

Dear Fellow Twinners,

In some ways it's hard to believe I have nearly completed a year as chair, in others it's hard to believe it's only a year! I'm writing to you all as there are two matters which I need to share with you.

A recurring theme in our committee meetings has been our lack of a vice chair. This is very worrying on several fronts.

1. We have been functioning unconstitutionally for the past 11 months, which is a situation that cannot continue.
2. We have no succession plan
3. If for any reason I am unable to carry out my role as chair we have no-one to take over.

As a committee we have discussed this on numerous occasions. We do not have an existing committee member who feels able to take on the role. I am therefore appealing to all members to consider whether they are able to help us by stepping forward to take on the position.

Furthermore we are going to be in need of more committee members. Andy Champion and Anne-Marie Pickerill feel unable to continue their membership of the committee and the Association itself. You will all be aware of Sandra and Kevin's imminent departure to France which will leave us without another committee member who is our very hardworking secretary. The committee will be reduced from 10 to 7 members. We need 5 to be quorate. The Association is vulnerable. Existing committee members are facing an increasingly large workload.

The situation is desperate. For the Association to continue to function we must have a vice-chair and more (new or returning) committee members.

Assuming we are able to form a committee and continue as an association we have been considering re-organising the way we pay our subscriptions.

The income from our monthly meals is the largest component of the funds we use to entertain our French friends. The income is also used to subsidise other events, for example the AGM, the Christmas dinner and putting on events like the French club in the village school.

We have 8 monthly meetings, the AGM, Christmas dinner and the visit to or from France each year. Our treasurer has calculated that we need to raise at least £3000 every 2 years (assuming costs do not rise dramatically). A proportion of our meal fees pay for the food, rent of the hall, washer-up etc and a small element is profit. It has been calculated that for a monthly fee of £3.50 per member (paid by standing order) or a one off annual payment of

£40.00 we would raise the necessary funds to keep all our activities going. We would then be able to reduce the monthly dining fee to £5.00 per person, with the option to raise the fee for special events when the organiser wishes to provide a 3 course meal. In this way all members would be able to contribute to our funds even if they were unable to attend many meetings.

I appreciate this would be a dramatic change to the way we raise our funds and wanted to give all members time to consider the proposal before raising it at the AGM.

Thank you for taking the time to read this lengthy epistle. Both of these matters are central to the future of our Association and as a committee we feel we need your input to continue to move forward.

Looking forward to hearing from future committee members and my new vice-chair,

Best wishes,

Julie