

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2011

PRESENT:- Councillors Doreen Dart (Chair), Raymond Fisher, Stan Pajak and Kevin Small; Roger Gower (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association), Mr Bruce Clarke (Swindon Ocotal Link), Councillor Doreen Dart, Councillor Raymond Fisher, Andy Lane (Chattanooga, USA), Councillor Stan Pajak and Councillor Kevin Small

Apologies for absence were received from Derrick Gustafson, John Mayell and Councillor Eric Shaw.

20. 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.

21. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

22. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2011, be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Councillor Kevin Small reported that the private visit by the Mayor of Salzgitter and the veteran's football team from 2 - 5 June had been very successful.

23. Schools and Twinning

Mr Paddy Bradley (Director, Schools and Learning) attended the meeting to discuss how the Town Twinning Network could work more effectively with local schools to encourage twinning activities and how these schools could become more involved in the work of the Network. He explained that one of the challenges was around the increasing autonomy of schools and that many schools were in the process of, or had already become, Academies. Some schools had already developed links independently and the Network had obtained some information in the past about which countries these schools were linked with, although not all schools had responded to the questionnaire sent to them. School budgets were also getting tighter and some schools were cutting back on twinning activities, especially as a result of hostile comments from parents and the public about staff going abroad. However, there may be more scope for schools to develop links as a result of the introduction of English Baccalaureate into the curriculum.

Mr Bradley stated that it might be useful to undertake some further work around which schools had links currently and what activities they were involved in and whether there were opportunities to set up such initiatives as a facebook page for twinning. Bruce Clarke added that his radio show might be of interest to schools and that it might be useful to invite Shirley Ludford to join the Network in order that

she could help schools and young people to become more involved in twinning activities. There could also be an opportunity to involve Create Studios so that young people could make videos regarding their twinning links and that this would benefit them in terms of public speaking and with confidence building.

There was also a Youth Forum and Mr Bradley agreed to speak to them to see if they would be interested in becoming involved in the Network. Mr Bradley also circulated an article from the Swindon Evening Advertiser regarding Seven Fields Primary School who had recently won the British Council's International School Award, a badge of honour for schools which do outstanding work in international education.

Resolved – (1) That the following actions be undertaken:-

- a) Mr Bradley would contact schools in order to update information regarding their current twins and links.
- b) Mr Bradley would explore the possibility of schools/young people being able to make videos regarding twinning with Create Studios.
- c) Mr Bradley would speak to the Youth Forum about how they could become involved in twinning activities in a meaningful way.
- d) Bruce Clarke invited Shirley Ludford to be a member of the Town Twinning Network.

(2) That Mr Paddy Bradley be thanked for attending the meeting.

24. 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 reported that the visit by Salzgitter to Swindon from 15 – 22 June 2011 had been very successful and activities had included:-

- Mayor's reception
- Welcome evening
- Visit to Wadworth Brewery
- Visit to Houses of Parliament and London
- Farewell meal
- Number of informal visits, including the Outlet Centre, Cotswold Water Park, Aldbourne, Avebury and Didcot Railway Museum.

He added that three new members had joined the Association, including Councillor Kevin Small and that a leaflet was currently being produced to provide more information to potential new members about the aims and objectives of the Association.

Councillor Kevin Small congratulated Roger as this was the first trip that he had organised for the Salzgitter Twinning Association and it had been very successful.

Councillor Kevin Small also reported that an official visit by the Mayor of Saltzgitter to Swindon, his wife and their two children, had taken place from 6 – 10 August 2011. Activities had included:-

- Trip to Windsor
- Curry and skittles evening at Even Swindon Club

- Trip to Bourton on the Water
- Charity night at the Hilton Hotel
- Visit to Welsh mines via Raglan Castle, Plas Pencelli Outdoor Recreation Centre and Brecon Railway
- Fish and Chip evening and DVD of the Freedom Parade
- Visit to Arkells, Kingsdown School, STEAM and the Outlet Centre
- Farewell evening
- Trip to Westminster and then to Stansted for return flight.

Councillor Small added that about 12 people from Even Swindon Club would be visiting Salzgitter from 1 – 5 December 2011 and that he was currently talking to officers about arranging for the exchange of referees to take place following the Olympic Games.

Swindon Ocotal Link (SOL)

Bruce Clarke circulated copies of the Annual Chairman's Report from July 2010 to September 2011 that outlined the range of activities undertaken by SOL during this period. He advised that SOL were currently about £8/900 down on their fundraising target for this year although they did meet the targets contained within the service level agreement they have with the Council. They had chosen not to invite anyone over from Ocotal this year but were making progress on developing links between King William School in Swindon and a junior school in Ocotal. SOL were in the process of redefining their objectives and were also keen to establish links with Torun and Salzgitter.

Swindon Torun Link

Councillor Stan Pajak reported that the group were trying something different that involved a business trip to Torun to try and develop business links between Swindon and Torun. This was currently in the planning stages but the theme for the trip would be around green energy solutions and the trip would be for three days at a cost of around £250 per person.

Highworth Twinning Association

As he was unable to attend the meeting, Derrick Gustafson submitted the following information regarding the Highworth Twinning Association:

- A very successful visit to Pontorson had taken place from 2 – 5 June 2011 to celebrate the annual European Day celebrations on June 3rd.
- A successful Safari Lunch was held on August 14th attended by 45 people, raising £417.
- A delegation from Wassenberg will be visiting Highworth from 28 - 31 October this year to ratify the Charter. The Wassenberg party, including Burgermeister Manfred Winckens will arrive on 28 October. Mayor Patrick Larivierre of Pontorson will also attend. The Highworth Silver Band will play on the podium from 10.15 and at 10.45 there will be the official ceremony at St Michaels Church. The Choral Society will also perform. Other activities include an evening tour of Highworth hostelrys, a visit to Oxford and an evening dinner at Wrag Barn.
- A Twinning Montage was currently being produced to celebrate the twinning

between Highworth and Wassenberg – the final picture would be displayed in St Michaels Church during the October visit.

- A new website was up and running – www.highworthtwinning.org.uk.
- Quiz night booked for October 21st at the Scouts Hall, starting at 7.30pm.
- Pontorson will visit Highworth in September 2012 during the Festival weekend.

Chattanooga

Andy Lane explained that he had been having discussions with his colleagues in Chattanooga regarding whether to keep the friendship agreement going as, whilst his contacts in Chattanooga were particularly interested in developing business links, the economic climate was currently restricting any progress in this area. Members of the Network felt that the friendship agreement should keep going and that a visit to Chattanooga may help to develop links. Andy advised that he would like to plan a visit to Chattanooga next year for any local businesses that might be interested.

25.

Any Other Business

Roger Gower asked for any help in contacting 'Communicate (This is Wiltshire)' in order to update information regarding the Salzgitter Twinning Association. Councillor Ray Fisher agreed to find out who to contact at 'Communicate' and would forward this information on to Roger.

The next meeting of the Town Twinning Network would be held on 11th January 2012 at 6pm.