



ADUR & WORTHIN
COUNCILS

Joint Governance Committee
28 November 2017
Agenda Item 10

Ward: All Worthing Wards

Honouring links with Richebourg L'Avoue

Report by the Director for Communities

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 To consider the options for formal recognition of the links between the Borough Council and Richebourg L'Avoue.
- 1.2 To make a recommendation to the Council meeting on 19th December 2017

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Council on 31 October 2017 accepted a Motion on Notice from the Mayor requesting officers to put a report to this Committee to consider the available options of strengthening our ongoing relationship, with a view to formally granting a civic recognition, specifically Freedom of the Borough, to honour the sacrifices of the past and strengthen ongoing ties and relationships between citizens of the Borough of Worthing and the Town of Richebourg.
- 2.2 Supporting information for the Motion is added below:
- 2.3 On 30th June 1916, Richebourg l'Avoué in France was the site of the Battle of the Boar's Head that owes its name to the network of trenches forming the shape of a boar's head.
- 2.4 The Battle aimed to distract the Germans and to make them believe that the Great Offensive would be launched in Richebourg and not in the Somme. The 11th, 12th and 13th Battalions of the Southdowns Brigade were involved in this battle that lasted only 5 hours. Even so, 349 British soldiers and 17 officers died and over 1,000 were wounded or taken prisoners. Ever since, the 30th of June has been regarded locally as "The Day Sussex died". 22 of those who died were from Worthing.
- 2.5 In 1920, after the First World War, the Mayor of Worthing Ellen Chapman raised thousands of pounds in Worthing to go towards the rebuilding of Richebourg which

was all but destroyed in the battle. This was the foundation of our relationship with Richebourg.

- 2.6 The strong links with Richebourg has continued in recent years with the support of a number of past Mayor's and Councillors. Every year, "The Day Sussex died" is remembered both here in Worthing and in Richebourg. The commitment of our continued friendship is something that the Mayor of Richebourg, Gérard Delahaye, supports by facilitating yearly commemorations in memory of the soldiers who died, inviting Cllr Sean McDonald over to their town for the 100th anniversary services last year and in encouraging links with local schools here and in Richebourg.
- 2.7 This Council acknowledges the links between the Borough and Richebourg as demonstrated by continued yearly commemorations of the actions taken by the Royal Sussex Regiment at The Battle of the Boar's Head on 30 June 1916.
- 2.8 The town of Richebourg have expressed interests in extending their links with the Borough and have recently been forging links with Chatsmore Catholic High School. Working on various projects to promote and explore our relationships history, most notably in designing a stain glass window for Worthing Pier and an identical one to be displayed in Richebourg.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 This paper discusses the options available to the Committee to honour the direct links between the Borough Council and Richbourg, building on the work of Mayor Ellen Chapman and continuing through each Mayoral Year.
- 3.2 Formal Twinning between the Towns

The formal process for Town Twinning is governed by the Council for European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) where prospective towns post a request for a twin; prospective partners are matched together with various negotiations taking place before a Friendship Link is established as a first stage to formal ties. The Borough already has a twinning Association with links to Le Pays de Olonnes in France and the Elztal Region in Germany.

It is unlikely that the CEMR would formally support Worthing choosing to Twin with Richbourg when there are a number of Towns across Europe waiting for a Twin.

- 3.3 Informal Twinning or Friendship links between the Towns

A Friendship accord could be drafted and made personal to the links between the Borough and Richbourg although this would take time to ensure that both Parties views are represented; there would likely be translation costs to ensure that the document did not commit either Parties to unattainable goals and use of resources. Friendship links are usually used to improve relations between nations rather than to honour existing links.

- 3.4 Freedom of the Borough granted to either the Town or the Civic Head in perpetuity

The Mayor of Richbourg conferred on the Mayor of Worthing (Councillor Sean McDonald) the Freedom of the Town of Richbourg during the WW1 commemorations in June 2016. This recognised the ongoing links between the Civic Offices.

To recognise the special links between the Civic Offices the granting of the Freedom to the Civic Head is similar to granting the honour to a military unit without naming the personal of the Unit.

