



SETTLE AREA SWIMMING POOL

# NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2024

## COMMUNITY RALLIES ROUND POOL



*January 24 Open Evening*

Pool users and supporters came together in a great show of solidarity with Settle Area Swimming Pool as it faced a major financial crisis this winter.

Community support, together with important external developments and cost saving measures, all helped alleviate a situation that at one time looked as though it could threaten the imminent closure of the pool.

More than a hundred people crammed into the new fitSpace area on January 24 to hear of the seriousness of the situation and what measures were being taken to keep the pool afloat.

In the following months the pool has received much-needed financial support, both from local organisations and national bodies. Fuel costs, at the centre of the problems this winter

are expected to have eased when the next bills arrive later this spring and loan repayments, including those to North Yorkshire Council, have been re-scheduled, helping to ease the immediate pressures. But as pool chair Colin Coleman said: "We are by no means out of the wood yet. More needs to be done to raise funds, to keep costs under control and to ensure we make best use of all our facilities."

## **What's changed?**

Over the past few months there have been significant developments in three major inter-related areas: finances, energy efficiency and use of the building, all of which were discussed at the January meeting.

### **Loans rescheduled**

The re-scheduling of loans to North Yorkshire Council, the Co-op Bank and the Keyfund organisation have helped ease the immediate pressures on pool finances, but as the trustees were told at their February meeting, when this was reported, the loans will eventually need to be repaid and all the rescheduling does is to buy time for other measures to come into effect.

### **Donations boost**

There have also been a number of very welcome donations in recent months. A £4,000 grant from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust was announced in February. The Clapham-based charity, whose aims are to look after the spectacular Dales landscape, support local communities and help everyone enjoy and understand the Dales said it had made the award 'in recognition of how your organisation aligns with YDMT's charitable aims, specifically to support people to live in, visit and care for the Dales'. It added that the award had been made possible thanks to funding received from People's Postcode Lottery. Commenting on the award pool chair Colin Coleman said: 'This generous award is further recognition of the role of the pool in the life of our local communities.'

A second big source of support was a series of local fund-raising events. Settle Rotary Club made a donation following its merry-go-round dinner in February. The North Ribblesdale Rugby Club held a collection before one of its matches and there was a retiring collection at an evening of sacred choral works at St Alkeda's Church on March 9 in memory of well-known Settle resident Phil Smith. Together they gave a welcome boost to our funds.

Other events planned include an outdoor sale of items donated to the charity shops that can't be displayed in the shops themselves.

This is to be held in the pool carpark on Easter Sunday, March 31 from 10am-1pm. One of the regular Sunday afternoon teas in Langcliffe this summer will be run on behalf of the pool and our team's participation in the Coniston Hall Dragon Boat Regatta on May 12 (see *below*) will be specifically aimed at raising money to hire new gym equipment for use in the fitSpace area.

Following the January meeting a new community fund-raising initiatives group was set up to help co-ordinate the very welcome range of community events now being organised to support the pool. A special section of the pool website has been created to record events that have already been held and give notice of forthcoming fund raisers.

You can see that here:

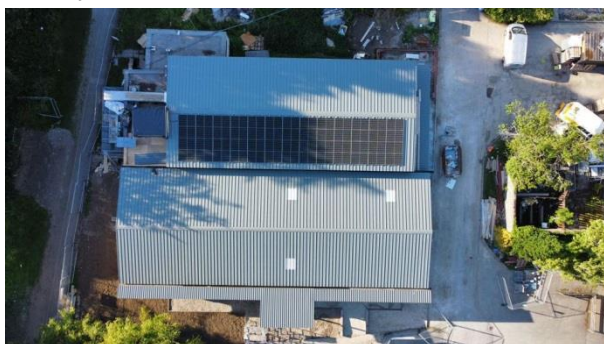
<https://www.settleswimmingpool.co.uk/fundraising/fundraising-events/>

### **A greener pool**

As explained at the January meeting, one of the biggest challenges facing Settle Pool, and indeed all public swimming pools, is keeping down energy costs whilst keeping the water at the required temperature for swimming classes.

