

HARINGEY AQUATICS – THIRD POOL CAMPAIGN

Wood Green Regeneration is an important opportunity to meet the demand for more public swimming pools in Haringey

Background – Haringey Aquatics

Haringey Aquatics is a volunteer led, amateur aquatics club affiliated to the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA). We fulfill a defined role in the borough's 'Aquatic Plan' in pre-competitive and competitive aquatics as well as running a 'community programme in Northumberland Park, N17.

We have protected pool time at Park Road and Tottenham Green pools for development swimming (pre-competitive), competitive swimming and water polo and at Park Road, for pre-competitive and competitive diving, with a total membership of more than 300 young people.

We run a community programme at Northumberland Park Community School that provides low cost Learn to swim sessions for more than 300 primary school children, a rookie lifeguard scheme and some classes for 'women only' and mixed adults.

We are a Swim 21 accredited club with fully trained and DBS checked staff. Haringey Aquatics has increased in size, scope and competitiveness since 2009. We are regularly short-listed at the Haringey Celebrating Sport Awards, winning 'club of the year' in 2014 and 'outstanding contribution to sport and physical activity' (Sharon Austin) in 2016.

(see Appendix 1 for links to articles about the club)

Case for a third pool complex in Haringey – the opportunities

There has been no public swimming pool in Wood Green for 20 years, since Western Road pool closed in 1997. Wood Green regeneration plans are well under way but there is no clear intention to provide a new leisure centre and public swimming pools in the plans. This is a surprise and a cause for concern. In its review of community facilities published in 2013¹, the Council identified the need for a new district level swimming pool and leisure centre to meet predicted population growth. Wood Green was identified as a prime location, as was the need to identify private sector partnership or other external funding to finance the project.

Haringey's public pools at Tottenham Green and Park Road have been refurbished in recent years and leisure facilities at those centres have been upgraded, but the overall number of public pools in Haringey remains the same and is poor in comparison with most other London boroughs. Among Haringey's large population, only residents in South Tottenham and Hornsey have access to a public swimming pool on their doorstep, and there is no equity for residents living anywhere in Wood Green.

Haringey Aquatics is passionate about providing opportunities for young people in the borough to develop their full potential in aquatic sport, particularly swimming, diving, and water polo. Close proximity to facilities is vital to encourage regular participation in physical activity and enable children/young people/families to commit to the hours of training that the sport requires.

Membership of the club and a commitment to training can provide a pathway to a career in the Sport & Leisure industry that is independent of academic achievement. More generally, it provides opportunities to improve fitness, excel at sport, build self-esteem, confidence, team loyalty and leadership skills. It also provides unlimited opportunities to move up the rankings via county, district, national and international competition and access to funding and national and international events for disabled athletes. But the ambitions and talent of young people in the borough and their opportunity to act as role models for their peers is limited by poor access to public pools, the available pool time and crucially by the lack of adequate facilities for competitive aquatic sport in Haringey (see below). There is an opportunity with Wood Green Regeneration to raise our sights in Haringey and take aquatic sport to another level.

There is also a need to increase access to low cost community programmes (a fourth or fifth pool?) with the key aims of improving health outcomes and increasing access to swimming and physical activity among families on low incomes or with no culture of participation in sport. The Wood Green Regeneration project should consider the opportunities for this type of provision too with strategic positioning of at least one 'community-oriented pool'. To our knowledge there is very limited provision of this type in the borough but the success of such schemes is exemplified by Haringey Aquatics' after school 'learn to swim' scheme at the very good facilities at Northumberland Park Community School, N17². Most schools in the borough that have their own swimming pools have IM deep tubs that are not suitable for a quality learn to swim programme for children or adults.

Councillors we have spoken to simply say there is no money available to build pools in Wood Green. We understand the constraints the Council is under but we believe there is an important opportunity and responsibility for the Council to develop and implement a plan to meet the demand and need for pools and leisure facilities that it has already identified (facilities/health/youth/sport & leisure/inclusion). Such an endeavour would be highly popular with residents, significantly increase participation in physical activity and help to improve health outcomes. It would also provide employment for local people and opportunities for young people to gain qualifications in sport and leisure and excel in aquatic sports. Potential revenue from a substantial new leisure centre could be considerable. Wood Green regeneration provides a timely opportunity to take this vision forward and to source the funding (partnerships and other external funding) that will be required to get the job done. It's important that these opportunities are not lost.

