

Mayor presents BTA contributors with copies of book celebrating 25 years of friendship between Bristol and Tbilisi

The Acting Mayor of Tbilisi, Sevdia Ugrekhelidze, celebrated the publication of Tbilisi City Council commissioned book on Saturday 8 March with a presentation ceremony at the Colston Hall in Bristol.

The book 'A Bridge of Friendship – Between Mtkvari and Avon' is filled with the personal stories of a number of people who have been involved in twinning links between Bristol and Tbilisi.



At the presentation the mayor met with a number of people who have contributed both to the relationship between the two cities over the past 25 years and to the content of the book.

Speaking to the group Mayor Ugrekhelidze said: "The most important thing is the friendship between the citizens of these cities.....the personal relationships are the spirit and soul of the connection. It is very hard for any book to adequately reflect such friendship."

The mayor explained the book is an attempt to catalogue the projects and initiatives between the two cities over the past 25 years.

She said: "I was personally keen to meet all the people involved in twinning links between Bristol and Tbilisi. The book is as a result of the contributions of all of you present and a number of other people who could not be with us today."

Mayor Ugrekhelidze highlighted the work of Professor Henry Parry and Paul Garland. She described them as: “pioneers....who laid the solid foundation for what has become a 25 year long relationship.”

The mayor concluded: “My hope is for many more good pages and chapters to be added to this friendship in the future.”



The book presentation occurred after a busy couple of days in which the Tbilisi delegation had met with, amongst others, Bristol elected Mayor George Ferguson. Ferguson has said he is very enthused about the relationship and has in principle committed to a return trip in October to Tbilisi when the city hosts their own jazz festival.

The delegation met with Andrew Kelly Director of the Bristol Festival ideas and John Hirst Chief Executive of Destination Bristol as well as key people involved in the Harbour Festival, Balloon Festival and the Arts Council. Ideas were shared and discussed about potential cultural and economic collaborations between organisations in Bristol and Tbilisi.

Mayor Ugrekhelidze’s words were translated by Nino Beglarishvili, Chief Officer of the Department of International Relations in Tbilisi’s City Hall.

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