

THE NEWSLETTER

From the Chair

A Happy New Year everyone

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Chippenham Twinning Newsletter and I hope you all had a good Christmas.

May I remind everybody that, due to several other commitments that our hosts have, the 2026 visit to France will be a little earlier than usual being from Friday 3rd to 7th April. More information will be forthcoming shortly. However, as this will be over the Easter period, the ferries are likely to be very busy, and I would urge travellers to book early as costs will only rise nearer the time.

As reported in my column throughout 2025, two special Automotive students from Wiltshire college were selected to attend a three-week internship at BMW's HQ in Munich. A summary of their experience in Germany is included in this edition of the Newsletter. The success of the above initiative has prompted the Friedberg committee to ask if we could arrange for two of their students to visit the South-West of England and take part in a similar scheme – though not necessarily automotive. I have started the process and (so far) have identified four possibilities - two of which I'm in preliminary discussions with. It's hard to say if anything will come of these but I'm keeping my fingers crossed.

As always, the Autumn brings the usual round of school awards evenings and various committee members attend the events to see the Twinning Association award presented and meet the successful students. The other benefit of attending these gatherings is the chance to chat with the Head Teacher, other teaching staff and Governors. This gives us the opportunity to promote Twinning and explain how we can help young people who wish to further their language skills.

February brings our Association AGM which, this year will on Sunday 22nd and I urge you all to attend. The venue is the Quaker Meeting Room at The Cause, 42 The Causeway, Chippenham, SN15 3DD and the start time is 7pm for 7.30pm. Light refreshments (like the 2025 AGM) will be provided. In addition, and subject to the anticipated number of attendees, Norma Guscott (who owns the Cause with her Husband Fred), will run a bar for us.

As well as the usual business, the committee will be asking members to ratify (by a show of hands) an updated version of the Twinning Association Constitution. A copy of this was sent to every member on 29th November 2025 with the request that any questions / comments be submitted in writing to the acting Secretary (Karin) by no later than Friday 23 January. If you have a comment or question, please ensure you do so by that date. Many thanks.

Yours, Richard.

Dates for your Diary

**Annual subscriptions
due NOW**

1st January 2026

See page 2

**Annual General
Meeting**

Sunday 22nd Feb 2026

See page 3

Paint Easter Eggs

Saturday 28th Feb 2026

See page 4

Visit la Flèche

3rd – 7th April 2026

See page 4

**Friedberg visits
Chippenham**

27th – 31st Aug. 2026

See page 4

Annual subscriptions

If you have not done so, please pay your annual subscription of £18 or £36 for a family (seniors £15 or £30 and juniors under 18 if not covered by family £15) **by BACS or a standing order before the end of January**. At the same time, you may add as many numbers as you like to your membership of the 100 club £12 per number – there are four draws a year.

Account name **Chippenham Twinning Association**, account number **00260428**, sort code **20-84-58** – don't forget your name!

Internships

Maddison Long – Student at Chippenham College wrote a report of her internship with BMW in the summer 2025, here are some extracts from it:

Jaxyn Mackay and I are Automotive students at Wiltshire College and were fortunate enough to be selected to go on a three-week Internship at BMW HQ in Munich during August 2025. This opportunity came about because of a long-standing Town Twinning agreement between the towns of Chippenham and Friedberg in Bavaria.

During my time as an intern at BMW I got to see an insight into the after-sales department, which showed me an entirely new side of mechanics. While staying in Mering, Germany, I had the chance to explore and go sightseeing.

During the first week and leading up to it, I was full of nerves and emotions. But once we got there, Jaxx and I found our host family Sylvia and Jochen who met us at the airport and took us back to their home.

We set off for München the next day. We travelled by train through rain and sun to get to the middle of the town. We had seen beautiful architecture and landscapes and got a few tourist photos in as well on the way. The real challenge came with entering BMW for the first time. We walked in with shaking hands and left the first day feeling more confident. This was due to the friendly staff who helped us get settled in. It was also due to our lovely mentor for the trip, Anita. She is a working student and helped/managed Jaxx and me whilst we stayed in Germany. She was thoughtful and organised meetings and other opportunities for us when interning.

In the first week we met Claudia, who gave us an insight into the market community. We went through a lot in that meeting, but a key thing I remember is the big meetings she holds with every branch of BMW from different countries. There is a lot of planning that goes into just 1 meeting, and we saw the whole process. She also met someone called Alison on the same day, who gave us an insight into product management. This went into detail about the 3D models that she has to go through, the number of lists she keeps track of, and what needs to be done. For me, it was interesting to see the tools that Alison has to use to make sure her work is complete. The next day, we had a meeting on vehicle diagnostics with Falko and others. During our time down in the workshop, we learnt about how you can now diagnose a car while it is with the customer connected to Wi-Fi and the technician being elsewhere. This was cool to learn about and experience as they did some small tests whilst we were there. At the weekend, we went to 'BMW Welt and Museum'. There we saw different cars from generations of BMW manufacturing. BMW Welt was more about the newer side of cars and production.

In the second week we went to the Dingolfing plant, which gave us a look into the packaging of parts for BMW. The main aspect was the robots that help pack and find orders. The robots know where everything is and the workers don't, so at times it can be untidy. Tanja showed us the Business Admin side of things, which was really in-depth, and we also managed to squeeze in a meeting with Steffy, which gave us an overview of AI in BMW. She showed us how to program it and how difficult and frustrating it can be.