Key points

a) Shortage of pool time

- Haringey falls well below the average for its provision of public swimming pools when compared with other London boroughs.
- There has been no public swimming pool in Wood Green for two decades.
- Competition for pool space at the existing two sites (Park Road and Tottenham Green) is increasing and is likely to increase further with demographic change in the borough.
- Haringey Aquatics has protected pool time at Park Road and Tottenham Green. But the protected pool time currently available to us is insufficient. It is limiting the club's development, ambitions and the opportunities we can offer to young people and adults in the borough to participate in aquatic sport and competitive aquatics.
- Our Learn to Swim programme is already at capacity in Northumberland Park.
- We are close to capacity at Park Road and in the near future, will be unable to offer places in the club to everyone who wants to train with us.
- Demand is increasing very rapidly at Tottenham Green for all our squads, from pre-competitive to our top 'performance' squad. We expect to reach capacity within months.
- Reaching capacity will harm the club's reputation and impact significantly on our ability to attract high calibre coaching staff in the future.
- The lack of available pool time has already prevented the club expanding into areas like Masters' Swimming (competitive swimming for adults), Triathlon Swimming and Masters' Diving.
- We can offer only 1 hour coaching in 1 lane/week to young people who want to improve their swimming and fitness in a club environment but do not want to compete (club squad). Greater resource for this type of session in other boroughs/clubs is popular and provides clubs with a valuable source of income to subsidise competitive swimming fees.
- Children from Wood Green are under-represented in Haringey Aquatics.
- Closer proximity to a pool would be beneficial for all residents and schools in Wood Green.

b) Lack of facilities in Haringey for competitive aquatics

The facilities for competitive aquatics at Park Road are very limited and even more so at Tottenham Green. This will be obvious to anyone in the club who has travelled to other pools in neighbouring boroughs for a swimming meet or water polo match. With the exception of the Olympic Park in Stratford, competitive diving facilities are very restricted throughout North London and many diving pits have closed. The nearest diving facility to Park Road at Barnet Copthall will close shortly, leaving 50+ divers without a home base. There are very limited facilities for water polo in North London.

Swimming

Park Road main pool is the only swimming pool in Haringey which meets competition standards but the spectator seating has been reduced below anything viable for a major meet, parking is difficult, there is no automatic timing equipment and the diving blocks need replacing. There are no diving blocks at Tottenham Green and the main pool was designed as a leisure pool.

Open meets are important for swimmers pursuing times for the county age groups, district and national competitions. For many clubs and pool providers, interclub or open swimming meets are a significant source of income, for example in Enfield, Southey Road pool has been the site of all the short course county championships as well as competitions organised by the local club.

The club would welcome a viable opportunity to organise open meets in Haringey.

Diving

Diving has taken off strongly in Haringey with significant demand since the re-opening of the diving pit at Park Road. But the competitive ambitions of the club are limited by the available diving boards. The ceiling at Park Road is too low for a 3M spring board and we have no 5M platform either. There are no dedicated dry side facilities for our divers. There are no diving boards at Tottenham Green. Even with these limitations, diving competitions that we have organised at Park Road have been very popular and brought revenue to the centre.

Water polo

Water polo is an exciting sport that can attract a different cohort of young swimmers who enjoy team sport and match play but would not want to pursue competitive diving or swimming. Currently there is no fully adequate pool for water polo in Haringey. Water polo requires deep water across the length of the playing area. No whole pool time for match play is available at Park Road where all training is restricted to the diving pit. At Tottenham Green, sessions are restricted to the main pool, which is neither large enough nor deep enough at one end. We have attracted more than 75 young people into water polo since the pools re-opened but will struggle to retain older players and build a significant base for water polo in Haringey without better facilities.

c) Skills, training, employment opportunities

Haringey Aquatics puts more into the local economy than simply the income spent on pool hire. We employ or hire 24 part-time staff as coaches, teachers, lifeguards and administrators and we contribute to training either directly or via grant applications. Ex-club members are significantly represented in Fusion's workforce at Tottenham Green and Park Road, including teachers, instructors, team leaders, wet operations managers and lifeguards and in the borough's school swimming programme.

