

Babergh makes a splash with Hadleigh pool refurbishment



A Babergh District Council-bid to secure Government money to refurbish the interior of the Hadleigh Swimming Pool building has been a success! As a result, the pool's changing rooms will soon be equipped with new cubicles, toilets, showers, seating and lockers - as well as new wall tiling. Babergh officers have been working hard throughout the first

part of 2009 to pull together a bid for £185,000 from Sport England, the government agency responsible for developing a world-class community sport system. Babergh's bid, which included a pledge by the Council to contribute an additional £88,600 if it was successful, clearly impressed the agency as it has been allocated the full amount it was after.

The Hadleigh Pool bid was one of only two in the whole of Suffolk to be approved by Sport England. Cllr Nick Ridley, Babergh's Strategy Committee Chairman, said: "This extra money will allow us to make a major and obvious difference to the whole user experience at the pool - and so should help further increase its popularity among local people."

What's good for your heart, fun and free?

The answer is swimming - at least if you are 17 and under or 60-plus! Since April, Babergh has been running a Swim for Free programme which is funded both by the Council and the Government. The scheme allows residents in both these categories to swim for nothing as many times as they wish at both the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Hadleigh Swimming Pool - once they have registered and produced evidence of their identity. According to Paul Little, Babergh's Community Safety & Leisure Manager, said: "The initial take-up has been good, but we want to encourage even more people to register. Swimming is a great way of keeping and staying fit - but in such a way that minimises any unnecessary strain and stress on the body." Application forms for Swim for Free can be found on South Suffolk Leisure's website <http://www.sisleisure.co.uk>

Starting the clock ticking on the Hadleigh Community Facility

In April, Babergh District Council placed fencing around both the existing Hadleigh Swimming Pool and the site of the hoped-for new Hadleigh Community Facility - in order to be able to build the promised building. The £2m Babergh District Council-funded facility - which will incorporate facilities for local groups and services for young people as well as a gym and dance studio - received planning permission earlier this year. However, the development involves building on a small patch of open space land adjacent to the present swimming pool. Babergh has received just three objections to this, one of which raised the issue that this patch of land could be claimed as a town green as defined under a relatively new piece of legislation - the Common Land Act (2006).



A town green can be registered if there is sufficient proof that the small piece of land in question has been used by a significant number of people for sports and other pastimes without consent over at least a twenty year period. Babergh has been advised to erect temporary fencing, for at least a six month period, to mark off the land that would be needed for the Community Facility in order to gather available evidence as to whether the

small patch of open space could potentially be classified as a town green or not. If an application is successfully made it will mean that neither the Hadleigh Community Facility nor any future new swimming pool could ever be built on that site.

Cllr Nick Ridley, Chairman of Babergh's Strategy Committee, added: "Hadleigh deserves better than to see a £2m investment halted and the prospect of a new pool being written off for ever. That is why we are urging the community to demonstrate its support for both and to provide evidence that the small patch of land in question cannot reasonably be classified as a 'town green'."

Babergh's call for support has been backed by both Hadleigh Town Council and South Suffolk Leisure, which manages the existing swimming pool.