



**European Movement in Wandsworth & Merton
Chair's Report
For the AGM, January 31st 2023**

The objectives of this branch as stated in the Constitution are:

- to promote awareness of the European Union (EU)
- to disseminate a positive image of the European Union and Britain's role in Europe
- to raise awareness of European values and to campaign to build a closer relationship with the EU and to rebuild public support for such a relationship.
- to further the aims and objectives of the European Movement (EM) by undertaking relevant activities. as stated in the Constitution.

The Committee

The AGM on 26th January 2022 elected the following committee:

Chairperson	Barbara Callender
Secretary	Jenny Ladbury
Treasurer	Arjan Geveke
Campaign Executive	Ben Austin
Membership Officer	Johanna Rindforth
Social Media	Maciej Psyk, James Ryder

Other members Phil Carey, Lucy Marsden, Sally Morgan, Peter Pollard, Helen Rennie-Smith

In Memoriam

Peter Pollard, who passed away on September 12th 2022, was a highly valued member of our committee. He was a great campaigner, a good friend and a thoroughly decent person. It is a huge loss for us all. As a fellow Battersea constituent, he was our key liaison person with our MP, Marsha de Cordova. Peter was instrumental in ensuring her presence at our summer social in July 2022. In our meetings with Marsha Peter always managed to ensure her commitment to the aims and values of the European Movement (EM).

Summary

As the country has returned to a semblance of pre Covid life, the damage caused by Brexit has continued to become increasingly apparent in all sectors. As international travel opened up, people have for the first time had to queue to enter EU countries as third country citizens. In a recent poll, of those who considered that Brexit had created more problems, their top reasons for thinking so were the increased cost of trade (50%), Brexit induced labour shortages (39%) and the fact that Brexit has made travelling and working abroad more difficult and expensive (26%).

We have continued to campaign energetically both as a local group and in collaboration with EM HQ. It has been an extremely busy and diverse year of activities.

Members, supporters and e-mails

At the time of writing EM Merton has 75 members and Wandsworth has 149. It is a constantly moving number since new members sign up and some previous members don't always renew their membership.

The database also includes so-called supporters, people who have signed up for our e-mails but are not yet paid-up members. The best way to monitor the number of supporters is to study the statistics of our e-mail messages.

Between the last AGM in January 2022 and now we have sent out 21 e-mails to supporters. The year started with an e-mail sent to 1519 supporters and that number remained steady at around 1500 until late summer. In August our e-mail to supporters went to 1490 recipients, a number which dropped to 1453 in October. The message after that was sent in December at which time the number of recipients had plummeted to 1236.

It turned out that maintenance of the database by HQ had mistakenly moved a number of members and supporters away from our branch, among others our own chairperson and her partner. That has now been rectified and we have 1392 supporters registered to EM Wandsworth & Merton.

Activities in the community

- **Street stall in Wimbledon**
On **February 26th**, our first action day of the year took us to Wimbledon, where we tried out our new 'Moodmeter', based on the Brexitometer and aimed at gauging how local people were feeling about Brexit now that post EU life was becoming clearer.
- **March in solidarity with Ukraine**
On **March 26th** we joined EM groups from across the country to march and protest against Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Our branch led the various groups from EM to Trafalgar Square under the EM banner.
- **Social at The Leather Bottle in Earlsfield**
On **April 28th** we held our first indoor social in over 2 years at The Leather Bottle in Earlsfield. This was an opportunity to connect with members we had not seen for some time, catch up and discuss how to turn those pro EU feelings into action.
- **Trial of Brexit Heatmap, Tooting**
On **May 7th** we participated in a trial organised by EM HQ to develop a 'heatmap' of our local area indicating people impacted by Brexit.
- **Brexit belongs in the Bastille**
On **July 14th** we celebrated the Fête nationale française or Bastille Day at the Woodman Pub. Many local members and supporters attended this summer social. Two of Wandsworth's MPs, Fleur Anderson and Marsha de Cordova, joined the celebrations.
- **The Brexitometer comes to Putney**
On **October 8th** we took our Moodmeter to Putney to re-engage with local residents about the effects of Brexit.
- **National Rejoin March**
On **October 22nd** our branch marched with other EM groups and associated pro EU organisations on a march and rally at Parliament Square. Our branch organised the running and management of a EM stall distributing 10,000 leaflets to the marchers and other passers-by.

European Twinning for Wandsworth and Merton

We successfully applied to the second round of the 'Building Bridges' Campaign Fund run by the EM nationally to support innovative and community-based campaigning. In July 2022 we were awarded £500 to pursue town twinning for the London Borough of Wandsworth, through social media and campaign launch events. We plan to seek a similar amount in 2023 to repeat the exercise with LB Merton. Both the governing and opposition groups on Wandsworth Council have endorsed the idea, along with the two MPs Fleur Anderson and Marsha de Cordova; Marsha has recently reiterated her commitment to making twinning a reality.

