

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 2 APRIL 2014

PRESENT:- Hassan Nur (Salahley, Somaliland), Councillor Kevin Small, Councillor Junab Ali, Councillor Abdul Amin, Councillor Mike Bawden, Councillor Toby Elliott, Nazma Ramruttun (Swindon Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, Mauritius Link) and Mark Sarnowski (Swindon Torun Link)

Apologies for absence were received from Eileen Mochan, Roger Gower, Mr Bruce Clarke, Mike Ide, Andy Lane, John Mayell, Councillor Michael Bray and Derrick Gustafson

32. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Junab Ali declared a personal interest in Minute numbers 36 and 37 as he was a member of the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association.

33. Chairman's Announcements

1. The Chair reported that this meeting was Councillor Mike Bawden's last Town Twinning Network meeting as he was not seeking re-election at the Local Elections in May 2014. The Chairman wished him well for the future and thanked him for his valuable contribution to the Network and the Council.
2. The Chair reported that Andy Lane, Vice Chair and Chattanooga, USA link had decided to end the relationship link with Chattanooga and the Network. The Chair wished Andy all the best for the future and agreed to write a letter of thanks.

34. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

35. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2013 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to Nazma Ramruttun's name being added to the list of those giving apologies for absence.

36. Town Twinning Grants Applications - Cultural and Educational Activities

The Network considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services reviewing the criteria for consideration of Town Twinning grant applications along with the Council's definition of 'Cultural and Education Activities'.

The Director of Law and Democratic Services reported that the word 'culture' was subjective and could have many different meanings to different people depending on their viewpoint. The report highlighted the definition adopted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and suggested that this interpretation was one that this Council should use alongside the existing guidance and criteria for considering Town Twinning grant applications.

The Network were reminded that the basis for awarding grants was that they would strengthen links between Swindon and its twin towns and widen the horizons of the individuals and groups involved in twinning activities.

It was suggested that twinning activities needed to be taken more seriously within Swindon, especially as there were positive benefits for the economy, tourism, social and business community. A view supported by the Network.

The Chair proposed that a wider consultation be undertaken with those organisations connected with the Network and all 57 Councillors about the report, and in particular their opinion on the proposed definition of 'Cultural and Education Activities', prior to its adoption by the Network. It was also suggested that Cabinet be approached with a request for a 'one-off' budget of £10,000 to support Town Twinning activities over the next 3-5 years.

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet be asked to consider a 'one-off' budget of £10,000 to be administered by the Town Twinning Network to support Town Twinning Activities over the next 3-5 years.
2. That the Director of Law and Democratic Services be asked to undertake a consultation of the organisations connected to the Network along with the 57 Borough Councillors to canvass opinion on the definition of Cultural and Educational Activities contained in the report, prior to its adoption by the Network.

37. Swindon Salzgitter Twinning - 40th Anniversary Celebrations

The Network considered the report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services about arrangements to mark the 40th anniversary of the Swindon/Salzgitter Town Twinning during 2015.

The report highlighted the discussions held with various Heads of Service Areas within the Council and the possible options open to the Council to help with the celebrations, including appropriate displays at the Civic Offices and Central Library and Communications support and publicity of events.

The Network, along with Councillor David Renard, Leader of the Council, indicated their support to mark the 40th Anniversary celebrations. There was an expectation that there would be mutual visits to Swindon and Salzgitter during 2015 and recognition that appropriate resources would be necessary to support events. A number of ideas were suggested for the celebrations including:

- Participation of Schools – German themed events
- Promotion of events and activities through local papers and radio

- To ask the Salzgitter delegation visiting Swindon in 2014 to bring any materials that would help with displays at the Civic Offices and Central Library
- In promoting the economic links between the Towns, to ask Forward Swindon to identify German companies based in Swindon and encourage them to become involved in the celebrations for example BMW, Siemens, VW and MANN
- To seek the support and participation of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in the activities planned for 2015
- To 'tie-in' the visit from Salzgitter to Swindon with the Council's Annual Council and Civic Dinner for 2015

Resolved:

1. That the arrangements detailed in the report and highlighted above be supported
2. That the Cabinet be asked to approve a 'one-off' budget to support the 40th anniversary celebrations during 2015 of the Swindon/Salzgitter Town Twinning link

38. 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

Councillor Junab Ali reported on the recent events as detailed below, on behalf of Roger Gower who was unable to attend this meeting:

- Held 2 Social meetings both of which were well supported and enjoyed by those who attended
- Had 2 Business meetings. The January meeting was poorly attended but there was a good showing at the meeting in March. Enthusiastic discussion led to several decisions being made:
 - details of the visit to Salzgitter in June 2014 were completed
 - the Association would start setting up their own website
 - No change to when evening meetings were held
 - Visit by student of English from Salzgitter. Members of the Association would host her and has been the conduit for the Council to find her a volunteer posting for her 3-month stay in Swindon. Association members had agreed that they would take her on visits in and around Swindon and engage her in other events.
 - There were vigorous discussion about means of raising funds and enhancing visibility of the Association with the public. Work would go forward on the ideas suggested.
 - Planning had started on the events in the programme for the visit by Salzgitter in summer 2015. Vitally important to coordinate activities with the Council on celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the twinning between the two towns so that events were not duplicated.

Salahley, Somaliland

Hassan Nur reported that Salahley road construction project, which would connect Hargeisa to the largest district under the Marodijeh region in the south and of the most populated rural district in the Hawd of Hargeisa was progressing well.

Swindon Mauritius Friendship Twinning

Nazma Ramruttun reported that the former Mayor of Beau Bassin/Rose Hill, Mauritius, Ramalingum Maistry, who instigated the Friendship Twinning between the two towns in 2008 had visited Swindon in August last year and was very well received by the Mayor of Swindon. A reception was held for Ramalingum at Voluntary Action Swindon, where the Council's Chief Executive, Gavin Jones, and Leader of the Council, Councillor David Renard were also in attendance.

Swindon Torun Link

Mark Sarnowski spoke about a recent visit that took place to Torun. Members asked to receive advance notice of future visits to Torun so that they could consider attending.

39. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 18 June 2014 starting at 6:00pm.