

TOWN TWINNING PRESENTATION.

Introduction – Thanks to the Mayor, Mayoress, Town Councillors and Town Clerk.

Thank you for this opportunity to present this application to twin Abergavenny with the town that Love Zimbabwe work with, Domboshawa. This town is 40 kilometres north east of the capital of Zimbabwe, Harare. It is Martha's mother's home town and our Community centre there is managed by Martha's two sons, Taurai and Tafadzwa who have both been to stay in Abergavenny.

Since Martha and I came to Abergavenny in 2007 we have been working with many different organisations in the town linking these activities with our work in Zimbabwe. Indeed, our very first event was the Wales Fair Trade Fair in the Market Hall in 2007 promoting cultural understanding, inclusion and Fairtrade. This was supported by the Town Council and the then Mayor, Councillor Martin Hickman. There are 9 elements that are relevant in twinning the two towns.

1. – *The first deals with the suitability of the proposed town and the areas that have some similarity.* I have identified the following similarities – The population of Domboshawa is approximately 16,000 people and is expanding rapidly as a commuter town for Harare. This compares with Abergavenny with a population of 14,000 which has a similar pull for commuters to Cardiff and Newport. Domboshawa has four primary schools and two high schools. It has a main High street with many shops and businesses. All the normal trades are represented- grocery, hardware, tyres, builder's merchants, pharmacies, bars, restaurants, etc. Economic activities – Farming, Agriculture, Retail trade, Livestock & Arts & Crafts. – Social and Environmental issues – Climate change, Extreme weather conditions, Poverty, Food sustainability, Youth opportunities, Education & Health.
2. *Involve the citizens and the whole community. Elected representatives and civil servants can often be the driving force behind projects, but they should not be the only people involved. Schools, sport clubs, leisure groups, senior citizens organizations, and other local community associations should all be involved. At the same time the twinning needs to be visible for every citizen to feel involved. For instance, signs can be posted at the entry of the town hall, and your local newsletter and website can feature news about the twinning. It is important to communicate the impact and benefits of twinning to the wider public, and in particular to the media, to create an accurate image of your twinning.* With that in mind, there are many local organisations and businesses we have already worked with who we would want to involve, such as - Abergavenny Town Council, King Henry Secondary School, Ysgol Y'Fenni, Llantilio Pertholey Primary, Derry View, Our Ladies & St. Michael's Primary (Talks in all on Fairtrade), Mardy football club, Gwent association for voluntary organisations, Disability in Wales and Africa, N H Sound, Women's Institute (talks on Fairtrade), The Methodist & other Churches (Funding for Community Centre), 7 Corners (Supported festival), Abergavenny Community Centre, Tools for Self- Reliance, Rotary Club (Funding for various projects in Domboshawa), The Borough and Melville Theatres, Priory music sessions,

Abergavenny Town of Sanctuary, Homemakers (Book storage), Just Food, Abergavenny Fairtrade Forum (Members since 2007), many local shops and businesses who have supported our events, local musicians, Abergavenny Museum, (Exhibition of influential women settled in Wales), The Abergavenny Food Festival (March for Africa 7 years. Attended by Chief Chinamhora) & The Abergavenny Writing Festival. Other organisations that we would like to work with include- The Civic Society, Danceblast, Abergavenny Community Radio station, Abergavenny Round Table, U3A, Abergavenny Town Football Club, Rareseed Theatre, The Woolcroft, Abergavenny Transition Town, We have a proven record of successful media publicity with over 50 articles published in the Abergavenny Chronicle as well as many articles in the Focus magazine. Love Zimbabwe has also been well represented on social media such as Abergavenny Voice and on BBC Radio Wales and television. We have also hosted several events in the Senedd in Cardiff and have support for the twinning from the AM for Monmouthshire, Nick Ramsay and the Welsh Government Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language, Baroness Eluned Morgan, AM for Mid and West Wales.

These would be twinned with similar organisations in Domboshawa.

3. *Define common objectives.*

You and your partner should define together clear objectives and types of activities, and where possible agree from the outset on dates by which an assessment of the project can be established.

