**Faversham Town Twinning Association Annual Report 2020-2021**

On behalf of the FTTA Management Committee it is my pleasure to present to members our annual report for the past year.

Our attempts to progress our plans as published in 2020 continued to be somewhat thwarted by the long drawn- out period of lockdown that we have endured here in England. Similarly, this affected our attempts to link up again with our newly appointed partner officials in Hazebrouck. Our twinned town of Hazebrouck experienced similar issues.

You will however have noted from our quarterly newsletters that the Committee continued to meet via Zoom every 2 months and more recently we have met face to face as restrictions have eased.

While we acknowledge that little has taken place that reflects our town twinning association, we have endeavoured to find ways to celebrate our French connection through cultural activities. These included two Zoom sessions to discuss French literature, Albert Camus’ “The Plague” followed by “L’ Étranger”. We are grateful to Catherine Bessières-Craddock for arranging those sessions, the second of which was in her garden.

Sadly we were unable to host a French film but thanks to Trevor Bryans who invited members to choose their favourite film from a list of well known standards, a group was able to discuss Jean Luc Goddard’s “Breathless” with some lively discussion afterwards.

Once again Julian Saunders generously offered us his lovely garden in Ospringe to hold our Summer Dejeuner sur l’ Herbe. The sun shone and we were delighted to welcome Councillor Alison Reynolds, the Mayor, as a special guest. There was an excellent turnout with impressive French delicacies shared amongst the guests.

In April Trevor Bryans and I met with the Mayor for coffee in the Rec where she shared detailed memories of the initiation Town Twinning event held at the Rec 60 years ago. She shared stories of the sporting activities they held with Hazebrouck residents and subsequent musical events and friendship exchange visits over the years. You may have read Trevor Bryans’ article in the Faversham Council newsletter summarising the 60 years since the Twinning was set up. We look forward to sharing with you after the AGM some ideas for how we celebrate the 60th anniversary.

The Management Committee did not lose sight of its mission to develop links with local schools and already meetings have taken place with a local primary school and our two secondary schools are responding to our efforts to seek ways of establishing meaningful joint activities with their counterparts in Hazebrouck. There is more still to be done but we have discussed the way forward.

We are also discussing with Swale’s tree person the planting of a tree this autumn to mark the 60th anniversary and we are delighted that Hazebrouck is going to do likewise.

The biggest disappointment for us all as an Association is the lack of real connection between our two towns, caused of course by long months of lockdown.

The fact that FTTA is still functioning despite this is testament to the 100% commitment of the Management committee and the continuing interest of FTTA members willing to support the small number of events we have managed to arrange.

It is with a degree of optimism that we can look forward to a year of greater engagement and success in meeting our stated goals. Our membership remains encouragingly healthy and we hope this can be strengthened by a return to enjoyable, stimulating events and crossings across the Channel both ways.

In conclusion I should like to thank Richard Shipman for all his work as Treasurer, membership officer and in charge of sending out communications including the newsletters.

I should also like to thank Catherine Bessières- Craddock for her role in developing educational links and more recently, acting as our visiting ambassador in Hazebrouck.

Grateful thanks to Councillor Trevor Martin in furthering links with the local council and secondary schools.

Thanks also to Trevor Bryans for his contribution to organising cultural events, together with Catherine and in furtherance of school involvement.

I am also grateful to Chris Oswald-Jones and his attention to detail in communications and understanding of local government

And of course to Vice Chair Councillor Julian Saunders and his wholehearted commitment to FTTA and his hosting of the Summer events.

It has been a pleasure working with the Management Committee with its emphasis on team spirit in order to sustain and develop our Town Twinning Association.

Clarissa Hanna, Chair of FTTA Management Committee