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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BAGNÈRES-DE-BIGORRE, MALVERN

The Malvern Bagnères Twinning Association will be a year old on Saturday 26th November. We have had a great first year. We met our target of a successful signing weekend in Malvern at the end of April, we have identified a number of interest groups where interactions are being worked on, we have engaged with local businesses and we now have three schools in each town who are working with partner schools abroad. Above all, in June we created The Friends of Bagnères-de-Bigorre. The Friends group sits under the umbrella of MBTA and aims to develop a Twinning-related social agenda in both Malvern and Bagnères. Put more simply it is where we can have fun!

I have been Chair/President of MBTA since its formation and have willingly given a great deal of my time to the project. The workload however is not diminishing and I now want to give more of my time to family and friends. I am therefore stepping down from my role as President of MBTA but will continue to contribute to the Twinning Association as a Committee member with specific responsibility for Media Relations and this Newsletter. Gina Butler has agreed to become President of MBTA with immediate effect and will bring a new energy and style to the role. She has just what it takes to lead the Association into the next phase of its development. Gina has my full support and I look forward to continuing to work with her and our Committee to grow our activities with the wonderful town of Bagnères-de-Bigorres. *Graham Dimmock*

A MESSAGE FROM GINA

Thank you, Graham for reminding us just how much has been achieved under your leadership in the first year of our existence. You have been eminently successful in conveying to our friends in Bagnères-de-Bigorre an extremely positive impression of Malvern as a town of great charm offering many opportunities for friendship and joint initiatives. You have also played a vital 'front of stage' role here in Malvern, bringing Bagnères to life for our fellow citizens through MBTA social events and leading the team hosting the successful visit of the Bagnères mayoral party in April.

Over the coming year the committee and I will work to create opportunities for you, our MBTA friends, to participate directly in twinning activities where you too will be able to meet our new friends in Bagnères-de-Bigorre and enjoy the marvellous Pyrenean countryside - watch this space! *Gina Butler, President of MBTA*

FUTURE EVENTS

There will be no event in December but we are planning to hold **A Great Bagnères Bake-Off** in January. Many of you will know the French tradition of Galette des Rois. The Galette is a cake traditionally shared at Epiphany, on 6 January. It celebrates the arrival of the Three Wise Men in Bethlehem. Composed of a puff pastry cake, with a small charm, the fève, hidden inside, it is usually filled with frangipane, a cream made from sweet almonds, butter, eggs and sugar. More gourmet versions are available with chocolate, apple or candied fruits inside. In January, we will be asking the bakers amongst you to create and bake your own Galette and bring it along for a judging evening. The non-bakers will have the pleasure of feasting on a variety of Malvern's finest Galette. More details will be with you by email soon.

MEMBERSHIP

We have all paid our £2 membership fee for 2016 but will soon have to decide what the Friends "offering" will be for next year and what level of membership fee is appropriate. The Friends is a members' group not something provided from the top down. We all have a say in how it works and it would be very useful to have your thoughts either in an email to Cathy, MBTA's Secretary, or in person at the Galette evening.

We will be sending out revised contact details for the MBTA Committee as soon as Gina's "cabinet reshuffle" has taken place.