk about our common challenges. It was good to hear that one Association has hugely increased its membership as a direct result of Brexit. Meeting notes and contact details will be published shortly which I will share with our Committee in due course

In the meantime, keep safe and well everyone and enjoy the summer.

Best wishes

Janet Powell

Joint Chairman & Eschweiler Link

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News From Eschweiler

In Germany the election campaign is slowly starting. The election is in September. The Green Party has a candidate who wants to become Chancellor: Annalena Baerbock. The conservative CDU has Armin Laschet as its candidate and the SPD has Olaf Scholz.

At the moment, the Greens and the CDU are the strongest.

The war in the Middle East has again led to many demonstrations and unfortunately also to anti-Semitic riots. This issue is very topical again and is being watched with concern. There will be even stricter rules against violations. Unfortunately, many migrants are also anti-Semitic.

Vaccinations in Germany are in full swing since GPs are also vaccinating. Very slowly, there are first openings, but they can be different in each federal state. In Baden-Württemberg, for example, there are already many more openings than in North Rhine-Westphalia. Everyone hopes that we will be able to travel again in the summer. If you want to go to the hairdresser or to fashion shops etc., you still have to wear masks and get tested. If you have been vaccinated twice, you don't need a test, but still a mask.

There are special rules for schools: If the incidence value is above 165, only distance learning takes place. Between 165 and 100 there is alternating teaching and below 100 there is face-to-face teaching. All pupils wear masks and are tested twice a week.

If the incidence value in a city is above 165 - lockdown with exit lock. In the moment the incidence value in Germany is between 60 and 70.

Unfortunately, there are always demonstrations by corona deniers and corona opponents. They gather by the hundreds without masks.

All towns are suffering the consequences of Corona, especially many small shops and restaurants have to close. The cities are changing.

We often think of you all and wish that you are protected and stay healthy so we can meet next year.

Sincerely Ute.

Zoom Meet and Chat.

On Thursday 18 March, 22 people connected into an informal zoom meeting to hear updates about our twinning partners.

The evening began with our President, Penelope Horsfall, welcoming everyone. She emphasised the importance of keeping up contacts across borders in this difficult time of a global pandemic. She then introduced our Mayor, Rosemary Absalom.

Madame Mayor outlined the challenges she has faced during her year in office. Unable to meet in person, she has relied on virtual meetings to encourage the many groups and charities which have been crucial in supporting the community at such a difficult time. She said she would love to be able to visit both Brunoy and Eschweiler once restrictions allow, although she admitted to having poor language skills, with many present assuring her that fluency was not required!

Monique Pottage reported on the difficult situation in Brunoy. Paris was about to enter a strict lockdown for a month because of rising COVID infections. Their committee had been meeting regularly on line to deal with changes necessary in the organisation. Following Genevieve Finel's resignation due to ill health, Michel Lefort has been acting as President.

They are hoping to organise an AGM on line soon, to discuss and confirm all the changing roles. They will also consider when visits to and from Brunoy may be feasible.

Janet Powell reported on her contacts with Germany. She and Graham had joined in with virtual Karneval celebrations. Eschweiler council had produced a video showing how they were supporting the community, keeping infections down and supporting vulnerable people. She hoped that we would be able to visit in June 2022. Reigate Priory School and Barbaraschule had been unable to make their annual exchange but plans were already in place for next year.

Monique then invited members to ask questions or make comments.

Diana Bowes told the meeting that she had been organising the archives and that she had contacted the Family History centre at Woking, who would be delighted to receive them.

There followed some interesting discussions on a range of topics, including the possibility of working with other twinning associations in Surrey for events like Dorking Twinning Association who are planning beer tastings.

It was hoped that the vaccinations would allow restrictions to be eased, allowing everyone to meet again. The committee will reschedule the postponed AGM for the Autumn when we can all meet face to face.

Monique thanked everyone for their contributions, especially Robert Bogin for organising the technology.

Sally Baker

Forthcoming Events

◆ Summer Picnic 3 July 2021

Please see attached form for full details

Monique Pottage

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Membership

We have 70 Memberships of whom 50 are subscription paying – the rest are Honorary Members and members of our twinned clubs. The 70 memberships represents 85 individual members/organisations.

Robert Bogin
Treasurer & Membership Secretary

His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

Members from our twinning towns of Brunoy and Eschweiler have sent their condolences on the death of His Royal Highness on 9 April 2021