

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2012

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Small (Chair) and Junab Ali; Roger Gower (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association), Mr Bruce Clarke (Swindon Ocotal Link), Andy Lane (Chattanooga, USA), Councillor Kevin Small, Councillor Junab Ali and Derrick Gustafson (Highworth Twinning Association)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brian Mattock, Hasan Nur, Mark Sarnowski and Stephen Taylor.

1. Appointment of Chair

Resolved – That Councillor Kevin Small be Chair of the Town Twinning Network until December 2013.

(Councillor Small took the Chair.)

2. Tribute to Councillor Dart

The Chair and members of the Town Twinning Network paid tribute to Councillor Dart who died on 5th October 2012 and acknowledged her commitment to town twinning in and around Swindon.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Resolved – That Andy Lane be Vice-Chair of the Town Twinning Network until December 2013.

4. 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.

5. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

6. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2012, be confirmed as a correct record.

The Chair asked that the minutes from each meeting of the Town Twinning Network be forwarded on to Full Council in order to raise awareness of twinning activities amongst Councillors. This request would be forwarded on to the Committee and Member Services Manager.

7. 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 verbal reports from those Town Twinning Associations and Links present at the meeting:-

Swindon Ocotal Link

Bruce Clarke reported that this had been their most successful year for fundraising and that the Emmanuel Church had raised over £3K which would be used to support a refuge for abused and expectant women. The Rotary club had also raised about £2.5K towards a disability centre in Ocotal. In total, about £5K had been raised to support projects such as an Old People's home, bursaries, health centre and basic medical support.

Patricio Marin, an artist from Ocotal, had recently visited Swindon to put on an open exhibition at Swindon Artsite. He also visited three schools and Lydiard Park Academy asked him to supply a mural which brought together the geography of Nicaragua and the history of Swindon. He also visited the Mayor's parlour, two other churches and Ken White, a Swindon based muralist.

The next trip to Ocotal would take place in 2014, at a cost of about £1500 for a 2 to 3 week trip.

Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association

Roger Gower advised that he had contacted the Swindon Advertiser, the Link magazine and U3A to publicise the Association. An article had appeared in the Link magazine in December which attracted one person to join and a piece produced by U3A resulted in four people making enquiries, although they were not yet members. He had been unable to make any progress with the Swindon Advertiser and would try and find out why.

The membership was changing slightly and advice was being sought as to how to attract younger members. Next year's visit was planned for 29th May to 5th June and the programme was currently being put together and an application would be submitted to the Council for a Town Twinning grant.

Roger asked for access to the Council's website in order to publicise the Association and the clerk agreed to find out more information about whether this was possible.

Chattanooga

Andy Lane reported that American twinning was about business rather than developing friendship links and that there was a need to find a link between the two towns. The Chair advised that he would arrange a meeting between Andy and Forward Swindon who had a responsibility for economic development in Swindon.

Highworth Twinning Association

Derrick Gustafson reported on the following activities:-

- Fundraising quiz on 15th February 2013 at the Scout hall.

- AGM on 15th March 2013.
- Europe Day (when Wassenberg will visit Pontorson from 9th – 12th May 2013). It was unlikely that Highworth would visit Pontorson at this time as it was not a school holiday or half-term. A date for the visit to Pontorson was still under discussion.
- No date yet arranged for the visit to Wassenberg next year (alternate years). Wassenberg have been invited to visit Highworth in October 2013, although a date has not yet been confirmed.
- No date has yet been set for Pontorson to visit Highworth.

8. Cabinet minute on Town Twinning Review

Members of the Town Twinning Network considered the minute from the Cabinet meeting held on 17th October 2012 on the review of town twinning. The Chair advised that he was at the Cabinet meeting and that he had presented the following three challenges to Cabinet Members:

- The need to show leadership
- More commitment from senior officers
- Using Forward Swindon to consider the economic side of twinning.

He added that Cabinet were supportive of the report and the need to raise awareness of twinning activities. Bruce Clarke suggested that there was a need to move beyond the term 'twinning' and that there was a substantial amount of International links being made through schools. The Chair proposed that an event could be held to which schools would be invited in order to promote twinning further. It was agreed that Paddy Bradley would be invited to the next meeting to discuss this proposal further.

There was also a need to ensure that the town twinning network meeting dates were put into the diaries of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to encourage their attendance and involvement in twinning activities.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Town Twinning Network would be held on 27th February 2013 at 6pm.