

PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PROVOST'S SUB COMMITTEE****13 AUGUST 2008****PROPOSED TWINNING VISIT TO BYDGOSZCZ, POLAND – SEPTEMBER 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 Bydgoszcz, Poland in September 2008.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the sub committee agree:

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

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The background to the twinning with Bydgoszcz emanates from the strong link with the Polish community that has existed for many years. The Polish Link Association was established in 1995 following Perth & Kinross Council's events to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of VE Day in that year.
- 2.2 In 1996, Perth & Kinross Council was approached regarding the formation of an official twinning link with Bydgoszcz. The feasibility of establishing this link was explored by former Provost John Culliven. Subsequently, the twinning agreement was signed by the Mayors of both cities during official visits to and from Poland in 1998.

3. PROGRESS OF THE LINK

- 3.1 The establishment of a local twinning association, the 'Friends of Bydgoszcz' followed in 1999. At first progress was very slow indeed, mainly due to funding constraints in Poland. However, the 'Friends' Association persevered as it was perceived that the link offered a range of possibilities in terms of social, cultural and educational exchanges.
- 3.2 Despite enthusiasm for the link, it became dormant with social visits by individuals becoming the only activity to take place between the two cities.

- 3.3 In Bydgoszcz, attempts were being made to establish a twinning association whose brief would be to revive the twinning and in 2005/6 an official association was finally established in Bydgoszcz.

4 TWINNING ACTIVITIES SINCE 2003

4.1 4.1 Visits to Bydgoszcz

There have been 4 visits to Bydgoszcz of Committee Members of the Friends of Bydgoszcz Association.

One of these visits included 12 people from Kinross travelling to Bydgoszcz in 2005 to host a Burns Supper.

Also, former Provost Bob Scott visited Bydgoszcz in August 2006 to discuss the way forward for the twinning.

To add impetus to the link, the Chairman of the Association, Mrs Christine Robertson from Milnathort has given a talk to the Scone 50 plus group and its members intend to visit Bydgoszcz later this year.

4.2 Visits to Perth & Kinross

Committee members and members of the Friends of Perth Association in Bydgoszcz have visited Perth & Kinross 4 times since 2005.

Additionally, the Bydgoszcz Cathedral Choir has visited Perth twice, once in 2006 when they performed at two concerts with the Fair City Singers in Cleish and St Matthews Church, Perth. They returned to Perth in 2007 and performed again in Cleish Church and Scone New Church

The Economic Development Service at Perth & Kinross Council has hosted a trade delegation from Bydgoszcz and has also made a reciprocal visit.

4.3 Other Activities Associated with the Link

Scott Wilson from the Crannog Centre in Highland Perthshire was invited to Bydgoszcz to give a presentation on archaeological work being carried out on Loch Tay.

In July specialist Polish archaeologists visited the Crannog to advise on restoration work. It is likely that a team from Biskupin will return to Loch Tay to oversee the restoration of the Crannog this winter.

20 Students from Bydgoszcz have been studying at Perth College for the last three years.

Also, in 2006 and 2007, two writers from Perth & Kinross have taken part in the annual Book Festival in Bydgoszcz.

In July 2008, Councillor Bob Ellis and Mr David Burke, Depute Director Housing and Community Care attended an Equalities Conference in Bydgoszcz.

5. VISIT BY THE MAYOR OF BYDGOSZCZ TO PERTH – MAY 2008

- 5.1 In May of this year, the Mayor of Bydgoszcz and two other Council Officials accepted an invitation to come to Perth to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Perth, Scotland – Bydgoszcz, Poland twinning
- 5.2 The Group spent 2 full days in Perth & Kinross during which time the Provost played host to a number of celebratory events including a Civic Lunch, a distillery visit, a tour of Highland Perthshire and a Social/Musical evening with the Friends of Bydgoszcz. They also attended the closing concert of Perth Festival of the Arts.
- 5.3 During the visit, both Civic Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the link and the way forward for future exchanges which could be of mutual benefit.

6. THE WAY FORWARD – INVITATION TO PROVOST JOHN HULBERT AND DELEGATION – SEPTEMBER 2008.

- 6.1 During the visit of the Mayor of Bydgoszcz, a number of issues associated with the twinning were discussed, in particular how future exchanges could be established and developed.
- 6.2 One aspect of the twinning, on which the Civic Leaders agreed, is the potential for exchanges between local government staff in both cities. The basis of this would be that each city could cover the costs of accommodation and living allowance enabling staff to broaden their experience and aid the development of good relations.

7. INVITATION TO VISIT BYDGOSZCZ IN SEPTEMBER 2008

- 7.1 The Mayor of Bydgoszcz, Konstanty Dombrowicz has invited up to four people, including the Provost and Lady Provost to visit Bydgoszcz from 18 – 23 September during the festival of the Biskupin Museum which has strong links with the Scottish Crannog Centre at Kenmore, Loch Tay.

8. PROPOSALS

- 8.1 To continue Perth & Kinross Council's support for this revived twinning, it is important that the Provost demonstrates the Council's commitment to the link. Further talks will take place with the Mayor on the way forward, particularly in relation to establishing a wider exchange programme between staff from Perth & Kinross and Bydgoszcz.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Chief Executive has been consulted on this report

10 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The cost of a return flight between Edinburgh and Bydgoszcz is estimated to be in the order of £220, with spouses/partners travelling at their own expense. Once in Poland 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.

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| Airport transport from Perth to Edinburgh return | £150 |
| Civic Gifts | £200 |
| Flights for 3 Council representatives i.e. Provost, Councillor, Council Officer | <u>£660</u> |
| Total | £1,010 |

This sum can be met by the 2008/2009 twinning budget.

11 COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPLES

11.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2006-2010 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. They are as follows:

- (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
- (ii) Healthy, Caring Communities
- (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
- (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
- (v) Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

12 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

12.1 The information 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.

13 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

13.1 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 & 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 it is to be taken forward.

14 CONCLUSION

14.1 The Perth & Kinross – Bydgoszcz is undergoing a revival with numerous ideas coming forward whereby a broader approach will be taken in terms of its potential for developing new initiatives and activities.

The acceptance of the invitation will add value to the twinning demonstrating the Council's commitment to the link with the aim of embracing a broader international strategy.

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Background Paper: Letter from the Mayor of Bydgoszcz

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion only, a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting **Judy Harris Ext. 75058**



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