

Cullompton Swimming Pool Campaign  
Committee Meeting 11  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2012, The Market House Inn, Cullompton

Attendees: Dave Haslett (Chair + minutes), James MacPherson, Sean Burrett, Anita North, Sharon Vaughan, Mary Christie

Apologies: Lynne Read

Absent: Carla Wetherell, Caroline Pring

**1. Welcome and announcements**

Pete Woodley (grants and donations) has resigned from the committee as he is in the process of moving to Tiverton. We wish him well for the future, and he has promised to follow our progress.

A number of people have expressed an interest in joining the committee, so hopefully our numbers will soon increase again.

**2. Previous Minutes, Matters Arising, Action Points**

Previous minutes agreed.

Car boot sale

Sean is still awaiting a response from Cadeleigh Estates regarding the use of the old Somerfield car park for a car boot sale. Sharon said the contractors replacing the water pipes in Exeter Road had wanted to use that car park, but were unable to do so because of an insurance issue. This might also prevent us from using it.

Sean has received a quote to use the Station Road/Forge Way car park: £75 for the morning. This seems a lot, but if we charged £5 per car to sell and 50p or £1 to park it might still be worth doing. Additional money could be made by selling refreshments, and this alone might cover the cost of the car park. We will need to make some further enquiries to find out how many sellers are likely to attend.

Dave has been to look at the Community Centre car park, which Mary suggested previously, and he agrees it would be large enough for a car boot sale – it can hold about 40 cars. Mary is awaiting a response from the manager, but he is away at the moment. The manager is keen to support local groups, but the centre's high prices are a concern. Hopefully they will be soon be reduced to compete with other facilities.

Other options for a car boot sale include Padbrook, which the previous committee tried without much success. Also St Andrew's car park, though we will need to find out whether it would be empty enough on a Sunday morning. The Manor House Hotel car park only holds about 20 cars, but it would allow us to start small and consider moving if it got too big, and we could probably get it free of charge.

## Shop

Dave attended the Cullompton Traders Association meeting in March. The general consensus was that the Town Hall should be the main tourist information point in the town. However, it is not always open, and is not publicised as a tourist information centre, so visitors don't know where to go. In the meantime it was felt that all the traders in the town should provide some degree of tourist information, and our shop could do this too, or be a second information point for the town. If we put a prominent sign in the window to advertise this, it should bring more customers in. Space in the shop is quite limited, but we should be able to find room for a rack of leaflets. Most of the shop staff have good local knowledge.

If we promote local attractions they should look more favourably at donating tickets for prizes.

We will need to find out who is responsible for providing tourist information in towns, as there may be funding available. Pete was going to do this, but has now left.

**Action Point** – Dave and Lynne to get a leaflet rack for the shop, get some leaflets from the Town Hall and Tesco's, and put a sign in the window saying Tourist Information.

**Action Point** – James to look at funding for information centres.

## General discussion

Anita felt that the Town Council should be leading the swimming pool campaign, since it will bring so much benefit to the town, and is within their remit.

James felt it was important that we establish a formal body as soon as possible, with the community benefit scheme to follow at a later date. This would allow us to apply to the Town Council and County Council for funds, without them taking control.

Large funding organisations require formal business plans with evidence of need and sustainability before they will consider issuing grants. Sean said we should conduct a detailed survey after running a series of events over the summer to raise our profile.

Sean, James and Sharon said it was vital that we quashed the public perception that we are building another local authority pool.

Mary is looking at the catchment area and population size for our pool. This should include Ottery St Mary, where people have already said they will use our pool rather than Honiton's. Broadclyst should also be included – it will be quicker and easier to get to our pool than to Exeter.

## **3. Feedback from the Easter Egg Hunt**

We sold 57 entry forms and raised approximately £160. The only cost was £15 for use of the Baptist Church hall, but the money from selling refreshments covered this.

Feedback from the public was very good. They were delighted that there was something going on in Cullompton rather than having to go outside the town. Some of the traders reported a significant increase in takings on the day, and public awareness of the range of businesses in the town was also increased. Although it didn't make a huge amount of money, it was worth doing, and is worth repeating as an annual event, because of the positive community spirit it generated.

There were far more than 57 people taking part; a lot of families and groups only bought one entry form between them. We should consider charging per person or per family/group (of up to 4 people) next time, rather than per entry form.

