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**HELENSBURGH-THOUARS TWINNING COMMITTEE**

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**1. SUMMARY**

On 11 June 2013 the Area Committee agreed to release £833 from the Twinning Budget for 2013/14 to the Helensburgh Thouars Twinning Committee as a contribution towards the costs of hosting the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary visit to Helensburgh in July 2013.

At the time of making this award, the Committee requested a further report be brought back after the event with information as to how the activities undertaken by the visitors contributed towards the objectives of the twinning visit. This report attends to this request.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Area Committee notes the feedback received from the Helensburgh-Thouars Twinning Committee as to how the objectives outlined in the Twinning Charter were met by the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities.

**3. DETAIL**

3.1 The Area Committee agreed on 11 June 2013 to release £833 towards the costs of hosting a visit and range of activities to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the twinning link between the towns of Helensburgh and Thouars. At the time of making this request, they requested that officers from Governance and Law obtain information from the Twinning Committee as to how this met the objectives of the twinning arrangement and instructed that they report this back to the Area Committee.

3.2 From the Twinning Charter, the objectives of the arrangement are to:-

- establish and maintain friendly relations with each other;
- foster and develop a mutual understanding and respect between the people of Thouars and the people of Helensburgh and District; and
- encourage and assist youth and adult organisations clubs, companies, groups and all classes of persons in Thouars and Helensburgh and District to communicate and exchange visits with each other, thereby developing human and cultural relations and establishing a firm foundation for future understanding, respect and friendship between the people of Thouars and the people of Helensburgh and District for all time.

3.3 The objectives were relayed to the Twinning Committee together with the request from the Area Committee seeking information as to how the activities met these objectives. The response received is attached at Appendix 1.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 From the information submitted by the Twinning Committee it is clear that there are strong bonds of friendship between the families who have taken part in the previous exchange visits (it being quoted that some of the families involved are in the second generation of friendship) and that new linkages are actively encouraged with some new families taking part in the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities. To further the aims of the objectives, there are plans for a return visit to Thouars in 2015.

It is considered that attendance at the Rosneath Highland Games, the celebratory Ceilidh (which was attended by the Mayor of Thouars and the Depute Provost of Argyll and Bute Council) and opportunities for promoting language exchange contributed to the desire within the Charter to form cultural relations.

It is noted from Appendix 1 that youth and other organisations, such as the bowling club, were involved in visits, a celebration picnic and informal street party which would have further promoted the work of the Twinning Committee and encouraged greater participation.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

Policy - Activities detailed within the programme of activities are consistent with the objectives outlined in the Twinning Charter.

Financial –	Grant awarded to the Twinning Committee was within budget and therefore there are no financial implications.
Legal -	None – The aims of the Twinning Charter have been met
HR -	None
Equalities -	None
Risk -	None
Customer Service -	None

**Executive Director of Customer Services  
16 September 2013**

For further information contact: Melissa Stewart, Area Governance Officer,  
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Appendix 1



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Argyll and Bute Council  
FAO Ms Shirley MacLeod  
Area Governance Manager  
22 Hill Street  
DUNOON  
PA23 7AP

11<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Dear Ms MacLeod

**Application for Grant Assistance towards Twinning Visit 12<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013**

Report on the Twinning visit to be taken to the October Area Committee meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2013 as requested.

The programme which was put together for the visit was included in a letter to Mrs Belinda Ruthven at Scotcourt House Helensburgh a copy is set out below:-

*We (the Helensburgh Twinning Committee) have put together a very varied programme for this years visit. We are especially proud to show them Scotland at its best with visits to Cruachan, Inveraray, Loch Lomond, Stirling, Bo'ness and Edinburgh. Also this year the visit will include the Rosneath Highland Games which will be a memorable occasion for them all to attend. We have a Ceilidh planned, as we have learned from previous visits that our French friends are always very willing to participate in Scottish dancing. The climax of the visit will be the official dinner in the Victoria Halls for the 30<sup>th</sup> celebrations and an informal street party the day after.*

A breakdown of the itinerary for the visit is set out below:-

This was the first visit where the French Twinners travelled by plane from Poitier to Edinburgh. Previously they have travelled by coach. During the visit we ensured, whenever required, to have booked a coach for the various trips. On arrival at the Helensburgh Bowling Club on the 12<sup>th</sup> July we had a reception where the French people were introduced to the families who were going to look after them during the visit. Most of the French and Scottish families were already acquainted but the new people both French and Scottish were introduced.

There was a Ceilidh and Dinner at the Commodore Hotel on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July where the French guests enjoyed a typical Scottish music and dance evening.

The following day we took them to their first Highland Games at Rosneath. This was an especially important day for our visitors as it was 'Bastille Day' the French National Holiday. We all took part in the Grand Parade through Rosneath village with the band. The band also played La Marseillaise, the French National Anthem in honour of our French visitors. They also took part in the traditional tug of war, where they were narrowly beaten by the Scottish team. Lunch was provided in the Princess Louise Hall.

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July was a free day to spend with families.

The next day we travelled by the local Blue Train to Glasgow for an open top bus tour around the city. This was a day to show them a bit of history of Scotland and some of our newest tourist places of interest.

The visit to Cruachan on 17<sup>th</sup> July was an ideal visit to show our engineering and power generation facilities within a mountain and to enjoy a picnic at the edge of Loch Awe. They had free time in Inveraray before enjoying a meal at the Loch Fyne Hotel.

On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July lunch was organized at Ardgarten and a wander along the banks of Loch Long before a boat trip on Loch Lomond where the scenery was admired.

Our final trip on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July was to Stirling, where another opportunity for all to enjoy some history and shopping. After this we headed to Bo'ness for a trip and supper on this famous steam train.

There were two occasions when the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Twinning was celebrated. One as an Official dinner in the Victoria Hall and the other, a Party with a picnic, again in the Victoria Hall. At the dinner on 20<sup>th</sup> July we were honoured to have Patrice Pineau, the Mayor of Thouars and Douglas Philand, the Depute Provost of Argyll and Bute join us for this very important occasion. The following day there was an informal inside street party with picnic to finalise the celebrations.

Finally, when the French people flew home from Edinburgh the coach took them on a 'thro' the window' tour of the city, where a Scottish French speaker was able to be their official tour guide for the afternoon.

The Twinning Committee feel that the programme that all the Twinners, both French and Scottish enjoyed, contributed positively to the objectives of the Twinning Arrangement. We have maintained constant touch with our French Twinners now for 30 years and in fact some of the families on both sides are into the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of friendships. This year we have a few new families who are very keen to continue and are looking forward to our visit to France in 2015. Many of these families have young members who have enjoyed each

others company and the chance to try out speaking a different language. The Twinning between Helensburgh and Thouars is well established and will continue into the future due to the 'bonhomie' of all those involved. Some families have already been in contact with each other swapping photographs and experiences of this years visit.

I trust you will find this report to your satisfaction when you take it before the committee.

Yours sincerely

***Sue Hume***

Secretary, Helensburgh and District Twinning Association