

# Andover Swimming & Water Polo Club

[www.andoverswimming.co.uk](http://www.andoverswimming.co.uk)

Chairman: Nathan Williams

Affiliated to ASA South East Region

February 18<sup>th</sup> 2017

To: All Councillors Test Valley Borough Council  
Kit Malthouse – Member of Parliament for Hampshire North West  
Claire Perry – Member of Parliament for Devizes  
Tracey Crouch MP - Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport, Tourism and Heritage  
The Right Honourable Karen Bradley MP - Secretary of State for Media, Culture and Sport  
Tom Watson MP - Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

Dear Councillors, Members of Parliament and Secretaries of State,

## **An appeal from the Andover Swimming and Water Polo Club in Hampshire**

This year the Andover Swimming & Water Polo Club (ASWPC) celebrates 80 years of providing a club for generations of swimmers and water polo players for Andover and the surrounding area. Over the years from this many have been able to pursue their chosen sport at county, regional and national level. We wish we could write more in celebration of 80 year of history and success. However, it is with regret that instead we are writing to you to explain that the future of the club is now under threat. To avoid this happening, we are writing to ask you for your support in the provision of a temporary swimming pool during the two years while the existing Andover Leisure Centre (ALC) is demolished and replaced with a new ALC on the same site. We would also like to appeal to you to keep the existing ALC open until the temporary pool is ready.

### About the club

The ASWPC has circa 250 members, with most members being children and young people. The club is growing especially with children of primary school age. The club serves north west Hampshire and much of eastern Wiltshire. We are the only club in the area that can field a team to compete with other swimming clubs in Hampshire, the south and south east. At the ALC, we are able provide eight internal events each year offering swim distances from 50 to 400 metre swims and swims for novices. These events provide our swimmers from six year olds to adult masters opportunities to compete and better themselves. Some TVBC councillors have come to these events and presented medals and trophies in recent years, and we are proud that they did so. We are also proud to inform you that in water polo, we have three young men and one young lady that are playing as part of the South-East water polo squad. However, all of this is now under threat, if we do not have a swimming pool in Andover to train and compete within.

### Lack of consultation

We are deeply disappointed that as a club we were never consulted by TVBC, when Leisure officers were devising the documentation that accompanied the tender process for the new leisure contract. We were never asked on what our hopes and requirements were for the new ALC, that in turn would have helped to have made the new ALC a greater success. The first we knew what was planned, was when planning application number 16/03191/FULLN was submitted just prior to Christmas. The club

is using the planning process to seek reasonable amendments to the plans, but it is now so late in the process, we fear that we are now faced with a fait accompli with limited prospect of change. We are seeking greater spectator seating, minor amendments to ensure that we can run licensed competitive events, and we are asking for a larger pool to make the deficiencies that TVBC admit to having in the area.

Our immediate concern is the closure of the existing ALC. We were shocked to learn from Leisure Centre staff on February 9<sup>th</sup> 2017 that the existing ALC is to close on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2017. Again no one from TVBC forewarned us of this, and we were not expecting this to happen for some months.

#### What will happen to the club without a pool?

We are aware that the build programme for the new ALC will take two years. Should there be no pool in Andover to train and compete in, the ASWPC will be decimated. As mentioned above, many of our members are primary school children, and it is often too much to expect them to travel to and from locations such as Winchester, knowing that they will be at school the following day. We also have teenage swimmers that are studying for GCSE and A levels, with their time often too limited to travel greater distances to swim. It is then likely that such swimmers will leave. If the club loses swimmers, then this will remove our ability to be able to have a team to compete with other clubs. There is also the prospect that if we do not have a pool, we will be unable to run our own internal events. Being able to swim and play water polo competitively is important to many swimmers. If such opportunities are removed, the club will lose those swimmers too. The club is therefore at risk at not being able to function and able to be financially viable. We will not be able to pay our coaches, pool hire or affiliation fees to our governing body the Amateur Swimming Association. After 80 years, the club would cease to exist.

We therefore appeal to you to support the provision of a temporary pool to keep the ASWPC going and able to serve the local area in the provision of training and competition in swimming and water polo.

#### Can the existing swimming pool be kept open for a little longer?

We are aware that should planning consent be given by the Northern Area Planning Committee for the temporary pool, it will take some four months to complete the pool, rendering Andover without a pool for that time. This is of course a much shorter time duration than two years, but even this shorter period could be detrimental to the club. We know of some parents that are already registering their children at other clubs such as the Durrington Otters and the Winchester City Penguins.

We are pleased that TVBC Leisure officers are willing to help us find other pools to train in such as on Salisbury plain and Winchester. However we are also making our own inquiries. We know that clubs such as the Durrington Otters and the Winchester City Penguins do not have enough pool time themselves; therefore, it is likely that there will be limited or no space available for the club at other pools. Therefore, we would like to appeal to you to do everything within your power to keep the existing ALC going until the temporary pool is ready, or at the very least keep it going to minimise the gap when Andover is without a pool. From a club perspective, until mid June would solve many problems, as we could at least give swimmers an earlier summer holiday.

We understand that maintaining the ageing existing pool will cost additional funding to keep it going through the summer, but we wonder how this financial conclusion has been reached. Surely the costs of losing all the swimming lessons that are run by the ALC including 1,400 children, adult swim

lessons, aqua fit, pool hire by the club, and the cost of transporting staff to other pools in the interim would balance the costs of keeping the existing ALC open a bit longer.

Finally, we would like to thank you for taking time to read our appeal. We hope that you can do all you to help us. We also hope that all councillors will support us, other clubs that use the ALC and the people of Andover in their forthcoming votes.

Should you have any queries, please contact one of the following:

Nathan Williams – Chairman at [chair.aswpc@gmail.com](mailto:chair.aswpc@gmail.com)

Paul Goddard – Internal Competition Secretary at [championshipsec.aswpc@gmail.com](mailto:championshipsec.aswpc@gmail.com)

Jon Lee at [jonathanlee@talk21.com](mailto:jonathanlee@talk21.com)

Kind Regards

**The Committee**  
**Andover Swimming & Water Polo Club**