

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

GUERNSEY AND BIBERACH AN DER RISS, GERMANY - FRAMEWORK OF FRIENDSHIP
ARRANGEMENT

The States are asked to decide:

Whether, after consideration of the policy letter entitled 'Biberach Framework of Friendship Arrangement' dated 25th February 2025, they are of the opinion:

1. To agree to enter into the Framework of Friendship arrangement between the States of Guernsey and the Town of Biberach an der Riß.
2. To agree to delegate the signing of the Framework of Friendship between the States of Guernsey and the Town of Biberach an der Riß to Deputy Trott, as Chief Minister, and Deputy Le Tocq, as Minister for External Relations, or any other member of the Policy & Resources Committee if Deputy Trott and Deputy Le Tocq are not available.
3. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee, together with the Committee *for* Education, Sports & Culture, to continue to facilitate cultural and educational exchanges between Guernsey and Biberach from time to time.
4. To reaffirm Guernsey's commitment to the international principles of peace, human rights, and reconciliation, as embodied in the Framework of Friendship and to agree to support collaborative projects that promote these values between Guernsey and Biberach.
5. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to oversee the implementation of the Framework of Friendship and conduct a review within three years to assess its impact and propose any necessary changes or enhancements.

The above Propositions have been submitted to His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications in accordance with Rule 4(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees.

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ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

Policy & Resources Committee

GUERNSEY AND BIBERACH AN DER RIß, GERMANY - FRAMEWORK OF FRIENDSHIP
ARRANGEMENT

The Presiding Officer
States of Guernsey
Royal Court House
St Peter Port

25 February 2025

Dear Sir

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 Guernsey has longstanding ties with Biberach an der Riß, Germany. This relationship was developed in 1997 through reconciliatory moves from Biberach, some decades after the deportation and internment of Guernsey individuals to Biberach during the Second World War.
- 1.2 In January 2023, correspondence was received from the Mayor of Biberach, expressing a desire to formalise the longstanding relationship between Guernsey and Biberach through a friendship arrangement, which would function similarly to a twinning agreement. The Committee agreed that the idea had merit, and a letter of intent was signed in April 2023 (APPENDIX 1).
- 1.3 Officers from Guernsey and Biberach's administrations, and members of the Biberach Twinning Association, have worked together to produce a draft Framework of Friendship (APPENDIX 2). A Framework of Friendship arrangement between Guernsey and Biberach has the purpose of strengthening cultural, social and economic ties between the two parties, while formally recognising the shared history and reconciliation of both parties.
- 1.4 The Mayor of Biberach is due to visit Guernsey for the Liberation Day 80th anniversary commemorations and celebrations. It is proposed that the

Framework of Friendship, if approved by the Assembly, be signed during that visit.

2 Introduction and Historical Background

- 2.1 Guernsey has longstanding ties with Biberach an der Riß, a town in southern Germany. The relationship began when British citizens not born in the Channel Islands were deported by German authorities during the occupation of Guernsey during the Second World War. From September 1942 to its liberation by French forces on 23 April 1945, about 1,000 British citizens and their families were deported to Camp Lindele in Biberach, a civilian internment camp mainly for people from Guernsey.
- 2.2 Shortly after the end of the war, visits of former deportees to Biberach and individuals from Biberach to Guernsey began on an informal basis. Following an invitation from Biberach's then Mayor, Thomas Fettback, for former deportees to visit Biberach, the Guernsey Deportees Association was formed in 1997 and the first group travelled to Biberach that year. The Guernsey Council of Churches invited citizens from Biberach to take part in the "Week of Reconciliation".
- 2.3 Since 1997, these visits have taken place by official invitations of the city and the 'Biberach Friends of Guernsey', and the 'Guernsey Friends of Biberach'. A positive relationship was established by the 'Guernsey Friends of Biberach' and the 'Deportees Association', with the aim of promoting reconciliation between the citizens of Biberach and the people of Guernsey. The reconciliatory moves led to the development of friendly relations between Guernsey and Biberach individuals and organisations.
- 2.4 Through these connections between Biberach and Guernsey individuals, a productive and well spirited relationship has been formed. It has previously been agreed to formally document the friendship, shared history, and future aspirations between Guernsey and Biberach.

