Press Release

Twin Town Commitment Renewed In 10th Anniversary Celebrations

Visitors from Hailsham's French twin town of Gournay-en-Bray were welcomed to the district last weekend to celebrate the 10th anniversary of town twinning.

A special celebration took place at the Hailsham Pavilion on Friday [29th October], where the Mayor of Hailsham and members of the Hailsham & District Twinning Association joined their Gournay-en-Bray counterparts, to mark the anniversary by renewing the town twinning commitment.

Additional events organised as part of the Twinning Association's 10th Anniversary weekend included a tour around local places of interest for French visitors on Saturday [30th October], and a civic dinner and entertainment evening held at Michelham Priory on Sunday [31st October].

The Mayor of Gournay-en-Bray, Monsieur Jean-Lou Pain, and the Mayor of Hailsham, Councillor Robin Kempe, signed the charter declaration. Speaking on behalf of Hailsham residents, Councillor Kempe said that the success of the twinning was down to the "community spirit and increased understanding and mutual respect between the two towns over the past decade."

"We were delighted to welcome the delegation to celebrate the anniversary, and I hope that they had a lovely time during their visit to Hailsham. It was a significant day to celebrate the friendship we have fostered since the original signing of the Twinning Charter in 2000."

Monsieur Le Pain said, "During the last ten years, many things have occurred between our two countries and, thanks to these dynamics, host families have developed loyalty and many personal links have been woven. We can be proud of this success and of writing together a page of history between England and France."

The Twinning Charter between the two towns was originally signed in Hailsham in October 2000, and Gournay-en-Bray in February 2001. Whilst the populations of the towns differ considerably (Hailsham - 20,500; Gournay - 5,000), the facilities in both towns are very similar. A number of fundraising activities and cultural visits in both directions take place each year.

"Over the past 10 years a great many people have been involved in our twinning events," said Paul Simmons, president of the Hailsham & District Twinning Association.

"There have been many friendships that have been formed, and our French visitors have thoroughly enjoyed coming here as part of the two towns' cultural exchange program."

"We are proud that ten years on the twinning links are still going strong, and look forward to many more years of friendship in the future."

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Hailsham & District Twinning Association, please contact John Puttick on 01323 441787 or Paul Simmons on 01323 845006. Alternatively, log on to www.hailsham-gournay.org for details.

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