

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 5 JUNE 2013

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Small (Chair), Junab Ali, Abdul Amin and Mike Bawden; Roger and Vera Gower (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association), Mr Bruce Clarke (Swindon Ocotal Link), Derrick Gustafson (Highworth Twinning Association).

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Lane, John Mayell, Stephen Taylor, Nazma Ramruttun, Hasan Nur and Councillor Michael Bray.

17. 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.

18. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

19. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2013, be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Minute No. 16 – Application for a Town Twinning Grant.

Roger Gower confirmed that the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association had received a grant of £500 from the Council, although the original amount requested, and recommended for approval by the Town Twinning Network, had been £1000. It was agreed that Councillors Kevin Small and Mike Bawden would meet with the Director of Law and Democratic Services to discuss the process for approving Town Twinning grants and the role of the Network in that process.

20. Involvement of Schools and Young People in Twinning activities

Paddy Bradley, Head of Commissioning – Economy and Attainment, attended the meeting to discuss the involvement of schools and young people in Twinning activities. He explained that many schools develop links through their curriculum activities rather than through the more formal Civic Twinning links. He suggested that a task group be established to visit three Secondary and three Primary Schools in Swindon to find out more about their approach to twinning.

Roger Gower added that, during the recent visit to Swindon by a group from Salzgitter, a visit was arranged to Nova Hreod School where the students gave presentations in both English and in German. The visit had been very successful and the school were keen to repeat this in two years' time for the next visit by

Salzgitter to Swindon.

The Network agreed that a task group be established to visit Primary and Secondary Schools and that a series of questions be established prior to the visits to ensure there was a consistent approach to obtaining relevant information in order to develop a strategy for further engagement with young people with regards to twinning activities. The chair asked for any ideas on suitable questions or areas to be explored to be submitted to the clerk as soon as possible.

Members of the Network also discussed the need for a school link with Salzgitter and it was agreed that it would be worth liaising with the University Technical College when the management team were in place.

Resolved – (1) That the Town Twinning Network establish a task and finish group to visit three Secondary and three Primary schools in Swindon.

(2) That the Network receives a report from the task and finish group on its learning from the visits and its recommendation for the future development of the Network.

(3) That any ideas on suitable questions or areas to be explored with the schools be submitted to the clerk as soon as possible.

(4) That the management team at the University Technical College, when established, be contacted with regards to developing a link with Salzgitter.

21. 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:-

Highworth Twinning Association

Derrick Gustafson reported that the AGM had been held on 15th March and that all officers had been re-elected, including the Chair Richard Pearce. It was also agreed that the annual subscription would be raised from £5 to £10.

16 members had attended the Europe Day in Pontorson from 9th – 12th May and it was also the 45th anniversary of the Pontorson-Wassenberg link.

A fundraising Safari Lunch would be held on 30th June which was an opportunity for members to get together socially and a fundraising 'Jazz on the Lawn' would be held on 21st July, for which some of the proceeds would go to the Twinning Association. One of the members was also holding a coffee morning on 15th September in order to raise funds for the association.

Visitors from Wassenberg were due to visit Highworth on the weekend of 26th/27th October although no date had yet been arranged for a visit to Wassenberg which usually occurs every other year. There was also not date set for Pontorson to visit Highworth.

Swindon Ocotal Link (SOL)

Bruce Clarke reported that he had resigned as chair, along with four other committee members and that other volunteers had now taken over and the first meeting with the new executive would be held following this Network meeting.

Initial reports on the project established by the Emmanuel Church to work with women indicated that it was working very well and had been well received. The next trip to Ocotal would take place in 2014 and Bruce would be circulating information about this in the near future. The likely cost would be around £1500 for a three week visit.

Bruce added that a postcard had been developed of the mural painted at Lawn Academy last year and that he would let all members of the Network have a copy of the postcard when they were printed. SOL were also in the process of developing a link with a school in Ocotal and letters were being exchanged with the hope of moving onto Skype.

Bruce briefly highlighted the progress made with regards to his radio programme 'It's a wonderful world', including coverage of the recent Salzgitter visit. This had grown out of a conversation held at a Network meeting as to how to promote twinning and link activities.

Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association

Roger Gower briefly outlined the programme for the recent visit to Swindon by a group from Salzgitter, including:-

- Visit to Coate Water
- Meeting the Mayor at Lydiard House
- Welcome meal
- Visit to Cardiff
- Visit to Nova Hreod School
- Trip to the Wroughton bowls club, which was covered by the Swindon Evening Advertiser
- Farewell event at the Purton Club.

12 Germans and about 24 members/friends took part in the visit and the Germans were provided with copies of the Advertiser before they left to go home.

Roger would be putting a journal together of the visit, including photographs and would circulate this to members of the network. He added that he had had lengthy discussions about the two twinning associations and how they could develop in the future.

Chattanooga

Andy Lane had reported that he was still talking with Forward Swindon regarding a possible business delegation to Chattanooga and that he would be meeting with a UK Trade and Investment representative later this month.

Future meetings of the Town Twinning Network would be held on the following dates:-

25th September 2013 at 6pm

4th December 2013 at 6pm

2nd April 2014 at 6pm

23.

Any Other Business

The Chair advised that this would be the last meeting for the clerk, Alison Smith and members of the Network expressed their thanks for all her work and wished her well in her new job.