



## Report on Yearsley Pool - December 2010

### Briefing note for Councillor Alexander

#### Background and history:

Yearsley Baths, as it was known then, was built in 1908 by Rowntree & Co. Ltd. and gifted by deed to the citizens of York on the 4th May 1909. The pool was first upgraded in 1949 when a water filtration circulation system was added. Originally an open-air pool, the installation of a roof and other facility upgrades took place between 1964 to 1965.

#### The last 10 years:

##### 2000

Now one of the few Edwardian 50 Yard Pools remaining in the North of England, an investigation was undertaken into the fabric of the facility by GLR Architects. This highlighted that a major refurbishment was required. A model refurbishment scheme was costed by GLR at £2.6m. This scheme was not progressed.

##### 2003

In 2003 the executive agreed that a brief should be produced for a feasibility study, which would inform members on the best way forward for the refurbishment of Yearsley Pool. The specialist consultants' brief was drawn up in consultation with the Yearsley Action Group and sought to:

- Review the technical data regarding the state of the pool's fabric
- Focus on a scheme which would retain the current 50 yard configuration
- Extend the life of the pool by a further 25 years
- Reflect the known views and wishes of users and stakeholders
- Ensure that Yearsley is fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act
- Maximise business opportunities for the pool in respect of both swimming and other uses
- Ensure good value for money

The study was carried out by Wm Saunders Architects.

##### 2006

In May 2006 a four week maintenance closure was required due to the main inlet pipe failing. Emergency repairs were carried out as well as other urgent DDA measures, which included:

- New entrance to include automated door with level access into the building.

- Improved reception desk
- New separate disabled changing room with toilet, shower and locker facilities
- New easy access steps into the pool
- New disabled pool hoist
- Improvements to signage and designated parking bays

## **2007**

On 12 June 2007, the Council's Executive agreed to a £890k refurbishment scheme to prolong the pool's life till at least 2012. This scheme followed the principles set out in the Wm Saunders study.

On 9 July, a 16-week refurbishment by William Birch started on site. The work included:

- New roof and wall cladding, which exceed building regulations in terms of energy ratings
- New air circulation and heating systems to ensure energy efficiency through heat recovery
- Improved access for disabled people and families
- Renewed shower and toilet areas
- All tiled areas around the pool were replaced
- New filtration system

In October the Executive agree to add an additional £200k to the refurbishment scheme due to William Birch encountering a number of additional issues that could not have been foreseen before the work commenced:

- Additional ground works to replace drains found to be collapsed
- Additional work to remove asbestos
- Concrete found to be 4 times deeper than expected at the deep end of the pool hall necessitating a redesign of a number of scheme elements
- Pool hall lighting could not be re-used as originally envisaged

Customers, many of whom had been involved in the initial consultation, were delighted with the refurbishment which retained the heritage look and community feel of the pool, whilst improving the facilities entrance, changing and swimming experience.

## **2008**

The highlight to the centenary celebrations was the Lido event. A modern dance event held within the pool hall. 900 spectators over three shows witnessed a great dance spectacular part funded by the Arts Council.

### **Facts and figures about the Pool:**

- 45.7 Metres long (50 Yards).
- 15.5 metres wide (17 Yards).
- The pool is still heated by steam supplied from the Nestle factory.
- The pool holds 227,000 gallons, which takes only 4 hours to fully circulate.
- The pool has over 13,000 user visits per month.
- 365 children and 85 adults take part in regular swimming lessons each week.
- 16 local primary schools deliver curriculum swimming lessons at the pool.
- The size of the pool allows York's top Swimming squad swimmers to train in a long course pool, improving their overall competitiveness.
- York City Baths Club and New Earswick Swimming Club have regular training sessions at the pool.
- Regional and National Canoe Polo galas are played at the pool.
- Other clubs using the pool include Octopush (underwater hockey) and Scuba diving.
- This public swimming pool is open 7 days a week from 7am until 10pm, with earlier closing on Saturday nights.

### **Pool programming:**

The swimming pool programme is changed only once a year and it is essential to get a balanced programme that provides opportunities for all residents.

