**ESSEX & SUFFOLK JOINT TWINNING CONGRESS AGM,**

**Saturday, 12th October, 2019 at Haverhill**

**Associations in attendance**

Beccles, Brentwood Montbazon, Bury St Edmunds Compiegne, Chelmsford, Dunmow, Eye, Felixstowe, Great Waltham, Haverhill, Lowestoft, Ongar, Panfield, Stowmarket, Sudbury, Tendring**.**

**Minutes of Meeting**

1. Delegates were welcomed by Haverhill Mayor, Cllr John Burns.

2. Mary Dunk, Chair of the Joint Twinning Congress gave a brief explanation of today’s proceedings and drew attention to handouts on the implications of a ‘no deal Brexit’ on travel to Europe’ gleaned from an article by Simon Calder of the Independent newspaper. She also said she had been contacted by an insurance company who would look favourably on twinning partnerships travelling in Europe and would be sending details of this out to Congress members.

3. Patrick Crouch of Haverhill Local History Group gave a résumé of Haverhill’s history from Anglo Saxon times up until the beginning of the Overspill years.

4. Open Forum: Presentations were made by:

Haverhill, Felixstowe, Chelmsford, Panfield, Brentwood, Gt. Waltham, Tendring District, Stowmarket, Sudbury, Eye, Bury St Edmunds, Dunmow, Beccles, Lowestoft.

A brief overview of members comments are as follows:

It was agreed we all suffer from an ageing membership and suggestions were made as to how we could encourage interest from young(er) people. These included sponsoring young people on sports or arts/music trips abroad, work experience and to work with Primary Schools, especially years 5 and 6 and encourage ‘pen pals’, also taking grandchildren on our visits.

To advertise our existence, we could work with U3A groups, such as language groups, promote reciprocal mayoral visits, have market stalls, especially around Christmas, work in collaboration with local festivals and be visible on social media. We could also work alongside other local clubs and involve ourselves in commercial enterprises. If a significant year of twinning was imminent, we could try contacting the German Embassy for a representative to be present.

It was agreed that staying in hotels was not as good as staying with hosts but sometimes this could not be avoided.

Regarding funding issues, it was suggested that approaches to parish and town councils for sponsorship could be made. However, it was pointed out that this would depend on the politics of the councils involved as it had been experienced that some Brexit favouring councils were against any help in visiting Europe. It was agreed this was not in the spirit of Town Twinning. Some fund raising suggestions included quiz nights, jumble sales, ceilidhs, and auctions.

The ‘One Suffolk’ workshop on the website was requested. (Note. OneSuffolk.net hosts the Congress website and is open for any Suffolk-based organisations who would like to take up web space. Training is available.)

5. Congress Business

Apologies for Absence were from: Colchester, Framsden (Framlingham), Gosfield, Hadleigh & District, Norton, Redgrave, Sible Hedingham, Wortham & Burgate. It was noted that a number of organisations did not appear to exist any longer.

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 13th October, 2018 at Gt. Dunmow, which had been previously circulated were agreed. Proposed/accepted by EM, Haverhill and seconded by PW, Haverhill.

There were no matters arising therefrom.

Treasurer’s Report 2018/2019: David Whiteing was unable to attend but the accounts were circulation at the meeting. Proposed/accepted by member from Eye, seconded DB, Gt. Dunmow.

Election of Officers: As no-one was willing to stand as Chairperson, Mary Dunk said she would be willing to serve another 3 year term of office. Proposed by DB, Gt Dunmow, seconded by EM, Haverhill. There was a unanimous vote in favour.

The Treasurer was willing to stand again and was proposed by DB, Gt Dunmow and seconded by KS Panfield.

Any Other Business: none

Date and Venue for next Congress: Lowestoft agreed to host this on Saturday, 10th October, 2020.

Meeting closed at 12.20 for lunch.

CHAIRPERSON: ………………………………………….

DATE: ………………………………………….

http://essexandsuffolktwinningcongress.onesuffolk.net