

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2016

PRESENT:- Councillor Kevin Small, Councillor Junab Ali, Cristina Bennett (Swindon Ocotal Link), Cecilia Olley (Swindon Ocotal Link) and Councillor Caryl Sydney-Smith

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Sarnowski, Hassan Nur and Nazma Ramruttun

7. 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.

8. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

9. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 8th June 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

10. Reports from Town Twinning Associations and Links

The Network considered and noted a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services listing the Town Twinning Associations and Links in and around Swindon.

Verbal reports were given from the following Town Twinning Associations and Links present at the meeting:

Swindon Ocotal Link (SOL)

Cristina Bennett and Cecilia Olley reported on the events held during the recent cultural visit to Swindon by two guests from Ocotal, including a Civic Reception, held at the Civic Offices on the 6th May 2016, a night of dance at the Wyvern Theatre, a Spanish Evening held at the Arts Centre on the 9th May 2016, the launch of a cookbook 'A Taste of Nicaragua' and speaking with pupils at Lydiard Park Academy. The Network noted that all the events had been a great success. It was suggested that the cookbook could be sold at a number of outlets and the possibility of selling the book at the Central Library would be investigated. SOL felt that this was the most successful visit in its 25 year history.

The Network noted how the Link had developed over the last 25 years, with funds raised to help support a number of projects in Ocotal and how the quality of life has improved for those benefiting from the financial support. In particular the funds had been used to help provide food at a refuge for abused women and providing school transport, uniform and books for about 40 children.

In addition to the recent visit, SOL had recently held its Annual General Meeting,

where the main theme focused on the future of the Link and how this would be developed in the years to come. It was noted that a number of SOL representatives would be travelling to Ocotol during December 2016 and would report at a future meeting.

Swindon/Salzgitter Twinning (Civic Visit)

The Chair reported on the Civic Visit by the Mayor of Salzgitter and a delegation of 7 to Swindon between 6th October and 11th October 2016. He spoke in detail about the planned programme of events and how this was the first time that a number of the delegation had visited England.