



Twinning committee

16:00 to 16:35

20 October 2022

Present: Councillors Maguire (chair), Catt, Hampton, Lubbock (substitute for Wright), Schmierer, and Sands (M) and; David Raby (El Viejo), Ralph Gayton (El Viejo), Bob Young (Koblenz), Doug Underwood (Novi Sad), Christine Wilson (Rouen) (substitute for Isabelle Savage) and Bert Bremner (Rouen).

Apologies: Councillors Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi) and Wright (vice chair) 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 meetings held on 12 March 2020 and 23 June 2022.

3. Twinning fund – financial position and update

The Lord Mayor introduced the report. The democratic and elections manager highlighted that in the previous financial year £200 had been paid to each twinning association for administration costs. It was recommended that this arrangement should be adopted for the financial year 2022-23. The £200 would be paid once the twinning associations provided details to the democratic and elections manager how this money would be spent on administrative costs.

It had been noticed that the Twinning information boards in the civic corridor needed updating. The democratic and elections manager proposed use of the twinning fund to cover the costs of updating these. The cost to replace the five boards would be around £150. The content of the twinning information boards would need to come from the twinning associations and the boards would then be designed and printed.

In response to a member's question, the democratic and elections manager said that photos could be provided to the twinning associations showing the current content.

He reminded the twinning associations that the current balance of the twinning fund was £2639.90 and a further £2060 would be added in the financial year 2022-23 with any grants being paid from this in the first instance. He encouraged the twinning associations to apply for twinning grants with grant application forms being emailed directly to the democratic and elections manager.

The Lord Mayor said that a grant application from Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association had been received which had been circulated to members. He invited Christine Wilson to address the committee and present the application. She highlighted the strong cultural links between Norwich and Rouen. A group from Rouen, *le safran collectif*, was currently on an exchange trip in Norwich working with The Garage Trust and performances had been held at The Garage. The grant application was for £400 to help fund part of this visit from Rouen to Norwich.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

- 1) note the twinning fund financial position;
- 2) recommend to the executive director of corporate and commercial services:
 - a) The grant of £200 to each twinning association in this financial year 2022-2023, upon receipt of details how this grant will be used
 - b) The use of the twinning fund to cover costs of updating the Twinning information boards; and
 - c) The payment of £400 as a grant to The Garage Trust on behalf of the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association

4. Reports of the twinning associations

Norfolk and Norwich – El Viejo Friendship Link

Ralph Gayton gave an update on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich – El Viejo Friendship Link. A history of the Friendship Link had been circulated to members. He said that due to the Nicaraguan government requiring foreign organisations to be registered and the associated costs of this, there would be a meeting on 21 October 2022 to formally wrap up the Friendship Link.

In response to a member's question the democratic and elections manager said that he would need to confirm if there was a formal process that the council needed to take and share this information with the Friendship Link and other members. The Lord Mayor suggested that a letter from the twinning committee could be written to express its regret about the situation. David Raby said that while he had only been involved with El Viejo for a short amount of time he had had the opportunity to visit El Viejo in 2019, and while the formal Friendship Link would be ending individual links would continue. Bert Bremner expressed his thanks to the El Viejo Friendship link and congratulated them on the work they had done to improve the lives of people in El Viejo.

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 the association had 70 members at present. A visit from Rouen had occurred in July 2022, with excursions to different locations within Norfolk. A range of future activities were being planned such as the 'This is England' film festival in Rouen in November and a visit to Rouen in June 2023.

The annual event for the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association was happening at the Maids Head Hotel in Norwich and members were invited to contact Christine Wilson for further details.

Christine Wilson informed members that Rouen was making a bid to be European Capital of Culture for 2028. Norwich had previously made a bid for 2008. And due to the links with Rouen the bid would also highlight Norwich

Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association

Doug Underwood gave an update on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association. The association had held a small number of events since the last meeting such as the annual lunch. Doug Underwood said that the association were planning their future events for 2023 which included the Annual Concert to be held in January 2023 and the first in person Annual General Meeting since the pandemic in March 2023. Unfortunately, there had not been enough interest to organise a visit to Novi Sad.

Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Friendship Association

Bob Young updated the committee on the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Friendship Association. The current membership stood at 96 members. The association had organised the Southern Comfort trip over the summer which had had participants from the Koblenz, Rouen and Novi Sad associations. The event had been very successful, and the association was looking to organise a similar event in the summer of 2023. The annual lunch had been held on 25 September 2022. An advent event had been organised at Norwich Cathedral for 28 November 2022. As part of this the association was holding "dementia cafes" and visiting care homes to talk about German Christmas traditions and making wreaths. Bob Young said the association was also looking at options for a visit to Koblenz but due to the rising costs the bus costs had increased significantly.

Bob Young said that the synagogue in Koblenz had reached out to ask for help with raising money for the rebuilding of a synagogue in Koblenz, as the Jewish community in Koblenz had donated money for the refurbishment of Dragon Hall. The Lord Mayor suggested that the Jewish community in Koblenz could contact the Norwich synagogue.

RESOLVED to note the updates of the associations.

CHAIR