

Notes from meeting with Sink or Swim

22nd March 2021

Representing Copmanthorpe Community Pool (aka 'Sink or Swim' – SoS):

Joanna Bowen, Derek Bowen, Claire Khouja

Representing Copmanthorpe Primary School:

Jenny Rogers, Peter Northfield, Menna Godfrey, Antoinette Burroughs

Menna apologised for not notifying SoS that Antoinette had been invited to the meeting. SoS were happy for Antoinette to be present.

Joanna updated that:

- SoS had felt in limbo since the governors decided to withdraw support from the project but in light of it had paused the lottery and no further grant applications had been made
- The two major funding bodies which the Trustees are ready to apply to are still only accepting Covid19-related applications
- The Trustees and volunteers still believe that the project should continue, and would like the governors to change their decision
- Pledges have been pursued and total £3495 (with £1475 pledged 1-22 March 2021 alone) suggesting that the project is warmly viewed by the community, and as shown by the community survey last year (see Community Survey below)
- Trustees have received comments from some in the community questioning if governors had considered the project from Copmanthorpe's perspective as well as the school's and asking who the governors were, i.e. are they local?

Joanna added that if it is the lack of progress that is the issue for governors then SoS want to point out that any project would have suffered the same in this pandemic. SoS would like to reframe the project in terms of funding and time frames which would require fewer grants to be obtained. SoS ask the governors if this would be supported? Would governors like SoS to look into reopening the pool first and developing it later? (see details in Community Survey

The Community Survey was due to include several face-to-face questionnaires, which could not take place due to the first Covid lockdown. Nevertheless, returned questionnaires revealed that 20% of respondents had to travel outside the village for swimming. This means that potentially 900 villagers (20% of ~4500 residents) could benefit from a village pool.

Phased Re-opening of the Pool below)

Joanna and Claire explained that the government has announced a new fund for up to £250 000 for community development, which opens in June 2021 (see New Relevant Grants below). This could be another source of money. SoS would like to move forward by obtaining the lease via the school and working more in partnership with the governors and school. To save costs SoS could project manage it themselves.

Derek stated he had spoken with Andy or Tim at City of York Council (CYC) some months ago to ask whether agreement in principle for the community asset transfer could take place under the, then,

CYC policy and process. Andy and Tim agreed to look into this, but this has been put on hold as with other project activity. Derek added that he sees the governors' problem as a balance against other projects – would an alternative project benefit the children or just manage the building? The pool would benefit the children and the community.

Jenny and Menna explained that the pool was built before the National Curriculum and even after SoS's proposed plans it would not be sufficient to meet the needs of the year 6 pupils, who need to be able to swim 25 metres in a proficient stroke (see National Curriculum below).

Menna added that it was too early to share the school's alternative plans for the pool building but that they are all focused on the children and Copmanthorpe community. She explained that being completed in a timely fashion was important for any project.

Peter explained, in response to the questions about the governors, that all except one lives in Copmanthorpe and that one governor lives within the catchment area. Menna reminded everyone that details on each governor are available to the public on the school website. Peter stated that only the local authority can transfer the lease and he is unaware of early transfer ever having been allowed. Antoinette added that the school had worked hard on the lease transfer to SoS but that early lease transfer did seem possible.

Peter questioned that, as stated in the recent SoS Facebook posting, £40 000 would be sufficient to get the project started. The school had received quotes of higher amounts for making the pool building serviceable. Joanna explained she hadn't dealt with the figures and couldn't comment (see update in National Curriculum

A reopened school pool would benefit year 6 pupils who then be able to practice and learn to swim so that they are able to swim 25 metres when they do go to a bigger pool. A few lessons in year 6 is insufficient for children who have never had swimming lessons elsewhere, and disadvantages poorer pupils. It would also benefit children in years 1 to 5, who would otherwise rely on parents/carers for swimming lessons, and increase the success rate of children achieving the curriculum requirement.

Project Costs below). Jenny explained that LHL had quoted £80 000 to make the building serviceable.

Derek asked how the school would manage the access problems posed by the school to SoS. Menna explained that, as in the letter explaining the governing board's decision, the access problem was not a factor for withdrawing support. Menna added that the school did appreciate the value of having a pool in Copmanthorpe in regards to the obesity and mental health agenda.

Claire shared that the SoS project is a good one and it just needs time. Menna asked for the costs of the alternative proposals – Joanna explained none existed currently as the Trustees and volunteers had felt in limbo but that they could put these into writing if the governing board wanted that. Menna stated that they should not spend lots of time and effort writing proposals before the next full governors board in mid-May as the board may still decide to withdraw their support for SoS.

Notes

Whilst checking and revising the above for accuracy, Copmanthorpe Community Pool have added these notes to provide further details discussed in the 22 March meeting and additional relevant information that has since come to light.

Community Survey

The Community Survey was due to include several face-to-face questionnaires, which could not take place due to the first Covid lockdown. Nevertheless, returned questionnaires revealed that 20% of respondents had to travel outside the village for swimming. This means that potentially 900 villagers (20% of ~4500 residents) could benefit from a village pool.

Phased Re-opening of the Pool

The current Project timeframe is imposed by CYC's requirement for 90% of funding to be raised before their lengthy processes of community asset transfer can begin. SoS suggest that timeframe could be reduced if we split the project into two phases:

1. The repair and reopening of the pool as it is
2. A later extension and improvement of the facilities.

This would mean a lower fundraising target to get the building back in use sooner and having a greater chance of funding phase 2 with the pool open and demonstrating community demand and potential.

New Relevant Grants

The Community Ownership Fund recently announced by the UK Government (<http://bit.ly/communityownershipfund>) is highly relevant to the pool project as it will support communities in taking over and running assets that would otherwise be lost:

"From summer 2021 community groups will be able to bid for up to £250,000 matched-funding to help them buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to run as community-owned businesses. In exceptional cases, up to £1 million matched-funding will be available to help establish a community-owned sports club or help buy a sports ground at risk of being lost without community intervention."

[The Hobson Charity](#) are already interested in supporting the Project and could provide the match-funding required by the Community Ownership Fund.

The Levelling Up Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund recently announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak in his Comprehensive Spending Review Statement could also benefit local swimming pools as identified by Swim England's Chief Executive Jane Nickerson (<http://bit.ly/investmentinpools>).

National Curriculum

A reopened school pool would benefit year 6 pupils who then be able to practice and learn to swim so that they are able to swim 25 metres when they do go to a bigger pool. A few lessons in year 6 is insufficient for children who have never had swimming lessons elsewhere, and disadvantages poorer pupils. It would also benefit children in years 1 to 5, who would otherwise rely on parents/carers for swimming lessons, and increase the success rate of children achieving the curriculum requirement.

Project Costs

£40,000 was mentioned in a recent Facebook post as a realistic initial target to aim for (equivalent to ~£10 per Copmanthorpe resident) that would fund the items mentioned (new liner, deeper pool, new steps for accessibility, upgraded pipework and filtration, dehumidifiers) and offer a tangible sense of progress rather than simply noting the full amount.

If the Project continues, SoS will also seek discounts on materials etc. (current costs are based on the Charity paying the 'going rate') and seek 'in-kind' contributions of labour, materials etc. from local companies and tradespeople.