

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 1 JUNE 2011

PRESENT:- Councillors Doreen Dart (Chair) and Brian Mattock; Roger Gower (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association), Mr Bruce Clarke (Swindon Ocotal Link) and Stephen Taylor (Director of Law and Democratic Services).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Raymond Fisher, Stan Pajak, Eric Shaw and Kevin Small; Derrick Gustafson, Mike Ide, Andy Lane, John Mayell, Tom Wilkes, Nazma Ramruttun, Hassan Nur and Superintendent Bonne.

15. 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.

16. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

17. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2011, be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

The Director of Law and Democratic Services confirmed that he had approved the grant of £1000 for the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association.

18. Reports from 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 reports from the Town Twinning Associations and Links:-

Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association

Roger Gower confirmed that the grant of £1000 for the Salzgitter visit had been received and he thanked all those involved for their support in securing this grant. He would provide a report and photographs for the next Town Twinning Network meeting.

Arrangements for the visit were now being finalised and events booked where appropriate. Eight people would be visiting Swindon from Salzgitter. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to arrange a formal visit to the Houses of Parliament but Swindon MP's researchers had agreed to take some of the German guests around and hopefully, Justin Tomlinson would be able to take 4 – 6 of the English people around.

Bruce Clarke would interview members of the German and English twinned after the reception in the Mayor's office on 16th June for an item on the Community Services radio.

Following a query at the last meeting, Roger confirmed that there were no insurance restrictions for non-members wishing to join events. The Association had third party liability insurance but anyone travelling to German would be expected to arrange their own travel insurance. However, one of the principles of the Association was that by visiting Salzgitter, Swindonians were agreeing to host visitors from Salzgitter in their homes so non-members could normally only travel with the Association in exceptional circumstances. Spaces were still available for the trip to London at a cost of £10 per person and for the Farewell Meal at a cost of £5 per person.

Roger added that there had been recent announcements that the Government, through the British Council, was encouraging British schools to form twinning links with foreign schools.

Private visit by the Mayor of Salzgitter and the veteran's football team

Councillor Kevin Small submitted the following information as he was unable to attend the meeting:-

The Mayor of Salzgitter was in Swindon on a private visit from 2nd to 5th June along with a veteran's football team to take part in a veteran's match on Saturday. The Mayor would officially attend the Lyneham Freedom of the Borough parade on Friday. The group would also visit Swindon greyhound stadium, followed by a meal in a town centre venue.

Saturday, they would visit STEAM in the morning, then play Shrivenham Vets in the afternoon (venue to be confirmed) followed by a meal at the Toby Carvery at Abbey Meads and then a skittles match at Even Swindon Club starting at 8.30pm.

On Sunday, they leave early for a visit to Windsor Castle on their way back to Gatwick Airport.

Swindon Ocotal Link (SOL)

Bruce Clarke reported that one of the aims of SOL was to raise £5K each year and that a duck race had been arranged in Castle Eaton as part of the fund raising activities.

A positive meeting had been held with King William School and work was now ongoing on "a day in the life of" which would be replicated by a school in Ocotal. SOL would be providing help to the children to translate their submissions into Spanish.

Two members were preparing for a visit to Ocotal at the beginning of 2012. The young person who had worked as a volunteer in Ocotal had now joined SOL and was taking an active part in the organisation.

Bruce had received an email from the Youth officer in Salzgitter wishing to re-establish links with Swindon and he agreed to send this on to Sara Tough who is

the Council's Director Integrated Children and Young People's Services.

It's a wonderful world is a radio programme that goes out every Monday at 11am (105.5) and covers all the links that exist within Swindon. The Chair of the Network agreed to a live interview on the 21st June.

SOL were currently working on re-defining their objectives and were casting themselves as a charitable organisation involved in twinning.

Highworth Twinning Association

Derrick Gustafson had submitted the following report as he was unable to attend the meeting:-

"I will be on my way to our twin town Pontorson where we will share the weekend with our German twinning friends from Wassenberg.

