

## **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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012 at 6pm.

