

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 3 JUNE 2015

PRESENT:- Mark Sarnowski (Swindon Torun Link), Roger Gower (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association), Mike Ide (Wroughton - St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association), Cecilia Olley (Swindon Ocotal Link), Councillor Junab Ali, Councillor Michael Bray, Councillor Teresa Page, Councillor Kevin Small (Chair) and Councillor Oliver Donachie

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Bennett, Hassan Nur

9. Appointment of Chair

Resolved:

That Councillor Kevin Small be appointed Chair of the Town Twinning Network for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

10. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved:

That the appointment of a Vice-Chair of the Town twinning Network be deferred until the next meeting on 30th September 2015.

11. Declarations of Interest

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

Councillors Kevin Small and Junab Ali made personal declarations of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 9 in their capacity as members of the Salzgitter Twinning Association and therefore did not participate in the voting on the grant application from the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association.

12. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

13. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th April 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

14. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred in Agenda Item 9 on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public

interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned (Minute 17 refers.)

15. 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

Roger Gower reported on the following:

- The programme for the Salzgitter visit from 18th – 25th June 2015 was now finalised.
- Roger spoke at length about the proposed programme for the visit, in particular about the trip to Arkles Brewery, Nova Hreod School, the bench plaque in the Town Gardens and Lydiard House.
- A local radio station programme called 'What a Wonderful World' focussing on Salzgitter, had recently interviewed Roger and his wife, along with a member of the SSTA who was born in Salzgitter.
- A British film maker had recently recorded material in Swindon for a film that would measure the attitudes of the general public to Germany and the German people. It was understood that the film maker was delighted with the responses received from the general public.
- The SSTA web site was still attracting interest.

The Network noted that there were opportunities for the general public and members of the Network to become involved in a number of the Swindon Salzgitter 40th Anniversary celebrations. A copy of the SSTA programme would be circulated to the Network for information.

The Chair reported on a visit to Swindon from a motorbike group and a veteran football group from Salzgitter during the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May 2015.

Swindon Torum Link

Mark Sarnowski reported that an artist from Torun had been commissioned to design a memorial for Queens Park. The memorial would commemorate the contribution of the Polish people through the years towards the development and culture of Swindon. Mark spoke about the funding issues and explained that a book of dedication would be available for people to sign and also make a contribution towards the memorial.

The Network noted that an exhibition on Torun was also being considered for the future.

Swindon Ocotal Link (SOL)

Cecilia Olley reported on the following:

- Meetings were being held every two months
- Fundraising was continuing

- It was understood that the Nicaraguan government were planning to build a canal from one side of the country to the other side – a similar concept to the Panama Canal.

Wroughton – St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association

Mike Ide reported that the Association were currently meeting as a social group and that it was proving difficult to generate interest in twinning activities amongst the residents of Wroughton.

Mike explained that a football team representing Wroughton was unable to attend the exchange football match being held in St Germain les Corbeil during May 2015.

16. Swindon Salzgitter 40th Anniversary Celebrations

The Chair updated the Network on the work of the Swindon Salzgitter 40th Anniversary Working Group. He reported that the last meeting was on 30th March 2015 and that a further meeting was being arranged.

It was noted that Councillor Toby Elliott was no longer a member of the Network and subsequently no longer a member of the Working Group. Councillor Oliver Donachie expressed an interest in replacing Councillor Elliott in attending future Working Group meetings.

The Network noted that Town Twinning Associations and Links generally attracted the participation of older residents and consideration was given to how younger residents could be encouraged to appreciate and understand the benefits of Town Twinning and become more involved. It was suggested that social media could play a major part in heightening the awareness amongst young people, especially through the school system. It was also suggested that the wealth of information on Town Twinning held by the Associations and links should be documented for future generations.

Resolved:

1. That a further meeting of the Swindon Salzgitter 40th Anniversary Working Group be arranged.
2. That Councillor Donachie investigates the opportunity of using social media in Schools to help pupils engage with learning foreign languages and strengthening the links with Town Twinning.

17. Application for a Town Twinning Grant

The Town Twinning Network considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services about a grant request received from the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association.

Roger Gower, Chair of the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association explained that the application for a Town Twinning grant of £1000 was to assist with the costs of a cultural visit to Swindon by a group from Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft from 18th June to 26th June 2015 and briefly outlined the programme planned for the visit.

Roger confirmed that the total cost for the visit was £1720 and that the costs of

hosting and entertaining the guests from Salzgitter amounted to £603. Any deficit would be paid for by members of the Association and host families would pick up any costs relating to guests staying in their homes. He added that transport costs were included as this was a reciprocal arrangement with Salzgitter who always ensured that visitors from Swindon were transported to and from the airport.

The Network noted that a budget of £15,250 was available for Town Twinning Activities. However, £10,000 of that budget had been agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 22nd October 2014 to fund Council supported events to commemorate the 40th Anniversary since the formation of the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association.

It was suggested that a grant of £1,000 be supported and that £500 should come from the £10,000 Council contribution for the 40th Anniversary and the remaining £500 to come from the £5250 allocated specifically for Town Twinning Grants.

Resolved : That the Town Twinning Network recommends to the Director of Law and Democratic Services that a grant of £1000 be approved to assist with the costs of a cultural visit to Swindon by a group from Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft from 18th June until 26th June 2015 as suggested above.