

TWINNAGE COMMITTEE

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Twinnage Arrears: At the request of the National Council I produced a report on the subject of payment of twinnage arrears for their last meeting. The salient points were:

Formerly all twinnage expenses were met by National Council and bank interest and the reserve fund was used to meet twinnage arrears.

At a National Council meeting in April 2005 I was asked what use was made of the bank interest which we received and replied as above. It was then agreed, without any request from the Twinnage Committee members present, that: "Arrears are DC/CC responsibility but details are needed if they are to follow up....."

This was of course the thin end of the wedge as the agreement for National Council to meet Twinnage costs was removed shortly after and was followed by Twinnage being included in the Special Works list which makes a contribution to National Office costs.

For 2009/10 Twinnage expenses totalled £34117 of which £14960 was our contribution to National Office costs. This was found primarily from Gift Aid.

I am most reluctant to go to the countries we support and tell them we are having to curtail support of some of their most needy conferences and, given the level of expenses now being supported it would put a great burden on Twinnage if the backing of CCs and DCs in meeting arrears was withdrawn.

I went on to ask for the support of all CC Presidents in promoting the need for new twins and circulated the figures showing the number of twins per bank account in each CC which had been distributed at our Birmingham meeting,

The outcome of the discussions was a decision that CCs and DCs would be responsible for meeting twinnage arrears for a period of 5 years. This would not be backdated so the earliest a twin can be handed back is June 2015. I sincerely hope we can find replacement twins in that time.

Twinnage Promotion: A point made to me by a CC President was that we would do better finding new twins if his Twinnage Rep ever turned up for meetings! **PLEASE** attend your CC meetings or at the very least submit a report. A few CCs have two Reps, one who handles finance and the other promotion. This may be a solution if you really cannot make meetings.

Festival Meetings: At Birmingham I asked for invitations for one of the visitors to India to speak at Festival Meetings in every CC by the end of 2011. Several CC Presidents seemed unaware of this so please raise this at your next CC meeting.

Cards from India: New supplies of the beautiful hand embroidered cards from the Jeevan Jyoti project for physically challenged young women have arrived. 10 cards for £12 or 45 cards for £50 including postage. Happy to send on sale or return.

Sudan: In his annual report on the work of the SVP in Sudan, at present in draft, Ian Mawdsley shares his delight that our brother in Sudan Kamal, has been named “Man of the Year” by Caritas Austria. A well deserved accolade (although a view not shared by Kamal in his modesty).

The great news is that all the baby feeding centres have now been re-opened although they are having to work on reduced numbers. Whereas we were feeding 10,000 babies a day at the peak we are now feeding 8,100 babies 3 times a week – still a considerable number. This is as a result of reduced donations from all the European partners except SVP England & Wales and it is worth noting that but for our increased contribution, through the efforts of Twinnage Reps and the generosity of people in England & Wales, the situation would have been nothing short of dire.

Whilst baby feeding is without doubt attracting the minds and hearts of everyone we shouldn't forget the other support provided by the SVP in Sudan. As well as baby feeding the members continue to provide 1 to 1 support through visiting the poor, sick and housebound in their own homes. Other significant major initiatives include looking after about 500 street children in homes/farms, and delivering vital vocational training for a total number of 560 adults compared to 660 last year.

Ian also reminds us that although we always have to take a practical approach in our support, it is no sin occasionally to remember the enormous benefits that we bring to individual lives. Here in the safety and security at homes, it is always difficult for us to understand the magnitude of the impact we have on the poorest of the poor. Imagine a young Sudanese child of about 8 or 9 standing in front of you and saying “Thank you for keeping me alive”.

A full report will be circulated by Ian very shortly.

Disaster Fund: Haiti – our members have been greatly generous and we have been able to send £30,000 to Haiti through Council General. Coincidentally a Vincentian Family initiative, as part of our 350th celebrations, was being established to support the poorest in Haiti before the earthquake struck. Information can be found at www.zafen.org

We will be promoting the Zafen scheme, which allows individuals to make small business start up loans, in the next Vincentian Concern but we are also looking at funding some of the larger projects utilising some of the Disaster Fund monies donated for Haiti.

India: A request has been received from Tuticorin CC, which is at the southern tip of India. *“This is to inform you that on 7th June 2010 around 10 p.m. nearly 130 huts were burnt down in a major fire at Inigo Nagar Thoothukudi, 14 people died and several received severe burn injuries. 125 families have lost all their belongings. 12 Adopted families have lost their huts. Inigo Nagar is a fisherman settlement located near sea shore. With 95% of this residents are Catholics. Most of the settlement were from 2004 Tsunami affected areas. The National Council appeal for immediate relief under Disaster Relief fund to help the victims”*

The conference is twinned with England and Wales. We are looking to send support from the Disaster Fund to help with the rebuilding of peoples homes and lives. This money will be sent with the twinnage remittance next week.