



## MEETING PAPER

Subject: Twinning

Meeting: Events and Communications Sub-Committee

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~/NON-CONFIDENTIAL

*Please note that the official Twinning website is not operational whilst a new platform is being developed, therefore we will be unable to register for twinning and partnership building.*

### **The History of Twinning**

The town twinning movement started soon after 1945 and it was vowed Europe should never again be torn apart by war. The promotion of this movement was a priority of the Council of European Municipalities in 1951 and the 1950s saw a significant increase in the number of twinned towns. There are approximately 17,000 twinning links across Europe, with most towns having more than one twinning partner, and the UK has approximately 2,000 formal twinning agreements.

In these modern times, twinning represents a long-term commitment between two communities where they can discuss challenges their communities face, exchange views, heritage and art, and provide an opportunity for young people to get involved with their counterparts from a different country. The partnership should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it continues to meet the needs of both towns.

Lowestoft was twinned with Plaisir in 1978 and the Lowestoft Plaisir Town Twinning Association was established to promote friendship and understanding between the two communities.

### **Process**

Finding a partner

Twinning.org can assist a town seeking a twinning partner. The website has a list of towns seeking partners which can be reviewed for potential partners to contact. Alternatively, the website offers an online form which will notify other towns that you are actively seeking a twinning partner. This form will first be sent to the relevant national association in the UK, who may be able to provide further assistance, before it is displayed on the website.

Before undertaking this process, it is advised to consider the following points:

- Find the right partner – The partner towns should have similarities regarding population size, geographic location, economic activities and historic links.
- Involve the citizens and entire community – Schools, sports clubs and other local community organisations should all be involved. It is also advised that the twinning be visible to all residents with the benefits communicated.
- Define the common objectives – Both towns should define clear, common objectives and types of activities they wish to participate in. Dates should also be agreed to reassess the objectives and actions to ensure both participants remain committed to the same priorities.

- Create a support structure – A small active team in both towns can help maintain the connections and develop the partnership through new projects.

#### The Twinning Oath

Whilst not legally binding, the signing of this oath facilitates the setting up of a long-term relationship between the two towns. The content of the oath is not fixed and can be amended depending on the nature of the partnership and according to the wish of the twinned towns. A general template can be found [here](#). This oath can be submitted to the local council for debate and if agreed the oath can then be signed at a formal public meeting.

#### Finances

There is no cost to setting up twinning, but there may be associated fees with travelling, openings and the funding of activities. The Town Council will need to consider what budget may be required to ensure the longevity of the twinning partnership.

#### Who to Twin With

At a previous meeting of this Sub-Committee, there were suggestions on twinning opportunities with Germany and Holland. The Sub-Committee will need to contemplate the shared history with the towns they consider for twinning, what mutual benefits the partnership will provide to both towns and what activities could be undertaken for the partnership.

If the Sub-Committee have ideas of which towns Lowestoft could be twinned with, checks would need to be made on those potential towns to ensure they are not already twinned with other UK towns.