

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2009

PRESENT:- Councillors Doreen Dart, Ray Fisher and Stan Pajak; Mr Bruce Clarke and John Mayell (Swindon Ocotal Link), Mike Ide (Wroughton - St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association), Andy Lane (Chattanooga, USA), Derrick Gustafson (Highworth-Pontorson Twinning Association), David Martin (Geminid), Nigel Henham (Swindon Chamber of Commerce), Peter Hall (Haydon Wick Parish Council) and Haasan Nur (Potential link with Somaliland).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Mallinson, Eric Shaw and Kevin Small; John Hamilton, Paul Howlett and Mark Sarnowski.

1. Appointment of Chair

Resolved – That Councillor Doreen Dart be Chair of the Town Twinning Network until December 2010.

(Councillor Dart took the Chair)

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved – That Andy Lane be Vice-Chair of the Town Twinning Network until December 2010.

3. 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.

4. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

5. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 30th September 2009, be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Minute 26 (Application for a Town Twinning Grant – Torun and Swindon Twinning Enterprise) – the clerk to the Network confirmed that the grants team were satisfied with the accounts provided by TASTE and that their grant application was currently being circulated for approval. With regards to the original criteria set when the twinning grants budget was established, it was agreed that the Chair and the clerk would meet with the Director of Law and Democratic Services and that a report would be presented at the next Town Twinning Network meeting outlining the current budget provision and criteria for Town Twinning grants.

6. Reports from the Town Twinning Associations and Links

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

Potential Link with Mauritius

The Chair read out a letter that she had received from the Mayor of Mauritius offering thanks for the hospitality that he received during his recent visit to Swindon. Nazma Ramruttun was currently visiting Mauritius and would take best wishes from the people of Swindon back to the Mayor of Mauritius.

Potential Link with Somaliland

Haasan Nur attended the meeting to talk about a potential link between Swindon and Somaliland, particularly as there were a large number of people living in Swindon who were from Somaliland, in particular from Salahley. He had met with the Mayor from Salahley who had expressed an interest in developing a link with Swindon and they had already collected £15K to help build a school there. The group were also keen to build a clinic there and were already raising money for this initiative. Haasan would be meeting with the Mayor again in April and felt that it would be useful to have an exchange of letters of friendship between the two towns. It was agreed that Haasan would bring some further information to the next meeting of the Town Twinning Network in March 2010.

Haydon Wick Parish Council

Peter Hall attended this meeting as Haydon Wick Parish Council were keen to develop a link with a sub-region of Salzgitter. David Martin agreed to attend a future meeting of the Parish Council's communications committee to discuss this in further detail.

Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association

Councillor Dart reported that the next visit to Salzgitter would take place in mid May 2010.

Swindon Ocotal Link

Bruce Clarke confirmed that five people had visited Ocotal to celebrate 200 years Ocotal as a city and that there had also been a representative from Salzgitter there. Dorothy Clarke had successfully introduced Bollywood dancing and the costumes and make-up had been left in Ocotal to be used at other events. There were also talks regarding a project between the rotary clubs in Swindon and Ocotal.

A conference had been held recently in Bristol regarding links with Nicaragua which had been well attended and proved that there were some very successful links being developed.

Bruce added that they would be celebrating 20 years of twinning next year and that they were looking to bring some dancers to Swindon in June/July 2010.

Torun and Swindon Twinning Enterprise (TASTE)

Six visitors from Torun visited Swindon to take part in the half marathon which was won by Krzyst Bartkiewicz in 1 hour 11 minutes. The long weekend was a great success and they visited a number of places in and around Swindon. It was hoped that a team from Swindon would visit Torun for their annual running event in June 2010.

An exhibition of photographs taken in Torun is being organised at the Central library in Swindon for which a Town Twinning grant had been granted.

Preparations were currently underway for a Torun long weekend in 2010.

Wroughton – St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association

Mike Ide reported that the committee had been re-elected at their AGM on 3rd November and that they would be meeting on 3rd December to plan next year's events. They also have an informal agreement with some of the villages to the West of Swindon and would be attending a party at Lydiard Millicent in January.

Highworth-Pontorson Twinning Association

Derrick Gustafson reported that their annual quiz had been attended by 64 people and had raised £180. 39 visitors from Pontorson were expected this weekend and activities will include a concert by the Choral Society and a dinner at St Michael's Hall on the Sunday night. It would be the 20th anniversary of Twinning with Pontorson next year.

Derrick explained that the Association were on the verge of splitting into two organisations, one of Pontorson and one for Wassenberg and that there may be two representatives attending the Town Twinning Network meetings in the future.

Chattanooga Friendship Agreement

Andy Lane explained that he was about to sign a license for trading between America and Europe and that he hoped that this would spark other activities.

Geminid

David Martin circulated information following a meeting held in Salzgitter to consider the best approach to obtaining EU funding as some funds require more than three participating countries. It was planned to hold an International Youth Festival in Salzgitter next year and this event already had the agreement and support of Swindon Youth Service. Further information regarding the various EU programmes was outlined in this paper (a copy of which is attached to these minutes). David would be visiting Salzgitter in January 2010 in order to take these initiatives forward and he would contact members of the Town Twinning Network prior to his visit to invite any comments or ideas to contribute to this International activity.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Town Twinning Network will be held on Wednesday 3rd March 2010 at 6pm.

