



Twinning committee

16:00 to 17:05

5 October 2017

Present: Councillors Fullman (Lord Mayor and chair), Bremner (vice chair), Peek, Raby, Schmierer and Wright; and Ralph Gayton (El Viejo), Waltraud Jarrold and Jill Noble (Koblenz); Sandra and Doug Underwood (Novi Sad) and Ann and Chris Rowe (Rouen) and Councillor John Ward (Chairman of Norfolk County Council)

Apologies: Councillors Maxwell and Ryan

1. Diana Beckley, MBE

The Lord Mayor referred to the sad news that Diana Beckley, MBE, had died and paid tribute to the contribution that she had made together with Peter, her husband, to the activities of the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association and the humanitarian support they had given to the people of Novi Sad in the 1990s.

As a mark of respect, a minutes silence was held.

2. Public questions/petitions

There were no public questions or petitions.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2017, subject to item 9, Reports of the Twinning Associations making the following amendments:

- (1) under the heading "The Norfolk and Norwich / Koblenz Friendship Association", making the following two amendments:
 - (a) first paragraph, first sentence, by deleting "Rouen" and replacing with "Koblenz";
 - (b) final paragraph by deleting "Norfolk and Norwich / Koblenz Friendship Association would celebrate 40 years" and replacing with "the twinning agreement between Koblenz and Norwich was signed 40 years ago";

- (2) under resolution (4) delete “Norfolk and Norwich / Koblenz Friendship Association” and replace with “the twinning agreement between Koblenz and Norwich”.

5. Twinning Fund – Financial Position

The committee officer explained that there were some outstanding financial commitments which would show in the figures at future meetings. She confirmed that she had not received any new proposals for grants and reminded members that they could apply for funding for twinning activities which would be considered at the next meeting.

Members were also advised that public liability insurance was provided by the council for the twinning associations. This did not cover travel abroad or services provided by a third party (where its insurance arrangements would apply).

RESOLVED, having considered the report of the director of business services, to note that the twinning fund closing balance (in hand) at 21 September 2017 is £3,299.69.

6. Reports of the Twinning Associations

Norfolk and Norwich / Koblenz Friendship Association

Waltraud Jarrold presented the report on behalf of the Norfolk and Norwich / Koblenz Friendship Association and paid tribute to Diana Beckley, who had acted as treasurer for the Triorca. She referred to the August version of “Kontakt”, the association’s newsletter, and said that she was pleased that the Chairman of Norfolk County Council and the Lord Mayor had attended the association’s annual birthday luncheon at Park Farm, Hethersett on Sunday, 17 September. The Advent evening would be held at the Great Hospital on 4 December and was a very popular event with over 100 people attending last year.

Members of the association had visited Koblenz in September and enjoyed a wonderful programme of events and good weather. Coincidentally, at the same time as the visit a pilgrim group from Koblenz was in Norwich as part of its pilgrimage of Catholic Cathedrals in England. The pilgrims had been very impressed with Norwich and the association would be following up contacts with the visitors from Koblenz.

The association had been pleased to be invited to apply for funding from the Anguish’s Educational Funding to encourage twinning activities with young people from Norwich. This was very important to ensure that associations and friendship links continued. The weekly German conversation group continued to flourish and was well attended. Two new members had joined other members on the visit to Koblenz in September who had attended the annual general meeting as their first contact with the association.

Waltraud Jarrold then presented a plaque to the Lord Mayor which had been presented to the Ralph Roe (Lord Mayor 1977-78) commemorating the signing of the agreement between the two cities, Koblenz and Norwich. She suggested that an appropriate venue for a special function to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the

signing of the agreement would be the Sainsbury Centre which opened 40 years ago next year. Koblenz would be celebrating the signing of the agreement in April 2018, but it would be a good idea to focus the celebrations in Norwich with the Lord Mayor's celebrations in July and perhaps to invite the new Oberbürgermeister to attend. Councillor Bremner said that the Lord Mayor and a group of people from Norwich would be attending the 40th anniversary in Koblenz in April and that twinning was about people. The Kemps Men had links with groups from Winnigen (near Koblenz) and the Netherlands. He suggested that dance/musical groups from Koblenz and its surrounding area were invited to participate in the Lord Mayor's street procession and other events, and asked for the committee's support.

