

# Cullompton Swimming Pool Campaign

## Frequently Asked Questions – Summer 2015

### **1. Where will the pool be?**

In the old indoor bowls hall at Padbrook Park Hotel and Golf Course, Cullompton. The owners are giving the hall to the community on an extended rent-free lease (e.g. 80 or 99 years – the exact period to be confirmed later this year.)

### **2. Isn't Padbrook Park for sale?**

Yes, but it's been on the market for over 5 years with no sign of any sale happening. If it ever happens we'll work with the current owners to put an asset lock on the bowls hall so it can only be used for a community pool. (We'd be very surprised if the new owners didn't want a pool, since they'd be effectively getting it for free.)

In case anything goes wrong, Mid Devon District Council has offered us a back-up site in front of Culm Valley Sports Centre (between the sports hall and the road) but it will cost us more to build the pool there as there is no existing building to put it in.

### **3. Would hotel guests be able to use the pool?**

Yes. They will be given a free pass to use the pool during public sessions. But our research shows that fewer than 10% of hotel guests will actually take up the offer. Strangely, the fact that there is a pool on site will encourage more people to use the hotel (which is good for the hotel's business), even though most of those people won't use the pool when they get there.

### **4. How big will the pool be?**

We're planning a 25 metre main pool – we're not sure about the number of lanes yet.

### **5. Will the pool be indoors, will it be heated?**

Yes and yes.

### **6. Will there be a learner pool?**

Yes. There will be a learner pool, and also a hydrotherapy pool. The hydrotherapy pool will be screened off for privacy and will have its own entrance and changing area.

### **7. Who will own and manage the pool?**

The pool will be owned by the community and managed by a panel of voluntary trustees on behalf of the community.

## **8. Aren't swimming pools terribly expensive to run?**

They certainly were in the past, but costs are falling and we're confident that a pool in Cullompton would be sustainable and viable. The main expenses associated with running a pool are generally heating, management/staffing and chemicals, and we can eliminate almost all of these.

Heating: solar PV panels, with the feed-in tariff being used to fully offset the cost of running the latest generation of heat exchangers.

Management: a voluntary panel of trustees.

Staffing: paid lifeguards, but all the other staff will be volunteers – receptionists, cleaners, etc. They will receive a free swim for every 2 hours they work.

Axminster's Flamingo Pool is very similar to what we are planning (except they don't have a separate learner pool). They started out in 1998 using only volunteers, but are now so profitable that they pay 100% of their staff. We hope to do the same in Cullompton – and the Axminster team is happy to help us do it.

Chemicals: we will eliminate 99% of chemicals by using UV or ionising filters. These are becoming increasingly common – Tiverton's pool uses this system, for example.

## **9. How will you ensure you can stay in business?**

We are putting together a detailed business plan, closely based on the one produced for at Axminster's Flamingo Pool. They have operated profitably since 1998, with a similar population size to Cullompton's, and with similar facilities to those we are planning.

We are surveying every household within the catchment area of our pool to ensure there is sufficient demand. We need to have all of this information in place before we can apply for the major grants we will need to build the pool – and we will only get those grants if we can prove there is sufficient demand and that we can stay in business. We are confident that this is the case, as a pool has been at the top of Cullompton's wish-list since 1922. Mid Devon District Council and Devon County Council both acknowledge that there is an unmet need for a pool in Cullompton (though they don't have the funds to build and operate it themselves).

## **10. Are you sure you will get planning permission?**

MDDC have given the pool their official backing and sent us a letter expressing their support. We have had a meeting with their Head of Planning who has confirmed that Padbrook Park is an ideal site for the pool. MDDC's 2004/5 feasibility study on the pool also recommended a partnership with Padbrook Park. The site is currently used for sporting activities, so there will be no major change of use. And the pool is included in Cullompton's Neighbourhood Plan. So there is every indication that planning permission will be granted. We will obviously need to have it in place before we can get the major grants, so we're working on this at the moment.

### **11. Won't a pool in Cullompton take business away from other pools in the area?**

We have studied this in detail and found that a pool in Cullompton will have very little impact on other pools. Many formerly keen swimmers have told us they can't be bothered to go all that way just for a swim, so they don't go any more. There is no bus service between Cullompton and Tiverton after 6.35pm, and the cost of taking a family there by public transport during the day can be prohibitive (and it can take up to an hour each way). Tiverton's pool in particular is frequently overcrowded or closed for classes, clubs or galas and they turn people away – not good if you've just spent an hour on a bus to get there. We are confident that the other pools will quickly make up any shortfall in their business with a bit of local advertising and promotion.

