



9 Merchant Way
Copmanthorpe
York, YO23 3TS

Copmanthorpe Primary School
Low Green
Copmanthorpe
York, YO23 3SB

15th July 2020

Re: School Governors' Decision on Sink or Swim Project

Dear Menna,

Thank you for your letter of 1st July. Please also extend our thanks to the School Governors for giving Joanna the opportunity to update them on the progress of the Copmanthorpe Community Pool Project at the 30th June Full Governors Board (FGB). The Copmanthorpe Community Pool Trustees appreciate the Governors' consideration of our situation but are very disappointed with the requirement to demonstrate guarantees for at least 50% of the necessary Project funding before the next FGB on 20th October 2020. We appreciate that a decision for the future use of the pool and pool building is required as soon as possible. However, the 50% funding requirement is simply not achievable **due to factors beyond the control of the Trustees.**

The majority of the costs of reopening the pool will need to be met by grants but the impact of Covid-19 and other factors mean that we will not have received decisions on our applications before the FGB in October. As we detailed in our responses document to the Governors' information request, and Joanna further explained in the 30th June FGB, awarding bodies are either not accepting applications or only accepting applications for Covid-19 -related projects. This includes the two funders we are targeting for £100K each – Sport England (not accepting applications) and the Reaching Communities National Lottery Fund (only considering Covid-19 related projects). Furthermore, whilst we have other applications recently submitted or ready to be submitted, the typical waiting period for a decision is likely to extend beyond your October deadline (even without considering the additional delays due to Covid-19).

The Trustees are also conscious that the pool has been unused since March 2016 and represents both a safety risk and a wasted resource. However, we respectfully remind the Governors that they themselves first led efforts to save the pool and that our Project began in July 2017 as a voluntary and community-led initiative following little progress in the preceding 16 months, and that the original project to build the pool took almost 4 years¹. Since 2017, the Project has not been straightforward, as described in previous updates to the Governors, largely because the pool was already closed and made demonstrating local demand and income-generating potential difficult. Nevertheless, the Trustees have achieved several milestones including producing a detailed business plan (that has been commended by community and voluntary sector professionals), obtained charity status (a frequent prerequisite for grant awards), obtained a draft Lease from City of York Council (although some matters raised by the Trustees still await a response

¹ Source: Frost, F and Ansell, M *Copmanthorpe School: Its Growth and Development* (available in Copmanthorpe Library)

from the School), and conducted a Community Survey to support grant applications (which has demonstrated widespread support for retaining the pool as a community facility). Whilst these achievements have incurred delays, they have been vital steps in making progress with the Project. The Trustees and other volunteers have also achieved this and raised £9559² with little support from the Governors beyond occasional endorsements.

In the 1960s, the School built the swimming pool with the support of the community, including cash contributions from many households. The Community Survey has confirmed that today's community similarly want to support the refurbishment and enhancement of the pool to fulfill its original purpose of providing PE curriculum activities for school children and to provide a facility for the community. We have also been promised letters of support from the Parish Council and Councillor David Carr (to follow). The Trustees encourage the Governors to work together with the community on the pool once more. The current financial limitations placed on schools by Government, and community support for the pool past and present, mean that our Project provides the only opportunity to revive the pool. We do not wish to obstruct the School using the pool building for other purposes if the School or Governors have plans ready to implement. However, should our Project be abandoned, the School is left with a building that requires significant funds to repurpose or to safely remove – asbestos is known to be present and estimates obtained in 2016 suggested that the cost to demolish the building would be around £20K.

It is clear that a final decision on the Project is required both for the School and for the Copmanthorpe Community Pool Trustees and volunteers. We propose that this final decision is not a date by which a proportion of the total funding required is guaranteed, which is beyond the Project's control as explained above. Instead, we propose that when the success or otherwise of funding applications for large proportions of the total costs are known the decision to proceed with or abandon the Project be discussed. These applications include a Sport England application for £100K that will be submitted as soon as submissions being accepted (announcement in this respect has been promised end of July 2020), and a Reaching Communities National Lottery Fund application for £100K that will be submitted as soon as submissions beyond Covid-19 related projects are being accepted. In this manner, the School and the Trustees will have the relevant information from which to review the whole Project.

The Trustees note that the next Full Governors Board is on 20th October 2020. To prevent further delay, we request that the Governors consider and respond to this letter as soon as possible. We hope that the Governors appreciate that our proposal offers a constructive way forward for both School and the Trustees, and that we can work together to reopen the swimming pool as a community facility that enhances both the reputation of the village and the School.

Joanna Bowen, David Chapman, Claire Khouja
Trustees, Copmanthorpe Community Pool

² Figures from accounts up to 30th June 2020, consisting of £3450 from grants and £6109 from local fundraising.