



NEWSLETTER

THETFORD TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Town Council Election Candidates' Answers to Thetford Twinning Association Questions

It was agreed at the AGM that we would write to all the candidates for the Thetford Town Council elections and ask them their views about twinning. As a result a letter was written and posted to all 30 candidates. A copy of the full letter is available on the Thetford Twinning association website at www.thetfordtwinning.org.uk/publications/newsletters/2011/lettertocandidates

You will see that the letter asked two questions

1. *What are your views about the current twinning arrangements?*
2. *If elected, what will you do to support and promote twinning activities?*

and that candidates were asked to answer each question with a one sentence response. This was to enable a possible 60 responses to be incorporated into a newsletter to all the members as agreed at the AGM.

Up to and including 26th April 2011, twelve candidates had sent email replies and there were no letters. Some candidates provided much more than the two sentences asked for. To be fair to the candidates who did exactly as asked, though, we are including just the two sentence responses from each candidate but we have indicated where there were additional comments and views from a candidate. Also we did not respond to requests for additional information since the members who attended the AGM wanted to know what the candidates' views were. The replies are in alphabetical order.

Sylvia Armes -

1. Most members are getting older , and the most important issue is to get younger members .
2. For over thirty five years I have supported the Civic and The Twinning Association, Surely that speaks for itself.

Ramon Barker -

1. I think the current arrangements need to be maintained as practically possible in these financially restrained times.
2. I will support and try to promote twinning activities as there sometimes a common misconception that these activities are nothing more than jollies for councillors.

Mike Brindle -

1. I am a member of TTA and believe in the cultural and friendship values of twinning; I have visited Hurth, Les Ulis and Spijkenisse, holidayed with Les Ulis friends and entertained guests from all three; I think the current arrangements need rethinking by committee and members to reflect changing attitudes to group organised trips both here and in our twin towns.
2. In May I shall be visiting Skawina to support the Mayor on an official Town Council visit and if elected I shall continue to support official links and encourage Thetford Council to work with the Twinning Association to foster and strengthen continuing links and twinning activities.

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Payment for Hosting

You will remember that we asked our twin towns whether hosts are paid for hosting guests from twin towns and that the replies from Les Ulis and Hürth are that neither do, or have ever, paid hosts a fee for hosting. We have now heard from Spijkenisse who also confirm that they don't and have never paid hosts for having Twinning guests to stay. Spijkenisse did say however: "When a sportclub for instance the swimmingclub or chess-club has their twinning weekend in Spijkenisse, they ask the town-council for subsidy and mostly they get € 7,50 for each foreign guest. With this money they organise during this twinning-weekend a trip or have a disco". This may be where the misconception that Spijkenisse pays hosts has come from, but they have made it clear that hosts are not paid.

Dennis Crawford -

Unfortunately I do not know enough about this system and therefore cannot give my views but I would like to find out more about this, and I would like you to reply back to me about the Thetford twinning.

Corinne Fulford -

1. I confess that my knowledge on our twinning arrangements is not as detailed as I would like, however, from the little I do know I see it only as very positive for our town.

2. Bearing in mind my answer to your first question, I would like to learn much more about your organisation and what you would like to see happen and wherever I can I would be happy to support you in promoting twinning activities.

Ray Key -

1. With a few exceptions attitudes to Civic Links and town twinning in particular appear to be very negative by both staff and councillors.

2. I would promote the reintroduction of the Civic Links Committee and I would ultimately encourage consideration of development of exchange of personnel between local industry/employers/education establishments/schools/colleges within the twin towns.

Robert Kybird - (additional information provided)

1. Historically, these were set up in similar communities which were receiving significant population increase from larger cities and to date the Town Council has allocated annual funding in support of Civic Links although I think there is also an unwritten aspect of exploration of Economic opportunity, something that is not a direct remit of Thetford Town Council.

2. I do support continued Twinning activity both by the Association and by The Town Council and I try where possible to attend both twinning events and fund-raising and social activities.

Derek Mortimer -

1. As a member and councillor I find the present system more than adequate, my thanks to those responsible.

2. If elected, I shall continue to support as I have in the past, I feel that Twinning is an important part of Thetford's activities both cultural and social.

Bryan Skull -

1. As a relatively new councillor I confess to not having any great knowledge of arrangements.

2. If re-elected I will happily join the association to put this right and I do know from what I hear that if elected I would be supportive of twinning activities, but exactly what way I could assist would no doubt be helped if a member.

Dennis Sulley -

1. Having a Twinning Association is good for Thetford but I do not have enough knowledge to comment on the arrangements

2. I will support the association but again do not have sufficient knowledge of the relationship between the association and the town council to make any firm commitment.

Bob Waple -

1. Unfortunately I cannot answer this fully as I am unaware of the current twinning arrangements, despite attending every Full council meeting over the last 12 months, the twinning association has not been mentioned in any detail.

2. If elected, I would gladly come along to meetings etc, when possible, and find out more about the important work the Twinning Association do, I would make sure that I would promote any twinning activities through my connections with the Barnham Action Group Newsletter, Barnham Action Group and other groups I am involved in, along with spreading the word to as many people in the Saxon ward.

Stuart Wright -

1. I am very supportive of the current twinning arrangements and would like to see these extended so that a wider cross section of the Thetford community participates in events organised by the Twinning Association.

2. If elected I will continue to look for the Town Council to provide support for Twinning Association events and help promote these by using the Town Council's database of community contacts as well as providing a formal reception for representatives of our twin towns.

Julia Yelloly - (additional information provided)

1. I have had a look at your website and can see that you are very busy with lots of events in the past and planned for the current year.

2. I do support the work that you do and would support you inside or outside the council and I do think that Twinning and building links within the community as well as beyond it can only be of benefit.

We hope that you find the responses to be both useful and interesting.

Graham Sigley, Chair