

REFERRAL FROM HITCHIN AREA COMMITTEE: POTENTIAL TOWN TWINNING – AYENSUAKO, GHANA

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

To authorise further work to be done involving Members, Officers, the local community and the Hitchin Town Twinning Association.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To explore the possibility of twinning Hitchin Town with Ayensuako, Ghana.

A verbal presentation was given by Joanne Wearne of Humanitas and Tommy Eaton of Bambuu Brush on a new potential town twinning opportunity with Ayensuako, Ghana and drew attention to the following points:

- Humanitas' office is in Hitchin.
- Humanitas is a charity which has been operating for 21 years, It exists to give access to the world's most vulnerable and impoverished children healthcare.
- Have a strong relationship with The Comet;
- Majority of funding comes from loyal local communities;
- The charity runs projects in Romania and Ghana;
- Humanitas operates 2 schools in the town of Aseyuako, Ghana; a primary school and high school with 280 students.

The Chair thanked the two members of public for their presentation.

In response to a question from Councillor Keith Hoskins, Joanne Wearne advised that the school had only closed for three weeks during the pandemic. The school did not have access to hand washing facilities however.

The Chair invited David Leal-Bennett, Hitchin Town Twinning Association, to give a verbal presentation. In his presentation the following points were made:

- Post-war town-twinning was very popular; twinning with towns in France and Germany has worked very well, facilitating exchanges between the areas;
- Over the past 15-20 years the demographic has changed; very few youngsters coming into the town twinning association;
- Will need to discuss with patrons and progress discussions through the Association.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Simon Harwood
- Councillor Judi Billing
- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg
- Councillor Val Bryant

In response to questions from Members, David Leal-Bennett and Joanne Wearne advised:

- Humanitas want to be part of reenergising the Town Twinning Association;
- All Humanitas fundraising is done in the UK. 88p of every £1 goes to the projects;

In response to a question from Councillor Judi Billing, the Chair advised that: Formally speaking it is for the Council and relevant committees to decide about twinning arrangements. If the Twinning Association was against the idea it could lead to two separate associations, however the Council and the Town Twinning Association want to proceed together.

It was:

RESOLVED: That the Hitchin Committee notes and welcomes the presentation on establishing a new Twinning arrangement with the community of Ayensuako in Ghana.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: To authorise further work to be done involving Members, Officers, the local community and the Hitchin Town Twinning Association.

RESOLVED: That the Hitchin Committee agrees to discuss the outcome of this work and any formal proposal for the adoption of a new twinning at its first meeting of the civic year in June.

The reports considered by the Committee can be found at Item 9 here: [Agenda for Hitchin Committee on Tuesday, 1st March, 2022, 7.30 pm - North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)