

# Neath Town Council's Twinning Survey.



## Background:

Twinned towns participate in a community that extends beyond national borders while retaining local identity. The twinning process and organisations provide an alternative way to engage with politics, and offer opportunities for learning, connecting, organising and caring.

Where local governments were once among the most ardent promoters of twinning, years of austerity coupled with changing processes of financial rationalisation and Brexit, have led many councils to question the value of these relationships. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council are one of those who do not value its significance and importance.

Simply defined, Twinning involves establishing sustained links between communities, usually located in different countries. It may involve members of diaspora groups connecting with home, teachers looking to promote learning about other cultures, artists pursuing collaborations with counterparts abroad, or students taking part in exchanges. Twinning also refers to the construction of formal or informal ties between towns, cities, institutions or localities usually located in different countries.

The twinning's of the post-war period centred on family and schools-based exchanges with a substantial cultural content. In this sense, they may be understood as an experiment in applied cultural diplomacy, targeted at building a 'positive peace' in the context of beleaguered, fragile, and divided national communities.

## Benefits:

For a successful twinning collaboration, we must have the active participation of the community. Elected representatives and civil servants can often be the driving force behind projects, but they should not be the only people involved. Schools, sports 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 of Neath to feel involved. Some of the previous supporting twinning initiatives are still in place, such as the 'welcome to' signs are still in place highlighting the towns Neath are twinned with. 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.

## Questions:

**Were you aware of the benefits of Twinning?**

Yes  No

**Did you know that Neath is already twinned with Vienne (France), Esslingen (Germany) and Udine (Italy)?**

Yes  No

**Did you know that the links with these towns has not been prioritised by NPTCBC for some years?**

Yes  No

**Do you know of anybody who has experienced twinning exchanges either in community groups or schools?**

Yes  No

**Would you support the re-engagement of Neath twinning with Vienne, Esslingen and Udine?**

Yes  No

**If yes, could you explain the benefits you would expect to see from the twinning?**

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**If No, why Not?**

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete our survey.**



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