

## **TOWN TWINNING NETWORK**

**WEDNESDAY, 3 APRIL 2019**

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Small (Chair) Junab Ali and Kevin Parry.

David Bell, Cristina Bennett (Swindon Ocotal Link), Hassan Nur (Salahley, Somalialand), (Swindon Ocotal Link) and Nazma Ramruttun (Swindon Mauritius Friendship Twinning)

Apologies for absence were received from Cecilia Olley and Ken Kimber.

### **14. 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.

### **15. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

### **16. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018, be accepted as a correct record.

### **17. Swindon City of Sanctuary Update**

The Forum was updated on work related to the City of Sanctuary Since the last meeting of the Network which included:

- The hosting scheme for people who were destitute or about to become destitute.
- A break-down of work with local companies and schools.
- Work to update the City of Sanctuary Website which included a “20 welcomes film”.
- The Opening Night at the No1 Coffee Shop in the town centre, held on every Thursday between 6:30pm and 8:30pm, which offered the opportunity to meet and interact with sanctuary seekers, volunteers and supporters.

Resolved – That the update be noted.

### **18. Town Twinning Future/Friendship Link Agreements**

The Forum received an update in respect of a request relating to the creation of friendship arrangements between Swindon and Madhyapur Thimi and anticipated work with their school and hospital and to create a friendship link to facilitate a group visit to Swindon as well as a group from Swindon visiting Madhyapur Thimi. The friendship group had held a charity event on 20<sup>th</sup> April to raise funds for the town and friendship group. The Worshipful The Mayor reported that he had met the Nepalese Ambassador and Nepalese community. The Network supported a friendship link whilst noting that this did not require any funding or officer support.

The Chair would write a letter to the Mayor of Madhyapur Thimi setting out the Forum's support for a friendship link and desire for closer links between the two communities.

The Forum also received an update in respect of the request for a friendship link with Mauritius and a visit by representatives of the local community to Mauritius in November and a forthcoming visit at the end of April. The Network supported a friendship link whilst noting that this did not require any funding or officer support. The Chair would write a letter to the Mayor of Mauritius setting out the Forum's support for a friendship link and desire for closer links between the two communities.

Resolved – The update and presentations by the Madhyapur Thimi and Mauritius Friendship Groups were noted.

## **19. Reports from Town Twinning Associations and Links**

The Network received a report of the Interim Director of Law 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.

Hassan Nur (Salahley, Somalialand) updated the Network on discussions with representatives in Salahley to formalise the friendship links between Salahley, Somalialand and Swindon.

The Network discussed the benefits of including a paragraph from each organisation within the paperwork for future meetings.

The Network noted with sadness the recent death of Rita Heyes, one of the founder members of the Swindon/Ocotol Link Association. The Network noted that there might be an opportunity to formally remember her via naming a street, building or allotment site in her memory in Covingham the area in which she lived. Details would be sent to the Clerk and, in consultation with the Parish Council and Ward Councillors, consideration would be given to an appropriate form of memorial. The Association had recently revised its charitable status to facilitate a change in the way it undertook its work.

The Chair updated the Network in respect of communications from Salzgitter following the news of the proposed closure of the Honda site in Swindon. The Mayor would lead a delegation to visit Salzgitter in May.