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SUMMARY OF VISIT TO LEAMINGTON SPA AND WARWICK BY THE MAYOR OF BO TOWN COUNCIL 24/25 NOVEMBER 2003

In view of the strong and long lasting links between the communities of Warwick District UK and Bo District Sierra Leone; we were grateful for this opportunity to host Mrs Nancy Nicholas and her Personal Assistant Mr Amadu Sheriff

During their visit, they were able to meet the Chief Executive and the Chairman of Warwick District Council, to attend a meeting of the Leamington Town Council as guests of honour, to meet the Chairperson, nominated link Councillor and European Officer of the Warwickshire County Council, to visit four primary schools that are linked to primary schools in Bo, to view the Sierra Leone resource section in the Leamington Library, to be entertained by local groups, to see the local botanical collection, and to be given a demonstration of bell ringing. The details of their programme are given overleaf. They were given photographic and video records of their visit.

Achievements.

- Mrs Nicholas was able to reciprocate the visit that the Mayor of Leamington made to Bo in 2001 and help to cement the official link between the two Town Councils
- Her meetings with leaders of the District and County Councils helped to buttress the support that those Councils give to the community link, and to progress their willingness to explore ways in which they can contribute to the development of local government in Bo District
- Each school visited received an endorsement of the value to the people of Bo of the efforts they put into school linking. They were also able to use the visit for educational purposes. In one school Mrs Nicholas and Mr Sheriff answered questions about their country from the assembled year 5 classes. In another a whole school assembly was devoted to appreciating the musical culture of other lands and to furthering ideas of global citizenship. Another school was warmly thanked for the money it has raised for its link school and for a centre for war orphaned children in Bo; and the other school put on a display about their knowledge of Bo.
- Mr Sheriff will endeavour to send books and other materials to augment the Leamington Library resource
- Through Mr Sheriff and Mr Salim, the leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslims in Leamington, the link between the Muslims in each town has been strengthened
- The possibility of a link between groups of disabled people in the two communities has been advanced
- Mrs Nicholas and Mr Sheriff have seen that, through our link, local (indigenous) people have come to learn, appreciate, and perform aspects of Sierra Leone (Mende) culture
- They will have gained a small first hand appreciation of the architecture, organisation, governance, amenities, and home life of our community
- They are the eighth and ninth citizens of Bo to visit our community since the end of the civil war in Sierra Leone. We have found that each such visit, however short, has helped to raise awareness of our link, to further understanding of Sierra Leone, and to make personal bonds between people. During the same period nine citizens of Warwick District have been to Bo. This visit has been part of a cumulative reciprocal process.
- The Mayor of Leamington elect, Councillor Mota Singh, has indicated an interest in visiting Bo during his year of office, if invited to do so.

PROGRAMME FOR THE VISIT OF THE CHAIR OF BO TOWN COUNCIL MRS NANCY NICHOLAS AND HER ASSISTANT MR AMADU SHERIFF

ARRIVAL

Sunday arrive 6 p.m. at station, no engagements - meal at Myf Hodkin's house,

ACCOMMODATION

Mrs Nicholas at the house of Myf Hodkin. Mr Sheriff at John Myers house

MONDAY

9.15 Riverside House Janie Barrett, Chief Executive Warwick District Council

10.15 Town Hall Chair Warwick District Council Michael Doodv

11 St Anthony's School R.C. Primary School.

12-45 LUNCH Restaurant in Park with committee and guests 1 p.m. press photo, Tour of glass house

3 Brookhurst School Year 5 Assembly (what we know about Bo)

During afternoon also a visit to Library (possibly museum) and rest period

5-30 Leamington Town Mayor (cold buffet)

6 Leamington Town Council

Informal Reception (Parish Church) Finish 8-,0

bell-ringing demonstration, entertainment at 8 by Songlines and Bambadinka drummers

TUESDAY

9- 10-30 Ferncumbe Primary School Hatton Assembly, classroom/displays , coffee break with teachers.

11 St Mary's R.C. Primary School Warwick

12 Reception Warwickshire County Council Shire Hall

12-45 Lunch Quaker Community Cafe Committee members, review of visit

DEPARTURE

14.0 rest or tour of historic Warwick.

14.48 leave by train Arrive London Marylebone 16.24