

## Essex and Suffolk Twinning Congress. 10/10/20

### How can we keep the spirit of twinning alive?

Participants went into break-out rooms and reported back as follows.

- Newsletter with contributions and updates from each town published by Colchester. Several associations mentioned the positive influence of regular newsletters on the morale of members, they are much appreciated
- Colchester members had attended an online German conference on using media (in German).
- Regular phone and zoom contact maintained with twin town council officers and twinning counterparts
- Virtual meals with European twins - Dunmow organising a “Cassoulet Evening” (added after the meeting) and Colchester a meal with Imola, Italy.
- Noted that some members had not responded during lockdown, it was planned to phone around personally
- Anglo/French Quiz Night with questions in both languages
- Virtual wine tasting planned (Stansted) but proved too complicated
- Monthly update from each town is circulated (Beccles)
- Young people have been put in contact with each through the twinning facebook page
- Beccles Pumpkin Festival - participation sought from French in terms of photos.
- Facebook as a useful tool to be developed more fully - mentioned by several participants
- Language learning materials donated to local schools
- Setting up Cross-Channel conversation groups on line (note the difference between language lessons and conversation groups)
- Local groups can hold Scavenger Hunts in their own cars

- Great Yarmouth's twin town Rambouillet has 5 twin towns, and seems to re-invigorate its twinning movements every decade by adding a new one!
- Some social events like Beetle Drive and board games - can they be done online?
- A "Doodle" poll was recommended for meetings
- Personal Emails, phone, Messenger, Facebook, Go To meetings, LinkedIn are all recommended methods of maintaining contact. Even writing letters.
- The French custom of towns having a "Fete des Associations" each Autumn, celebrating community groups, can be recommended. They are outside and can be socially distanced.
- Britta Schluter reiterated the enthusiasm of the German Embassy to reach out to the provinces, and said that assistance is always available. Speakers, cultural topics, events are all possible, we just need to ask

### Questions

Q. Could the Congress organise a tutorial on Zoom break-out rooms for members?

A. U3A (University of the Third Age) has published Zoom tutorials for its members - Mary to investigate to see if we could use them. In principle, yes we could organise sessions, practice to be investigated.

Q. Does the "break out room" facility on Zoom cost more?

A. It's included in the basic free version (which only allows hosting for 40 mins.) The fuller version, which has to be licensed, is something like £15.00 per month, this needs to be verified.