

Minutes of the Twinning Meeting held on Saturday 20th August 2016.

Present from Llanwrtyd Town Council:

Cllrs P. James, L. Pace-Avery, J. Rowlands, J. Davies

Present from Llanwrtyd Twinning Association:

B.Davies , J.Davies, J.Curtis, L.Morris, S.Greenhough

Present from Meriel Twinning Association:

Monsieur J-L Delannoy(Mayor of Meriel), N. Cabon, F. Lafargue, E. Jeanrenaud, D.Gogendean, A. Julitte, Eliane Gesnet.

Present from Cesky Krumlov:

Mr R. Rouce (Chief Executive of Cesky Krumlov)

In Attendance: Mrs.L E Ball (Clerk and RFO for Llanwrtyd Wells Town Council)

1. Welcome to Guests

Cllr P. James (Mayor of Llanwrtyd Wells and Chair of the meeting) opened proceedings at 9:30am giving a personal welcome the Mayor of Meriel, Monsieur Delannoy , and Mr Rouce, Chief Executive of Cesky Kromlov followed by a welcome to all Twinning Association members gathered.

He voiced that he felt privileged to Chair the meeting with his counterparts from Meriel and Cesky Krumlov, all of whom were passionate about maintaining links in the future.

Cllr James referred to the Agenda and asked to go immediately to **Question 4-Innovative Links to keep the Twinning Alive** asking the Mayor of Meriel to outline the current situation in Meriel and who the Town Council should be communicating with regarding the Twinning.

Monsieur Delannoy responded by confirming that the delegation of the Twinning was devoted to the French Twinning(The Association “Comite de Jumelage”) and that all actions should be controlled and agreed by the Twinning Committees chaired by Mr Bryn Davies of Llanwrtyd Wells Twinning Association and Nicole Cabon of the Meriel Twinning Association. He understands that the double link from the Meriel’s side was not easy to live with for our Welsh counterparts but he pointed out that this Committee was not mandated to resolve human problems here in Wales.

He reiterated that the Twinning Committee needs to be in charge of promoting **any** activity that strengthens and develops links with the School and the Community of Llanwrtyd and that there is no competition as far as they are concerned from anyone else. The French Council will do everything possible to promote and protect relations and Twinning actions. He suggested that he would meet with both parties to iron out any difficulties. Madame Cabon agreed in theory but felt that in practical terms it was more difficult.

Monsieur Delannoy responded that there needed to be a practical approach that doesn’t disturb the Welsh side.

Chair of the Llanwrtyd Twinning Association, Mr B Davies stated that the unanimous decision of the Committee was that loyalty and affiliation was to be with the Town Council of Meriel and Jumelage and that all activities, links and development would only be done with them.

Cllr James opened the discussion asking for any other questions from the table. There were no questions forthcoming and therefore Cllr James rounded off the discussion by reiterating that the Town Council and the Twinning Committee, and indeed all those around the table were clear of the position and who we should be communicating and dealing with.

Cllr James moved forward with the Agenda.

2. Things we have Achieved

Cllr James informed members that

- the new signage at the entrance to the Town bore both Meriel and Cesky Krumlov as our Twinning partners
- the Heritage centre had strong links with Meriel and Cesky Krumlov and thanked Cllr J. Rowlands for steering the project on behalf of the Council and invited Cllr Rowlands to input into the discussion.

Cllr Rowlands explained that the Centre was an Arts and Heritage Centre and that currently there is an Art exhibition upstairs whilst in future it is hoped to have temporary exhibitions from a variety of local artists. He invited Meriel and Cesky Krumlov to think what links there could be and whether in future they could bring items /art work to exhibit.

Mr Rouse of Cesky Krumlov said they already have a similar building which was a Jewish Synagogue and a female artist, saved by Nicholas Winton, already has paintings which she exhibits there. This could be explored further with the possibility of her paintings being exhibited in Llanwrtyd.

Monsieur Delannoy also agreed that this could be explored in Meriel.

Cllr James informed the meeting that the Public Toilets, soon to be refurbished, had a mural on the wall depicting our Twinning partners reiterating that in any new venture undertaken by the Town Council that our Twinning Partners were in the forefront of our minds.

3. Concerns

Cllr James outlined the problems of less money at County level and Town Councils having to take on the running of local facilities. He mentioned the bank, the surgery and now we have the issue of the Library that we are negotiating and felt that for youngsters this was an avenue for free internet access and therefore the possibility of communication between our Communities.

