

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **by Friends of Alzey who might participate in a visit to Alzey**

The recent newsletters have given information about the timing of the 2025 visit and an outline of the programme from arrival on Thursday afternoon September 4<sup>th</sup> to the final morning on Monday September 8<sup>th</sup>.

Prospective participants will hear in mid-January about the flights London-Frankfurt-London to be taken by the group. These have to be agreed with the Friends of Harpenden ( FoH ) because they a) put on a coach for our transport between Alzey and the airport and b) have to tie in our arrival and departure times with their programme.

Participants book their flight individually at a point in time that suits them, then inform the organizers. The group meeting point is the departure gate. A WhatsApp group is formed shortly before the visit so that everyone can stay in touch during the time in Alzey and the travel days.

**Q. Would it be acceptable to go for a shorter or longer time and make independent travel arrangements?**

**A. Participation in the whole programme is recommended, as that is the optimal way to get to know the people involved, the town of Alzey and its surroundings. This applies in particular to first-time visitors. However, every year some Friends arrive a day early/late ( perhaps by train or as part of an extended journey around the country). This year, the dates have been chosen for our participation in the Sunday's walk in the town's vineyards, so it would be a pity to miss out on this very special event in Alzey's calendar. It's also known as the Weinberg-Wanderung – a walk in the vineyards with the slogan 'Wo die Fahne hängt, wird ausgeschenkt!' Where there's a flag flying, you can get wine, light food ( and even hear music!) . This is the link to the group which organises the event. For anyone with mobility issues, at least one wine producer opens its accessible courtyard for eating and drinking.**

<https://alzey-altstadtverein.de/weinbergswanderung/>

**If you're planning to be independent, the key is to communicate your plans as early as possible with the organisers, using Susan Vinther as a contact. There is a cost to the Friends of Harpenden for entrance to tickets to the Friday outing attraction, and for participation in the Farewell Dinner ( nothing for us to pay!), so it is important to be clear if a ticket will be required. Passenger numbers for the airport coach transport must also be known in advance. ( There is an unbroken tradition of participation in the Friday group outing for those participants who find themselves in Alzey on that day. It's not yet known when the Farewell Dinner will be held.) It is important to check with hosts before booking tickets if you would like to arrive before or after the main group.**

**Q. Does everyone stay in a host family?**

**A. Participants mainly stay in a host family. Some 'exchanges' between Harpenden and Alzey hosts are into their second or third decade, whilst others are very new. Circumstances also mean that participants may stay with different hosts with each visit. If first-time participants would like a host family, the organisers ask for personal information in order to make a good match. A host family can't be guaranteed, though in recent memory one has always been found. In 2023, several first-time participants stayed in a hotel by choice. There are several hotels in Alzey at a range of prices.**

**Q. How can we get to the various meeting points and back if we are in a hotel with no host to transport us?**

**A. The organizers in Alzey do their best to ensure that participants have lifts to be able to participate in the programme ( unless they choose to stay outside Alzey), but on the free Saturday , hotel guests have to be prepared to get to where they want to go, or make a plan with another host/guest for that day.**

**Q. Should I/we book to go even if I/we don't know if a host family will be found for us?**

**A. In the past, hosts have always been found, but there isn't a cast iron guarantee this will happen. Flight prices do rise as time goes by, but in our experience , it has always been possible to get a seat on the designated flights. If you are unsure, we can put you in touch with people who have recently been in a similar position.**

**Q. When must I/we make our decision about participation?**

**A. The Friends of Harpenden will set an 'apply by x' date so that they can find hosts and make plans. For a September visit this might be in February – it will be decided and communicated at around the same time as the flight information.**

**Q. Do many people go as solo participants, not part of a couple?**

**A. Every visit has a mixture of solo travellers , couples and sometimes family groups. Everyone is very friendly, and we are together for much of the time. Saturday is a free day; the organisers always check that no-one will be alone on that day if they prefer to have company.**

**Q. Would I come under any group insurance?**

**A. We are not insured as a group – individual travel insurance is essential.**

**Q. Is there a coach for the Harpenden – airport – Harpenden journeys?**

**A. The Harpenden-airport-Harpenden transport is organised independently. Taxi sharing is a popular solution.**

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