It might have been better to have had separate prizes for children and adults, so those paying the lower entry fee weren't eligible for the main prize. Sharon said the prize wasn't the thing that drew people in; it was the taking part in a community event – and several hours of low-cost children's entertainment. A large Easter egg and a certificate would have been perfectly adequate. We could also consider medals.

None of the children taking part were older than primary school age.

One shop refused to take part.

The tickets to Yarak Birds of Prey were donated back to the campaign by the winners, so they will now be one of the raffle prizes in the shop in May.

Several people said they would be unable to take part as they were on holiday on the day of the event. There isn't much we can do about this, and we agreed to stick to Easter Saturday next year, so that the shops are open and the traders benefit.

We might use different picture cards next time, e.g. bunnies or chicks.

#### **4. Fundraising events**

**Action Point** – Dave and Sean to set the questions for the treasure trail by the next meeting.

**Action Point** – Sean to contact the Rugby Club to see if we can use it as a base for the sponsored walk. Preferred date: a Sunday near the end of July, before the schools break up.

**Action Point** – Mary to discuss the menu for the 1940s Evening with the Manor House Hotel, and to find out when the musicians are available in August.

We are proposing a charge of £15 per person for the 1940s Evening. If we sell 80 tickets we should raise about £400 after deducting the cost of the food and musicians. The Manor is letting us use their function room free of charge.

Several people have suggested holding a sponsored cycle as well as a sponsored walk. We will need to give the route careful thought as there aren't many cycle paths in the area. We could hold it along the canal in Tiverton, but getting the bikes there might be a problem. Alternatively (or as well) we could run it at Padbrook's gym using their

exercise bikes, and people could clock up the necessary number of miles over several sessions. We could also hold a 24-hour cycle relay there. We will discuss this further at our next fundraising meeting.

James suggested a raft race, but we didn't think the river was deep enough. We agreed that something water-based would be a good idea. Sharon suggested replicating the duck race, which was hugely popular, but perhaps using armbands instead of ducks, and holding it in the river rather than the leat, as it flows faster.

Another suggestion was a murder mystery evening, which could be held at the Manor House Hotel. We would need to work out how such an event might work with around 80 people taking part. The Community Centre ran one last year, so we will speak to them about it.

**Action Point** – Mary to contact William Wheeler, one of the organisers of the Community Centre's murder mystery event.

## **5. Accounts update**

Anita needs a signature from our former Secretary (Carol Pickering) to open the bank account. Carol is still a keen supporter, and Sharon said she would ask her to sign the forms so we can open the account. We will then do a change of signature for the Secretary role. Sharon is happy to be a signatory, but does not want to be Secretary. Sharon and Carla offered to help Anita with the accounts.

**Action Point** – Anita/Sharon to contact Carol.

## **6. Charity status update**

Charlotte Weedon from the Community Council of Devon is leaving on 4<sup>th</sup> May. Dawn Eckhart is taking over for the time being.

The Exeter Real Food shop is run as a community benefits scheme like the one we are considering for the pool. They sold shares to their local community and raised £235,000. Wessex Community Assets helped them with this.

**Action Point** – Anita to contact Wessex Community Assets to see if they can also help us.

## **7. Shop update**

Dave said the shop is doing well, with takings of £211.17 in the first 7 days of trading. Our running costs are approximately £6 per day, which we are easily covering. At the moment we are only selling donated items, mostly left over from the table top sales, but further donations are arriving daily. We intend also selling t-shirts, stickers and bags featuring the Cully Pool logo.

18 people have contacted us about working in the shop, but we're still waiting for some of them to come forward. We have 8 volunteers in place, and need 12 to run the shop full time, each doing two 2-hour sessions per week. We also need a handful of

others to cover absences. Dave is confident that we will get all the people we need within the first month or so, and he and Lynne are doing extra sessions in the meantime.

Dave is managing the rota for now, and is continuing to interview volunteers. Sharon said one of the volunteers should take over the rota as soon as possible, as Dave has enough to do already.

We have an arrangement with the Brainwave Charity Shop to send them any clothes that are donated to us. In exchange they will send us any books they receive. Sharon suggested setting up an arrangement with Hospice Care too.

Sean tried to sell some of our ornaments on eBay, but noticed they were all slightly damaged. Similar (undamaged) items are selling for up to £300. Sean will list them on eBay anyway, but will say they are slightly chipped or scratched.

