



Twinning committee

16:00 to 16:35

23 June 2022

Present: Councillors Maguire (chair following election), Everett (substitute for Councillor Hampton) and Wright and; Bob Young (Koblentz) and Doug Underwood (Novi Sad)

Apologies: Councillors Catt, Hampton Schmierer, Sands (M), Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi) and Isabelle Savage (Rouen) Ralph Gayton and David Raby (El Viejo) and Sandra Underwood (Novi Sad)

1. Appointment of chair

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Keven Maguire, Lord Mayor, as chair for the ensuing civic year.

2. Appointment of vice chair

RESOLVED to appoint Councillor James Wright as vice chair for the ensuing civic year.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2022.

5. Twinning fund financial position

The democratic and elections manager presented the report. He highlighted the grants made to the twinning associations and thanked them for sending through details of events.

A member asked for clarification on why the El Viejo Friendship Link did not receive an annual grant and it was confirmed that this was because the Link chose to instead use rooms at City Hall free of charge. The council's monitoring officer added that any grant applications from the associations, including the El Viejo Friendship Link would be considered and the arrangement could be revisited if needed.

RESOLVED to note the twinning fund financial position.

6. Reports of the twinning associations

Doug Underwood gave an update on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association.

The annual grant to the association had been received and was hugely valuable to ensure that the work of the NNNSA could continue. Doug also thanked the committee for the £250 grant towards the Paul Cross Memorial concert. There had been concerns that the attendance would be lower due to Covid-19 and a change of venue but the concert had been a success and had raised funds for the Mila Petrovic School in Novi Sad.

The Novi Sad Association had originated in 1985 when it formed twinning links with the city council, although the two cities had been twinned for 65 years. As the association was a friendship link and not a political entity, the city continued to receive support from Norwich when war broke out. The city council had been the only council keeping links with Serbia during the war and the support was vital post-war when the association acted as an ambassador and could rebuild links.

The AGM had been held by email with reports sent out in advance and comments and votes collated electronically. This had been more successful in terms of responses than a face-to-face meeting as members of the association were spread out across the country.

Filipe Kramarsic, a student at the Norwich University of the Arts had approached the association and put on a successful online art project which had won an award. He had been invited to present his project to the Milan Petrovic School and members of the public as part of the Capital of Culture celebrations. This could potentially be an annual event with professors from NUA looking to collaborate with the Milan Petrovic School in the future.

Matt Williea had instigated a project in Norfolk creating and developing school allotments and he had been in contact with the Milan Petrovic School to take the project forward with Parkside School in Norwich.

Finally, Doug Underwood updated the committee on the sad death of Dr Djordje Janic who had been a surgeon in Novi Sad and president of the association in Novi Sad. He had kept the links between the two cities and had visited Norwich on many occasions. He would be greatly missed.

The Lord Mayor asked how Novi Sad was dealing with Covid-19. Doug Underwood said that travel to Novi Sad was possible and interest was being sought from members for a trip there to celebrate it being the European Capital of Culture.

Bob Young updated the committee on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Association. Savings had been made on postage with around half of the association members choosing to switch to email correspondence. This had also given the opportunity to personalise messages to members which had been well received.

The website was up and running but the renewal for the domain would be around £256.

Support had been given to ten cyclists biking from Koblenz to Norwich which raised over £7,000. The cyclists were welcomed to Carrow Road at the end of their journey by the Koblenz committee and were taken out to dinner to celebrate.

Finally, a summer outing on the Southern Comfort had been arranged with members from the other Norwich twinning associations invited and around 68 members had confirmed their attendance.

Bob Young asked whether the association was able to be insured through the council. The democratic and elections manager said that he would find out some information and be in touch.

As apologies had been received from the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association and the El Viejo Friendship link, there were no updates to the committee from these associations.

RESOLVED to note the updates of the associations.

CHAIR