

Norfolk & Norwich - El Viejo Friendship Link

Registered Charity No 1156787



NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

TWINNING COMMITTEE

1st OCTOBER, 2015

REPORT OF THE EL VIEJO FRIENDSHIP LINK

1. The handover of school uniforms to the 200 children in the scholarship scheme took place on 20th August at one of the schools in the scholarship project.

This occasion is always a major community event involving not only the pupils but also teachers from all the schools, parents, local councillors and the representative of the Ministry of Education. This year was no exception.

A member of the El Viejo Municipal Council, Councillor Morales Mariano said 'as an adult it gives me great joy to see so many children that are dedicated to education.' He added that education was the future, not only of the children and the family but of the nation. A country without education is a country that is poor and which lacks development, he said to applause.

The Link representative, Carmela Hernandez, on behalf of the twinning with Norwich welcomed all the children and parents present. She said, to great applause, that although those responsible for the twinning could not be present in person they were with us in the spirit of the scholarship project.



Children with their new uniform packages



A pupil performs a local folk dance

2. Following the handover of uniforms, our representative, Sra Carmela Hernandez fell ill with an attack of an illness called chikungunya which is caused by mosquito bite. It is quite a serious illness and causes very painful joints which can be long lasting. She has recovered but still has some joint pain.

3. Future Funding of the Link

In common with many similar organisations, the Link is facing a funding problem which is beginning to affect its level of activity.

The Link is a small organisation dependant on membership fees for the basis of its activities but we have a small membership which cannot provide more than a proportion of current expenditure. Our committee is exploring ways of increasing income but the situation is quite difficult. In the past we have received contributions from local schools but a recent appeal to schools across the city has been signally unsuccessful. A number of special one-off events have made substantial contributions to our resources in recent years but we do need a basis of regular and assured income.

Our committee continues to explore opportunities for fundraising and is looking at using the internet for publicising our activities. We are also looking at the use of professional sources of fundraising but that costs money we don't have.

We have invited suggestions about the future from the membership through a general meeting and our officers continue to explore possibilities. However, it is clear that we cannot continue our present scale of activity and have reluctantly decided that it will be necessary to make a significant reduction in our expenditure by reducing the number of scholarships in our project from 200 to 100 with immediate effect. This will give us a breathing space in which to give further thought to possible funding opportunities.

We will keep the Committee informed about the position.

Ralph Gayton
Link Secretary.