On this, there have been a number of important developments over the past few months.

After being turned down for the first round of Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund grants, aimed at helping pools meet rising costs, Settle Pool is hopeful that it will receive £20,000 in the second round aimed specifically at making pools more energy efficient. The Settle money will be spent on extending the bank of solar panels that were installed as part of the major redevelopment work completed in 2022. This should help further cut energy bills. A formal announcement by Sport England is expected shortly.



*The current bank of solar panels and space for more*

On the wider issue of energy savings, pool trustees are negotiating with North Yorkshire Council to fund a full energy audit. More immediately they have taken advantage of an offer from local business JD Mounsey to give detailed advice on energy savings. One suggestion frequently made is that the pool should follow the example of the community pool in Exmouth which has installed a data storage hub that generates a lot of heat. This is then recycled for pool usage. Initially enquiries showed that the cost of upgrading our electricity supply to make this possible would be prohibitively expensive, but further enquiries are being made to see if there is a way around this problem. Other work on energy efficiency is also continuing.

## **Working harder**

The third strand of work highlighted at the open evening in January, alongside boosting

finances and increasing energy efficiency was ensuring that all our facilities are fully used. Following greater marketing, especially via social media, pool usage has increased substantially in recent months.

New classes, both in the pool, and in fitSpace, are proving popular, with good take up for the spin classes, weight work, yoga and aquajog.. We are also now planning to hire specialist gym equipment in order to increase the range of facilities that we are able to offer.

We looked at various suggestions made at the open evening concerning pool usage and one change trialled in March was to extend some of the one hour slots in the pool, originally introduced post Covid, to two hours, so swimmers could arrive at a time that suited them within that slot and stay in the pool longer. The trial will be reviewed at the end of the month.



*Soft play sessions are among the many uses being made of the fitSpace area.*

## **Dragon boats are go**

Settle Pool has once again entered a team in Skipton Rotary Dragon Boat Regatta to be held at Coniston Hall Lake on Sunday May 12. This time we are raising funds to provide gym equipment.

The equipment is needed to help extend the range of classes that we are able to offer and

so fulfil our ambition to be 'more than just pool'.

Supporters can help by sponsoring our paddlers, through this justgiving page.

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/sasp-dragonboat-2024>



Spectators are also very welcome to show their support in person at Coniston Hall on Sunday May 12. Events usually start about 10am and all the crews take part in at least three events paddling across the scenic lake.

Finally if you are really up for it you can join our squad of eager paddlers. The first team get together takes place at the Golden Lion in Settle on Tuesday April 9 at 7pm.



The 2023 dragon boat crew prepare for action

## Membership tops 100

Our new membership scheme has proved a big hit with pool users.

In just three months more than a hundred people have signed up for the flexible membership offer that gives unlimited access on a month by month payment system. There

are reduced rates for those eligible for concessionary payments and a variety of systems to suit those who want to use the pool only and those who want access all areas, including the fitSpace classes. There are more details on the website at <https://www.settleswimmingpool.co.uk/swimming/membership-passes/>

## Cricket Club bowls us over

We are delighted that Settle Cricket Club, one of the most successful cricket clubs in Yorkshire, has adopted the pool as its charity partner. The pool logo will now appear on a number of pieces of kit and we will be working together on fund raising events over the coming months.

Settle Cricket Club's first team now plays in the Northern Premier League. The club also fields two teams in the Westmorland League and runs a number of junior sides with a women's section and softball section too. They have even recently taken up walking cricket in conjunction with the local u3a group. All of which makes the cricket club, alongside the pool, an essential part of the local community.

## 200 club super thirty bonus

The 200 club has been popular with pool supporters since it was set up in the 1990s. But this year demand for places in the regular fund raising draws was such that, for this year only, we have set up a new Super 30 group to run alongside the 200 club. Members of the new group, like the 200 club members, pay £30 a year. Half the money goes to the pool and the rest is distributed in prize money. The 200 club has regularly monthly draws from February to November, with a Christmas bonus in December. With fewer participants the Super 30 go in for two big draws during the year: two prizes of £100 each in June and two more of the same amount in December. There is more information on the website at

<https://www.settleswimmingpool.co.uk/fundraising/200-club/>

## Link up to B4RN

Settle Pool is now connected to the world's fastest rural broadband.