We have a painting which we have been told may be worth up to £100. Dave has removed it from the shop while we find out more about it.

A girl with learning disabilities is keen to help in the shop. We agreed that this would be ok as long as she has her care worker with her. She can rearrange the books, dust the shelves and clean the window.

Mary said we need to set up an arrangement with Black Beauty so we know who is responsible for cleaning the toilet, as we share this facility with them.

**Action Point** – Anita to ask Sarah whether we can use her clothes rack for the shop

James said we should look out for a clothes dummy that we could put in the window with one of our t-shirts on. Mary suggested getting some hangers that allow you to put multiple t-shirts on a single hanger.

We have received 2 donations, each for £100, in the last few days.

## **8. Location/site update**

James has contacted Persimmon, but the person he needs to speak to is away.

**Action Point** – James to email Daniel Heathcote, Land Director at Persimmon

James has also been in touch with PineLog, who manufacture commercial leisure pools. They are sending him brochures and plans for the types of pools they can build. Their prices range from £200,000 for a small pool, up to £2 million for a full-size leisure centre pool. James has seen some examples of their work and is impressed by their modern designs.

Dave provided James with details of Chudleigh Pool. This is a community-run pool, based at the primary school. It is seasonal, open air, solar heated, with low chlorine. It

is run by a volunteer committee, with the only paid staff being lifeguards. It seems to be very successful, and might be worth a visit later in the year.

We understand that Aldi may be about to build a supermarket on land in Longbridge Meadow where we had considered putting the pool. We were told we wouldn't be allowed to build there as it is part of the flood plain. Devonshire Homes have also submitted another application to build on the site of the old greenhouses at Culm Lea, which we were told we couldn't use due to restrictions on the motorway junction. We will keep an eye on these developments. It may be worth speaking to Devonshire Homes at a later date.

We still need to visit the site of the old pool at Cullompton Community College. Dave said Google Maps has updated its satellite view, and the site of the old pool can now be seen clearly. It looks to be about the same size as one of the adjacent tennis courts.

**Action Point** – Sean to arrange a visit to the college pool site

We noted reports in the press that Kingsteignton pool is having financial problems, and needs to find £20,000 in operating costs to open for its summer season in May. We don't have any further details, but it will be worth monitoring to see how it is resolved.

Anita said that while it would be great to have an indoor pool, an open air one would be better than nothing, and most people would still use it. After some discussion we agreed that our aim was to build an indoor pool, and we will continue looking at plans, designs and costings for these. However, if we were unable to raise sufficient funds, we do have the fallback position of building an outdoor pool. But we would ensure that proper footings were put in place during construction to support a cover, and fundraising would continue with the aim of installing a cover as quickly as possible.

We thought that a greenhouse-like cover would be adequate, provided that it allowed for year-round use of the pool. The type of cover will need to be fully investigated at a later date, to ensure it allows for year-round use, is sufficiently insulated to avoid heat loss in winter, and sufficiently ventilated to avoid condensation problems, which have been a problem at other pools.

We noted that there are several grants available for green energy and ecological building projects, which would also reduce our operating costs.

We agreed to reduce the fundraising thermometer target on our website from the overall target of £1 million (including grants, etc) to our local fundraising target of £100,000.

## **9. Response to recent letter/comment in the Culm Valley Gazette**

A recent letter and comment in the Culm Valley Gazette, plus the survey they published on Facebook, have generated quite a bit of ill feeling, not least amongst ourselves. The letter was based on incorrect figures, and both writers seem to be

poorly informed about what we are doing. The correct information is readily available had they bothered to look for it.

We agreed to write 4 separate letters to the Gazette. These will cover:

- what we are doing and how we are doing it
- the financial side, and planned formal structure of the group
- why there is a need for a pool in Cullompton and why the one in Tiverton is unsuitable for people living in the Cullompton area
- the respective catchment areas of Tiverton and Cullompton, and how Tiverton could make up for any loss of business within its own catchment area if Cullompton swimmers stopped using it

**Action Point** – Mary, James, Anita and Sharon to send their letters to Dave, who will edit them as necessary and ensure that all the points are covered and there is no repetition. Everyone should then send their letters to the Gazette individually

**Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 6.30pm at the Market House Inn (children's room)