

Sherborne Douzelage
Chairman's Report 2024

This is the last time I shall give the Chairman's report for this august Association. Allow me please reminisce a little, for it was in 1991 that I was returning with my family from holiday in France, Agde, I think, and we spent the night with Henry Haffray and his family on the way back in Granville. In the course of the meal, Henry took me aside and outlined his (and Monsieur Poirier's) idea of a European Partnership (what became known as the Douzelage) to be formed round the twinning of Granville and Sherborne. Was Sherborne interested?

I answered emphatically yes. Just what the town wants. It took a while for Henry to find the other 10 towns, a big accomplishment, and we duly met in Granville in 1992 and signed the Charter "pourque", as I put it then, " nous ne serons pas effrayé par la concepte d'Europe mais Haffrayé". There were cynics who said it was an impossible undertaking and I swore inwardly then that I would make absolutely that it did. It has.

But it was difficult. In the next meeting in Meerssen we had many ideas but all we actually decided was that English should be the language of the organisation. The next meeting, in Bellagio, a truly wonderful event, but we got nowhere. So an extra meeting was called, Sean McInness and I proposed we have a permanent President, Karel Majoor, who, carefully primed, took an agenda out of his pocket and took over the meeting. Sean proposed the next meeting should in Sherborne. I seconded quickly. It was agreed we have two delegates for the General Meeting and two teachers for an Education Meeting. We were off!

That meeting was easier than this year's – 48 delegates only all staying, homes, an EU grant, very successful – and a surplus! Thereafter the association steadily grew, a constitution, workshops, the addition of 2 youth delegates (truly transforming), and more members as the EU expanded until it reached the present figure of 28.

Sherborne in fact has now been host on four occasions, the first two with an EU grant, the last two without and the first three all unexpectedly left us with a surplus. This year's was remarkable. It was at short notice as one town reneged on its promise to host (I think for the third time), no- other town would take it on and so Sherborne was approached. I personally was very much in favour of saying yes (in part from gratitude at Sherborne being allowed to remain within the organisation after the stupidity of Brexit) and when put to the Committee the answer was unanimous that we would go for (I have say somewhat to my surprise but certainly to my delight - and that of the President and the rest of the Douzelage). The thanks owed to that Committee are boundless. Moira Weston promptly offered to organise the accommodation, Mike Balfour the finding the projected

£50,000 needed, Lin sought out trusts and local government funds, Elizabeth came to look after the Youth meeting, Rachel Education and everyone found a niche to help make the event such a success. At the centre of it all was our Secretary Mary who co-ordinated everything with unerring regard to detail and of whom one cannot speak too highly. Indispensable. She has been at the heart of Sherborne Douzelage now for so long. Thank you Mary a million times.

Thanks too to all those who organised fund-raising events, made approaches to Trusts, businesses, individuals, local government bodies and so caused the funds to flow in a seemingly unending stream, presided over by tireless Michael Balfour. The Treasurer will talk more of this but perhaps in can be allowed to give particular thanks to Sherborne Town Council, the two Digby Trusts, the unfailing Wessex Morris Side, Nick Whighams family Trust, John Baker and the Abbey Music Festival, Rotary, and so on. I can't list them but after the fees from the Non-delegates had been all received, there the unexpected surplus of some £10,000. Here more thanks are needed for the Sherborne School provided accommodation and meals and other facilities at a greatly reduced price and so also Sherborne School for Girls. We could not have achieved all we did without them. Profound thanks.

Doubtless you will ask what will be done with the money and the answer is that the Trustees of the Charity met together and decided, with the acceptance and agreement of the Committee, that 45% go into the student travel Fund and the rest projects, especially those involving schools and young people.

The theme of the Conference was "Well-being in Nature and Music". and so music was a theme throughout and appreciation needs must be expressed to those who performed for us. There was The Sherborne Town Band and the Yetminster Irish Dancers at the reception, on the Friday in the Cheap Street Church The Sherborne Chamber Choir and the Music Scholars from Leweston School, both outstanding, and in the evening the SherBavarian Band. On the Saturday there was an hour and a half rehearsal for those Youth delegates who had brought musical instruments with them and they duly performed three pieces in the evening under the baton of Rachel Milestone (who had also organised the Teachers Meeting). It was magical and greeted with thunderous applause! They were followed by the Wriggle Valley Jazz Band and thereafter the party was then taken over by Wessex Morris side who rounded off one of the best end-of-conference parties ever. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

There was little time or energy for other projects during in the year but walkers did go to Normandy and Rosa Williams and Clifton Jelbert attended the Youth Music Festival in Susice, a very well-run event Rosa will play to us later.

Future projects are planned. The band from Koszeg (Hungary) will come here all going well to play in 2026 and hopefully Sherborne Town Band will reciprocate. The Abbey Primary School and Sherborne Primary are establishing contact with schools in Granville, hopefully some will go and help celebrate St Patrick's Day in Bundoran in March, and so on.

In conclusion, Sherborne Douzelage in is in good heart. It has a dynamic and highly motivated Committee – but in looking to the future, there needs to be recruitment of younger people. It would be so much better if the Education Committee were recreated with representatives from all the schools because the opportunities we offer are so many and varied and we know from past experience, how transformative exchanges can be for the young. And there are the ample funds now to ease the way. U3A, sports clubs, music groups etc all need to be encouraged to participate. Perhaps too there might be a visit to Granville Carnaval with the Twinning Association? it is time to talk our relationship.

I finish by giving my best wishes to the Association for the future. It has added so much to the lives of so many people, not least mine. It deserves a vigorous and continuing existence.

Jeremy Barker
Chairman,
21.xi.24

SHERBORNE DOUZELAGE

Year to 31.08.2024

Accounts

Charity No. 1147562

	Notes	Income 2024	Expenditure 2024	Income 2023	Expenditure 2023	Balance Sheet	
						2024	2023
Donations	1	35320		350			
Dividends		1364		859			
Additional income from 2022				730			
Additional income from 2023	2	808					
GM non delegate fee income	3	8885		0			
GM Fund raising events	4	4973		0			
Sundry repayments & refunds		108					
GM related expenses	5		40167		0		
Administration			215		433		
Ukraine			0		115		
Secretarial expenses			1350		600		
Reporting Accountant			150		100		
Douzelage International			320		329		
Rovinj Youth			443		472		
Susice Youth			273		0		
		51457	42918	1939	2050		
Net surplus for the year			8540	(91)			
Surplus on value of investments			3035				
Overall surplus			11574				
Bank Balances						21297	29080
Investments	6					30079	27044
Young Musician	7					3776	3776
Chojna Fund	8					1185	585
YTF Capital	9					17437	16929
YTF Income	10					6161	1182
GM 2024						0	17073
				3787	4099		
surplus/deficit		8540					
General Fund Capital						15000	15000
General Fund income	11					7566	1480
Sundry Creditors						250	100
						51375	51375
						56124	56124

Accountants report

This set of accounts for 2023/24 has been completed from the books and information maintained by the Charity's Treasurer, Clifton Jelbert, and is in accordance therewith.

I have not undertaken any audit of these figures.

1212 Cooper

Robert Cooper
19th November 2024

Clifton Jelbert

Clifton Jelbert, Treasurer
19th November 2024

Original

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19th November 2024