



TWINNING COMMITTEE

4pm to 5pm

13 October 2011

Present: Councillors Lay (Lord Mayor), Bremner (vice chair), Gledhill and Thomas, Peter Beckley, Mary Corbould, Ralph Gayton, Jill Noble and Doug Underwood

Apologies: Waltraud Jarrold, Councillors Ackroyd, Fisher and Offord; and Councillor Shelagh Hutson (Chairman, Norfolk County Council)

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2011 subject to the following amendments:

- (1) deleting Lord Mayor from the list of apologies;
- (2) item 4, General reports, Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association, fourth sentence, deleting “had been successful in bidding” and replacing it with “had supported the successful bid” so that the sentence reads:

“The county council had supported the successful bid for €200,000...”

2. GENERAL REPORTS

Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association

Peter Beckley presented the report and referred to the sad loss of Dr Muriel Heppell, the honorary vice president of the association. The European Federation of Youth Choirs “Europa Cantat” had chosen Novi Sad for the annual festival of choirs in Europe, but it had been disappointing that no choirs from Norfolk or Norwich had been able to participate. He also updated the committee on his visit to the Milan Petrović School and said that the association’s continuing support of the school was much appreciated.

Doug Underwood referred to Novi Sad’s bid for European Capital of Culture bid 2020 and said he and Peter Beckley had had a constructive meeting with Nikki Rotsos, the city council’s head of communications and culture, about sharing the council’s experience of the process.

Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association

Mary Corbould apologised for not submitting a written report but said that a newsletter was just about to be produced and this could be circulated to members of the committee. The association's visit to Rouen had been successful. New members had stayed with families in Rouen and would act as hosts when visitors from Rouen came to Norfolk in May 2012. The Norfolk and Norwich Philatelic Society had asked the association for help in contacting philatelists in Rouen, and as a result several sheets of stamps celebrating Rouen and Normandy would be displayed at the exhibition in The Forum. Sporting links had been established as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of twinning between Rouen and Norwich and visits between football and rugby teams were continuing. Taverham brass band had asked the association to help arrange venues for a visit to Rouen next year. During the visit to Rouen, members and their hosts from Rouen, had attended a concert performed by hand bell ringers from East Anglia, which had been a wonderful experience. Mary Corbould also reported that she was looking forward to welcoming her fourth work experience student from Rouen next month.

Discussion then ensued on the situation at Dragon Hall regarding the future of the twinning room and the desire of the hall's management to put this on a commercial basis. There had been a meeting at Dragon Hall but only the representatives of the Rouen and Koblenz twinning associations had been invited. Mary Corbould and Jill Noble had attended. Items had been moved from the twinning room to the education room and the twinning association's displays could only be viewed when the room was not in use. The associations had not been informed that the items were being moved and there were concerns about the way the items had been moved and stored, especially as the archive contained gifts made to the city from the twin cities. The committee discussed options to investigate the situation; and if necessary to retrieve the property belonging to the associations and the council; and consider alternative venues for the twinning room.

Mary Corbould and Jill Noble also reported that they had attended the last meeting of the Norfolk Association of Twin Communities and said that some twinning associations had reported that their town or district councils did not support them. The support that the city council gave to its twinning associations was much appreciated.

Norfolk and Norwich El Viejo Friendship Link

Ralph Gayton presented the report and said that there had been a good attendance at the launch of the presentation to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Norfolk and Norwich El Viejo Friendship Link event at the Fusion facility in The Forum. It was hoped that the presentation could be simplified so that it could be used again as there was some useful information. He pointed out that the request to Norwich City Football Club for a football shirt for each of the 8 schools in the El Viejo area had not been successful unlike a similar request in 1986. Each of the 8 schools had been provided with a computer which gave the children more scope for education. The school garden project had been affected by a drought last year and the crops did not thrive. The distribution of school uniforms to scholarship pupils was a major event in the community. Arising out of The Forum event, the Norwich Cathedral Chapter had confirmed that alms collected during the Christmas offertory this year would be

donated towards the school building project in El Viejo. This was a major project to replace the temporary structure that was currently being used.

