

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Twinning Committee – Thursday 11 December 2014

Twinning Report

Tonbridge Tennis Club and Le Puy Tournament

Earlier this year, Tonbridge Tennis Club hosted an Anglo-French tennis tournament with a group of players from Le Puy. French visitors came over for the weekend of the 23 August and stayed with families from Tonbridge Tennis Club.

The match was held on Sunday 24th at the club facilities in Tonbridge and there was a buffet lunch for all involved after the match. The Mayor of Tonbridge & Malling, Cllr Mrs Sasha Luck, attended the event.

30th Twinning Anniversary, Tonbridge and Heusenstamm

Since the last meeting of this board, Members will be aware that a busy weekend of activities took place in September to celebrate the 30th anniversary of twinning between Tonbridge and Heusenstamm.

An official delegation from Heusenstamm, including Frau Ingrid Henninghausen, Herr Ulrich Hoeffken and Herr Uve-Peter Hajdu visited Tonbridge during the weekend of 13-14 September. The civic guests stayed at the Rose & Crown Hotel and enjoyed a varied cultural programme throughout their stay. In addition to these arrangements, the Sevenoaks & Tonbridge Concert Band had invited their twin band the 'Heuseenstamm Stadtkapelle' to come over and mark the anniversary with a joint concert between the two bands.

The weekend celebrations commenced with a formal dinner at the Rose & Crown which was attended by the Mayor of Tonbridge & Malling, Councillor Mrs Sasha Luck, who was accompanied by members of this twinning committee and a group from the Heusenstamm Friendship Circle. At this occasion, speeches were made by the Mayor and the civic guests from Heusenstamm and an exchange of gifts took place.

As the anniversary took place during the weekend of the national Heritage Open Days scheme, the German party were introduced to places of historical interest across the borough including Hadlow Tower and the Twitch Inn, West Malling. The official civic guests were also invited to attend the social evening hosted by The Sevenoaks & Tonbridge Concert Band and the Stadtkapelle Heusenstamm. Members of the Heusenstamm Friendship Circle also joined in with this activity and provided some of the entertainment!

Other events the German party visited during their stay included Tonbridge Castle Medieval Fair and Tonbridge Town Team's Dragon Boat Race. At this year's dragon boat event, the Sevenoaks & Tonbridge Concert Band and the Stadtkapelle Heusenstamm put in a joint team.

The anniversary celebrations finished with an informal dinner at the Vauxhall Inn.

The Council would like to take this opportunity to thank Chairman of the Twinning Committee, Mike Dobson and David Packer from Heusenstamm Friendship Circle for their support during this busy time. Their assistance with various elements throughout the weekend, including with transport and catering arrangements as well as accompanying the guests to their various engagements was much appreciated and provided a vital role to the success of the weekend.

30th Twinning Anniversary – Malling/Auchel

The Malling Auchel Association contacted the Council earlier in the year advising them of the arrangements to celebrate 30 years of twinning with Auchel.

A weekend of activities was planned which included a visit to London, in particular the Thames Clipper boat at Greenwich, visits to the market and museum a short talk about the history of Greenwich in the Queen's House. An evening meal was held at the Moat, Wrotham.

Auchel offered the Malling Society a gift of a tree. It was agreed that the tree, and a commemorative plaque, would be installed in Macey's Meadow, near the cricket pavilion. The tree planting ceremony was attended by the Mayor of Tonbridge & Malling, Cllr Mrs Sasha Luck. After the ceremony at Macey's Meadow, a civic reception was held at the Tonbridge & Malling's Council offices at Kings Hill. County Councillor, Trudy Dean, gave a financial contribution towards this project.

Earlier in the year, the Malling Auchel Association held a 'Boules' evening which was well supported and included a contingent from the Tonbridge Le Puy group.

Sadly as members have got older or moved away both associations have had depleting members over the years. As a result, it was decided that 30 years would be the right time to finish the formal twinning on a high note. It is anticipated that informal visits between the remaining families will continue with the occasional social event on the English side

Forthcoming Projects

Heusenstamm Friendship Wood, Haysden Country Park

The Council received a request from Heusenstamm Friendship Circle regarding provision of a sign to increase profile behind the history of the Heusenstamm Friendship Wood. The Council, in liaison with Heusenstamm Friendship Circle, is working with a contractor to create the sign and it is hoped this will be installed early in the New Year.