



Twinning committee

16:00 to 16:50

19 October 2023

Present: Councillors Wright (chair), Sands (M) (vice chair), Everett (substitute for Thomas (Vi)), Peek and Schmierer (substitute for Catt) and Bob Young (Koblenz), Doug Underwood (Novi Sad), Bert Bremner (Rouen) and Alan Waters (Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau).

Apologies: Councillors Catt, Galvin and Thomas (Vi) 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 6 July 2023.

3. Twinning fund – Update

The democratic and elections manager presented the report. He highlighted that the twinning fund had a healthy amount within it and encouraged the associations to make grant applications. These could be recommended for approval at a committee meeting or if the period between meetings was too long this could be done by members of the committee via email. This included for the planned international junior football tournament. He reminded representatives from the associations to send photographs and text for twinning boards to the committee officer. The friendship charter between Norwich and Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau would be signed in late October or early November by the Lord Mayor. To pay for the charter to be printed and framed he was requesting the committee to consider recommending for approval to the interim chief finance officer (s151 officer) the spend of £44 from the twinning fund for this. The committee supported recommending this for approval.

The Lord Mayor commented that the funds provided by the committee to fund events could be very important and impactful.

A member commented that they had received an email to ask for the council to explore setting up a twinning link with Suzhou in China. The democratic and elections manager said that this email had been received by the Lord Mayor and the leader of the council. The council needed to consider which cities it was twinned with to ensure that it reflected the values of the council.

RESOLVED to:

- 1) note the twinning fund financial position; and
- 2) recommend to the interim chief finance officer (s151) the approval of the spend of £44 from the twinning fund to pay for the printing and framing of the friendship charter between Norwich and the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people

4. Reports of the twinning associations

Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Friendship Association

Bob Young updated the committee on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Friendship Association (NNKFA). The association had held a Heavenly Gardens walk which started in the twinning garden and had visited a number of different gardens across the city, this trip had ended with coffee and cake in the Birton Arms. The Southern Comfort trip had been held in the summer and had been successful, this had started in Horning and sailed around the boards. This had been hosted with the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association and the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association. The annual lunch had been held at the Oaklands Hotel and feedback had been positive. An upcoming event for the association was a visit to a Dementia Café in Sprowston. The association had visited in 2022 to share knowledge and hold a workshop to make advent rings. This had been very successful so had been invited to attend in 2023. There would be an Advent evening in the Norwich Cathedral Refectory in December to celebrate Christmas.

The NNKFA were also involved with the international junior football tournament. The local council in Koblenz were enthusiastic about the international junior football tournament but concerns had been raised by the local schools. The association had been contacted by the City of Norwich School (CNS) for help with establishing links with a school in Koblenz to exchange letters and explore future exchanges. The Lord Mayor commented that links between schools were important even if there are no formal associations. Bob Young said that options were being explored whether the association in Koblenz could continue.

Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association

Doug Underwood provided an update on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association. He thanked the democratic and elections manager for his work supporting the committee and the association as he would shortly be leaving the council. A newsletter had been circulated within the agenda. The annual lunch had been held at the George Hotel had had positive feedback. He highlighted that the donation to the Milan Petrovic School had facilitated the school to refurbish their conference hall. This donation had been raised through the Paul Cross Memorial Concert and raffles held throughout the year.

The connection in Novi Sad had been a more informal than the other associations, however due to the deaths of key members within Novi Sad the association was looking at ensuring that they had appropriate contacts with the local government in Novi Sad. Fostering other contacts was also important including schools such as the Milan Petrovic School.

A provisional date for June 2024 had been set for the annual Paul Cross Memorial Concert but dates and venues were still being explored. Due to the increasing costs of both venues and transport for performers it was possible that the concert could be held outside Norwich. Members suggested a number of alternative venues such as City Hall, schools within Norwich and the new location of the Soul Church. The democratic and elections manager reminded the association that they could make a grant application to help support the costs of the event.

Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association

Bert Bremner updated the committee on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association. An update had been circulated to the committee via email before the start of the meeting. The news section of the association's website contained more details and photographs of the trip to Rouen. The association had celebrated Bastille Day in July 2023, in spite of the weather. There had also been a picnic in Eaton Park in August 2023. The association were hoping that these events would become an annual event to attract visitors. He highlighted the upcoming events that the association would be hosting, including a film evening in October and the association's annual lunch. There was a planned visit from Rouen for July 2024. Events had also taken place in Rouen, including a charity cycle trip to Rouen and a film festival that would be taking place in November in Rouen entitled "This is England". This demonstrated the strong links between Norwich and Rouen. In regard to the junior football tournament, it was noted that some issues with getting Rouen school involved was due to the requirement for passports and visas for the students which could prove cost prohibitive.

He highlighted that the link would be celebrating 70 years in 2029 and the association was hoping to rebuild links between industries as had been the case in 1959. Visits between the cities was key to keeping links active. The Lord Mayor echoed the importance of visits between the cities for all ages.

Norwich and Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau Friendship Link

Alan Waters provided an update of the Norwich and Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau Friendship Link. The signed twinning charter would be circulated to different tiers of government both in the UK and in Brazil to highlight the link between Norwich and the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau people. This was important for the group to raise their profile. The area of the rainforest that the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau occupied is around the same size of Belgium. Some of that area had been encroached by the previous Brazilian President. Alan Waters was working with a professor of social anthropology from the UEA to drive the link forward. The focus would be on knowledge exchange and education. A constitution was being drafted based on the constitutions of the other twinning associations to establish membership. He was working on a website and had a number of expressions of interest to manage this and join the group. There was a possibility of working with the Norwich Climate Commission.

The Lord Mayor commented that it was positive to see the link develop as a two-way partnership. A member commented that the Welcome to Norwich signs would need to be updated to reflect the new friendship link. The democratic and elections manager said that it would need to be clarified who would be responsible for new signs.

A member suggested that the website for the Uru-Eu-Wau-Wau should detail some of the fauna and flora found within the rainforest as this could be an interest point for members of the public. Alan Waters commented that a film had been produced “The Territory” which had been circulated to members of the council when the friendship link had been established. He would circulate this to members of the twinning committee, alongside other information about the group.

RESOLVED to note the updates of the associations.

CHAIR