3 Twinning arrangements and their history

- 3.1 The Framework of Friendship arrangement between Guernsey and Biberach is not officially a twinning agreement; twinning agreements usually occur between towns/cities¹. However, the Framework of Friendship arrangement will act similarly to a twinning agreement in practice.

¹ In the Guernsey context, twinning arrangements exist for parishes, but not for Guernsey as a whole. Several parishes in Guernsey are twinned with towns in France, for example St Peter Port and Masnières.

- 3.2 Town twinning gained popularity in Britain after the Second World War, as a means to foster reconciliation and prosperity through connections between towns and cities. A twin town relationship establishes cultural and commercial ties between two localities, symbolising international cooperation and friendship. Over time, its purpose has expanded to include promoting trade, tourism, and cultural exchanges, such as student programs and sporting events.
- 3.3 Biberach already has multiple successful town partnerships: Asti, Italy (since 1981); Swindica, Poland (since 1990); Telavi, Georgia (since 1987); Tending District, Essex, England (since 1991); and Valence, France (since 1967).

4 Engagement and Consultation

- 4.1 Guernsey has maintained a strong civil link with Biberach an der Riß, Germany, since 1997. This connection has been fostered through the efforts of community led organisations and individuals, like the Guernsey Friends of Biberach Association, their counterparts the Biberach Friends of Guernsey Association, the Deportees Association, and the Guernsey Council of Churches. The relationship has been encouraged and facilitated by former Bailiffs of Guernsey and Mayors of Biberach who encouraged the links between the two communities.
- 4.2 Over the years, these relationships have facilitated meaningful exchanges between the two communities, including meetings between Biberach's residents and Guernsey individuals who were deported there during the Second World War. For example, an annual 'Week of Reconciliation' has been established where representatives of each community either host or visit one another. Another such event occurred in November 2022 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the arrival of deportees from Guernsey to Camp Lindele, Biberach: the Biberach Friends of Guernsey and Guernsey Friends of Biberach Associations completed a commemorative walk through Biberach ending at Camp Lindele.
- 4.3 Additionally, cultural exchanges have taken place since the first visit in 1997, such as performances by orchestras and choirs, which have further strengthened this bond. A recent example was when 33 members of the Kantoeri Biberach choir travelled to Guernsey in July 2022 to perform a concert with the Guernsey Chamber Choir. Then the Guernsey Music Centre travelled to Biberach in July 2023 to perform during Biberach's annual showpiece festival, the Schützenfest. It is intended that Biberach musicians will come to Guernsey this year to participate in the celebrations for the 80th anniversary of Liberation. These and other cultural exchanges have been funded through the help of groups such as: the Friends of Guernsey Music Centre, student parents,

the Biberach Friends of Guernsey Association and the Rotary Club.

