

# DOUZELAGE

48<sup>th</sup> General Meeting

**Sherborne**

11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024



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## **Workshop 1: Future Projects that do not require EU funding**

### Present

Sherborne: Mike Balfour (Chair), Marcus Ainley

Bundoran: Joe McNulty

Holstebro: Mette Grith Sorensen, Tiahes Thiaharajah

Judenburg: Thorsten Wohleser

Meerssen: Herman Langeveld, Irene Raedts-Schreuder, Hub Eken

Niederanven: Roberta Dario

Turi: Aet Sarv

### Reasons for Workshop

1. At GMs we should always focus on projects.
2. We need to restore Douzelage to full activity following Covid.
3. Brexit has removed Sherborne's access to EU funding.

### Background

In the 33 years of the Douzelage, many projects have been successful when all the finance has been provided by the participants, their municipalities or a sponsor.

The Douzelage has helped to make connections between groups in partner towns, but their organisations have usually planned and administered these projects.

When there is no need to apply for EU funding, there is less bureaucracy and more certainty that the project will proceed.

## Travelling Groups

Musicians, sports teams, schools, youth clubs, service clubs and special interest groups sometimes travel to other countries to pursue their interests.

All these types of organisation have visited partner towns in the past. We should inform their current leaders about the opportunities and special welcome in the Douzelage. In doing so, we will raise the profile of the Douzelage in our towns.

## Making Connections

Many years ago the Douzelage attempted to compile lists for every town of all their organisations and their contact details. It was too large a task, for example Sherborne's list had over 100 entries and larger towns many more. Trying to keep details up to date was impossible.

With this in mind, our discussions concluded that we should focus on one type of organisation each year: Music, Sport, Art, History, or Hiking for example. Music would be a good first choice. This will need the involvement of the new Presidency team. See Recommendations.

## Retired People

Many 'Seniors' have the free time and money to travel to partner towns, and are active in organisations. Towns with a U3A (University of the Third Age), a Rotary Club, a Lions Club or similar organisations should tell them about the Douzelage.

Face-to-face meetings are best; but online events, for chess and bridge for example, are also worthwhile.

## Youth Projects

Our young people are the future of the Douzelage so we must focus on them too. Finding sponsorship for youth projects is easier than for others.

We should ensure that schools and youth clubs are fully aware of the Douzelage.

Sherborne Douzelage has a Youth Travel Fund, from which grants are given to ensure youth projects are accessible to all families. Please remember this and invite Sherborne's young people to your town.

## Well-being Through Wine?

Some of our towns are in wine-producing areas. Please invite us to a wine festival or a wine-tasting tour: a group from one town or a small number from more towns.

SWIG (Sherborne Wine Interest Group) will be interested.

## Sherborne

Sherborne's walking groups request exchanges with Douzelage towns. Holstebro and Niederanven will approach their walking groups.

Sherborne hopes to welcome the Koszeg Brass Band in May 2025 to stay and play.

Schools have Boarding House accommodation available for groups in their holidays.

Sherborne requests that towns leading EU funded projects consider their inclusion; Sherborne Douzelage may be able to finance their participation without EU funding.

## Recommendations

### 1. NEW PROJECTS

All towns to encourage clubs and groups to invite or visit other Douzelage towns.

### 2. MUSIC

- a) The Board to declare a year (2025, or from now to the next GM, perhaps) to be the year for towns to compile lists of their music groups, highlighting those who may be interested in travel to other towns, and also those interested in other Douzelage musicians visiting them.
- b) To circulate all this information to our music groups and help them to make connections with like-minded organisations in partner towns, so visits take place in the years to follow.
- c) A central communications point for 'the year of music' to be set up.
- d) The Board to recommend themes in later years, for GMs to approve.

### 3. SHERBORNE

All towns are asked to help Sherborne to participate in many projects.