There will only be about 20 of us going this time (in addition to 59 from Wassenberg).

The content of the report I made at the last meeting is largely unchanged, except that Pontorson decided not to visit us this year. I think they are struggling a bit for numbers, and there is talk from them of changing to an every other year visiting routine, which does seem to be the standard.

Most of our efforts lately have concerned planning for the Wassenberg visit at the end of October and the official ratification of our twinning charter with them."

Chattanooga

The Chair confirmed that there had been very little progress due to the economic situation.

Nova Hreod School

Tom Wilkes submitted the following information as he was unable to attend the meeting:-

Link with South Africa

Nova Hreod had two teachers over from Harold Cressy High School from May 8th to 14th. The visit was very successful. In addition to our work in school our visitors also:

- Appeared on Bruce's radio show (Excellent move for all visitors to the town!)
- Visited Swindon Academy, New College and met with Eddie Sims from Ridgeway School.
- Met with Alan Greer and had a conducted tour of STEAM.

We also took them to Windsor Castle, Avebury and Bath.

We are planning a joint science project for 2012-13 and have placed a bid to the British Council, however we are expecting them to cut funding for curriculum

projects (result of review expected any day now – see reference to this in item 2 below)

Message from the Wiltshire Global Education Centre for a Swindon Schools link with Bangladesh

Dear schools

Most of you will know us as specialists in the field of linking schools with the Gambia in West Africa but we have been asked by the British Council to set up and co-ordinate a new cluster link with Gopalganj in **Bangladesh** and we are delighted to do so.

We are still waiting for the details to come through but the time span is short and we will need to move quickly to meet funding application deadlines.

We will be looking to recruit 10 schools in Swindon and Wilts (for logistical reasons, we will be giving priority to schools in North Wilts but depending on numbers may be able to be flexible), primary and secondary. This is a great opportunity to get involved in a new Local Authority cluster - the funding for reciprocal visits etc will be guaranteed by the British Council. In fact as we understand it at the moment, it is the only funding for Global Schools Partnerships which is likely to continue.

If you think your school might be interested, please drop me a quick email as soon as possible

Caroline Harmer
Wiltshire Global Education Centre
The Upper Office
The Dutch Barn
Elm Tree Park
Manton
SN8 1PS
Tel office: 01672 861116
Home: 01594 562236

It would be useful to keep in touch with Caroline to see how this project progresses

Schools and the Town Twinning Network

I am sorry to inform the group that my Community Co-ordinator post at Nova is disappearing from August 31st, so I do not know if I will have any formal role with our Global Link work in the future.

I have been part of the Committee for 15 months and have only managed to attend one meeting however I believe that there is real value in having a 'schools' dimension to the Town Twinning Network. There are probably 20 schools in Swindon with links to Africa and other parts of the world, some of them enjoying regular exchanges of staff and students. I think it would be encouraging for all (the committee, the Council officers, business leaders) to see the extent of these networks and to be supportive of them. It will be especially important if the link with

Bangladesh (see above) comes to fruition. I think that the Town Twinning Network is probably the only forum through which this can be achieved but I am not sure that schools are aware of the work the committee does or of the opportunities that it might present. There is much potential for a *civic* dimension to their Global work and school links often miss out on that very important aspect. In most cases it does not *cost* anything, all people need to know is who to contact and what opportunities might be available.

I propose that an e-mail is sent to all Swindon schools - Primary and Secondary, explaining that the Town Twinning Network exists, giving them the Terms of Reference and asking schools to reply with information about their own Global link work. I then suggest that this information is distributed with the next minutes.

I would be happy to help with this process during the time that I am still in post.

The Network agreed that the clerk should contact Sara Tough, Director Integrated Children and Young People's Services about the best way forward in linking in with the schools with the aim of encouraging schools to become more involved in the work of the Network.

19.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Town Twinning Network would be held on Wednesday 21st September at 6pm.