- 4.4 Official engagement regarding the Framework of Friendship Arrangement between Guernsey and Biberach has been ongoing for a number of years. Following correspondence and recent visits to both Guernsey and Biberach to demonstrate both parties' commitment to the friendship arrangement, a Letter of Intent (APPENDIX 1) was signed by Deputy Le Tocq and Mayor Zeidler on 23 April 2023. This marked an important step toward formalising the relationship between Biberach and Guernsey.
- 4.5 Most recently, Deputy Trott and the Bailiff visited Biberach in October 2024 for Guernsey Wochen (Guernsey Week), which celebrated the links between the locations.
- 4.6 Officers from Guernsey and Biberach's administrations, and members of the Biberach Twinning Association, have been working together to produce a draft Framework of Friendship arrangement (APPENDIX 2). This arrangement has the purpose of strengthening cultural, social and economic ties between the two parties, while formally recognising the shared history and reconciliation of both participants. The Framework of Friendship is largely modelled after twinning agreements which Biberach has with various towns (as in paragraph 3.3).
- 4.7 The Policy & Resources Committee approved the wording of the draft Framework of Friendship arrangement in December 2024 and agreed to recommend it being signing in 2025, ideally on or around Liberation Day.
- 4.8 As part of the process of finalising the draft framework text, the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture ('CfESC') was consulted. CfESC provided helpful suggestions on the wording of the text and noted the support of the Committee to see the Framework of Friendship signed by the parties around the islands 80th Liberation Day Celebrations. The CfESC wished to be mindful of the costs associated both with setting up the Agreement and then making it meaningful and purposeful and will have regard to this arrangement as part of the next budget cycle and in its handover report to the next iteration of the CfESC.
- 4.9 The Law Officers of the Crown have advised on the proposals and the draft text of the Framework of Friendship Arrangement.
- 4.10 As the UK has official responsibility for Guernsey's foreign policy, the Policy & Resources Committee has informed the Ministry of Justice (as the UK Department responsible for the relationship between the UK Government and Guernsey) and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (as the UK Department responsible for foreign policy) about the intention to sign a Framework of Friendship Arrangement with Biberach in 2025. The draft wording of the Framework was shared with both departments. The Ministry of

Justice has confirmed that the UK Government is supportive of the proposed signing of the Framework of Friendship with Biberach and are content with the wording of the arrangement.

5 Resource Implications

- 5.1 It is not anticipated that additional resources will be required for the proposed Framework of Friendship Arrangement between Guernsey and Biberach. The setting up and signing of the Framework of Friendship will be covered by current budget allocations.
- 5.2 Engagements with Biberach will be reviewed case by case and form part of future budget cycles where appropriate. The relationship between Guernsey and Biberach could be facilitated by the continuation of civil and political engagement at current levels, and the promotion of continued engagement between cultural groups and public knowledge of the links between Guernsey and Biberach.

6 Review of the Framework

- 6.1 As noted in Proposition 5, it is proposed that a review of the framework should take place after a three-year period (after May 9 2028). The review would consult with those involved with the framework and the relationship between Guernsey and Biberach more generally, to assess its impact and propose any necessary changes or enhancements.

7 Compliance with Rule 4

- 7.1 Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation and their Committees sets out the information which must be included in, or appended to, motions laid before the States.
- 7.2 In accordance with Rule 4(1):
 - a) In accordance with Rule 4(1)(a), the propositions contribute to the States' objectives and policy plans in regard to assisting to fulfil the responsibilities of a principal Committee and the Policy & Resources Committee (see also Paragraph 7.3(a). The Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture, has responsibilities to develop and implement policies relating to heritage, youth affairs, civic celebrations and commemorations, including Liberation celebrations.
 - b) In accordance with Rule 4(1)(b), the Committee has consulted with other parties as outlined in Section 4 above, in accordance with Rule 4(5). In preparing the propositions, consultation has been undertaken with the

Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture, the Law Officers of the Crown, the UK Ministry of Justice and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO).

- c) In accordance with Rule 4(1)(c), the propositions have been submitted to His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.
- d) In accordance with Rule 4(1)(d), there are no additional resources required to fulfil the Propositions of this Policy Letter (as in Section 5).

7.3 In accordance with Rule 4(2):

- a) In accordance with Rule 4(2)(a), the Propositions relate to the duties and powers of the Policy & Resources Committee because its mandate includes responsibilities to: "advise the States and to develop and implement policies and programmes relating to: (a) leadership and co-ordination of the work of the States" which includes "developing and promoting the States' overall policy objectives", "promoting and facilitating cross-committee policy development" and "(c) external relations and international and constitutional affairs, which includes: 1. the island's constitutional position and the relationship with the Crown; 2. relations with the United Kingdom and other jurisdictions; ... and 5. representing, or overseeing the representation of, and negotiating for, the Island".
- b) The propositions have the unanimous support of the Policy & Resources Committee.