During discussion, the Lord Mayor said that it was a good idea for all associations to link twinning activities with the city's events such as the annual Lord Mayor's celebrations. Cultural exchange was a key principle of twinning. Further consideration could be given to these suggestions but more information would be needed and proposals worked up. A meeting could be set up with the events team to look into the practicality of dancers or bands from Koblenz and its surrounding area participating in the Lord Mayor's procession or events as part of the weekend.

Norfolk and Norwich / Rouen Friendship Association

Chris Rowe presented the report on behalf of the Norfolk and Norwich / Rouen Friendship Association and said that a shortened version of the association's newsletter had been included in the agenda papers for the meeting. He echoed the sentiments expressed about the sad news about Diana Beckley and said that he had written to Peter Beckley to say how sorry they were.

The association's annual dinner would take place on 29 November at the Debut Restaurant, Norwich City College. 2019 would mark the 60th anniversary of the Norwich/Rouen twinning link and the bicentenary of the Storming of the Bastille. There would be an Armada of tall sailing ships in Rouen which would be moored on the banks of the Seine and a visit was planned to coincide with this and celebrate the anniversary. He hoped that there could be a party in Norwich to mark the anniversary. Norwich Rowing Club was sending a team to complete the 7 km race rowing around the Ile de Groix. He was currently looking for a placement for a young man from Rouen without much success at the moment.

Councillor Raby commented on the 60th anniversary of the city's twinning link with Rouen and said that he had been in the first group of exchange students from Norwich to visit Rouen in 1959.

In reply to a question, Chris Rowe said that no dates had been confirmed for the Armada event in Rouen. He thought it might be May 2019 but would notify the committee officer when it was confirmed. He hoped that a special event could also be held in Norwich to mark this event.

The Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association

Doug Underwood said that he and members of the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association were still reeling from the shock of the sad news about Diana Beckley. He presented the association's newsletter which he had hastily put together and was circulated at the meeting. It was difficult to do justice to all that Diana Beckley had

done. Diana and Peter Beckley had been instrumental in setting up the association and twinning links with Novi Sad. They had been given hon. Novi Sad had given them honorary citizenship in recognition for arranging humanitarian aid during the 1990s. He explained that it had been difficult to ensure that all members of the association were informed of the sad news in a time of social media and where the press knew more than he did at times. The Beckley's many friends in Novi Sad had shown true friendship in their support for Peter Beckley during this difficult time. There would be a public memorial service for Diana Beckley in due course. Sandra Underwood added that Diana Beckley had loved Novi Sad and been a good and loyal friend, who would be much missed.

The Norfolk and Norwich – El Viejo Friendship Link

Ralph Gayton explained that he was unable to provide a written report on behalf of the Norfolk and Norwich El Viejo Friendship Link because there had been no contact with the Link's representative in El Viejo for over a month. This could be due to illness or that it was the wet season in Nicaragua, as the area around El Viejo is sparsely populated and served by earth roads.

He then referred to the Link's concerns about United States of America's proposed Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act of 2017. He said that the Act was as good as approved and the United States was already using its influence to block foreign investment into Nicaragua. There was concern about the impact that this would have on Nicaragua, which was the second poorest country in South America after Haiti, and needed better hospitals and infrastructure.

Discussion ensued in which Ralph Gayton answered members' questions. He explained that the Link employed a representative in El Viejo to work four days a month visiting the schools that it supported. Waltraud Jarrold suggested that there would be strength in a joint response to the Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act if the Link joined with other British groups twinned with Nicaragua to express their concerns. Ralph Gayton said that the Link was in touch with the national body and about twelve small twinning groups in the UK and one in the Netherlands.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) note the reports;
- (2) support in principle the proposal for events to celebrate 40 years since the signing of the agreement with Koblenz and Norwich to coincide with the Lord Mayor's celebrations in July 2018, subject to further information being provided by the Norfolk and Norwich / Koblenz Friendship Association;
- (3) ask the Lord Mayor to write to the Mayor of Novi Sad to express gratitude for the kindness and friendship shown to Mr Beckley and members of the Norfolk and Norwich Novi Sad Association;
- (4) note that the 60th anniversary of the Norfolk and Norwich / Rouen Friendship Link will be in 2019 and to consider holding an event in Norwich to celebrate and a visit to Rouen to coincide with the tall boats event;

- (5) note the effect that the withdrawal of foreign investment could have on Nicaragua as a result of the United States' Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act 2017.

CHAIR