ELFORD/AWOINGT ASSOCIATION: FRIENDS OF AWOINGT

REPORT MAY 2019 -2020

After the all the significant celebrations of the twinning of the two villages and many other activities reported last year, there was an concern that this past year might be something of an anti climax but it is a great pleasure to report that the momentum engendered over the past seven years, much boosted by the last years exceptionally successful events, has meant 2019-2020 has been another year of very rewarding activities with increasing village participation, on both sides of the channel.

The repeat of the pop up "Crepe Cafe"held at the playground on Sunday July 14th was, despite inclement weather, an indication of a thriving interest in this project with an encouraging increase in both the number of people served and the profit made. This was largely used to subsidise expenditure incurred by the visit over the Scarecrow weekend.

The previous year our friends in Awoingt were disappointed to have missed the opportunity to experience the Scarecrow Festival and so many were delighted to be able to come and participate in 2019. Not only did they bring their own Scarecrows to add to our own impressive display created by Brenda Jenkins but made more than noteworthy contributions to manning stalls, serving food (here particular mention must be made of Master Emilien Peronne!), clearing up and both setting up and closing down the festival. The acknowledgement of their involvement by the very welcoming inclusion of the visitors in festival volunteers events was particularly appreciated and they took full advantage to further widen their connections within the village and this has had the excellent result of involving yet more Elfordians in this international friendship.

Among the delegation from Awoingt were some novice visitors including Eddy DHerbecourt. That he enjoyed a very positive experience is particularly important for us as he is to succeed Jean-Richard Lechowicz as Mayor and as such his support for the twinning is essential. In fact his impression was so good that he is backing the idea of having a Scarecrow festival within their annual village fete, provided Elford can supply expertise, which has been readily offered.

The opportunity was also taken during the August visit to discuss various future projects including a sponsored cycle trip, originally an Elford proposal now finding participants from Awoingt. From the start it has been an ambition of the Howard School to make an exchange visit with pupils of the Ecole des Sources and from the consolidation of contacts created through written exchanges the first steps are planned for summer 2020.

This is a major advance in the aim of the association to widen the profile of those involved in this venture and here is an opportunity to acknowledge the commitment and involvement of the Howard School in this friendship. Letters are exchanged between the pupils of the two schools every half term and although the constraints of technology, differences in school timetables and holiday schedules frustrate more visual contact, videos and newsletters ensure each school is kept updated. Each term th Howard school has an Awoingt connected visit such as the St Nicholas chocolate distribution in December although very sadly the pre Easter visit normally linked with either April fool's fish or the story of the Easter bells was cancelled by the CV 19 school closure.

As in previous years the necessary planning and administrative meetings have avoided tedium and ensured participation by being held in conjunction with supper in the Crown. Our greatest problem now is that with ever increasing numbers we risk out growing the room available: a very pleasing conundrum!

If the distance between the two villages restricts frequent visits to maintain regular contact the monthly news letters exchanged ensure that it generally feels we know more about activities and events in Awoingt than we do in e.g Whittington or Edingale! Further, in addition to the village signs reminding us of our connections every time we return to the villages, in Awoingt the flowering of the planted pots and the specially named rose remain very pleasant reminders of Elford.

The contribution of the Parish Council in supporting and progressing this singularly successful venture can never be underestimated and which is acknowledged with much gratitude.

For the next year we particularly look forward to the opportunity to introduce our new members here in Elford to the friends old and new in Awoingt.