With this in mind we have come up with the following – A mutual working relationship should be established to engender close ties between the towns in various areas. To be able to learn from each other in the areas of culture, education, health, social engagement, trade. To form links between societies, schools, medical establishments and other societies. Those societies should develop their own links for mutual learning. To have regular meetings from all organisations involved in each town to discuss and show progress and communication. Annual exchange visits. It is important to stress that this partnership should benefit BOTH parties. After 15 years working in Zimbabwe, I have identified several areas in which the ‘Western’ link can benefit. With closer communication and visits from the Zimbabwe link people in Abergavenny can learn about a different culture which helps to increase racial tolerance. This can lead to a reduction in ‘hate crimes’. Most people in Domboshawa grow their own organic food. This leads to a healthier diet which could be of benefit to people in Abergavenny, and could also help tackle obesity. This also connects to the wider aspects of over consumption. Family values and respect for elders are core to the Zimbabwean culture leading to more settled family structures. Education is central to life in Domboshawa. Children aspire to go to school and understand the importance of education.

4. *Create a support structure.*

A small but active team, in each of the twinned towns, can help to maintain connections, develop the partnership through new projects, seek financing... This twinning “motor” can be a sort of steering committee.

This means creating a committee in each town.

Abergavenny – The Mayor should always be a member. The rest of the group will comprise of David & Martha Holman, plus one or two councillors (proposed either Teslin Davies or Gethin Jones) and two other members.

Our committee in Domboshawa will be made aware of these issues and our joint work in these areas. This committee will comprise the local ‘Headman’, the managers of our community centre, Taurai & Tafadzwa Sinaro, councillors and one ex headmaster.

5. *Work with schools and young people.*

Love Zimbabwe has already done a significant amount of work in schools in Abergavenny and elsewhere in Wales. We would like to involve a wider range of schools including – King Henry’s, Our Ladies & St. Michaels, Cantreff, Ysgol Y’Fenni and Llantillio Pertholey.

Martha has been working with the British Council’s ‘Connecting classrooms’ initiative which links four schools in South Wales (including Llantillio Pertholey with four schools in the Chinamhora area of Zimbabwe.

This project would help the twinning arrangement as links already exist.

6. *Address the major issues of our day.*

These issues can be about the environment, the future of developing nations, human rights, peace or social inclusion.... or even football or other sports!

In relation to environmental issues, the main concern for both parties would be climate change. This affects Zimbabwe through both drought and flooding. This is also very relevant in Wales. The future of developing nations is something that the Welsh Government takes very seriously and supports projects through it’s Wales for Africa programmes. Human rights issues are perhaps more relevant to Zimbabwe although should obviously be upheld here. Sport is a great leveller. Football is very big in Zimbabwe as well as cricket and tennis.

7. *Plan a sustainable relationship.*

Only by persisting over the years can one town come to count on another, in the event of disasters for instance.

An informal link has been operating between Abergavenny and Love Zimbabwe (Domboshawa) since 2007. Many links have been built over that time between schools, churches, societies and councils who have always been updated and informed of events that have happened in both communities. A book collecting project was started in Abergavenny in 2017 to take books to the community centre in Domboshawa for the new library building. These books will be sent in Spring 2020. Chief Chinamhora has visited Abergavenny and has been granted a civic reception by the then Mayor of the town, councillor Teslin Davies.

8. *Look to the future and build the basis for new exchanges.*

A twinning link can create an ideal environment in which to develop new cooperation. New techniques that can be expanded lie in the areas of social media, mobile phones (Whatsapp) and new technology. These provide more immediate solutions to joint problems and issues. As there is an obvious issue of the distance between the two towns we will take full advantage of new technology.

Domboshawa is now being connected to the main phone lines from Harare which

means that we can have a regular connection on computers and phones. Using Skype facilities would be a huge contribution to achieving direct contact. We are sourcing solar computers from Swansea.

9. Develop a budget and look after the finances

Treasurer role to be instituted in each group.

Last but not least, look after the finances! Any trans-national partnership is bound to cost some money, however carefully the partnership events are planned and organized.

It is helpful if the local authorities can allocate an annual budget, even if it is not a very large sum, to keep the momentum going. And local twinning associations are often very active in local fund-raising – which in itself can bring benefits among the home community.

Draft budget as below –

Inauguration ceremony- Abergavenny – April 2020. Committee and group members. Meal @ £25 per head x 20 - £500.

Inauguration trip to Domboshawa, Zimbabwe- April 2020. Two Committee members for 5/6 days - £3,000 – To include flights, accommodation at the Community Centre and food.

Two annual fundraisers to be organised to raise money for events.

Match funding is available for street signage from the W.C.V.A. grant fund.