Freedom is usually granted to recognise confidence, trust and friendship that has built up over time.

A Freedom of the Borough granted to the office of Mayor of Richebourg, would demonstrate our recognition of the town of Richebourg's continued acts of remembrance for not only the Worthing men and boys of the Royal Sussex Regiment who lost their lives at the battle of the boars head, but also for the work of Ellen Chapman almost 100 years ago.

4.0 Legal

4.1 Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows Boroughs to grant the Freedom of Entry to distinguished persons.

4.2 Should the Council meeting in December agree that the Freedom be granted to the Civic Head of Richbourg then an Extra Ordinary Council Meeting under Section 249 (5) of the Local Government Act will need to be arranged for the granting of the honour - two thirds of those councillors in attendance at that meeting, would need to vote in favour of the Motion to grant the Freedom. The conferment could take place during that meeting, similar to the Honorary Alderman/Alderwomen or at another suitable date or venue. This Extraordinary Meeting meeting could be arranged directly after the February or April Council meetings, enabling the actual conferment to take place in May at a Reception during the timetabled of the visit of the dignitaries.

4.3 The Freedom of the Borough of Worthing has been conferred as follows:

Lord Higgins of Worthing (7th November 1997)

HMS Sussex, The Sussex Division RNR (21st June 1990) - handed back when disbanded in 1994

Her Grace Lavinia, Duchess of Norfolk CBE (21st November 1978)

Princess of Wales Royal Regiment (formerly Queens & Hampshire) (4th June 1959)

Charles Bertram Barber JP (30th April 1959)

Alderman Joseph Arthur Mason OBE (6th April 1956)

Alderman Harry Thomas Duffield (4th December 1940)

Alderman James Farquarson Whyte MA JP (4th December 1940)

John Kennedy Allerton OBE (8th April 1938)

Alderman James Gurney Denton (28th September 1922)

Andrew Carnegie LL.D (31st May 1909)

The Rt Hon Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher Bart CB MP (8th October 1901)

George Baker (12th June 1901)

Charles Caleb Grinstead (12th June 1901)

Henry William Goddard (12th June 1901)

Henry Ingram Hill (12th June 1901)

Herbert Pope (12th June 1901)

[Members of the 'H' (Worthing Company) 2nd VB Royal Sussex Regiment, being members of the Active Service Company of Sussex Volunteers serving in South Africa, 1900-01]

Edward Harrison (25th October 1894)

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 It is customary to present a commemorative Scroll conferment and to hold a small reception, to celebrate the conferment.
- 5.2 Representatives from Richebourg are expected to visit the Borough during May 2018 (weekend of 11/12th) when a suitable conferment ceremony could take place followed by a small reception for the civic guests. A small reception could be accommodated within the current budgets and would be linked to the Official Mayoral Visit of the Guests from Richebourg.

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 That the Committee considers the proposal in the report and makes the following recommendation to the Worthing Council meeting in December:
- 6.2 That in accordance with the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the Council of the Borough of Worthing do grant Freedom of the Borough to the office of Mayor of Richebourg.

- 6.3 Council notes that an Extra Ordinary Council meeting will be required to formally confirm the Freedom of the Borough, with this likely to be after the February or April Council meetings.

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

Motion on Notice to Council 31 October 2017

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

1.1 This report does not support any particular Council Priority

2.0 Specific Action Plans

2.1 This report does not support any particular Action Plan

3.0 Sustainability Issues

3.1 Matter considered no matters arising

4.0 Equality Issues

4.1 Matter considered no matters arising

5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

5.1 Matter considered and no matters arising

6.0 Human Rights Issues

6.1 Matter considered no matters arising

7.0 Reputation

7.1 Matter considered no matters arising

8.0 Consultations

8.1 The Mayor, as the sponsor of the Motion on Notice has been consulted on this report and will be presenting the request at the Committee.

9.0 Risk Assessment

9.1 Matter considered no matters arising

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 Matter considered, no matters arising

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 Matter considered, no matters arising

12.0 Partnership Working

12.1 Matter considered, no matters arising