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**Report to**

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

6<sup>th</sup> February, 2008

**Report of**

Councillor Chater

**Title**

Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Coventry Association for International Friendship

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**1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 This reports sets out details of the work of Coventry Association for International Friendship (CAIF) over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The City Council continues the appointment of an elected member to CAIF

**3 Information on Work of Outside Body**

- 3.1 The Association works in various ways to advance International Friendship and understanding in Coventry, and to attract other organisations to this objective.
- 3.2 The Association seeks to increase contacts between citizens of Coventry and the citizens of its twin and partner towns, especially through its core activity of organising exchange visits.
- 3.3 The Association seeks to support Coventry Councils international reputation and policies as the City of Peace and Reconciliation.
- 3.4 The Association seeks to draw young people into exchange visits.
- 3.5 The organisation's report for the year ending 31 March 2007 is attached for information on its activities.

**4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment**

- 4.1 The appointment contributes to the Governance arrangements of the Association. (The City Councils current appointee is Chair of Association)
- 4.2 The appointment provides an important link in ensuring that the City Councils priorities for International Friendship and Peace and Reconciliation are considered within the Associations Development Plan.

**5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment**

5.1 The Coventry City Council's representative for Coventry Association for International Friendship is Councillor Chater. During the period between November 2006 and October 2007 13 meetings were held including Committee meetings and General meetings of which Councillor Chater attended 5.

5.2 There is no remuneration associated with the appointment.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

**Description of paper** **Location** CH59

Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies

# Coventry Association for International Friendship

## A Report for the year ending 31 March 2007

### 1 Objectives

The Association has worked in a variety of ways to advance international friendship and understanding in Coventry, and to attract other organisations to this objective.

A second objective has been to increase contacts between the citizens of Coventry and the citizens its twin and partner towns, especially through focus on its core activity of exchange visits.

Its third objective has been through these activities to support Coventry council's international policies of peace and reconciliation.

Its fourth objective has been to make a significant contribution to Peace Month.

A further objective is to draw young people into exchange visits. It is hoped that the build-up of sporting links with the twin towns will serve this aim.

### 2 Membership & Finance

The city council's grant guarantees the running expenses of the Association, such as postage and printing. Subscriptions also increase our income, collected from the greater part of our membership of eighty. Thirdly, receipts into the Hospitality Fund drawn from social events helped to increase total reserves. Finally, for the second year running a grant was applied for and received from the European Commission towards the costs of a multi-city event in Coventry.

### 3 Officers and Committee Members

President	The Lord Mayor, Cllr Shabbir Ahmed
Chairman	Cllr Dave Chater
Vice-Chair	George Miles and Pru Porretta
Secretary	John Moore
Assistant Secretary	Mary Goodwin
Treasurer	Ben Freeman
Social Secretary	Pat Trickett

#### *Committee:*

Cllr John Gazey  
Diana Dodd  
Maureen Porter  
Christine Oddy  
Linda Hirons  
Jennifer Smith  
Margaret Warman (Coventry French Circle)

The Nightingales Choir is affiliated to CAIF and is represented by its director, Pat Trickett. Stoke Park Over-Fifties Club and Coventry Guides are also affiliated bodies..

#### **4 Incoming visits**

People from five twin towns, including Coventry, came together for six days for Peace Month, in October, at CAIF's invitation. CAIF members hosted citizens of Kiel, Dresden, St Etienne and Vannes. The week's programme rested on the premise that mixing serious discussion and light-hearted social activities was a good way to deepen relationships amongst all concerned. A new, strong bond was formed with Dresden and an informal five towns association has come into existence.

There was a conference organised together with Eurolinx (a body representing UK towns with twinning links abroad) consisting of citizen groups and some council representatives. It was addressed by the Lord Mayor and by a speaker from each of our invited twin town groups.

Other activities included a discussion on global warming, a discussion on the European Union, attended by a party of schoolchildren, local visits and a coach trip to London, as well as social evenings.

