



Coventry City Council



Public report

REPORT BACK ON CONFERENCE/SEMINAR

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
REPORT OF: Lord Mayor 2014/15, Councillor Hazel Noonan
TITLE: Civic Visit to Dresden
DATE: 12th – 15th February 2015
VENUE: Dresden, Germany

1. Recommendation

1.1 The Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee is recommended to endorse the report of the Lord Mayor's civic visit to Dresden and the positive outcomes of the visit.

2. Background

2.1 The Lord Mayor and Consort were invited by the Mayor of Dresden, together with the Bishop of Coventry, Dean of Coventry Cathedral and a 12 strong congregation of 'Friends of Coventry Cathedral' to represent the City of Coventry at a number of ceremonial events as part of the 70th anniversary of the destruction of Dresden.

2.2 To emphasise the significance of the commemorative events, the HRH The Duke of Kent and the Archbishop of Canterbury were also in Dresden for the occasion.

2.2 13 February 1945 saw 200 British bombers drop hundreds of tonnes of explosives and a second wave of 500 aircraft flew over Dresden creating a firestorm across the city. Some 25,000 people died in the air strikes.

2.3 Due to our common fate, the link between the two cities is based on civic links of the two administrations as well as strong relationships between the Frauenkirche (Dresden Cathedral) and Coventry Cathedral. 2014 saw the 55th anniversary of this relationship.

Cost of attending

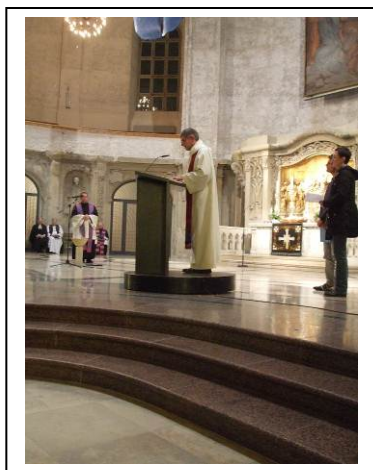
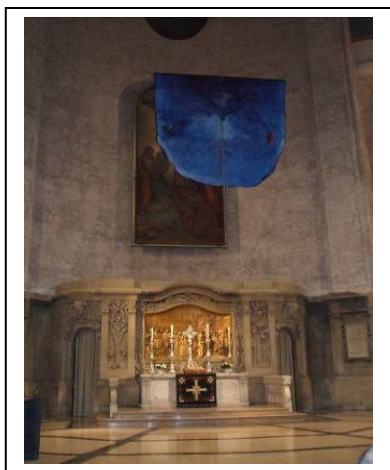
	Costs Approved by Cabinet/Cabinet Member	Total of Actual Costs
Conference Fees	Nil	Nil
Flights	Approx £480	£557.36
Additional Travel Expenses	Nil	Nil
Accommodation	Nil	Nil
Subsistence	£200	Nil

(NOTE: IF TOTALS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT PLEASE EXPLAIN WHY.)

3. Benefits

4.1 The itinerary for the visit was aimed at representing the City of Coventry at commemorative events to mark the 70th anniversary of the destruction of Dresden. The Lord Mayor, Bishop and Dean all played major role in these events. The most notable were:

- The opening of an exhibition at the Kruezkirche, where the 'Coventry-Dresden Cope', was hanging. The gift, a painting by British artist Terry Duffy from the Diocese and Cathedral of Coventry, strikingly hung above the main altar in the Church. The Dean of Coventry also preached here.
A welcome dinner followed for all visitors to Dresden representing their twin and sister cities, as well as The Dresden Trust UK.



The Lord Mayor, Councillor Hazel Noonan, with the Mayor of Dresden, Helma Orosz

- Visit to Panometer project “Dresden 1945 – Tragedy and Hope of a European City”. It is a panoramic 360° painting inside a former gasometer, showing Dresden as it might have appeared in 1945, accompanied by an exhibition.



- Main Service of Commemoration at the Frauenkirche. The Service started with the Lord Mayor acting as a candle bearer and speaking the words “This candle is from Coventry and represents peace and reconciliation”. Seen and heard by thousands as this was televised live internationally. Attended by the Federal President Joachim Gauck and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Thousands of people also gathered outside to mark the occasion and pay their respects.



- Participating in the Human Chain: On 13th February each year a human chain is formed around Dresden's Old Town designed to symbolically protect it against right-wing extremists and recall the events of February 1945. The Lord Mayor stands alongside HRH The Duke of Kent, Mayor of Dresden and the Federal President.



- Attendance at the 6th International Dresden Peace Prize Awarded to HRH The Duke of Kent for exemplary work towards Anglo-German reconciliation for decades. The cross atop the Frauenkirche, a gift from Britain to Dresden, was an impressive symbol of the relationship between one-time enemies.



1. Media profile: The Lord Mayor attracted much media interest from local, national and internationally television, radio and newspaper sources during the commemorative weekend. Numerous interviews and live press conferences were built into the schedule.



List of background papers

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Papers open to public inspection: None

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