The Leader of the Council, Simon Hogg, and Mayor, Jeremy Ambache have now determined that their priority will be to twin with an administration in Ukraine, as part of post-conflict reconstruction, following on from Wandsworth's support for the people of Ukraine. EM in Wandsworth & Merton has expressed its support for that approach, but has also confirmed its intention to seek in parallel a prospective partner borough in Berlin, given the appetite from Germany for twinning with Britain and the extra dimension this would bring to twinning by Wandsworth. We will also take steps during 2023 to build on the expressions of interest in twinning by Merton from parties on the Council there.

Work with Roehampton University

In cooperation with Molly Scott-Cato, Vice-Chair of EM and also Professor of Green Economics at Roehampton University, we organised a seminar with the University's Business and Law Societies. The aim was to:

- hear from representatives of the legal, business and economic sectors of how Brexit has impacted them.
- introduce students to the European Movement and more specifically YEM.

The event was scheduled for December 6th but had to be postponed due to industrial action called by university staff. We are rescheduling the seminar for early Spring, 2023.

Young European Movement (YEM)

In the year that saw the Young European Movement finally enjoy the opportunity to maximize the benefits of bringing people together again, Lucy Marsden has been building relations with other YEM representatives in the country, attending YEM's events with politicians and helping YEM to develop their growth strategy. She has also worked on initiatives to help YEM London and the European Movement for Wandsworth and Merton work more closely together.

National Executive and National Council

As a member of both the Executive and the Council, I have worked with EM management and activists around the country developing strategies to expand our membership and influence. Lucy Marsden is also a member of the National Council and has made a valued contribution.

MP contacts

We aim to stay in touch with our local MPs as much as possible through all usual avenues of communication.

- **Rosena Allin-Khan, Tooting:** Rosena has had another extremely busy year and we thank her for her support to EU citizens in her constituency.
- **Fleur Anderson, Putney:** Fleur started the year as our guest speaker at our online AGM in January 2022. As already noted, she was a guest of honour at our summer social.
Marsha de Cordova, Battersea: On May 27th Peter Pollard and I met with Marsha, our local MP, for lunch at The Woodman Pub, whose owner has seen trade and staff availability severely affected by Brexit. As already noted, she was a guest of honour at our summer social and is supporting our efforts to develop twinning.
- **Stephen Hammond, Wimbledon:** We have not had any direct contact with Stephen recently.
- **Siobhain McDonagh, Merton:** We have not had any direct contact with Siobhain recently.

Communication

- **Website**

The website www.wandsworth.eu has remained more or less static with only basic information about our branch. For the March to Rejoin, first scheduled for September but postponed until October, we set up a temporary campaign page to promote the event. EM UK have extended the services they offer to local branch websites and during 2023 we shall examine the possibilities to take greater part in those.

- **Social Media**

Facebook

Our branch continues to maintain a Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/europeanmovementinwandsworth/>

We have 822 followers, predominantly members of the branch, members of the European Movement from other branches, other committed Europeans and a small number of branches or organisations themselves. 785 people like our page.

Direct communication with the administrator is possible although practice shows this to be rare.

In terms of response to our posts we note the following:

- 89.8% of post engagements originated in England, with 5% in Wales and 4.4% in Scotland
- 83.6% come from feeds on mobile applications, with 8.9% from feeds on desktop computers
- The majority of responding users are over 55; this is in line with available data about members' average age
- In 2022 our advertisements reached 1143 people and made 15000 'impressions'. The cost of creating one 'impression' is generally at good or very good level, starting from 10 pence per impression.

Throughout 2022 a total of £177.93 was spent on six advertisements. The most fruitful was the advertisement promoting the March to Rejoin in October, which lasted for 22 days and generated 6044 impressions from £80 spent. It was the only time when we saw some