Developing an ability to swim well and a love of aquatic sport provides our young people with casual or more permanent employment opportunities in aquatic sport. A third pool complex at Wood Green would have a significant impact on the numbers of young people and adults in Haringey who could train up and gain qualifications leading to employment in sport and leisure.

d) Development of aquatic sport in Haringey and limitations

Haringey Aquatics has made a significant contribution to aquatic sport in the borough and across North London. Our ability to move forward and further develop and promote aquatic sport requires a vibrant club with opportunities for growth and expansion and improved facilities.

Our parent volunteers have trained up as swimming officials in large numbers and we have timekeepers, judges and referees among our ranks who make a significant contribution by supporting galas and meets across North London.

We are represented on the Middlesex County swimming executive. Several of our volunteers have led county trips abroad to international meets.

Our diving lead has significantly grown the sport, building an enthusiastic group of more than 60 young divers at Park Road since the pit re-opened, enabling novices to compete in their own galas, building a trained workforce and running competitions. We have taken diving teams to the Youth Games.

We have launched water polo at Park Road and Tottenham Green, received generous grant funding from Tottenham Grammar School Foundation for training equipment and goals and fielded the first water polo teams for the borough, achieving our highest ranking last year.

Our county and district rankings in swimming have improved year on year since 2009. Currently, we have swimmers who rank in the top 10 nationally for specific events, 9 county event champions and 1 London region champion³.

Our high quality, low cost learn to swim programme at Northumberland Park, N17² has helped reduce inequality and create a culture of swimming among families from diverse backgrounds in the area. We have taught more than a 1000 children to swim in Northumberland Park in the past 4 years and significant numbers of these children are now progressing into our pre-competitive squad at Tottenham Green. But we are unable to expand this programme further; it has been at capacity for over a year with a long waiting list. More worryingly, it is expected that the school will move to a different location at some point in the near future and we have no guarantees for the continuation of the programme in the medium and long term.

Notes

¹ Haringey's Local Plan: strategic policies 2013-2026. Haringey Council, March 2013
http://www.haringey.gov.uk/sites/haringeygovuk/files/haringey_local_plan_strategic_policies_-_march_2013_intro_ch_1.pdf

² The after school programme depends on continued access to Northumberland Park Community School pool and is likely to be limited by the time the school remains at that site

³ Correct as at 12/03/2017

Appendix 1

Haringey Aquatics in the news (examples)

<http://haringeyaquatics.org.uk/2016/11/06/haringey-aquatics-head-of-teaching-wins-haringey-celebrating-sports-award/>

http://www.hamhigh.co.uk/sport/haringey_aquatics_swimmer_max_hanson_is_selected_to_represent_middlesex_1_4732923

http://www.enfieldindependent.co.uk/spurs/14541379.Haringey_Aquatics_coach_Rick_Dear_secures_three_medals_at_European_Masters_Championships/

<http://haringeyaquatics.org.uk/2016/05/29/haringey-aquatics-waterpolo-players-win-bronze-at-inter-regionals/>

<http://www.crouchenders.co.uk/crouch-end-youngster-wins-gold-as-haringey-aquatics-scoop-5-medals/>

http://www.thetottenhamindependent.co.uk/news/14263557.Aquatic_group_wins_gold_in_a_number_of_competitions/

http://www.thetottenhamindependent.co.uk/sport/14236997.County_success_for_Haringey_Aquatics_swimmers/

http://www.romfordrecorder.co.uk/sport/haringey_aquatics_secure_best_ever_finish_in_london_region_arena_league_1_4351031

<http://haringeyaquatics.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Swimming-Article.pdf>

http://www.hackneygazette.co.uk/sport/haringey_aquatics_send_a_record_number_of_swimmers_to_london_regional_championships_1_4054624?usurv=completed

<http://www.thetottenhamindependent.co.uk/news/11827221.display/>

<http://heartlands.haringey.sch.uk/haringey-aquatics-annual-awards/>

http://www.tottenhamjournal.co.uk/sport/haringey_aquatics_win_sports_club_of_the_year_at_alexandras_palace_awards_event_1_3864237

<http://www.thetottenhamindependent.co.uk/news/11585139.display/>

<http://positiveyouthnewsharingey.co.uk/haringey-teen-competes-in-national-swim-championships/>