

SALISBURY CITY COUNCIL

Subject : Salisbury and Nivelles Twinning
Committee : Full Council
Date : 9 March 2026
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1. Report Summary:

1.1 A request has been submitted by Cllr J Wells, Mayor of Salisbury, to twin Salisbury with Nivelles in Belgium.

1.2 Salisbury is currently twinned with Saintes in France and Xanten in Germany. This would be Salisbury's third twinning relationship.

1.3 Twinning is not legally binding and there are no expectations from the relationship.

1.4 There are no formal costs to twin two cities together. However, there are anticipated costs associated with producing new signage for the city and potential travel for the Mayor.

2. Background:

2.1 Corporate have received a request from Cllr J Wells, the Mayor of Salisbury, to officially twin with Nivelles in Belgium.

2.2 The idea of twinning cities originated after World War II as a way of fostering international cooperation. The practice of twinning is rooted in the desire to promote peace.

2.3 Salisbury is currently twinned with Xanten in Germany and Saintes in France. Nivelles is also twinned with Saintes.

2.4 The Mayor was invited to visit Nivelles in October 2025 following an introductory meeting in Saintes. Nivelles expressed an interest in twinning with Salisbury during his visit and have since confirmed this via email.

2.5 Twinning is not legally binding and is an informal arrangement.

3. Benefits:

3.1 Twinning with Nivelles will promote Salisbury as a city of peace and European friendship.

3.2 An additional twinning relationship can open the doors to EU funding and collaborative projects.

3.3 Our current relationships with Saintes and Xanten have allowed us to broaden our cultural horizons.

4. Costs:

4.1 Salisbury City Council currently pay £500 to the Saintes and Xanten Twinning associations.

4.2 There is not currently a Nivelles Twinning Association so this may be a future cost.

4.3 There may be future travel to Nivelles to solidify the twinning. The cost of these trips will come out of the new Mayor's budget and will use the cheapest options for travel.

4.4 There is an additional opportunity to refresh our gateway areas.

4.5 If Salisbury chooses to host officials from Nivelles, there could be associated costs.

5. Draft Timeline:

5.1 Following approval at this meeting, officers will begin the process of formalising the twinning.

5.2 It is anticipated that the process will be finalised by Winter 2026. The Welcome to Salisbury signs will be updated in 2027/28 to reflect any requests for sister city relationships following the 2027 celebrations.

6. Recommendation:

6.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

6.1.1 Authorise officers to begin the process of the twinning through liaising with their contacts in Nivelles.

6.1.2 Authorise officers to draft an informal Declaration of Friendship.

6.1.3 Request that officers bring a report back to a future Full Council to ratify a formal twinning with more comprehensive costings.

Wards Affected: All.

Background papers: None.

Implications:

Financial: As set out in the report.

Legal: Salisbury City Council have registered with the European Commission EU Funding and Tenders Portal.

Personnel: This can be absorbed into existing officer workloads.

Environmental Impact: Potential for more international travel.

Equalities Impact Statement: None.