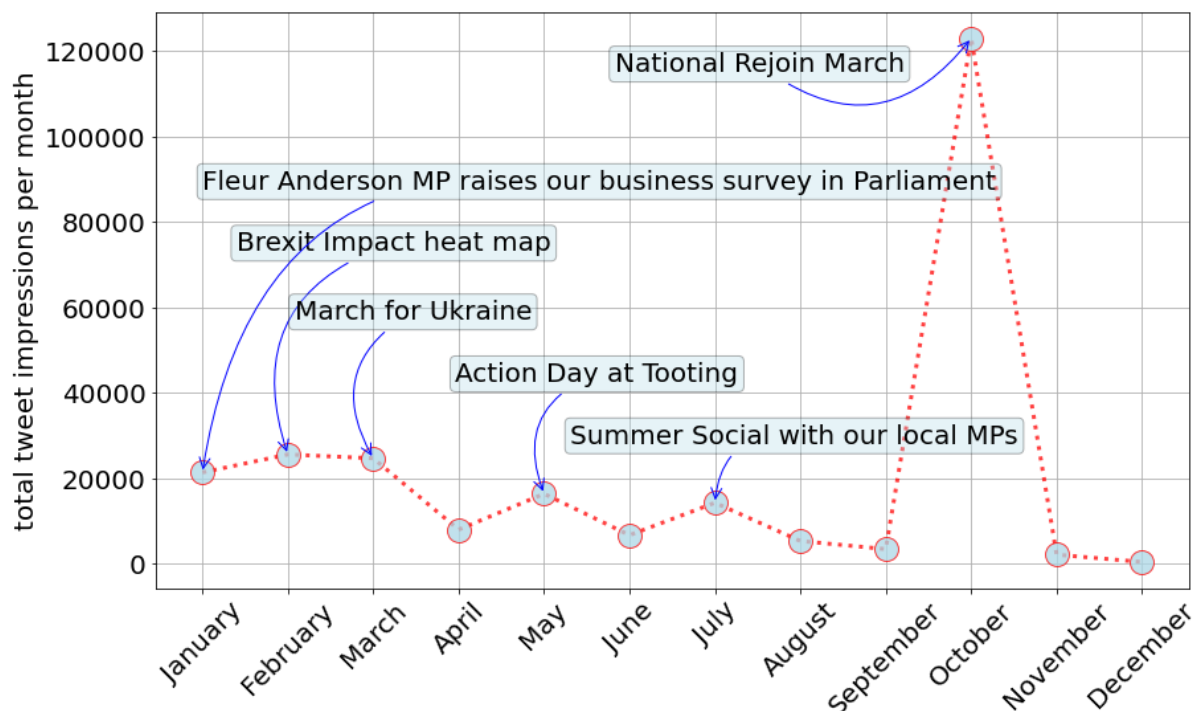
bitterness on the page, as some ardent Brexiteers visited it having seen the advertisement due to Facebook Artificial Intelligence algorithms.

The committee is aware that Mastodon is a new addition to the social media market. Experiences of early adopters are encouraging. We may decide to set up an account there at some point in 2023.

In late 2022 a dedicated WhatsApp group for EM branches' social media administrators was created with the primary aim of sharing best practices and important information. The results are very good. We wish to extend our thanks to Yvonne Wancke for facilitating this development.

Group Twitter account

Our output on Twitter consists primarily of announcements of upcoming activities organised by our group and related groups, photos from recent events, links to petitions and other initiatives promoted by European Movement HQ and by the 'Grassroots for Europe' group, and the sharing of interesting articles and accredited research relating to the consequences of Brexit and to UK's future place in Europe. The figure below plots the total number of times our tweets were viewed (impressions) for each month of 2022.



There has been somewhat of a downwards trend in impressions over the course of the year. However, this pattern is dramatically punctuated by the interest in October's 'National Rejoin March' in central London. Our group was able to act quickly to share pictures and video from the march as it was taking place. It serves as an example of the potential to

attract attention and promote discussion when the organisation of ambitious events is combined with the use of online tools to promote awareness more broadly.

In late October the billionaire Elon Musk was forced by the US courts to complete his purchase of Twitter, and has since set about reforming the service, including the dismissal of many Twitter employees tasked with combatting misinformation, the reinstatement of accounts previously banned for spreading lies (such as former President Trump) and the promise of increased visibility to accounts that sign up to the 'Twitter Blue' service for £8 a month. Our group has not yet subscribed to this service. Musk's actions underline a theme that social media is now entering a new phase. The world wide web was invented to remove the barriers for anyone to share useful information quickly and at low cost. We as a movement now need to determine the best ways to continue to achieve this objective going forwards.

- **Traditional Media**

We have had letters published in the South London Press and London News Online. These can be found on our website: https://www.wandsworth.eu/in_the_press

Looking ahead

We are participating in the EM National Action Day on February 4th, and planning an event on March 25th in cooperation with London4Europe and Lambeth for Europe. There are nationwide EM events planned for this day and we will be hosting a panel at a local venue with speakers from a number of political backgrounds.

Sally Morgan is participating in a project being organised by EM HQ entitled 'Still European'. This is focusing on people with connections across the EU who will be filmed in short video clips early in February.

We welcome suggestions and input from our members and are always looking for more volunteers and committee members.

Acknowledgements

Once again I would like to thank a highly proactive and efficient committee and all the volunteers who have worked with us on our campaigns this year. I am grateful to Phil Carey, Arjan Geveke, Maciej Psyk, Helen Rennie-Smith and James Ryder for their input to this report and accounts.

Battersea, January 2023

Barbara Callender

Chair

European Movement in Wandsworth & Merton