

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

meeting date: 23 AUGUST 2022
title: SWIMMING LESSONS - RIBBLESDALE POOL
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update on the provision of swimming instruction at Ribblesdale Pool.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
 - Community Objectives - In contributing to making lives safer and healthier
 - Corporate Priorities - To ensure a well-managed council providing efficient services through identifying customer need and maximising use of resources.
 - Other Considerations – None identified

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The provision of swimming lessons from Ribblesdale Pool was suspended at the onset of the Co-vid pandemic in March 2020.
- 2.2 School Swimming lessons returned when Swimming Pools were allowed to re-open and schools programme has continued through Council employed instructors.
- 2.3 It had not been possible to re-instate swimming lessons for the public though due to the difficulties in recruitment either internally or through an external provider. However, after sustained efforts to recruit new teachers, a learn to swim programme for juniors aged from 4years upwards from new beginner to competent swimmer standard, will re-commence in September.
- 2.4 During the current summer holiday period, week-long crash course swimming lessons have also been organised for primary school aged children.
- 2.5 All Swimming Teachers are required to be a minimum of level 2 to satisfy the Pool's Normal Operating Procedures.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The re-introduction of swimming lessons has been possible through the recruitment and training of newly qualified Level 2 Swimming Teachers. Certain members of Pool staff have been supported by the Council through the Level 1 and Level 2 Swimming Teaching training pathway. This opportunity has been extended to them on the understanding that they deliver teaching at Ribblesdale Pool for at least the next two years as they progress their respective courses of further education.
- 3.2 The recruitment process is being assisted by Swim England and the Institute of Swimming (I.O.S.) and their Recruitment Academy programme. This process comprises of the I.O.S. undertaking advertising to identify potential candidates and for an individual enrolment fee of £79, they initiate a learner agreement which guarantees them training to level 1 and training to level 2 upon successful employer

sponsorship. So far Ribble Valley has identified three individuals through this pathway and by the commencement of courses in September, it is expected that they will all have achieved level 2 qualifications and will have undertaken some volunteer teaching practice in supporting the delivery of school lessons at the Pool.

- 3.3. The teachers are being allocated hours of cover according to personal availability and will work on a casual basis initially, though fixed-time contracts will be explored. The programme of lessons set to start in September is essentially the same in respect to the number and range of levels that were available pre-Covid, although it is anticipated that Pre-School lessons (ages 0-4 years), 1 to 1 lessons and adult lessons will also become available as appropriately qualified teachers become available and demand is identified. Those people that were enrolled on lessons before they were suspended have been invited to attend free teacher assessments to determine which level they should now resume at; and once they have been enrolled onto courses, it is intended to open the remaining places to new demand from the public.
- 3.4 The recruitment cost associated with the training up of the new identified personnel is being met from 2021-2 and the current 2022-3 Pool revenue budget. The cost to train a teacher via the recruitment academy to Ribble Valley as a host site is £966.67 per person. The annual expenditure on swimming teaching will reflect the increased pay award which raised the rate for both establishment and casual staff who work as swimming teachers. The annual income generation projection is anticipated to increase from Pre-Covid budget figure due to the intention to deliver more weeks of lessons per year; (increasing provision from 36 to 42 weeks).

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 A fundamental purpose for the Council to provide a swimming pool for the Borough is to give children and adults the opportunity to learn to swim. Given the proximity of rivers and open water in the Borough it could literally prove for some people a life saving skill.
- 4.2 In addition having swimming lessons ensures that young people in particular can use the pool on their own as our customers in future years, for both recreational and health benefits. It has taken some time to get to a position where the Council has been able to identify and train the necessary swimming teachers to be able to deliver the programme we are now embarking upon and the response from parents has been very encouraging.

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