

COMMUNITY COUNCIL LIAISON SUB-COMMITTEE - 17TH SEPTEMBER 2003

SUBJECT: PADDLING POOLS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LEISURE

1. PADDLING POOLS

- 1.1 Staffing of the paddling pool is a reoccurring problem, a similar problem occurred in 2002 that resulted in a shortened season.
- 1.2 The agencies involved in the Senghenydd scheme discussed this issue during the autumn of 2002. A suggestion was made at the meeting with the Community Council on 29th October 2002 that we train local people up to Pool Lifeguard Bronze standard - a course of 13 weeks duration - but unfortunately this did not occur.
- 1.3 The commitment to both pools was confirmed by the commissioning of a report from an independent leading expert on quality and health and safety management in the leisure industry. A comprehensive report was produced and an action plan was devised to address the issues raised. This emphasised the need to employ suitable qualified staff.
- 1.4 A total compliment of 5 staff would be required for the both pools which included supervisor.
- 1.5 The problems encountered regarding staff recruitment are well documented but to reiterate, there has traditionally been a shortage of applicants for a few weeks work. This was exacerbated by the Welsh Assembly "free swimming for children" initiative that also was planned for the summer period. The end result was that local leisure centres were inundated with customers who required enhanced levels of pool supervision
- 1.6 Following a "honeymoon" period it was discovered that patterns of usage at the indoor pools had reached a plateau which then released available staff for our requirements. Interviews were arranged on Wed 13th August and staff commenced work the following day.

2. PERIOD OF OPENING

- 2.1 It was agreed to open on a continuous basis from 14/8/03 until 31/8/03 which included the bank holiday period. This resulted in a number of 18 days opening.

3. POOL WATER QUALITY TESTS

- 3.1 All log sheets for both site have been scrutinised and adequate levels of free chlorine and Ph were maintained.

4. USAGE FIGURES

- 4.1 Staff were instructed to carry out "head counts" on an hourly frequency and it may well be that this is not the most accurate method of measurement as families tended to spend longer than 1 hour on site.
- 4.2 Possibly for next year we will request that a daily average will be used as a yardstick.

4.3 Usage figures were as follows:-

Senghenydd 1530

Morgan Jones 870

Usage pattern graphs are available for inspection.

5. SERVICE COSTS

5.1 Officers are currently awaiting confirmation of costs for the constituent elements of the scheme and these will be passed on to all contributing organisations as soon as possible.

5.2 For 2002/2003 the following action has been taken.

1. Responsibility for staff recruitment and training will fall to the Leisure Service (in particular Caerphilly Leisure Centre) The staff will be employed as relief staff throughout the year and will be trained to manage the paddling pools specifically.
2. The responsibility for the physical maintenance of the paddling pools will remain with the Parks Service.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 It is not the intention of Officers and Members of the Caerphilly County Borough Council to close both of these two faculties. We are committed to improving and enhancing these facilities as funding becomes available.

6.2 There will inevitably be constant reviews of the use of these facilities in partnership with the Community Councils, SALT etc. and any discussions for change will always be dealt with openly and in consultation.