

Swindon Borough Council

Town Twinning Network

Wednesday, 21 September 2011

Committee Room 2, Civic Offices (Anticipated meeting room)

At 6.00 p.m.

**Conservative
Councillors**

Doreen Dart
Raymond Fisher
Eric Shaw
Brian Mattock

**Labour
Councillors**

Kevin Small

**Liberal Democrat
Councillors**

Stan Pajak

Robert Pean, Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association
Roger Gower, Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association
Derrick Gustafson, Highworth Twinning Association
Mr D Ainscough, Lydiards - Tessy sur Vire Twinning Association
Mr Bruce Clarke, Swindon Ocotal Link
Mike Ide, Wroughton - St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association
Andy Lane, Chattanooga, USA
John Mayell, Swindon Ocotal Link
Jane Sullivan, Lechlade Twinning Association

Committee Officer: Alison Smith (Telephone 01793 463612)

Email: alsmith@swindon.gov.uk

Swindon Borough Council, Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon, SN1 2JH
(Telephone 01793 445500)

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it becomes apparent that they have an interest in the matters being discussed.

3. Public Question Time

See explanatory note below. Please phone the Committee Officer whose name and number appears at the top of this agenda if you need further guidance.

4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2011.

5. Schools and Twinning

At the last meeting of the Town Twinning Network, members sought further information

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. Paddy Bradley, Director, Schools and Learning has agreed to attend this meeting to discuss this issue in more detail.

6. Reports from Town Twinning Associations and Links (Pages 7 - 14)

Date of Despatch: 12 September 2011

Public Question Time - *Swindon Borough Council is committed to increasing its accountability to the public and to promoting active citizenship. Up to 15 minutes will be allowed at the start of all Council meetings for questions to the Chair from members of the public about the work of the Committee (except for confidential matters and specific planning applications). Questions must be relevant, clear and concise. Because of time constraints Public Question Time is not an opportunity to make speeches or statements. Prior notice of a question to the Director of Law and Democratic Services is desirable - particularly if detailed background information is needed.*

Access Arrangements – *The Venue is wheelchair accessible and an infrared receiver hearing system is provided. If you would wish to attend the meeting but have any special requirement to enable you to do so please contact the Committee Clerk above, as soon as possible prior to the date of the meeting.*

If you would like to receive any of the pages contained in this agenda in a larger print size please contact the Committee Officer whose name appears on the first page of this agenda.

Town Twinning Network - Terms of Reference

The Town Twinning Network seeks to promote co-ordination and co-operation in the development of Twinning Links with the Twin Towns of Swindon (currently Salzgitter and Ocotal) and other existing Twinning Links with towns in the Borough. It will also encourage the development of other international friendship links between the people of the Borough of Swindon and communities in other countries.

The Town Twinning Network will act as a co-ordinating body for interested groups and individuals seeking to promote twinning links with the Twin Towns of Swindon (currently Salzgitter and Ocotal).

The Town Twinning Network will seek to co-ordinate fund raising and publicity in relation to Town Twinning but will not itself undertake these activities.

The Town Twinning Network will seek to encourage the development of international friendship links and commercial links between the people of Swindon and communities in other countries by the provision of a forum for discussion and the exchange of information.

The Town Twinning Network will receive and consider applications for Town Twinning grants and make recommendations to the Council.

The Town Twinning Network shall not hold funds or enter into any financial transactions.

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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 Germany 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 Ocotol 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 Ocotol. SOL would be providing help to the children to translate their submissions into Spanish.

Two members were preparing for a visit to Ocotol at the beginning of 2012. The young person who had worked as a volunteer in Ocotol 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.

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Reports from the Town Twinning Associations and Links

Town Twinning Network

Date: 21 September 2011

Author: Director of Law and Democratic Services

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

To provide verbal reports updating members of the Town Twinning Network on the activities of the following Town Twinning Associations and Links since the last meeting of 1st June 2011:

- Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association (see attached Journal of the visit by Salzgitter to Swindon 15 to 22 June 2011)
- Swindon Ocotal Link
- Swindon Torun Link
- Wroughton-St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association
- Highworth-Pontorson Twinning Association
- Chattanooga, USA
- Other Twins/Links present at the meeting

Recommendation

The Town Twinning Network is asked to: -

- Note the activities of the Twinning Associations and Links.

1. Reasons

- 1.1 To keep the Town Twinning Network informed of the activities of the Town Twins and Links within Swindon and its surrounding areas and to provide a forum for these groups to exchange information and area of good practice.

2. Detail

- 2.1 The Town Twinning Network seeks to promote co-ordination and co-operation in the development of Twinning Links and in the development of other International friendship links between the people of Swindon and communities in other Countries.
- 2.2 The Town Twinning Network meets four times a year in order to encourage the development of International friendship links and commercial links between the people of Swindon and communities in other Countries by the provision of a forum for discussion and the exchange of information.
- 2.3 Each of the Town Twins and Links will give a verbal update at the meeting on the activities that have been undertaken since the last Town Twinning Network meeting.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Alison Smith on 01793 463612 or Email alsmith@swindon.gov.uk.