Monsieur Delannoy felt that it was a similar situation in France with less and less money to do things but technology was not the issue. It was actions that needed to be organised.

4. Innovative Links to keep the Twinning Alive

Cllr James asked Monsieur Delannoy to outline the strength of the Twinning Association in Meriel. He responded by saying that it was very strong - that there were strong links with the schools in Meriel and the Twinning was promoted to encourage children to visit Llanwrtyd. He informed the meeting that a large proportion of their budget is allocated to schools for outdoor Activities and this could be a project for the future. He also informed members that they have one teacher who is keen to come to Llanwrtyd on exchange.

Cllr James then directed the same question to the Llanwrtyd Twinning Committee. The Chair of Llanwrtyd Twinning Association, Mr B Davies, felt that there was a hard core that remained loyal to the Twinning but that getting new members to join the Association was proving very difficult. Llanwrtyd is a much smaller place than Meriel and there were many other Committees within Llanwrtyd that people were involved with.

Madame Cabon informed members that Mr Louis Mezza, President of the Arts Association could provide some activities and was keen to discuss opportunities. She agreed with Monsieur Delannoy that this could be a project for the future.

Cllr Pace –Avery informed members of the writing competition done through the Library and felt this could be expanded to include our twinning partners thereby developing both the links and the language between the countries.

Mr Rouse said that from the Cesky point of view all Twinning work was done through the Council and the Twinning needed to be promoted with the children in the High School with a view to an exchange. He was keen to participate in the writing competition and Cesky would provide the prizes for their entries.

Monsieur Delannoy concluded by saying that The Jumelage in Meriel was very strong with activities twice a month to raise funds and awareness and that it would be sad if we could not achieve something.

Cllr Davies, member of the Twinning Committee, felt that there was a split within the Llanwrtyd Association with some members wanting to go a separate way. This was the result of issues arising in Meriel.

Monsieur Delannoy did not want to be involved in the personal squabbles –he was ambassador to find ways forward for the Twinning.

Cllr James informed members that all contact will be through the Town Councils and that he would attend the next Twinning meeting in Llanwrtyd and state this very clearly. The school aspect was very important and irrespective of budgets actions were vital.

Under links Manor Adventure was mentioned. Cesky Krumlov children come to the Centre – perhaps Meriel children could also come at the same time and this would enthrall the children in Llanwrtyd to want an exchange .

Cesky Krumlov won the Christmas Tree decoration in Church. Madame Cabon requested information about the subject in September so that the work could be carried out by the schools in good time as last year there were none sent due to the lateness of knowing the subject matter. The Llanwrtyd Committee would investigate this and communicate with Madame Cabon.

She outlined the position with exchanges saying that there had been a strong history of children visiting Meriel from Llanwrtyd but now it is not possible due to Safeguarding issues and lack of interest from the parents of the children in school.

Mr B Davies defended this position stating that the Head of the Primary School Mrs G Lloyd had tried very hard to get children interested but there was not the interest with very small numbers involved (no more than 10-12 in the final year group) and agreed that the new Safeguarding of Children was costly and prohibitive.

5. Employment Opportunities

Cllr James stated that he himself had employed 5 youngsters in his restaurant and the Neuadd Arms had employed two youngsters but there was no reciprocation from Meriel or Cesky Krumlov. He asked this to be considered by both Twinning partners.

He recalled one student from Cesky Krumlov working with him for eight weeks and fell in love with cornflakes.

Mr Rouse reported that there were many restaurants in Cesky Krumlov and he felt sure something could be arranged.

Monsieur Delannoy also said this would be considered by the Twinning Committee of Meriel.

Cllr James declared that all items on the Agenda had been covered and opened the table for questions and /or comments.

Mr B Davies strongly recommended people to visit Cesky Krumlov which has been rebuilt and renovated and is now a very beautiful place and congratulated Mr Rouse and the Town Council of Cesky Krumlov on what they had achieved.

Monsieur Delannoy felt there was still much work to be done in marketing the image of the Twinning in Meriel and wanted both all groups to sit down together to formulate a plan to develop more understanding and promotion of the Twinning and what it stood for.

There were no more comments or questions so Cllr James brought the meeting to a close thanking everyone for attending and thanked all the hosts who were not present for making the weekend possible. He wished everyone well for the weekend visit with each other and their hosts.

The meeting closed at 10.35 am