(A full report, as submitted to the European Commission, is added as an appendix)

When international relations officers of Kiel council visited Coventry in February, CAIF assisted with their entertainment and had a fruitful discussion with them.

#### **5 Outgoing visits**

A visit to Kiel took place in June during Kielerwoche. Our Kiel hosts were as generous as their Coventry counterparts always are. Our visit was well reported in the local newspaper.

Planning began on visits agreed for 2007: namely to Kiel, for the celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its twinning with Coventry; to Dresden, in return for the Dresden visit to CAIF in October 2006; and to Vannes, a visit that falls every two years.

#### **6 Other links**

We have had periodic email exchanges with several other twin and partner towns and cities, notably Meschede, Volgograd, Coventry Rhode Island, St Etienne and Dresden. Our newsletter is sent abroad by email (and a copy is supplied to every Coventry councillor).

#### **7 General meetings**

There is an outside speaker for our usual bi-monthly general meetings, usually on an international theme. The year's speakers were as follows:

*Cllr Ram Lakha* recalled his year as Lord Mayor

*Graham Hopley*, a member of the local group, gave a talk on Amnesty International.

*Pat Trickett* and some members of the Nightingales choir, gave a lively description of the choir's tour in Mexico, earlier in the year.

*Martin Hayward*, Director of the International Centre for Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral, talked about his work

*Jane Longville*, the Asylum and Immigration team manager at Coventry Refugee Centre, explained the work of the organisation

## **8 Heritage Week-end**

A CAIF stall in St Mary's Guildhall attracted a stream of visitors and gained one or two recruits for the association.

## **9 Publicity**

The historical sketch of CAIF – the Blue Book – continues to be useful publicity, and a source of information about Coventry to foreign visitors.

CAIF also put on a display during Heritage Week-end, in September.

## **10 Social activities**

Socialising has again been a positive influence on the morale of the association. Social activities were a tribute to the initiative of a number of members and especially to the skill and enthusiasm of CAIF's social secretary.

The Nightingales choir gave more lively concerts, with some of the receipts going to Tsunami relief appeal.

# **B CAIF Development Plan, 2006-7**

- 1** CAIF will continue to support the initiatives taken by the city council to strengthen Coventry's identity as a city that remembers war and seeks to support peace and reconciliation in the world.

## **2 Incoming visits:**

A visit from the friendship group in Coventry Rhode Island is pencilled in our diary.

We were pleased that our suggestion to the city council that it invite twin-town runners to take part in the Godiva half marathon during Peace Month 2007 found favour. We hope to provide for the guests, if they accept the invitations, and trust that the event will draw young people into twin town exchange visits

The Coventry Rhode Island friendship group have said they would like to visit us before long. .

## **3 Outgoing visits**

A return visit to the Vannes area of Brittany is arranged for August 2007.

An invitation has arrived for a party to visit Meschede in 2008

At the time of writing, very successful visits have been made to Kiel and Dresden, but they belong to next year's report.

#### **4 Peace Month**

A public meeting will be held with Michael Cashman MEP as principal speaker

CAIF will assist with the hosting of half-marathon runners from twin cities.

#### **5 Meetings with civic visitors**

As usual, when asked by the city council, CAIF will help to look after foreign visitors, perhaps by showing them round the city or entertaining them to an evening meal.

#### **6 Heritage Weekend**

CAIF will continue to support the civic initiative with a display of its twin city ties that form part of Coventry's heritage.

#### **7 Social activities**

These are still very popular, including coffee mornings, garden parties and evening excursions to operatic performances in Birmingham. They attract new people to the association, and bring existing members closer together.

#### **8 Publicity**

The historical sketch of the association in its Blue Book will be distributed on suitable occasions in Peace Month.

The association will again mount a display during the city's Heritage Weekend, in September.

#### **9 Conclusion**

CAIF continues to play a worth while role in stimulating public interest in the city's international policies of peace and reconciliation, in bringing together people of various political persuasions, and in fostering friendship with peoples overseas, especially in our twin towns.

Cllr Dave Chater, Chairman

John Moore, Secretary