The Norfolk and Norwich Koblenz Friendship Association

Jill Noble presented the report and said that the photographic exhibition at the cathedral had been very successful. She had just returned from Koblenz and could report that the Norwich garden at the Bundesgartenschau (BUGA) was in its full autumn glory and was a popular place where people liked to sit and linger. It was a credit to George Ishmael and Chris Southgate of Norwich-in-Bloom.

Jill Noble referred to Waltraud Jarrold's report and said that the plaque on Augustine Steward House sill contained some unfortunate mistakes in German and should be changed and asked what happened to the drain cover that had been presented to the city from the City of Koblenz and showed the Koblenz Shängel or urchin. The twinning officer said that he had spoken to landscape services and explained that the drain cover and other plaques removed from the wall adjacent to the Guildhall had also gone missing during the switch over from one contractor to another. This was an unusual set of circumstances and it was unlikely to happen again. Project management and the terms of contracts would ensure that items were protected and reinstated at the end of construction works. There was an audit trail that showed that the landscape architects had asked for the drain cover and plaques to be retained.

Councillor Gledhill said that the visits to Rouen and Koblenz had been held at the same time in May 2010 and that he and other members of both associations had been disappointed that they could not attend both. He said that he hoped this could be avoided in future. Jill Noble said that the visit to Koblenz at the beginning of May 2010 had been planned a year ahead to coincide with the opening of the BUGA. It was very difficult to avoid a clash of dates. Doug Underwood pointed out that Novi Sad also had to organise events during school holidays too and concurred that there would be clashes of events but it did not happen that often. Mary Corbould said that the associations not only had to take into account the availability of their own members but also the members of the twin cities. The twinning association at Rouen would be visiting Norwich and Norfolk in early May next year, at a time when she would not be able to attend events because she would be working. She thanked Councillor Gledhill for raising the issue because some of their members had been upset by the clash of visits. Ralph Gayton and Peter Beckley pointed out that their association's newsletters each set out details of forthcoming events which would alert other twinning associations of dates to avoid if at all possible.

RESOLVED to

- (1) note the reports of the twinning associations/link;
- (2) ask Councillor Bremner to speak to Dragon Hall regarding the twinning room and to liaise with the twinning officer and representatives of the twinning associations;
- (3) ask the twinning officer to investigate other locations for the display of twinning items.

- (4) note that the committee officer will arrange for the circulation of newsletters to members of the committee;
- (3) ask the twinning officer to advise HEART of the Koblenz association's concerns with the plaque at St Augustine's House.

3. TWINNING FUND – FINANCIAL POSITION

The twinning officer presented the report. He explained that the City of Koblenz had kindly given €20,000 for the city council to take part in BUGA and that the incurred expenditure would be claimed at the end of the event. Therefore the balance was currently a debit until this had been repaid back into the twinning fund. Currently expenditure was around £3,300 which should have been in a separating holding budget. The actual balance for the twinning fund was around £300 at present. He apologised for the presentation of the report and said that he had requested that the budget for BUGA had been kept separate from the twinning fund. The next report would be amended to make it easier to read.

RESOLVED to note that the balance in hand at 30 September 2011 was £386.47 (subject to expenditure on BUGA not exceeding £3,300).

4. APPLICATION FOR A TWINNING COMMITTEE GRANT

(Peter Beckley and Doug Underwood having an interest in this application did not take part in the discussion or the determination.)

The twinning officer presented the report.

RESOLVED to grant £200 to the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association to facilitate the attendance of a performer from Novi Sad to travel to Norwich to perform at the annual Paul Cross Memorial concert in January 2012.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The chair agreed to take the following items as additional business.

Norwich signs

Councillor Gayton reported that the council would be replacing the “welcome to Norwich” signs and that there would be a reference to each of the four twinning associations on the replacement signs.

City of Ale

Councillors Bremner and Gledhill referred to an email they had received from a Norwich publican seeking assistance from the European twinning associations on how to contact brewers in their twin cities with a view to promoting ales from the twin cities in a City of Ale festival. It was agreed that details could be passed on to the associations who would generally be pleased to help with contacts.

6. DATES OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED to confirm that the next meeting will be held at 4pm on Thursday 15 March 2011.

CHAIR