

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

Report on twinning activities, 1st December 2004 to 30th November 2005

- Jenny Norris was appointed part-time Twinning Officer from December 2004.
- The Twinning Officer has provided information and assistance to individuals and organisations in the community who wish to visit the twin towns, and likewise to individuals and organisations from the twin towns who wish to visit the Abingdon area.
- As well as providing practical assistance and advice, the Council has also assisted community-based groups financially. During the period covered by this report the Town Council has awarded grants to five societies and groups, to help them to take part in activities in our twin towns. The total awarded in twinning grants for this period is £1,045.
- The Twinning Officer has worked in close partnership with the Abingdon and District Twin Towns Society (ADTTS). This has involved regular contact and communication with the Society including attending committee meetings of the Society, regular meetings with officers of the ADTTS and working together with the Society on specific matters.
- Two joint forums between the Town Council and the ADTTS were held in February and October 2005. At these meetings there have been discussions regarding items of joint interest. These meetings have been valuable in the exchange of information and looking at ways in which to develop twinning in the community.
- Links have been maintained with the Abingdon's twin towns of Argentan, Schongau and Lucca, as well as Sint-Niklaas and Colmar, through the Vale Five Star Twinning.
- The Mayor, Consort and the Twinning Officer represented the town at the Argentan Quasimodo Fair in April 2005 and the Twinning Conference in Sint-Niklaas in September 2005. Whilst these were primarily civic events, the opportunities for contact to be made with representatives from the twinning and other community-based organisations in the towns involved proved to be valuable.
- The Twinning Officer worked with the ADTTS, to organise an exhibition and evening event, held at John Mason School, for Europe Day in May. This was open to all and no charge was made to those attending. She has also been involved in planning events taking place as part of Argentan's Saison Culturelle. She is presently involved in the planning for the celebration of 450th anniversary of the granting of charter to the town, to be held in June 2006. This will include a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of town twinning between Abingdon and Argentan which it is intended will assist in raising the profile of this twinning link.
- A number of visitors from the Twin Towns, including teachers taking part in a Comenius project with Rush Common School, school students on an exchange visit with John Mason School and people taking part in the Adult Twinning Weekend, have been welcomed by the Mayor at Old Abbey House.
- The Twinning Officer attended a seminar run jointly by the British German Association and the Local Government Information Bureau, on twinning issues.
- The Twinning Officer is working closely with staff at the Information Point at Old Abbey House, to promote twinning.