Reports from the Town Twinning Associations and Links

Town Twinning Network

Date: 21 September 2011

Alternative Options

- Not applicable

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- There are no direct financial or procurement implications relating to this update. Any future activity that has financial implications would be subject to a separate report.

Legal / Human Rights Implications

- This report has no specific legal or human rights implications.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)

- The Council is committed to the regeneration of the Town Centre and will seek to maximise existing investment and attract further inward investment into the Town. Town Twinning activities will contribute to this.

Consultees

- The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

Background Papers and Appendices

- None

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Alison Smith on 01793 463612 or Email alsmith@swindon.gov.uk.



The Swindon-Salzgitter Twinning Association



JOURNAL OF THE VISIT BY SALZGITTER TO SWINDON 15 to 22 JUNE 2011

INTRODUCTION

This journal details the visit made by our friends from Salzgitter to Swindon in 2011 who were hosted by members of the Association.

The programme had been designed to allow for organised visits, informal gatherings and free time when hosts could entertain their guests as they wished.

THE FORMAL PROGRAMME

Mayor's Reception

After an uneventful journey from Heathrow airport, the guests went to their hosts for a well deserved rest before the first semi-formal event the following morning. For this, the Mayor, Cllr Ray Ballman hosted a reception in the parlour in the Civic Offices.

An umbrella was presented to the Mayor, a fitting gift considering the weather that we had been suffering at the time. After tea and biscuits, the Mayor took us on a tour of the Council chambers and the newly refurbished rose garden. During the visit, members of both twinning associations were interviewed by Swindon Community Radio (105.5 FM). The rest of the day was free for private trips.



Welcome Evening

The evening was given over to a welcome meal of a very tasty curry at the house of one of our members. Members and guests could mingle and renew friendships and meet new people.



Visit to Wadworth Brewery

On the following day, there was a tour of the Wadworth brewery in Devizes. We were escorted round by a very knowledgeable lady who explained the beer-making process simply and succinctly. This was followed by beer tasting and lunch at the Black Swan in Devizes.



After lunch, guests had free time with their hosts.

Brunch

On the Saturday morning there was a brunch at one of the members' homes where all could indulge in a full English breakfast so as to fortify them for the afternoon private visits.

Visit to Houses of Parliament and London

The highlight of the programme was a trip to London. The journey to the capital was somewhat fraught owing to road-works on the M4 but we made it in time for the planned visit to the Houses of Parliament. This trip had been organised through the office of the North Swindon MP, Justin Tomlinson. Two of the MP's research staff took us on the tour. We first went into Portcullis House opposite the Westminster Palace (the modern building is next to where Scotland Yard used to be) and from there under the road into the precincts of the Houses of Parliament. From Westminster Hall, the 1000 year



old part of the Parliament buildings and the place where many famous people have lain in state, into the central lobby, the voting lobbies and the various corridors linking all these parts. It was a wonderful experience to be able to pass through the House of Commons, the centre of the British parliamentary system. We also had the treat of visiting the Terrace of the Houses of Parliament where MPs and their guests can take tea and have meals. Our hosts for the visit were very well informed and gave explanations of all that we saw. To our guests' delight one of our guides spoke excellent German and gave some of the explanations in their own language.



In the afternoon, Association members escorted their guests around their chosen places of interest in London. Although we could not visit Westminster Abbey (the queue was too long for the short time we had) nevertheless a walk over the route of the Royal Wedding seemed appropriate. From Parliament Square the route went down Whitehall passing the Banqueting Hall and Downing Street and across Horse Guards Parade to St James's Park. Across the park, was Pall Mall leading passed St James's Palace

and Clarence House to Buckingham Palace to the left of which is the Royal Mews where the state coaches are kept.

Others had chosen to mix some of the royal sites of interest with other landmarks such as Trafalgar Square and along the great



shopping streets of the capital (Piccadilly, Regent Street and Oxford Street) as well as taking advantage of the good weather of enjoying walking in the various parks of central London.

Finally all arrived in Park Lane and the rendezvous with our coach for the homeward journey. The latter proved far less irksome than the journey up to London since there were no road works to impede us. Guests then spent the rest of the evening with their hosts.

Farewell Meal

The last formal item was a farewell meal at the Purton Club with a fine buffet and entertainment by a group (Dave, Mike and Roy) singing a medley of well-know songs, soothing music on keyboards by Stuart and the local Brinwell choir.



The final morning of the visit was spent with hosts and, after our farewells, the guests departed for Heathrow and their journey home.

INFORMAL VISITS

Even though the twinning between Swindon and Salzgitter has been in place for over 35 years, it was still possible for hosts and guests to choose from among the many interesting places in and around Swindon to visit. The following outlines some of the places that were chosen.

Swindon Town Centre still offers many opportunities for retail therapy as well as places to eat and drink and some of us took full advantage.

Old Town offers a wide range of shopping. Also



some took the chance to visit the Museum with its comprehensive coverage of the history of Swindon and its environs and the Art Gallery with exhibitions of local and Chinese art. The icing on the cake was that it was festival week with entertainment in the street and the Town Gardens. The Gardens looked beautiful in the sunshine.