Customers can get free wi-fi access simply by scanning the QR code on the noticeboard at the pool café or by logging on to the network using the password 'swimming'.

The link to Broadband for Rural Networks - B4RN – was made possible when a fibre optic cable was laid under the fields between the pool and the nearby hamlet of Stackhouse - the nearest point where B4RN was already installed.

Pool staff are now using B4RN for all back office work. This includes monitoring progress on children's swim lessons, processing customer accounts and taking payments, and managing content for our social media feeds, booking system and website.



Pool Manager Tash Ward makes use of B4RN

B4RN - pronounced barn - is a community benefit society, established in 2011 to bring world-leading full fibre broadband speeds to underserved rural areas. It has won numerous awards and featured in media reports highlighting the fact that remote rural areas served by B4RN can match broadband speeds normally only found in places like the financial districts of big cities. It began in North East Lancashire is now spreading into the Yorkshire Dales and Cumbria. You can read more about B4RN on <https://b4rn.org.uk/>

## Response to open evening points

At the open evening on January 24 the trustees said they would respond to all the points made in the question and answer session. Here are the points made and the responses.

1. The pool should make more use of social media. *Social media use has increased. We now have 770 followers on facebook, are making more than 40 posts a month and have more than 7,000 visits to our website each month. A new facebook group for members has also been set up.*

2. Questions were asked about reclaiming VAT and VAT-able expenditure.. *Wherever possible we reclaim VAT. We are also intensifying our efforts to ensure we claim gift aid on donations where we can.*

3. The pool flyer could go out with Community News rather than Royal Mail. *Royal Mail guarantees coverage to every home, which Community News cannot. We do however use Community News to publicise the pool through regular articles.*

4. Details were asked of the monthly deficit and the Treasurer explained it was around £10,000 a month and the way to close it was more users and reduce expenditure. *Thanks to actions taken before and after the open evening the monthly deficit has now been reduced considerably. The actual amount varies from month to month so individual monthly figures can be misleading. The full audited annual accounts will be published for adoption at the annual meeting later this year.*

5. More details were requested about the duration of the deficit. *Following the meeting both Yorkshire Council and the Keyfund have agreed to extend the period of their loans*

6. A request to remove time-restricted swim sessions was made. *Trial sessions are taking place in March covering early morning lane swimming and weekend afternoon open swims.*

7. A suggestion was made to re-introduce The Friends of the Pool. *The role played by the Friends in fund raising is now covered by new community fund raising initiatives group. To set up a separate charity would be for others*

*to do as was done by the Friends initially. The reason for the merger was that the new structures allow for long term fund raising and corporate governance very different from days when trustees represented other organisations including local councils.*

8. A question was raised about balances held by the pool. *The Treasurer explained a charity needed to hold around three months' expenditure.*

9. Details were shared of a levy being raised at a similar pool to Settle for car parking charges etc to generate revenue. *The carpark is not owned by us but by Yorkshire Council but we are looking at maximising this source of income – see below.*

10. Several people spoke about charging for camper van parking and it was noted this suggestion was being investigated with North Yorkshire Council. *The investigation continues.*

11. As the cost of gas heating is so high suggestions were made about reducing the temperature of the water. *Pools providing facilities for babies are required to keep the water at a certain temperature.*

12. A request was made about how to regularly donate money to the pool. *Booking forms for standing orders are available at pool reception and on the website here <https://www.settleswimmingpool.co.uk/donate/>*

13. A mention was made of Patrons of Bradford Jazz Club and how the pool could recruit patrons. *This has been examined. It assumes the existence of a group of wealthy individuals prepared to make substantial donations, probably on a regular basis in return for some privileges. There have been other opportunities for such individuals to come forward – eg Community Loans – but to date there is no evidence that there are enough of this group around to make creation of such a scheme worthwhile.*

