

# Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association

## Town Twinning Network

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> April 2017

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Author:	Director of Law and Democratic Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

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### 1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the difficulties experienced by the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association prior to its closure and the prospects of the Association being re-established at some point in the future.

### 2. Recommendations

The Network is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the difficulties experienced by the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association prior to its closure.
- 2.2 Consider any action it wishes to take to maintain the current Swindon Salzgitter link.

### 3. Detail

- 3.1 The Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association was established in 1975 with the aim of furthering and expanding the knowledge of culture, education, industrial and political interests between the twinned towns of Swindon and Salzgitter. The Association also facilitated exchange visits with members in Salzgitter each year, with visits alternating annually between the UK and Germany.
- 3.2 The Association regularly applied for and received grant funding to help with exchange visits. The most recent visit celebrated the Associations 40<sup>th</sup> twinning anniversary and was held in June 2015.
- 3.3 The Association regularly attended Network meetings, giving feedback on activities and events held in furtherance of its objectives (see 3.1 above). However, more recently, due to an aging membership, health issues and lack of finances, the UK members of the Association struggled to host and entertain their visitors from Salzgitter.
- 3.4 The Town Twinning Network was advised, at its meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015, that the then, Chair and Secretary (Roger Gower) had stood down at the Association's Annual General Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015, due to health reasons. Nominations were subsequently received for the post of Treasurer but not for the Chair or Secretary's posts. This lack of interest from the remaining members of the Association led to their conclusion that the UK side of the Association was unable to proceed and, following discussions, a vote was

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taken to close the Association in Swindon. The Association had an average of 12 members attending meetings regularly during its 40 years.

- 3.5 The Association was entirely made up of community volunteers who, like so many voluntary organisations, raised funds throughout the year to enable the Association to operate. The majority of members were seniors and The Association had been very aware that it needed to attract a younger membership if it was to remain viable. Unfortunately their attempts to do so proved to be unsuccessful.
- 3.6 The German side of the Association were also experiencing similar struggles with attracting new members. It was understood from Manfred Voss, Chair of the Association in Salzgitter that some of his members were also elderly and of, generally, poor health and therefore reduced numbers were interested in travelling to the UK over the years. They were also unable to host visitors from Swindon as in previous years.
- 3.7 In view of the issues referred to above, it is felt that, in order to re-establish the Association in the future, there would need to be an increased willingness of either former members or new community volunteers to commit time, energy and finances to re-engage and re-create links within the local community and also with the Association in Salzgitter. At this stage, there does not appear to be any obvious enthusiasm from former members to undertake this role.
- 3.8 The Town Twinning Network, is therefore asked whether it wishes to take any steps, with a view to the assistance and continuation of the Swindon Salzgitter link outside the current Civic links.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 To not take any action.

## 5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 This report has no financial or procurement implications.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been fully taken into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with convention rights

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All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

5.3 None

Diversity Impact Assessment

5.4 No Diversity Impact Assessment is required.

Risk Management

5.5 No risk management issues have been identified at this stage.

## **6. Consultees**

6.1 The Section 151 Officer and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

## **7. Background Papers**

7.1 The Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee.

## **8. Appendices**

8.1 None.