

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 2015

PRESENT:- Mark Sarnowski (Swindon Torun Link), Councillor Kevin Small, Councillor Andrew Bennett, Nazma Ramruttun (Swindon Mauritius Friendship Twinning) and Cristina Bennett (Swindon Ocotal Link)

Apologies for absence were received from Richard Pearce, Hassan Nur, Roger Gower, Mike Ide, Councillor Michael Bray, Councillor Junab Ali, Cecilia Olley, Councillor Teresa Page and Councillor Maureen Penny

27. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. No declarations were made.

28. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

29. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2015, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

30. Reports from Town Twinning Associations and Links

The Network considered (a) a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services listing the Town Twinning Associations and Links in and around Swindon and b) the following verbal reports from those Town Twinning Associations and Links present at the meeting:

Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association (SSTA)

Councillor Bennett and the Chair reported that a number of Swindon Borough Council Members had been involved in a Civic visit to Salzgitter from 23rd to 27th October 2015. He spoke about the programme of organised visits and discussions that took place with the Salzgitter Oberurgermeister (Mayor) about apprenticeship links with Swindon. The Network noted that the Mayor in Salzgitter had an executive role, similar to the role of the Mayor of London, which was very different to the ceremonial role undertaken by the Mayor in Swindon.

It was noted that the Salzgitter area had welcomed a number of refugees from Syria and that capacity to house them was available in the area.

The Chair informed the Network that the SSTA held its Annual General Meeting on 20th November 2015 and the Chair and Secretary of the Association had stood down. Nominations were received for the post of Treasurer but not for the Chair or Secretary's posts. This led to the conclusion that the Association was unable to proceed and after much discussion, including advice from the senior members,

unable to attend the meeting, a vote was taken to close down the SSTA.

The Chair read a letter that he had sent to Roger Gower, former Chair and Secretary of the SSTA, explaining his sadness about the decision made by the SSTA and questioned whether the decision could be considered further with a view that younger volunteers continue the work of the SSTA. It was noted that the Leader of the Council supported the possibility of the SSTA continuing to operate, and that discussions about this were ongoing.

Swindon Torum Link

Mark Sarnowski reported that an artist from Torun had been commissioned to design a memorial for Queens Park to commemorate the contribution of the Polish people through the years towards the development and culture of Swindon. Mark spoke about the funding issues and circulated a fundraising leaflet. He explained that the current figure raised was £1020 and that a book of dedication would be available for people to sign and also make a contribution towards the memorial. Members of the Network suggested other areas of funding that the Link could consider including the Royal Air Force Association.

The Chair suggested that the placing of the memorial in Queens Park could be linked with the 60th Anniversary celebrations marking the end of the WWII.

Swindon Ocotal Link (SOL)

Cristina Bennett reported that SOL had held a very successful fundraising event in December 2015 with all 50 tickets sold. Cristina explained that arrangements were being made for two visitors to come from Ocotal to Swindon in 2016, however this was dependant on the available finances. It was anticipated that SOL would be making an application for a Town twinning Grant to help with the funding of the visit.

Swindon Mauritius Friendship Link

Nazma Ramruttun reported that the former Mayor of Mauritius had visited Swindon on 12th October 2015 and met the Mayor of Swindon, the Chair of the Town Twinning Network and spoke at the Broadgreen Community meeting.

The Network noted that the current Mayor in Mauritius was very interested in developing links with Swindon, however there was a need consider further how links would be fostered.

Resolved - That the Activities of the Twinning Associations and Links be noted.