

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 25 APRIL 2018

PRESENT:- Councillor Kevin Small (Chair), Councillor Mary Martin.

Cristina Bennett (Swindon Ocotal Link), Councillor Mary Martin (Shaw), Hassan Nur (Salahley, Somalialand), Cecilia Olley (Swindon Ocotal Link), Nazma Ramruttun (Swindon Mauritius Friendship Twinning) and Councillor Kevin Small

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Junab Ali and Councillor Derique Montaut

16. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded members of the Town Twinning Network to declare any known interests in any of the matters to be discussed.

No such declarations were made.

17. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

18. Minutes

Resolved- That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2017 be accepted as a correct record.

19. Derique Montaut

The Network noted that Derique Montaut was not standing as a Councillor in the forthcoming elections and wished to record its thanks to him for all his work on behalf on the Network.

20. 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 Ocotal Link Association

Christina Bennett advised that Swindon Ocotal Link Association (SOLA) was now meeting every ¼ year with the next meeting in June. She commented that since the Association had changed from a charity to a friendship interest in the Association had increased.

Ms Bennett referred to a mural currently being displayed in the languages area of

Lydiard Park Academy which SOLA intended to tour around various sites in Swindon

Cecilia Olley advised that the remaining SOL budget was going to be distributed as educational bursaries over the next three years by the Links contact within Ocotal.

Ms Olley referred to the International Day of Friendship to be held on the 30th July 2018, SOLA would like to bring together the friendship links in Bath and Bristol and their respective twinned cities.

Mrs Bennett explained that relationships with friends in Ocotal remained strong and the Link found that this had been enhanced by using WhatsApp to communicate between the groups.

Salahley Somalialand

Hassan Nur recounted his experiences during a recent visit to Salahley, which had recently suffered a severe drought.

Swindon Mauritius Friendship Twinning

Nazma Ramruttun queried whether the Council still wanted to continue establishing friendship links with different towns. She felt that the City of Sanctuary project might be a future model for twinning and friendship links.

Salzgitter

The Chair advised that there would be a formal visit from Salzgitter between the 20th - 25th July with an informal visit on the 27th May 2018.

The Director of Law and Democratic Services advised the Network that the Chair had recently been awarded a gold medal from Salzgitter for all the work he has undertaken on behalf of the friendship link.

The Network considered ways in which it could be modernised and also the future development of a statement about the role and benefits of a friendship link. Suggestions included linking to the Swindon City of Sanctuary and developing informal friendship links with the numerous communities in Swindon.

Resolved: (1) That the Council considers developing a friendship link with Mauritius.

(2) That the Senior Facilities Management Co-ordinator, liaise with members of the Swindon Ocotal Link Association to explore the possibility of exhibiting a mural by an artist from Ocotal on the Civic campus and at other buildings managed by the Council.

(3) That the Network, at its next meeting, consider a report concerning the future role of the Town Twinning Network, and whether the Council intends to continue to establish friendship links including the development of a statement about the role and benefits of a friendship link.

(4) That a special meeting be held on or around the 30th July 2018, to tie in with the International Day of Friendship and representatives from the Swindon City of Sanctuary be invited to give a presentation to explain how the organisation promote a culture of welcome, inclusion and support for everyone in Swindon.

(5) That the Network, at its next scheduled meeting on the 6th June 2018, consider a series of questions that can be put to representatives of the Swindon City of Sanctuary at the special meeting about its role in the community.

(6) That local cultural and community groups with an interest in developing friendship links with Swindon be invited to attend the special meeting and to give a brief 5-10 minute presentation concerning the work they undertake in Swindon.