We had a workshop with Arak where we did some practical things like taking out the gearbox fluid and taking off and on some of the protective covers at the bottom of the car. We also took a short drive over to a dealership to pick up some needed parts. Then on a different day we took a short ride to the 2W building, where we learned in detail about how they work with BMW and how sometimes there are issues with components of the cars. For example: a bolt was put in wrong, and they had to figure out how to make it easier to access. The 3D model showed it would be impossible to get out yet the master technician, Johnny, showed us how easy it really was. Then Alex showed us some PowerPoint presentations on 2W and Virtual Reality, and how they work with that. They also took us out to lunch at Motor World. This showed cars from different companies and eras. Peter showed us how they produce a car with another company. We researched Spotlight while with him. On the same day, we had a guided tour of the recycling and dismantling centre. We looked at cars being destroyed and how they take the parts that are recyclable away from the car and store them for future use. The saddest part of the tour was seeing all the car badges that would be destroyed as I collect them, but the tour was brilliant and informative. On our last day, Anita took us to a dealership/branch office to look at their workshops in detail, which were very different from the ones I'm used to, as it was very clean and organized. And finally, we managed to speak to a man called Johannes, who showed us the technical support side of his work. This was different from all the other meetings, as we had to do this one remotely on Teams.



While in Germany we visited various beer gardens and other places of interest, we met many interesting people. It was a fantastic opportunity for us and I would like to give a special thanks to Jochen and Sylvia for letting Jaxx and me stay in their home. I also want to thank the Friedburg Committee and Chippenham College for this experience.

Maddison Long

Annual General Meeting

22nd February 2026 at 7 for 7:30 p.m.

in The Cause



The Mayor, Councillor Kathryn Macdermid will be in attendance
Agenda etc will be sent out later

Easter Egg painting

Saturday 28th February 2:00pm – the beginning of Lent and fasting!



Decorate Easter Eggs as is done in Eastern Europe at Pip's house

No need to bring anything, but if you like you can bring any paints of coloured pens / pencils, wax crayons etc. Please let Pip know by 21st February

Visit to la Flèche



We are invited to la Flèche **from 3rd till 7th April 2026**, if you are planning on going then please see about arranging your travel there before everything gets booked up.

Visit from Friedberg



It is planned that we will receive guests from Friedberg from 27th – 31st Aug. 2026

Recent activities

Bangers and Mash and so much more!

Saturday 4th October some 18 people met in Yatton Kennell for a Bangers and Mash social evening and were met with a glass of bubbly and nibbles, and 2 very full tables sat down to not only Bangers and Mash but peas and carrots and lots of gravy too. This was followed by a choice of desserts and then yes, there was more, a Cheese selection and all with a glass of red or white wine. More was available!!! Coffee and tea followed and with so much chatter around the tables with old friends and new members we all had a great time. The Raffle was drawn and so was the 100 club. Pip will explain the winners of the 100 club elsewhere in the Newsletter. Big thanks to Margaret and Phil for hosting and especially to Ann as a great helper.



A full table with our hosts and friends and members



The second table was another chatty table and with some new members and friends –

Paul is taking the pictures hence the empty seat!!

Carolyn

100 Club winners as drawn at Bangers and Mash.

1st	Gibsons	£20
2 nd	Karin Meek	£15
3 rd	Baskervilles	£10
4 th	Gillmans	£5

Congratulations to all our winners.

Winter 2026

Christmas Lunch

The Christmas season started with the CTA Christmas Lunch at la Flambé in Sutton Benger when 30 members sat down to an excellent meal in very attractive surroundings. Margaret wrote: it was lovely to see so many happy faces. The food was delicious and good to see some of our new(-ish) corporate members getting to know other members in Twinning. We were of course sorry to hear that our Mayor, Councillor Kathryn Macdermid, was unwell and unable to join us and hope that she will soon be better. It was good to meet our Deputy Mayor, Councillor Matthew Bragg and hope he enjoyed himself.



As I said previously the food was very good and the service excellent, good choice Richard! Considering we are still at the tail end of November, it did feel really Christmassy. That might have had something to do with the wonderful array of wrapped presents on the raffle table that helped us raise £71 to go to help fund some of the expenses when our friends from La Fleche and Friedberg visit.

100 Club winners as drawn at our Christmas lunch on December.

1st	Jill and Derek Godwin	£20
2 nd	Anne and Brett Ceazar	£15
3 rd	Wendy and Roy Brookes	£10
4 th	Jim Hall	£5

Congratulations to all our winners.



This little bubble often accompanies the results of the draw, but **are** you in the draw? Out of the possible 100 we only have 36 numbers so if you would like a few more numbers, or perhaps your first one, please add the £12 per number to your subscription and let our treasurer Chris know how many numbers you would like in 2026.



For the pre-payment for all activities the bank details are

Account name: Chippenham Twinning Association

Account No.: 00260428

Bank Sort Code: 20-84-58

Bank Address: Barclays Bank plc, 66 Market Place, Chippenham, SN15 3JA

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Newsletter Editor

Please contact me if you know of any member (including yourself!) who hasn't received a copy of this newsletter. **Please let me know if your email address changes.** If you don't do this there is a risk that you will not receive your Newsletter.

Photos in this edition with grateful thanks to members of Chippenham Twinning Association.

Please send all material for the spring issue to me:

The deadline for the spring issue will be **15th March 2026**

Pip Higman

Treasurer/Membership/100 Club: Chris Higman

Social Secretary: Margaret Dyke