

Chichester is building links with another walled city

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A 'friendship link' may soon be formed between Chichester and the Maltese capital Valletta – another historic walled city.

The idea was approved in principle by the city council's community affairs committee, and discussions will take place when city councillor Anne Scicluna visits Valletta for an executive meeting of the International Walled Towns Symposium, on which she represents Chichester.

Chichester already has formal twinning links with the French city of Chartres and Ravenna, in Italy.

The proposed link with Valletta would be more informal, and focused mainly on sporting, cultural and educational activities.

Committee chairman Cllr Rob Campling said there had been preliminary inquiries in the past, and some city councillors were very enthusiastic about the idea.

"Malta is an English-speaking country, which makes a link like this much easier," he added.

"This would be something like the link we already have with Kursk, in the Russian Federation, exchanging letters of intent and looking to support each other in developing cultural events. There is no great cost involved.

"We have asked Cllr Scicluna to pursue this, because she was already due to go to Valletta for the symposium meeting."

In a report prepared for the committee, Cllr Scicluna said the idea was suggested some time ago.

"At that time there was little movement, as the then Mayor of Valletta had a great deal on his plate," she said. "However, there is now a new mayor, who is keen on renewing the suggestion."

A declaration could be signed by each city, agreeing to interact with each other.

During a previous meeting of the Walled Towns Symposium, she had some talks with Joe Spiteri, the deputy mayor of Valletta, and the suggestion was they could start by getting educational and cultural links.

"Primary schools could form email links, one advantage being that all Maltese children learn English before they attend school," she added. "Secondary schools could also use email, but could organise exchanges of both students and teachers as well."