The table below identifies what percentage of time is given to different sessions:

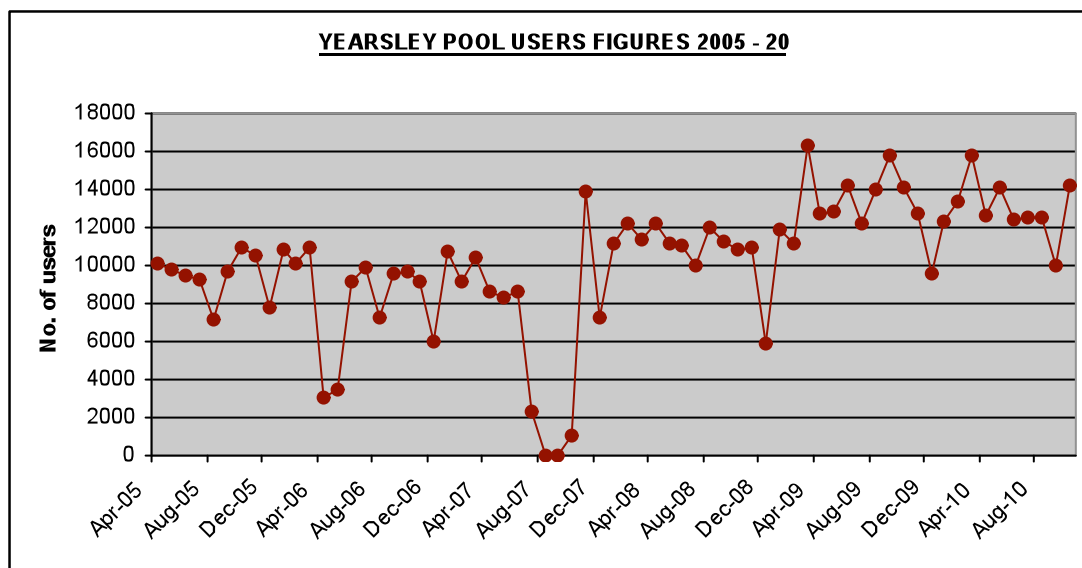
<b>Type of sessions</b>	<b>Total hours</b>	<b>% Split</b>
Public	60 hrs	60%
Schools	8.25 hrs	8.25%
Clubs	13.5 hrs	13.5%
Aquafit	3.75 hrs	3.75%
Courses	14.5 hrs	14.5%
Totals	100 hrs	100%

The table below shows the analysis of users over the period 2009/10:

<b>Type of session</b>	<b>Total users</b>	<b>% Split</b>
Public	100500	63%
Schools	11500	7.2%
Clubs	21000	13.2%
Aquafit	4300	2.8%
Courses	22000	15.8%
Totals	159300	100%

## How is the pool performing?

The refurbishment has led to record numbers of users assisted by the national free swimming initiative and the centenary celebrations: a total growth of 40%.



The free swimming for over 60s and under 16s started on 1 April 2009 and finished on 31 July 2010. Over 8,000 people signed up for free swimming, with 62,739 free swims taken.

Swimming nationally in participation terms has flat lined, so the increase in usage at Yearsley Pool demonstrates the successful management and improved marketing of the services offered.

In general terms, Yearsley's customers are older which brings a loyal following and strengthens the facility's position at the heart of the local community.

In revenue terms, the pool has not been able to match its participation performance, with the cost of running the pool increasing each year. The most significant increases have been energy and employee costs.

The income and expenditure costs can be seen in the table below for the last 5 years. Employee costs rocketed following job evaluation and the introduction of allowances, which had not been paid to leisure staff before. This coupled with the increasing energy costs from 2006 has seen Yearsley become an expensive to run facility.

<b>YEARSLEY POOL</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>-281810</b>	<b>-270696</b>	<b>-243064</b>	<b>-393942</b>	<b>-405906</b>
Activity	-281810	-270696	-243064	-393942	-405906
Grants					
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>441020</b>	<b>558596</b>	<b>478517</b>	<b>667618</b>	<b>776404</b>
Employees	265791	276048	235309	390869	465658
Premises	112630	215973	178227	177410	258427
Supplies & Services	31099	30500	38784	61783	29147
Capital Finance	31500	31500	26088	28456	23172
Misc	0	4500	0	9100	0
Transport	0	75	109	0	0
<b>NET COST</b>	<b>159210</b>	<b>287900</b>	<b>235453</b>	<b>273676</b>	<b>370498</b>
<b>TOTAL USERS</b>	<b>116661</b>	<b>97568</b>	<b>84769</b>	<b>134475</b>	<b>159728</b>
<b>NET COST / USER</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>2.04</b>	<b>2.32</b>
<b>NOTES</b>			Refurb yr		