14. One of the original founders of the pool spoke about the importance of the pool. She suggested income from camper vans should be chased up, and partnering with Settle United Junior Football who regularly use the car park during term time. *Both aspects are being followed up*

15. It was suggested there should be more publicity about the ability to donate to the pool. *A number of initiatives have been taken and well received.*

16. A member of pool staff spoke about the loss of the pool would result in many young people not learning to swim and how a sponsored swim would bring in additional funds. *This is to be pursued through the new community initiatives group*

17. A local energy contractor spoke about energy audits and offered to help the pool with this process using his expertise. *His offer has been taken up and a site visit taken place.*

18. Trustees offered to coordinate a fund raising group and requested volunteer help. *The new group is now up and running and generating ideas.*

19. Questions were asked about the duration of and charges for the gas contract. *The treasurer explained the background to the gas contract with YPO and the unsuccessful efforts to get out of the contract before the end date of April 2025.*

20. It was suggested that a Honesty Box in the car park might help with donations. *The secretary indicated he would approach North Yorkshire Council.*

21. Comments were raised about Facebook and Trustees gave details of the history of the use of FB. *Facebook postings have increased.*

22. The Trustees were thanked for all their hard unpaid work. *noted*

23. A member of the Dragon Boat Team asked for more paddlers for the race on 12th May raising funds for the pool. See *above*

24. Cllr David Staveley gave an update on the way North Yorkshire Council was helping the pool but pointed out these are challenging times. *Noted. Coun. Staveley has helped fund the proposed installation of CCTV at the pool through the 2023/24 allowance county councilors received for local projects.*

## **Now we are 50**

It is now 50 years since the pool was officially opened after years of community fund raising. We will be marking the occasion at our AGM in July. Look out for more details.

## **Trustee vacancies**

There is currently a vacancy on the pool's board of trustees. Other vacancies will arise this summer when a number of the current trustees come to the end of their three year term of office.

Interested in becoming a trustee or just want to know what is involved? Contact the secretary on

[secretary@settlewimmingpool.co.uk](mailto:secretary@settlewimmingpool.co.uk)

## **Learn to swim classes**

One of Settle Pool's main contributions to the local community, and one of the reasons that the community raised the funds to build the pool in the first place, is because it offers learn to swim classes, particularly for children but also for all non-swimmers.

There is a lot of demand for places but there are also often vacancies so if you or someone know can't swim and wants to learn get in touch by phoning the pool on 01729 823626 or emailing [swimlessons@settlewimmingpool.co.uk](mailto:swimlessons@settlewimmingpool.co.uk)

## **Volunteers wanted**

The pool charity shop, which opened in May 2017 has played a crucial role in keeping the pool afloat in the face of a series of financial pressures.

It is currently generating around £80,000 a year. But that is only made possible by our supporters donating goods that we are able to sell and by a dedicated team of volunteers who undertake a wide variety of roles. Initially collecting and sorting the donations, in all weathers, at the pool carpark on Tuesday and Friday mornings and then staffing the shop in Duke Street, Settle. Behind the scenes there are also a number of people performing essential tasks. These include PAT testing electrical goods, making sure jigsaws that are donated are complete and, crucially, selling on line large or specialist items that it would be difficult to sell in the shop.

Last year, such was the flow of donations that we were able to open a 'pop up shop' next to the Royal Oak, just off Settle Market Place. We have recently agreed to continue to run this shop beyond the initial six month trial.

We are always desperate for more volunteers to help in whatever way suits them.

If you think you might be able to help, or just want to know more about what is involved contact Rosie Sanderson on 01729 825944 or [rosiesanderson19@gmail.com](mailto:rosiesanderson19@gmail.com). You can also see more about the shop and its role in helping the pool on <https://www.settlewimmingpool.co.uk/about-us/join-us/become-a-volunteer/>

## **KEEP IN TOUCH**

For the latest information about sessions at Settle Pool visit the timetable section of our website at

<http://www.settlewimmingpool.co.uk>

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<https://twitter.com/SettlePool>

<https://www.instagram.com/settleareaswimmingpool/>