

TOWN TWINNING NETWORK

WEDNESDAY, 27 FEBRUARY 2013

PRESENT:- Councillors Kevin Small (Chair), Junab Ali and Richard Hurley; Mr Bruce Clarke (Swindon Ocotal Link), Andy Lane (Chattanooga, USA), Derrick Gustafson (Highworth Twinning Association), Peter Mallinson (Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association) and Hasan Nur (Somali).

Apologies for absence were received from Roger Gower, John Mayell, Councillor Brian Mattock, Councillor John Ballman and Councillor Michael Bray.

10. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. Councillors Kevin Small and Junab Ali made personal declarations of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 7 in their capacity as members of the Salzgitter Twinning Association and therefore did not participate in the voting on the grant application from the Swindon Salzgitter Twinning Association.

11. Public Question Time

No public questions were received during the meeting.

12. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 5th December 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters Arising – Minute No. 6 - the request for the minutes of the Town Twinning Network meetings to be forwarded onto Full Council will be considered by the Corporate Governance Review Working Group on 7th March.

13. Exempt Items - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved - That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred in Agenda Item 7 on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned (Minute 15 refers.)

14. 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

Peter Mallinson advised that work was currently underway to organise the programme for the visit to Swindon by a group from Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft, Salzgitter from 29 May to 5 June 2013. Social evenings and business meetings were also being held.

The Chair advised that he would be participating in a Civic Twinning visit to Salzgitter leaving on 28th February 2013, along with the Mayor and Mayoress of Swindon, Councillors Amin and Richards. He added that a PDF booklet had been produced of his visit with the skittles team in 2012 and that he would let the Association have a copy.

Swindon Ocotal Link (SOL)

Bruce Clarke advised that SOL were scaling back their activities. A link had been established with Lydiard Park Academy and two people had joined SOL from the Academy. Jake the Juggler would be visiting Ocotal for three months with a view to teaching them circus skills. The assessment centre for disability and access needs was the first one established in Nicaragua and the Emmanuel Church had raised £3,200 to support a project for women facing abuse/pregnancy and the first 30 women had participated in the project. SOL meet every other month.

Chattanooga

Andy Lane reported that he had met with Phil Young from Forward Swindon and that consideration was being given as to the viability of taking business delegates over to Chattanooga. Andy would also be talking to the two MP's next month in order to promote twinning activities in general. Andy was very positive about the progress that was being made.

Highworth Twinning Association

Derrick Gustafson circulated a newsletter that had been produced outlining the activities of the Association. Only 20 people turned up for the quiz which was disappointing and it had been agreed that Highworth would not be visiting Pontorson at the same time as the Germans. The AGM would be held on 15th March in the Community Room, Highworth Offices.

Somali

Hasan Nur reported that a new Mayor and Council had recently been elected. A letter had been received from the previous Mayor regarding a friendship link with Swindon and it was agreed that the clerk, in consultation with the Chair, would ensure that a response was sent from the Mayor of Swindon.

15. Involvement of Schools and Young People in Twinning Activities

Paddy Bradley (Head of Commissioning – Economy/Attainment) attended the meeting to discuss the possibility of young people becoming more involved in twinning activities. There were potential opportunities relating to the University Technical College, due to open in 2014, which had close links with Germany, the

involvement of young people, not linked to schools, in the various twinning projects and the possibility of new investment relating to the Chattanooga Link in the form of a virtual dragons den.

Paddy added that schools already had their own links and that the Network would need to make links with the Head Teachers Association in order to seek their participation. Bruce Clarke added that there was the opportunity to involve schools in Civic links and to promote the role of the Council and Mayor amongst young people. Members of the Network also felt that it would be useful to visit schools to find out more about their links. It was agreed that Paddy would develop a strategy on how the Network could engage with schools on Town Twinning and bring it to the next meeting.

Resolved – (1) That Paddy Bradley be thanked for attending the meeting.

(2) That Paddy Bradley develop a strategy on how the Town Twinning Network could engage with schools on Twinning activities and bring it to the next meeting.

16. Application for a town twinning grant

Peter Mallinson explained that the application for a Town Twinning grant of £1000 was to assist with the costs of a cultural visit to Swindon by a group from Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft from 29th May to 5th June 2013 and briefly outlined the programme planned for the visit.

Peter confirmed that the total cost for the visit was £2063 and that the costs for 10 guests from Salzgitter amounted to £1101. Any deficit would be paid for by members of the Association and host families would pick up any costs relating to guests staying in their homes. He added that transport costs were included as this was a reciprocal arrangement with Salzgitter who always ensured that visitors from Swindon were transported to and from the airport.

Resolved – That the Town Twinning Network recommends to the Director of Law and Democratic Services that a grant of £1000 be approved to assist with the costs of a cultural visit to Swindon by a group from Deutsch-Englische Gesellschaft from 29th May until 5th June 2013.