



Twinning committee

15:00 to 15:30

23 March 2023

Present: Councillors Maguire (chair), Wright (vice chair), Catt, Hampton, and Sands (M) and Bob Young (Koblenz), Doug Underwood (Novi Sad), and Bert Bremner (Rouen).

Apologies: Councillors Schmierer, Thomas (Va) and Thomas (Vi) and Isabelle Savage (Rouen), and Sandra Underwood (Novi Sad)

1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2022.

3. Twinning fund – financial position and update

The Lord Mayor introduced the report. The democratic and elections manager highlighted that paragraph 3) should read Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association (NNRFA). He said that the associations were welcome to submit grant applications to himself, and outside of any committee meeting there was a mechanism of getting these approved in a timely manner.

He had written confirmation that the El Viejo Friendship Link had been wound up at its last meeting on 21 October 2022.

On 22 November 2022 the council had agreed to establish a Friendship Link between Norwich City Council and the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people in Brazil. Work was progressing with establishing the link, and representatives of the link would be invited to a future twinning meeting.

A member commented that it would be good to have other forms of links between cities across the world that were not necessarily formalised. Another member commented that the city council had given Freedom of the City to two Ukrainian cities: Lviv and Odesa, once the war in Ukraine it would be good to have a link with both of these cities. The head of legal and procurement said that the rationale for establishing a formal link with Ari-Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau had been through ongoing work between Councillors Waters and Osborn and the University of East Anglia. Links of these nature take time to form.

Doug Underwood, Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association, said that energy had to be maintained behind links, as the links were based on friendship and support. The support from the city council was appreciated but members of the association had to be prepared to invest time and money through fundraisers. Bert Bremner, Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association, commented that the links had to be started informally to be successful.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to note the twinning fund financial position.

4. Reports of the twinning associations

Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association

Bert Bremner updated the committee on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association. He said that unfortunately Christine Wilson had passed away suddenly. He paid tribute to her work not only on the Rouen association but with working with the other associations. The city of Rouen was looking at putting up a plaque in her honour in the friendship garden.

The association had recently held their Annual General Meeting, and Isabelle Savage had been elected as vice chair and Bert Bremner was the interim chair. The association were planning a number of events including a visit to Rouen in June and a dinner in November 2023.

He highlighted the importance of the long-term friendships that were established through the twinning links.

Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Friendship Association

Bob Young updated the committee on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Friendship Association. He reflected on his first year as the Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Friendship Association chair. A highlight had been the Southern Comfort trip in the summer of 2022 and the association had booked the same trip for summer 2023.

He said that the Koblenz branch of the association would be winding up in 2025, as there was not enough membership to continue. Bob Young said that the association would be speaking to the Koblenz city council to enquire how the association could be revived.

The Lord Mayor suggested that a letter could be written.

Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association

Doug Underwood gave an update on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association. He said that the vice treasurer, Sue Prutton had unexpectedly died in December 2022 and a number of Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association committee members had stood down, including the vice chairman, Peter Beckley MBE, and long serving member Dr Brenda Moffitt.

He said that Novi Sad had been the European Capital of Culture in 2022 but unfortunately the association had not been able to organise a visit to Novi Sad during

2022. A new member had recently joined the association that had strong links with Novi Sad.

The Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association had held the Paul Cross Memorial concert in January 2023, and were grateful to the committee for the grant that had been paid. The association was looking at moving the date of the concert in 2024 to ensure that it was not impacted by weather.

The association had also moved the annual lunch to a location within Norwich, and this would be taking place in October 2023. Doug Underwood said that the annual general meeting of Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association had been held on 20 March 2023 and had been chaired by the Lord Mayor.

RESOLVED to note the updates of the associations.

CHAIR