Outlet Centre is a shoppers' paradise and a number of our group went there to seek out bargains.



Cotswold Water Park an idyllic place to relax among the more than 150 lakes which forms the catchment area for the Upper Thames and has been formed over millions of years.

Further afield, hosts took their guests to places in areas surrounding Swindon

Aldbourne has the medieval church of St Michael, extended in the 15th century in the perpendicular gothic style, overlooking



the village green. Nearby is the medieval ringwork Lewisham Castle. The village saw action in the English civil war and hosted Easy Company of the US 101st Airborne Division just before D-Day. Easy Company was featured in the TV series '*Band of Brothers*'. The village was also the backdrop for a *Doctor Who* episode. The people of Aldbourne are nicknamed 'Dabchicks' after the little grebe.

Avebury is renowned for its very large stone circle, causeway and picturesque village. Nearby are also the prehistoric relics the Sanctuary and the West Kennet Long Barrow.



Didcot Railway Museum is complementary to our own Steam museum. The Didcot museum has a number of engineering sheds containing reminders of the railway works that once thrived there and has a passenger railway open for rides by the public much like the Swindon and Cricklade Railway at Blunsdon.

Kingston Bagpuize House has a history dating



back a thousand years but took its present form when the house was redeveloped in the 18th century and the Saxon church being rebuilt in 1799. Mary Blandy (a cousin of the owner John Blandy) was the last woman hanged in Oxford after she poisoned her father over his objection to her lover.

Malmesbury is a quintessentially Wiltshire village with so much history to see. Of particular interest are the abbey and market cross but the town has over 400 listed buildings of historic importance.



Lacock is in effect the English village that has never changed. There is no street furniture and tight control is exercised on the style and decoration of the houses.



Because of this, the village has appeared as some 25 different TV series and films with, perhaps, the best known programmes being *Cranford* and *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. The Abbey (a private house since the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry X111) is a centre piece of the village. The design as a family home was by William Sharrington and then passed into the Talbot family. One very interesting

feature was the brew-house that used the gravity system just as had been seen by the group at the Wadworth Brewery. The Fox Talbot Museum proved to be really interesting containing a history of photography and including an exhibition of photographs made using the processes developed by Fox Talbot.



Oxford is a world-renowned city with thriving shops and pubs, a vibrant student population and



many University colleges. Christ Church is one of the fine university colleges and its dining hall is famous worldwide. Its walls are lined with the pictures of those who worked there including Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) and it boasts a very fine stained-glass window showing Dodgson himself and the characters of *'Alice in Wonderland'*. The hall was also used in scenes from the films about *'Harry Potter'*.



Many visitors also take time to marvel at the Bodleian Library and the Ashmolean Museum.

Snowhill Lavender Farm was described as a delight with the sight and smell of the lavender coming into bloom. The farm sells the flowers, plants and a whole range of products made from lavender.



Stratford-upon-Avon is the one-time home of William Shakespeare and his wife Anne Hathaway whose cottage is still a very popular visitor attraction.

Stratford is still a major centre for performance of Shakespeare's plays and the



RSC Theatre has been re-opened after refurbishment.



At the time of the visit there was a regatta on the river.

Uffington White Horse the enigmatic stylised view of a horse carved into the chalk hills is now thought to be 3000 years old. Previously it had been suggested that it was made to celebrate the victories of King Alfred. The horse looks over the Vale of the White Horse on the edge of the Berkshire Downs. Near by are several other important monuments including Dragon Hill, with its bare top said to have been caused when St George killed the dragon and spilled its blood leaving ground on which nothing would grow. Also around the area are The Manger, Uffington Castle and Pillow Mound.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Photographs of the Mayor receiving the umbrella, Avebury and the regatta at Stratford-upon-Avon were by Margaret Fryer.

Other photographs were by Roger Gower except for the following:

St Michael's Church, Aldbourn;
http://history.wiltshire.gov.uk/gallery/church/aldbourne_picF0013.JPG

Avebury;
http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-avebury-property_image-2

Ann Hathaway's cottage, Stratford-upon-Avon;
http://www.stratford-upon-avon.co.uk/images/ah_2011_400.jpg

Christ Church, Oxford;
<http://www.chch.ox.ac.uk/sites/defaults/files/images/quadaugust360.jpg>

Kingston Bagpuize House;
<http://www.kingstonbagpuizehouse.com/images/house2.jpg>

Malmesbury Abbey;
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/4a/Malmesbury.abbey.exterior.arp.jpg/220px-Malmesbury.abbey.exterior.arp.jpg>

Snowhill Lavender Farm;
<http://www.snowhill-lavender.co.uk/data/snowhill/images/landscape.cray11.gif>

Swindon Old Town Village;
<http://www.oldtownvillage.co.uk/images/towngardens.jpg>

Swindon Retail Outlet Centre;
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d4/Swindon.shopping.arp.750pix.jpg/220px-Swindon.shopping.arp.750pix.jpg>

Uffington White Horse;
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/48/Uffington-White-Horse-sat.jpg/280px-Uffington-White-Horse-sat.jpg>