

## **TOWN TWINNING NETWORK**

**MONDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2006**

PRESENT:- Councillors Doreen Dart (Chair), Deborah Baylies, David Glaholm, Derique Montaut, Stan Pajak and Chris Van Roon, Mr Reg Clarke and Peter Mallinson (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association), Mr Bruce Clarke and John Mayell (Swindon Ocotal Link), Mr Phil Eagle (La Garenne Link), Mike Ide (Wroughton - St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association) Peter Sonley (Lechlade Twinning Association) and Dr D Worsnip (Highworth - Pontorson Twinning Association)

Apologies for absence were received from Michael Colley.

### **15. Minutes**

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2006, be confirmed as a correct record.

### **16. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

#### Minute 6

The Chair reported that the decision concerning the potential link with Chattanooga was currently with the Lead Member and that this would be processed as quickly as possible.

#### Minute 10

A letter had been sent from the Chair of the Town Twinning Network to the Leader of the Council requesting Officer support for Town Twinning. The Chair advised the Network that there was no further information at this stage although she was aware that the post had recently been advertised.

### **17. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received during the meeting.

### **18. Reports from the Town Twinning Associations and Links**

The Network considered (a) a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services and (b) the following verbal reports from Town Twinning Associations and Links:

#### Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association

Reg Clarke reported on a number of meetings that had taken place with regard to the future policy and involvement of both Councils in twinning arrangements:

- A meeting with Gavin Jones and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Bawden.
- A meeting with Ms B Dickson of the Art Gallery to discuss the possibility of art

exhibitions between Swindon and Salzgitter.

- A meeting with Peter Robinson, Swindon Borough Council, to discuss youth exchanges with both secondary and primary schools.

Reg added that there would be further meetings arranged which would involve all twinning groups and he emphasised that none of this work would undermine the activities of the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association.

Peter Mallinson added that a trip had been organised from 27<sup>th</sup> May until 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2006 for 22 people to visit Salzgitter. Peter reported that he had spent a great deal of time in applying for an EU grant but that this had been turned down because he had not applied for enough money. The application had been for 9K euros and the minimum limit was 10K euros although this had not been made clear in the original paperwork. He had also had to wait for almost four months before a response to the application had been received. Dr Worsnip added that he had also applied for an EU grant but that this lower limit had not been in existence at the time. However, he had been aware of the outcome of the application about six weeks before the announcements were due as they had been published on the web site.

Councillor Glaholm felt that it was unreasonable for a lower limit to be set for these grants, especially as this was public money, and he asked that a letter be sent from the Chair of the Network to the MEP, Caroline Jackson, expressing these concerns.

#### Swindon Ocotal Link

Bruce Clarke gave an interesting presentation on the last visit to Ocotal which had taken place during November 2005. Members of the Network asked Bruce how this trip had been publicised. Bruce responded that there had been some publicity via the Swindon Evening Advertiser and the Link Magazine and that he would be more than happy to attend any of the groups twinning meetings to present the slide show.

There would be a fairtrade event on 17<sup>th</sup> March in conjunction with Swindon Borough Council who were to become a fairtrade authority. SOL would be hosting and bringing over a speaker and translator for this event.

A 15 year celebration of the link would take place in July of this year and SOL would be seeking financial support from the Network funds to bring over 4 people, including the Mayor, and 3 dancers from Ocotal to Swindon.

SOL was also working with the youth service on youth exchanges.

#### Swindon Torun Link

Councillor Pajak circulated information on the following activities of the Torun Link:

- A photo had been taken of the current Mayor, Councillor Ray Fisher and three past Mayors at the sign for Torun Way which is situated off Thamesdown Drive and leads to an area with Polish themed road names. The photo would be sent to the President of Torun.
- Hoping to create links between schools in Swindon and Torun, English being the foreign language taught in most Polish schools.
- A commercial organisation had been organising a weekend trip to Torun from the 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> March. For further details, contact Chris Bulzacki on 07879 637159.

#### La Garenne Link

Phil Eagle informed the network that this link had almost ceased to exist and that the last visit had taken place almost 12 months ago. The Chair informed Phil that he was more than welcome to continue to attend the Network meetings and that he may wish to consider the possibility of twinning with a suburb of a similar sized area to Haydon Wick in a current twin such as Salzgitter. Phil reported that he would take this idea back to the Parish Council.

#### Highworth-Pontorson Twinning Association

Dr Worsnip updated members of the network on the following activities:

- The visit to Wassenberg had been brought forward to 29<sup>th</sup> April
- Highworth market 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations – there will be about 10 people coming over from Pontorson to join in the celebrations and a grant application had been submitted to assist with the costs of the visit.
- Dr Worsnip circulated some photographs from the visit to Pontorson that took place in October 2005 and which included floral displays in the Pontorson Church.

#### Wroughton-St Germaine les Corbeil Twinning Association

Mike Ide reported that he had submitted a grant application to assist with the costs of a trip to St Germain-les-Corbeil from 28 April until 1 May 2006. This would be their first visit for about four years. Mike also asked what was happening with the accounts and constitutions that some of the groups had provided in the past. Bruce Clarke responded that he had been collating all this information and that he would circulate the form to those groups who had not yet provided this information.

#### Lechlade Twinning Association

Peter Sonley from the Lechlade Twinning Association attended this network meeting but had nothing to add from the previous report given at the network meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

Resolved – (1) That members of the Town Twinning Network note the activities of the Twinning Associations and Links.

(2) That a letter be sent to Caroline Jackson, MEP, expressing the concerns of the network in the setting of a minimum grant to be applied for in respect of EU grants.

(3) That the form requesting information on each of the group's constitutions and accounts be sent out to all groups with these minutes.

### **19. Any other business**

#### Insurance

Bruce Clarke informed the network that Gillian Morris had been investigating the possibility of group insurance for the voluntary sector and that he would ask her for a progress report and feed this back at the next meeting of the network.

#### Town Twinning grant applications

A number of grant applications had been received recently and it was agreed to hold an additional meeting to consider these applications. This meeting would be held on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April at 6pm. The Chair briefly outlined the process in determining grants and emphasised that all grants were considered on an equitable basis and that recommendations for approving grants could only be made by the elected Members who sit on the Town Twinning Network. It was also agreed that a note outlining the current grants budget situation be sent out with the minutes of this meeting.