

Swindon Borough Council

Town Twinning Network

Wednesday, 5 December 2012

Committee Room 2, Civic Offices (Anticipated meeting room)

At 6.00 p.m.

**Conservative
Councillors**

Brian Mattock
Michael Bray

**Labour
Councillors**

Kevin Small
Junab Ali
John Ballman

Roger Gower, Swindon Salzgitter 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
Derrick Gustafson, Highworth 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. Appointment of Chair**
- 2. Appointment of Vice-Chair**
- 3. Apologies for Absence**
- 4. 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.
- 5. 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.
- 6. Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2012.

7. Reports from Town Twinning Associations and Links (Pages 5 - 6)

8. Cabinet minute on Town Twinning Review (Pages 7 - 8)

Cabinet considered the Town Twinning review report on 17th October 2012 and a copy of the minute from that meeting is attached to this agenda for information.

Date of Despatch: 27 November 2012

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, 19 SEPTEMBER 2012

PRESENT:- Councillors Doreen Dart (Chair), Kevin Small and Junab Ali; Roger Gower (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association), Derrick Gustafson (Highworth Twinning Association) and Mr Z Sarnowski (Swindon Torun Link).

Apologies for absence were received from Mike Ide, Andy Lane and Councillor Michael Bray.

21. 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.

22. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

23. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th June 2012, be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising

Roger Gower advised that Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association had gained 5 new members and not 10 as stated in the minutes and that 10 people had participated in the visit to Salzgitter.

The clerk advised that the Town Twinning Review report would now be submitted to the Cabinet in October and that further information had been requested in order to link this in with the economic strategy. It was agreed that the clerk would put some wording together and check this with Councillor Kevin Small.

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

Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association

Roger Gower reported on a very successful visit to Salzgitter from 13th – 20th June 2012 and briefly outlined the programme of activities. He added that the transport arrangements had worked very well. A copy of the report on the visit had previously been distributed to members of the Network.

Attempts were being made to attract more members, particularly younger members, and an abbreviated version of the report would be appearing in the Link magazine and in the U3A leaflet. Discussions would take place as to what activities the association could undertake in order to attract more members.

The next meeting of the association would take place on Friday 20th September at the Civic Offices.

Swindon Torun Link

Mr Sarnowski reported that he and Councillor Stan Pajak had been invited to visit Torun to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the City Centre Unesco World Heritage Site. All Torun's linked cities had been invited to attend, including an 8 person delegation from China. Each linked city had an engraving on the Town Hall offices, in the order of when each one was signed up. They took part in a number of activities including the big feast on 24th June, a visit to an agricultural farm and to the construction of a new bridge using EU funding.

No events had yet been planned to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the link between Torun and Swindon and Mr Sarnowski would be speaking with Councillor Stan Pajak soon to agree a programme of events.

Highworth Twinning Association

Derrick Gustafson reported that, since the last report, the group had made a visit to Wassenberg to celebrate Europe Day there.

The group comprised 18 people, the largest yet. Visits to Wassenberg are always also made by Pontorsonnais at this time. A feature of the visit was an outing across the border in the Netherlands to the beautiful city of Maastricht.

A couple of weeks later came the annual visit to Pontorson. Disappointingly only 7 persons went. This happens occasionally partly due to making a trip there every year, instead of the normal every other year, and partly because it was so soon after the Wassenberg visit. Efforts are under way to ensure that next year, when no visit to Wassenberg is scheduled, we will take a bus load to Pontorson.

The Highworth Festival main weekend saw us invite both our French & German friends to visit.

31 Pontorsonnais accepted, and also 38 Wassenbergers (a record). This number included a small dance group, and an all-male choir.

It stretched our resources to the limit to host such a large group. In normal circumstances we would not invite both twin towns at the same time, but, to coincide with the 4 yearly festival, we took the chance.

The customary annual quiz has been deferred until early in 2013.

25. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Town Twinning Network would be held on Wednesday 5th December 2012 at 6pm.

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Reports from the Town Twinning Associations and Links

Town Twinning Network

Date: 5 December 2012

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 19th September 2012:

- Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association
- Swindon Ocotal Link
- Swindon Torun Link
- Wroughton-St Germain les Corbeil Twinning Association
- HighworthTwinning 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: 5 December 2012

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.

CABINET

17TH OCTOBER 2012

Minute No. 55. - Review of Town Twinning

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a joint report setting out a review of the current position of Town Twinning activities in and around Swindon and highlighting issues raised by members of the Town Twinning Network in response to the review.

The Chair commented on the importance of Town and Civic Twinning to Swindon. Councillor Kevin Small, a member of the Town Twinning Network, welcomed the report and highlighted the views of the Network on the merits of Town Twinning. He believed more could be done to link Town Twinning with the Council's economic development goals and, in particular, to secure access to European Union grant funding through utilising Twinning and Twinning links. He believed that more effort should be put into encouraging young people to become involved in Twinning activities. He felt that newer Councillors should also be helped to learn more about, and become involved in, Twinning activities and that Cabinet Members should act as ambassadors within their portfolio areas to promote Twinning opportunities and service involvement.

Councillor Stan Pajak, Leader of the Minority Group, welcomed the report and commented that he believed that Twinning was not often taken as seriously in the UK as it was by its international partners, where it was often seen as a matter of considerable civic pride. He referred to the Friendship Agreement with Torun in Poland and how this had developed over the years.

The Chair thanked Councillors for their thoughtful contributions and he endorsed the importance of international links to achieving a successful local economy.

Resolved – (1) That the Cabinet confirms its commitment to Town Twinning activities in and around Swindon and recognises the potential of twinning in promoting international links involving Swindon's citizens, groups and businesses.

(2) That the Cabinet records its recognition of the value of the Town Twinning Network in providing a forum for discussion and exchange of information, in addition to supporting the development of other international links.

(3) That the importance of the Civic and Mayoral roles in supporting and promoting Town Twinning activities and that formal recognition by the Mayor's Office would provide support to the development of important international relationships, be noted.

(4) That the Council be recommended that the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor be formally appointed as ex officio members of the Town Twinning Network.

(5) That Cabinet Members and Board Directors be asked to consider what further support could be provided to support Town Twinning activities such as promotional and marketing activities, through the use of existing Council services.

The reasons for the decision and alternative options are as set out in the report to the meeting.