

## Friends of Alzey 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Our special birthday celebration was a joyful afternoon of memories, re-acquaintances, warm smiles and new friendships. 70 people gathered in Park Hall in the company of our Town Mayor for a delicious afternoon tea provided by Yvonne Bamford, followed by a glass of sparkling wine or juice and a slice of the splendid birthday cake made by Carol Jones. The guests comprised not only existing members ranging in age from 20 to 92, but also representatives of local groups with historic links to Alzey, and to our great delight, four young families from Alzey Gardens. Three generations of one family joined the celebration, which seemed to illustrate perfectly the family-friendly nature of town twinning. President and founder member Rosemary Ross recalled in her opening speech her first time in Alzey in the mid 60s when she and husband Gavin travelled there by car with their two year old daughter. They hosted their first return guests a remarkable fifty years ago in 1969. Additional memories of past visits were shared with everyone by representatives of Sir John Lawes School, the Kings of Herts Chorus, the Lea Singers, the Colts Football Club and Rotary. Their speeches all highlighted the way that just a short time spent in the heart of a twin town's community allows strangers to become lifelong friends and to create a treasure chest of memories together! The Friends of Alzey's current Chair, Susan Vinther, paid tribute to the many hours of work freely given over forty years by former committee members too numerous to name, some sadly no longer with us. She also conveyed the congratulations and good wishes of Alzey's Mayor, Christoph Burkhard, and of Gabi Müller-Gebhardt, Chair of the Friends of Harpenden in Alzey. The afternoon closed with the presentation to Rosemary Ross of a paperweight bearing our new logo of town shields. It is to be hoped that the next generation of town twidders, so much in evidence at the party, will see the Friends of Alzey safely through to its half century!