

PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL**PROVOST'S SUB COMMITTEE – 6 FEBRUARY 2008****PROPOSED TWINNING VISIT TO ASCHAFFENBURG – JUNE 2008****Report by Head of Democratic Services****ABSTRACT**

This report relates to an invitation extended to the Council for the Provost and a delegation to visit Aschaffenburg during the Volksfest in June 2008

1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**It is recommended that:-**

- (i) The invitation to visit Aschaffenburg in June 2008 be approved; and
- (ii) The Council be represented by the Provost, and one other Councillor, supported by a Council Officer on the visit to Aschaffenburg in June 2008.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Perth & Kinross Council's twinning link with Aschaffenburg in Bavaria, Germany dates back to 1956. As well as being the Council's oldest link, it is arguably its most active twinning. The "Friends" associations in Perth and in Aschaffenburg have promoted and supported the link for many years and in 2006 the 50th Anniversary of this award winning twinning was celebrated in both Perth and Aschaffenburg. At a formal dinner in September 2006, former Provost Bob Scott and Oberbürgermeister Klaus Herzog signed a reaffirmation charter, pledging commitment to the future of the twinning.

3. INVITATION TO VISIT ASCHAFFENBURG IN JUNE 2008

- 3.1** Provost and Mrs Hulbert have been invited to visit Aschaffenburg for 3 / 4 days in June 2008 during which time the Aschaffenburg Folk Festival will take place alongwith the Aschaffenburg Culture Days. Klaus Herzog also hopes that other groups from Perth & Kinross will visit at this time and at present Inner Link Ladies Group, the Blairgowrie and Rattray Pipe Band and a novice Band from the Vale of Atholl Pipe Band have expressed interest in supporting the Provost.
- 3.2** The Oberbürgermeister has emphasised that he is particularly keen to reinstate the schools exchange which has experienced a decline in recent years. Provost Hulbert hopes to engender enthusiasm for some form of official exchange between young people as part of a wider international strategy in respect of twinning and other partnerships.

- 3.3 With a new Provost now in place, it is anticipated that the link will continue to be active during his term of office. To demonstrate support for this important twinning, it is deemed important that the Provost should accept the invitation, not only to promote the formal aspects of these links, and encourage the many musical, cultural, educational and social groups that travel back and forwards between our cities, but also to stimulate business, commercial and political links between Aschaffenburg in Bavaria and Perth & Kinross in Scotland.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 To continue Perth & Kinross Council's support for its oldest twinning, it is important that the Provost and the Oberbürgermeister meet as soon as possible to discuss the way forward for the link. Accordingly, it is proposed that the Provost and one other Councillor, supported by the Council Officer, accept the invitation to visit Aschaffenburg in June 2008.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Chief Executive has been consulted on this report.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The cost of a return flight between Edinburgh and Frankfurt is estimated to be in the order of £120, with spouses/partners travelling at their own expense. Once in Germany travel to and from the airport, accommodation and meals will be borne by the hosts.

Accordingly, it is estimated that the total costs associated with the visit would be as follows:

Airport transport from Perth to Edinburgh return	£150
Civic Gifts	£200
Flights for 3 Council representatives i.e. Provost Councillor, Council Officer	<u>£360</u>
Total	£710

Subject to the availability of resources, this sum will be met by the 2008/2009 twinning budget.

7. COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPLES

- 7.1 This report supports the Council priority "working towards ensuring Perth & Kinross has a prosperous, sustainable and inclusive economy".

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1** The function presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Assessment Framework and the determination was made that the item summarised in this report does not require further assessment as it does not have an impact on people's wellbeing.

9. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- 9.1** Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).

The information presented in this report was considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Perth and Kinross Council has determined that the implementation of the proposal will not have significant environmental effects.

The proposal will not require further action under the Act if it is to be taken forward.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1** The Perth & Kinross – Aschaffenburg twinning link continues to be active. Groups travel back and forth on a regular basis and Aschaffenburg will host the Mini Olympics in August 2008.

Accepting the invitation to visit Aschaffenburg will add value to the link, bringing together people involved in the twinning, past and present. It will also demonstrate that Perth & Kinross holds the twinning in high regard.

During the proposed visit, Provost Hulbert will meet with Oberbürgermeister Herzog with a view to the link being part of a wider international strategy.

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Background Paper: Letter from the Mayor of Aschaffenburg
(Translation attached)

Dear Provost John Hulbert, (that bit was easy!!!)

A good half-year has past since your election as Provost and certainly you will be well settled into your new post.

On the occasion of the imminent festival in Aschaffenburg next year, I would like to confirm our invitation to you. In June and July the Aschaffenburg folk festival and the Aschaffenburg Culture Days are planning two magnificent events that overlap the 28th, 29th and 30th of June. It would please me to be able to welcome you and your wife, Lady Provost Sara Hulbert, to Aschaffenburg that weekend. Naturally other groups from Perth are very welcome at this occasion in order to visit Aschaffenburg again or for the first time.

In connection with this, I would also like to use this opportunity to thank you for your friendly greetings that you have sent us on the occasion of the visit of Perth groups in Aschaffenburg. The greeting and caring (of the Perth groups) and was a great joy and satisfaction for us. The Antonine Guard from Perth caused a sensation at the Roman Days (Festival) and gave us a glimpse of a tradition that was not maintained in this way in Aschaffenburg. The Inner Link Ladies, the Perth Fire Brigade and Blairgowrie's pipeband were also once again very welcome guests of our twin town.

The Edelweiss Walking Group, two trainees of the town Civil Engineering office, the Scheinheim Scouts, the Ars Antiqua Chamber Choir and the boys and girls of ...?... were welcomed to Perth for the first time or renewed their acquaintance. Every single group returned home with great enthusiasm and gratitude for the welcoming friendship and warmth. All reported a friendly and warm welcome with you in the Town House, as well as, the hearty efforts and hospitality of the Friends of Aschaffenburg. Please convey my kind regards to them.

During the next year, there will be different discussions and plans. From the 4th –8th of August 2008, two mini Olympic games will take place in Aschaffenburg to which sportsmen from Perth and the twin town of Cognac will travel. In addition, our Garden Office has already explained to you to participate in the Garden exhibition, The Calyx, in case Perth should receive the ‘contract’ for the Scotland wide application.

Altogether, I am very happy about these varied and long-lasting partnerships and am delighted to be able to develop this continuity with you.

If you were to accept this invitation to join us, I would be grateful if you would inform us of your arrival and departure so that we can prepare good and interesting programme for you.

Yours sincerely,

Klaus Herzog
Mayor