

## Report for Information

**Report to** Twinning Committee

2 July 2009

**Report of** Twinning Officer

**Subject** Rouen 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations Weekend

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### **Purpose**

To inform the Committee of the Rouen 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations weekend.

### **Recommendation**

- (1) To note the success of the weekend.
- (2) To thank the NNRFA, Norwich Rowing Club and the City Hall based football players for their contribution to making the twinning weekend such a success.

### **Corporate Objective/Service Plan Priority**

The report helps to achieve the corporate objective to contribute the service plan priority of promoting and fostering links and exchanges of all kinds between the people of Norwich and those in the twin Cities.

### **Contact Officers**

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## **Report**

Discussions took place between the Twinning Officer and the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association (NNRFA) during 2008 to decide how to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of the formal Twinning agreement between Norwich and Rouen. The dates of 21 May to 24 May 2009 were chosen. It was agreed a weekend of activities be held after offering options to Rouen.

### **Thursday 21 May 2009:**

The coach arrived at Notcutts with our Rouen visitors, the coach was on time and the sun was shining as it continued to do all weekend. Some visitors stayed with members of the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Association, the rowers stayed at the homes of the Norwich Rowers and their hosts were there to meet them. The rowers were on the River Yare with their hosts within an hour of their arrival!! The football players stayed at the Premier Inn, Duke Street. The Twinning Officer had the pleasure of taking these young footballers to the public houses in Norwich and pointing them in the direction of the clubbing area.

### **Friday 22 May 2009:**

The Norfolk and Norwich Friendship Association arranged a programme of events and visits during the day which included a tour of the Cathedral and a visit to the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts. In the evening they hosted a reception at Blackfriars Hall, which was attended by about 120 people, visitors from Rouen, Rouen Civic party, members of the NNRFA, The Lord Mayor of Norwich and her consort, members of the Twinning Committee and various other people connected with Twinning. The Lord Mayor of Norwich and the Deputy Mayor of Rouen and NNRFA Chairman all made speeches.

The Twinning Officer arranged for the Chair of the Twinning Committee and the football players to visit Norwich City Football Club where they were met by officials at the ground and given a tour of the changing areas and were able to take photographs on the pitch.

The Civic Party arrived in Norwich at 5.00pm on the Friday and they were greeted by the Twinning Officer at the Georgian Hotel, Unthank Road. The civic party consisted of Monsieur Bruno Bertheuil Deputy Mayor, Monsieur Richard Turco Director General, Mme Marianne Quenel, Public Relations. The Twinning Officer took them on a tour of City Hall, the Forum, Castle Mall, Castle Gardens and the Market Place on their way to the reception at Blackfriars Hall.

### **Saturday 23 May 2009:**

There was a guided tour by Ben Webster (City Council's Design Quality Manager) of St. George's Plain area, which was pedestrianised under EU funded Spatial Metro Programme in which City of Rouen was a partner of the project. Following that there was a programme of films of old Norwich and old Rouen at Cinema City supported by Pole-Normandie and Screen East.

The Twinning Officer took the Civic party on a short tour of the Cathedral followed by lunch at the Cathedral Refectory restaurant.

The Norwich Rowing Club, lead by David Bolton arranged rowing races at Whitlingham which resulted in a narrow win by the Norwich team. A mini 7-a-side football tournament was arranged at the UEA Sportspark. The host group were football players based mainly at City Hall. The French team were very good and came out comfortable winners over the two Norwich teams. The Twinning Officer took the Rouen Deputy Mayor along to the UEA to watch these matches.

In the evening the Council hosted a Civic dinner at St. Giles House Hotel, which was attended by the Lord Mayor of Norwich, the Rouen Civic party, City Councillors, Twinning Officer, past and present presidents and members from the two Associations. The evening ended with speeches and exchange of gifts.

### **Finance:**

The NNRFA funded the activities during the Friday and their reception on Friday evening. Norwich City Council gave a grant through its, discretionary grant fund, to cover the other costs involved in hosting the Rouen guests. The whole weekend, therefore, was undertaken at no cost to the Twinning Fund.

### **Conclusion:**

This was a very successful weekend, which included lots of young people getting together for the first time. This is thanks to David Bolton and the Norwich Rowing Club, Darren Bruce and Otis Hernandez and the rest of the Council's football team. Particular thanks go to the NNRFA and its members with special thanks to Christine Wilson, Mary Corbould, June Perkins and David McKay.

The results of both sporting events were, of course, not as important as the friendship gained. It is hoped that friendships and exchanges will develop into longstanding links from this weekend. Indeed the Norwich Rowers are already planning to visit Rouen in October.

The weekend also received very good media coverage. This, as well as highlighting the weekend activities, also promoted twinning in general and the cities other twinning links.