



Twinning committee

16:00 to 17:15

3 October 2019

Present: Councillors Thomas (Va) (chair) Thomas (Vi) (vice chair following election) Grahame, Kendrick and Oliver; Christine Wilson and Isabelle Savage (Rouen) Ralph Gayton and David Raby (El Viejo), Waltraud Jarrold MBE (Koblenz); and Doug Underwood and Sandra Underwood (Novi Sad)

Apologies: Jill Noble (Koblenz) and Ann and Chris Rowe (Rouen)

1. Declarations of interest

Councillors Vaughan Thomas and Vivien Thomas declared a pecuniary interest in item 4 (below) due to the committee considering using the twinning fund to cover the Lord Mayor's travel for a twinning trip to Rouen.

Councillors Vaughan Thomas and Vivien Thomas declared an other interest in that they were members of the Norfolk and Norwich El Viejo Friendship Link.

2. Public questions and petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2019

4. Twinning fund – financial position

(Councillors Vaughan and Vivien Thomas left the room for this item. Councillor Kendrick took the chair.)

The democratic and elections manager presented the report. He reminded members that the grant application form should be submitted for any requests from the twinning fund.

The Lord Mayor had been invited to visit Rouen in November 2019 as part of the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of Norwich and Rouen being twinned. Members were asked to consider using up to £250 from the twinning fund to cover the Lord Mayor's travel expenses. The remainder of the expenses would be paid for by Rouen.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the twinning fund financial position; and
- (2) agree to use up to £250 from the twinning fund to pay for the Lord Mayor's travel expenses to Rouen.

(Councillors Vaughan and Vivien Thomas were readmitted to the meeting. Councillor Vaughan Thomas took the chair).

5. Reports of the Twinning Associations

Norfolk and Norwich – El Viejo Friendship Link

David Raby presented the report. He had visited Nicaragua on behalf of the link as part of a self-funded trip to Mexico. There had been a full programme of events during the four days spent in El Viejo – he had visited nine schools, attended a council meeting, attended a teacher's union meeting and had seen performances by a local choir and a youth theatre group. The link was preparing the way for exchanges and the schools were extremely grateful for the grants and scholarships provided.

Ralph Gayton said that there was still political unrest in Nicaragua although there was civil peace. The country was making progress with education and healthcare but still needed assistance to pursue policies.

A member asked if there were any links with teaching unions. Ralph Gayton said that there were no formal links but these would be an area to work on as such links would be a useful means to share information.

In response to a question around whether there were any plans to raise the profile of the link in Norwich, David Raby said that the link was always looking to recruit more members and there were some projects being worked on. The Slow Theatre Group wanted to develop an international project which would be a virtual event between the two cities screening performances in both places.

Members discussed press interest in twinning events and the Lord Mayor suggested that the Citizen magazine could have a feature on the twinning associations.

Norfolk and Norwich/Koblenz Friendship Association

Waltraud Jarrold MBE updated the committee on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich/Koblenz Friendship Association. The Feed the Minds book fair had been well attended and had raised around £1700. Norwich was one of the first committees founded to host this event and this year had been the fiftieth book fair. The Rotary club had its 40 year anniversary trip and an anniversary lunch was held in September.

Members were encouraged to visit the twinning garden which celebrated the unity of all twinning associations. There was a memorial bench for Roy Blower in the garden as well as the historic window.

There was concern that the Guildhall was not open to the public and that both the Guildhall and Dragon Hall were unable to host a twinning centre. There was not an area to display twinning memorabilia. The Lord Mayor said that a twinning centre was needed but there could be an issue with funding. Fundraising and grant applications would need to be pursued to raise money for a centre. The democratic and elections manager agreed to make some initial enquiries around the potential use of the Guildhall.

Norfolk and Norwich/Rouen Friendship Association

Christine Wilson provided an update to the committee. The sixtieth anniversary of the link with Rouen was being celebrated this year and it had been very interesting to back through the history of link.

In November, a film festival would be held in Rouen showing a series of British made short films. These would be judged by a panel of three members of the film industry. This was all arranged and run by volunteers. Norwich received a lot of publicity in Rouen which made for a good basis for twinning events.

Isabelle Savage had been arranging family events to be held next summer and said that she would like to organise a joint event with all four twinning associations.

Christine Wilson said that there had been a terrible factory fire in Rouen. Harvests had been banned in some regions, there was poor air quality and soot everywhere. Letters had been written to friends in Rouen and the Lord Mayor was asked to send a letter to the Mayor of Rouen.

Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association

Doug Underwood gave a verbal update on the activities of the association. There had been a boat trip on the Broads which was well attended by members of other associations. He said that Novi Sad would support more joint activities in the future.

A visit to Novi Sad had been constructive. Funds of around £500 had been taken to the Milan Petrovich special school which was a significant contribution to the school. A visit to Norwich had been arranged but there had been a problem with obtaining visas. The visas had to be applied for in Warsaw in advance and then an interview at the embassy had to take place. Plane tickets had to be booked in advance of this process which made it costly.

He referred to the discussion around the lack of publicity for twinning events and said that in Nov Sad, any events receive newspaper and local television coverage.

In response to a question from a member about the cleaning of the Novi Sad Friendship Bridge, Doug Underwood said that it would be the responsibility of Norfolk County Council to clean the algae so they would need to be approached. Waltraud Jarrold added that two road signs on Koblenz Avenue had been damaged which would also be the responsibility of the county council. It was agreed that the Lord Mayor would write to Norfolk County Council to request a cleaning of the Friendship Bridge and repairs to the damaged road signs on Koblenz Avenue.

RESOLVED to

- 1) receive the reports from the twinning associations
- 2) ask the democratic and elections manager to
 - a) approach the communications team to include a feature in the Citizen magazine on the twinning associations
 - b) investigate whether the Guildhall could be an appropriate venue for a twinning centre
- 3) Ask the Lord Mayor write to Norfolk County Council to request a cleaning of the Friendship Bridge and repairs to the damaged road signs on Koblenz Avenue.

CHAIR