

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC21/078

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	24 th February 2022
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Kettering Twinning Association
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek the committee's views about a grant for Kettering Twinning Association

2. Recommendations

The committee's views are sought

3. Information

3.1. In the initial 21/22 budget, the former KBC included a sum of £2000 for twinning support. At the time, three twinning links were either live or anticipated.

- Lahnstein in Germany
- Kettering, Ohio, USA
- Kettering, Jamaica.

3.2. At the time, it was assumed that a stand still grant of £1000 could be made available to Lahnstein, a stand still grant of £250 to Ohio and the remainder to help establish the new link with Jamaica, which, whilst agreed by KBC and the Jamaican side, had not been progressed, partly because of the pandemic and local government re-organisation.

3.3. Council at its annual meeting appointed three members to the committees of the relevant twinning associations – Cllrs Carolyn Carter, Eve Edwards and Mark Rowley. This committee at a meeting in June 2021 agreed to defer any decision on twinning support until it had more information.

3.4. In the meantime

- The Ohio Sister City Association has disbanded and passed its remaining assets to the Kettering (Lahnstein) Twinning Association.
- The pandemic has put on hold any visits to and from Germany

3.5. The Kettering Twinning Association has of course had very little expenditure in the last two years. The last grant it received was in 2020 for £1000. The Association has shared its last few years' accounts. They show a balance at the end of each year (which runs from November to October) as

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|--------|---|
| - 2018 | £3625 |
| - 2019 | £4343 |
| - 2020 | £4774 |
| - 2021 | £5795 (this includes £1195 transferred from Ohio Assoc) |

3.6. The last visit to Lahnstein was in 2019 and the last visit from Lahnstein was in 2018; the next likely visit from Lahnstein is in 2022. The 2018 visit cost £4500 to host, although most of this was recovered by contributions; the last visit to Lahnstein was in 2019 and cost £6000, although again most of that was recovered through contributions. However, up front expenditure for visits means a certain level of reserve is necessary.

3.7 The Association no longer benefit from postage, printing and room hire services which KBC provided for free.

3.8. The Association has in the past helped support the Jim Collier Bursary which enables someone from Kettering to visit Lahnstein on work experience for a short period.

3.9. The Association is now asking for its annual grant to be re-introduced, from 2022/23 onwards, to enable it to resume operation, post pandemic.

4. Options

4.1. The Twinning Association has been in existence for fifty years and there were school exchanges that preceded its formation. It is fair to say that it has an elderly membership, many of whom have long connections with it. The same is true in Germany.

4.2. Members may wish therefore, if making a grant, to put some conditions on it which seeks some renewal as well as continuation. Suggested conditions include

- Seeking to widen out membership to bring in a younger cohort
- Engaging more pro-actively with schools and colleges
- Progressing the Jamaica connection, which in turn might help energise membership and school engagement
- Ring fencing the Council's grant to a particular purpose only

5. Consultation and Engagement

5.1. Ideas in 4.2 above have been put to the Associations chairman

6. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

- 6.1. There is £2000 is in this year's budget for twinning support; next year's small grants budget can be used for twinning support if members so decide – see separate item on this agenda.

7. Policy Implications

None.

Background Papers

Association accounts and constitution