### **12. Will it put up our Council Tax?**

No. We are raising the money for the pool ourselves and will run it as a charitable/social enterprise on behalf of the community using volunteers. It will not be a council-run pool like Tiverton's or Crediton's. If you don't want to use it, it will not cost you a penny.

### **13. Has this sort of thing been tried anywhere else?**

Yes. There are hundreds of pools all over the country which operate this way and are profitable. In this area they include Flamingo Pool in Axminster, Chudleigh, Clyst Hydon, Crewkerne Aqua Centre, Kingsteignton, South Molton, Topsham and Wiveliscombe.

### **14. How much money have you raised and how much do you need?**

The total cost will be about £2.25 million. We need to raise the first £150,000 of this ourselves to prove there is a local demand for the pool. The rest of the money will then come from grants from national funding organisations such as Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund, local and regional donors, as well as from sponsors and the sale of shares – and anything else we can think of.

We currently have £58,000 in our bank account, plus £20,000 held in trust for the hydrotherapy pool, and the promise of £40,000 from a local housing developer, which is a total of £118,000. So we need to raise another £32,000 before we can apply for the big grants.

### **15. What happened to all the money raised in the past?**

All money raised between 1922 and 1984 was returned to the town at various times, including gifts to servicemen returning from WWII, purchase of the CCA fields, and running the old pool at the Community College (which has since been filled in and will not be reopened).

The current campaign began in 1985 with a balance of £0.00. All money raised since then is held in our bank account, and we have made sure it can only be used for a swimming pool in Cullompton.

## **16. How long before the pool opens?**

We hope to raise the remaining £32,000 within 2 years. The process of applying for major funding takes over a year. Once we get the money, building the pool and installing the equipment, converting the changing areas, etc will take 6 – 9 months. So a realistic target would be for the pool to open within about 4 years.

If more people help us, and we are able to raise the money in a shorter time, then it might open sooner than that.

## **17. How can people help?**

- We need more people to join our team. There are currently not enough of us to do everything that needs doing, so some important things aren't getting done or are taking much longer than they should. We meet for 2 hours on the second Tuesday of each month at Padbrook Park (starting at 6.30 pm).
- We need volunteers to work in our shop, both on the shop floor and upstairs sorting, cleaning and pricing donated items.
- We need more stock to sell in our shop – books, clothing, CDs and DVDs, video games, toys, good quality bric-a-brac, household goods, kitchenware, ornaments, and so on. Everything we sell is 100% donated. So if it's gathering dust, please give it to us! If you can collect donations from your friends and neighbours, that would be even better. (We can come and collect it.)
- We need people to help us deliver our surveys to every household in the catchment area. (Only Cullompton has been completed so far.) We also need people to help us get as many responses back as possible – via publicity, constant reminders and encouragement. We need to organise central collecting points in every community so people can return their completed surveys easily.
- We need more helpers at our fundraising events – people to set things up, run the stalls, act as marshals, tidy up afterwards, and so on.
- We need more people to take part in our fundraising events:

How about getting a team together for our Walking Half Marathon on 16<sup>th</sup> August?

- We also need as much help as we can get with publicity.

## **18. Are you a registered charity?**

Yes. In April 2015 we became a charitable incorporated organisation. Our charity number is 1161344.

## **19. How can I find out more?**

Come to our stall at Cullompton Town Fair at the CCA Fields on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June (12pm – 4pm). We'll have an information stand and several members of our team will be running stalls and activities. There will be stalls and games, welly wanging, a bouncy castle, treasure hunt, human fruit machine, coconut shy, refreshments, and all sorts of other things. Great fun for the whole family – and free admission.

We have a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation that we can give to groups, schools, councils, etc. This covers the history of the campaign and goes into more detail about many of the points covered in this document.

## **20. How can I contact you?**

Call in at our shop at 15 Fore Street, Cullompton, EX15 1JS – we're next to Bubble's launderette and Jeeves Sandwich Bar.

Phone: 01884 33978 (Kate)

Email: [admin@cullypool.org.uk](mailto:admin@cullypool.org.uk)

Website: [www.cullypool.org.uk](http://www.cullypool.org.uk)

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter.