

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 3 MARCH 2010

PRESENT:- Councillors Doreen Dart (Chair), Raymond Fisher, Stan Pajak and Kevin Small; John Hamilton (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association), 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), Nazma Ramruttun (Potential link with Beau Bassin, Mauritius), Hassan Nur and Eddie Thomas (Potential link with Salahley, Somaliland) and Tom Wilkes (Nova Hreod School).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Mallinson and Eric Shaw; Nigel Henham.

8. 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.

9. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

10. Minutes

Resolved – That, subject to the inclusion of Nazma Ramruttun's name in the apologies list, the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

11. Update on Town Twinning Grants

The Network received a report outlining the level of funds currently available for Town Twinning grants and information as to how these funds were established, as requested at the last meeting of the Network.

The fund was established in 2001 as a result of the surplus from the Civic Twinning budget being put into a separate reserve account to be used for small grants to support Town Twinning activities, as agreed by the Cabinet. However, due to budget pressures, the Civic Twinning budget had been reduced in 2006/07 and there was therefore little or no surplus being added to the reserve fund, which currently stands at £4250. The Council does not allocate any monies to this fund, therefore the reserve would decline with every Town Twinning grant awarded or any overspend on the cost of official Civic Twinning activities.

Some discussion took place regarding the way forward for promoting Town

Twinning activities and future possible sources of funding, external to the Council. It was agreed that Bruce Clarke, David Martin and Andy Lane would meet to discuss these issues and would bring a report to the next meeting of the Network outlining options available, including the possibility of the Network becoming a voluntary sector organisation, therefore in a better position to apply for external funding.

Resolved – (1) That members of the Network note the contents of the report.
(2) That Bruce Clarke, David Martin and Andy Lane bring a report to the next meeting outlining the options available to the Network on the way forward for the Town Twinning Network in order to promote Twinning activities effectively and to be able to access external sources of funding.

12. 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:

Torun and Swindon Twinning Enterprise

Councillor Stan Pajak reported that a trip had been organised from 5th – 9th June. The cost was £110 plus the cost of the flight from Bristol. The trip coincided with the Torun marathan and with Children's Day and the press would also be participating in the trip.

Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association

John Hamilton reported that the bi-annual visit to Salzgitter would take place from 2 – 9th June to celebrate the 35th anniversary. There would also be a social and business meeting held on 11th March.

Swindon Ocotal Link

Bruce Clarke reported that their fundraising target this year was to raise an additional £2500 so it would be a busy year in terms of fundraising. A quiz night would be held on 26th March at a cost of £8 per person at Even Community Centre. Work was ongoing with the Rotary Club in Swindon on a project yet to be identified in Ocotal. Three visitors from Ocotal, including 2 dancers and the President of the Rotary Club would be visiting Swindon from 17th July until 1st August. 30 young people in Ocotal were being supported through bursaries.

Wroughton – St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association

Mike Ide explained that there would not be an exchange this year but that the social programme continued with events being held in January and February. The March event involves linking up with some of the villages in West Swindon (this was due in January but was delayed due to the weather). Mike added that he was pursuing quotes for public liability and would report back to the next meeting on this.

Highworth – Pontorson Twinning Association

Derrick Gustafson reported that the last visit from Pontorson had been very successful. He added that the Committee had decided to carry on without splitting into two groups and that the AGM would be held on 26th March. Derrick would not stand for re-election at the AGM but would continue as a representative on the Network. A trip had been organised to Wassenberg from 13th – 16th May and visitors from Pontorson would be coming to Highworth from 21st – 24th May to celebrate the 21st anniversary.

Chattanooga Friendship Agreement

Andy Lane reported that progress was now being made with a Swindon school keen to exchange with a school in Chattanooga and that there was a development on the business side with two companies being established.

Potential link with Beau Bassin/Rose Hill in Mauritius

Nazma Ramruttun reported that she had visited in November and had met the new Mayor who was still very keen to develop a friendship agreement with Swindon. Churchfields School had already signed a friendship contract with Belle Rose State Secondary School. The school had been presented with a flag of Mauritius which they were going to put on their flag pole. There was also a smaller flag that could go in the Members Room.

Nova Hreod School

Tom Wilkes explained that he was the community co-ordinator at the School and that he had been exploring links with schools in Cape Town. A reciprocal visit grant had been applied for and a couple of visits had taken place and some items sent over including sweatshirts and text books. The bid was based upon District 6 and an archive was being developed that could be a resource used by all schools. Work was also being developed with the District 6 Museum and funding was being sought around exchanges for Museum staff.

Potential link with Salale in Somaliland

Haasan Nur and Eddie Thomas explained that a Friendship Agreement with Swindon Borough Council would enable them to make external funding proposals as funding was essential for them to develop projects in Somaliland. Councillor Dart read out an email that she had received from Ahmed Diriye outlining the support from the Mayor of Salale City in Somaliland to develop a friendship agreement with Swindon. Recognition by the Council was important for the group to be able to undertake fundraising.

Geminid

David Martin circulated information and outlined the following activities of the Geminid Organisation:

- International Festivals
- Youth Exchange programme
- Summer Adventure Camp – Pencelli
- Comenius School Exchanges
- Comenius Regio Partnership

- Training Bridge
- EU Culture Programme
- Exchange Programme
- Funding

Disneyland

The Network considered an update from Bill Cotton (Director Economic and Cultural Development) on the friendship link with Disneyland Florida, initiated by a local resident winning a national competition. There was some concern expressed that the Network had not had any input into this link but members acknowledged that it had created a lot of interest for Swindon. The friendship link would last for one year and Disneyland had paid for the Mayor of Swindon to visit Disneyland recently. It was agreed that Bill Cotton should be invited to a future meeting for an update on this link and to discuss with him what Disneyland could do for Swindon.

Resolved – That the Network note the activities of the Town Twinning Associations and Links in and around Swindon.

13. Any Other Business

The Clerk to the Network reported that the Information Centre in Swindon had requested some information about the Twinning Associations and Links in Swindon. Members of the Network agreed to pass on any relevant information or leaflets to the Information Centre.