Yours faithfully

L S Trott OBE
President

H J Soulsby MBE
Vice-President

J A B Gollop
J P Le Tocq
R C Murray

APPENDIX 1

Letter of Intent

23rd April 2023

Dear Mayor Zeidler

The Policy & Resources Committee of the government of Guernsey welcomes the opportunity to recognise the close relationship between Guernsey and Biberach an der Riß and to document the friendship between their communities.

The Policy & Resources Committee would like to have a formal arrangement which sets out the friendship between Guernsey and Biberach. The purpose of the arrangement would be to promote the continuation of friendly relations and to further strengthen links between Biberach and Guernsey. However, there has been insufficient time for the wording of any arrangement to be considered and approved before representatives from both administrations are together for the unveiling of a monument at the former Camp Lindele today.

It is intended that the government of Guernsey will sign an Arrangement of Friendship between the island of Guernsey and the town of Biberach an der Riß. This is one of the pair of letters exchanged between the two administrations on 23 April 2023 to demonstrate that shared intention.

Yours sincerely

Signed by Deputy Le Tocq

Deputy J Le Tocq
Minister for External Relations
Government of Guernsey (States of Guernsey)

APPENDIX 2

Framework of Friendship between Guernsey and Biberach an der Riß.

Being aware of the importance of human relations and the powerful spirit of reconciliation and friendship, the authorised representatives of the island of Guernsey and the town of Biberach an der Riß enter into the following Arrangement to fulfil resolutions passed by the States of Guernsey and the Biberach Town Council.

Arrangement

to formally recognise and continue to safeguard and develop friendly and cooperative relations between the town of Biberach an der Riß, and the States of Guernsey (government of Guernsey).

This document stems from our shared history, particularly the deportation of around 1,000 Guernsey residents to the Lindele Internment Camp in Biberach during the Second World War. It is intended to serve as a reminder of the suffering inflicted by the Nazi regime and as a beacon of hope for those who seek a peaceful future.

The objectives of this Framework of Friendship include:

To promote cultural understanding and exchange between Biberach and Guernsey. By facilitating the sharing of ideas, memories, and traditions, we honour our shared history and ensure it is not forgotten. Emphasising social and cultural exchanges at both governmental and community levels, we recognise that our current relations are rooted in longstanding friendships between individuals and families from both regions. Furthermore, both sides jointly decide to continue to invite official delegations to cultural and social events. This formal document seeks to preserve and foster these connections among our residents and governments.

To affirm the friendship and cooperation established in 1997, when some former deportees from Guernsey first accepted an official invitation to visit Biberach.

To encourage meetings and exchanges of historical and cultural knowledge among educational institutions, churches, voluntary associations, sports, government administrations, tourism representatives, and economic sectors. By recognising such cooperation, we seek to deepen our understanding of each participant's history and culture.

To affirm both Guernsey's and Biberach an der Riß's commitment to the international principles of peace, human rights and understanding between peoples. This document serves to highlight how an initial shared trauma need not continue to define the relationship between two places but can instead ultimately develop into the warmest of friendships and cooperation between peoples.

To facilitate educational initiatives to teach our children and residents about our shared history, so that we can foster a positive legacy from a dark chapter. We will also seek to develop joint community programmes to commemorate our history and enhance interaction between our communities. Additionally, we aim to initiate exchange programs for children to visit each other's regions, broadening their understanding of our cultures and histories.

To promote the cultivation, exploration, and future handling of our common past as a topic of joint understanding and an important part of our friendship.

With the signing of this document, the States of Guernsey, and the Town Administration of Biberach, together with the Biberach Twinning Association, individuals and other organisations in both locations will be entrusted with the continuation of this relationship. Both partners will continue to strengthen and promote cooperation between them.

Deputy Lyndon Trott
Chief Minister
Government of Guernsey

Norbert Zeidler
Mayor
Biberach an der Riss

Deputy Jonathan Le Tocq
Minister for External Relations
Government of Guernsey