

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT:- Councillor Kevin Small, Councillor Junab Ali, Nazma Ramruttun (Swindon Mauritius Friendship Twinning) and Mark Sarnowski (Swindon Torun Link)

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

There were no public questions.

9. Minutes

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2017, be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

10. Reports from Town Twinning Associations and Links

The Network received a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services inviting the representatives of the Town Twinning Associations and Links present at the meeting to provide updates on twinning activities undertaken since the last meeting.

Swindon Mauritius Friendship Twinning

Nazma Ramruttun, Swindon Mauritius Friendship Twinning, commented on her frustration at the lack of any significant progress in formalising either a twinning or friendship agreement between Swindon and Mauritius. She advised that during the course of her visit to Mauritius in October of last year, she had discussed the matter with her contact and that the preference would be for a full twinning arrangement. Ms Ramruttun also commented on the possibility that a visit to Mauritius might be arranged for next year.

The Chair advised that he had spoken to the Leader and that, at least at present, anything more than a friendship agreement seemed unlikely. He recognised that it might be ideal if the signing of an agreement could be endorsed as part of a civic visit and agreed to broach the subject with the Leader once again, to try and get a definitive position statement for the network at its next meeting.

On behalf of the Network, the Chair wished Ms Ramruttun well with her pending hospital stay and wished her a successful outcome.

Swindon Torun Link

Mr Sarnowski, representing the Swindon Torun Link, reported that he and several

other members of the Link had recently visited Torun to attend the “Polish Olympics” event held in the city. He advised that this was the 18th occasion this event, open to any Polish national not living in Poland, had been held since before the Second World War. Mr Sarnowski, commented on the success of the event and on the various innovative events staged in the city, during the time of the visit and throughout the year, to promote its cultural and sporting diversity as well as the importance it places on its international links.

In response to a query by Councillor Ali, Mr Sarnowski commented on the frequency of visits by the Link to Torun and the opportunity for delegates from the Council to be included in any future visits.

Swindon/Salzgitter Twinning

The Chair reported on the recent and very successful civic visit to Salzgitter, which had also included visits to Berlin and Hanover. He briefly commented on some of the highlights of the visit, including the opportunity to view a hydrogen driven train in development in Berlin and a pre-school facility in Salzgitter as well as the opportunity afforded to him to referee an Oberburgermeisters football match, which event had been reported upon in the local press.

In response to a question, the Chair briefly commented on the role of the Mayor of Salzgitter which, he advised, was an elected position, similar to the Mayor of London, and that the appointment was, currently, for a period of five years. He commented that Swindon had considered the possibility of introducing an elected Mayor some years ago but had determined not to pursue that option.

Resolved – That the Activities of the Twinning Associations and Links, as reported above, be noted.