Nationally, CIPFA measure the cost effectiveness of leisure facilities by dividing the net annual revenue cost by the annual users. In the above table, you can see in 2009/10 the net cost per user was £2.32, which is above the national average of £2.01. (CIPFA Statistics 2007)

#### **Future performance:**

The following table forecasts how the pool is expected to perform up to 2013/14.

	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
<b>£ Subsidy</b>	£376,000	£360k	£350k	£340k
<b>Users</b>	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
<b>Comments</b>	The loss of free swimming will see user figures drop slightly		Nestlé steam charge to be reviewed which could increase costs by £45k	

## SWOT Analysis:

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<p>User figures – 40% growth in last 5 years</p> <p>Loyal customer base</p> <p>Only long course swimming pool in the sub-region.</p> <p>Active action group which in the past 3 years have been cooperative</p> <p>Situated on main bus and cycle routes, which allow good access from residential areas.</p> <p>The £1.3m refurbishment has given the superstructure of the building a longer lease of life, potentially up to 2030</p> <p>Strong relationship and historic links with Nestlé e.g. agreed 50% reduction in energy costs until 1 January 2013</p>	<p>Higher than national average subsidy required to operate facility</p> <p>High energy costs due to inefficient steam heating, and non energy efficient pool hall lighting</p> <p>Main energy source (steam) supplied by Nestle can only be changed at a capital cost of £300k+</p> <p>The loss of free swimming</p> <p>No customer parking facilities, only verbal agreement with Nestle who allow use of their car park</p> <p>The very tight site envelope means there is no space to develop the building or add other, revenue generating, services e.g. gym</p> <p>Lack of a toddler pool places some limitations on programming</p> <p>Maximum occupancy of facility is 300, due to building design, fire exits etc.</p> <p>50 Yard pool (demand is for 50 metre) and lack of galleried seating make the pool unsuitable for competitive swim training or galas</p>

<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p>Further explore the commercial links with Nestlé and other commercial business e.g. NHS, York St John Uni and York Uni</p> <p>Yearsley Pool has good links with the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) which provides the pool funding to pilot initiatives and drive participation up</p> <p>Yearsley is working towards 2 quality marks (Quest and Swim 21)</p>	<p>York University Pool could impact on the student market.</p> <p>Private competition: Rocco, Living Well, Next Generation</p> <p>If Nestlé withdraw use of car park for our customers, income would be under threat</p> <p>The Nestlé factory could close which would have a big impact on users and energy supply</p>

<p>External energy reports have been carried out and confirm the steam heating inefficiencies and recommend replacing the steam heating supply with the installation of a new gas supply and CHP Boiler plant. All work is feasible and can be installed with minimum disruption to service The cost of which has been put forward in the CRAM bid process.</p> <p>Replacement of pool hall lighting, a feasibility exercise is being carried out looking into the possibility of LED lighting, if this is successful the upgrade is likely to be paid for through energy savings or energy grants.</p>	<p>The remaining life expectancy of the pool tank is unknown</p> <p>The outlet pipe from the main pool has never been replaced. If this fails circulation will stop and the pool will close. The condition of the pipe work is unknown. Replacing this pipe work will mean disruption to service but could be carried out should the event arise.</p> <p>The steam supply pipe work from Nestlé runs under the road and is outdated. If this pipe work fails all heating to the building will be lost and the pool will close while emergency repairs are carried out.</p> <p>Loss of steam from Nestlé / future price rises may necessitate investing in boilers at Yearsley.</p>
---	--

**Conclusion:**

Yearsley Pool is a well established facility, with a strong community ethos and a loyal following. Its customer base is wide, due to the under provision of public pools in York, people travel depending on which pool is open. Over the last few years Yearsley’s pool programme has changed to be open to more people more of the time, hence the strong growth in user numbers.

However, the reality is that Yearsley Pool is expensive to run and has no scope to reduce the level of subsidy required to run it. Each year, as the Council is financially squeezed, the future of Yearsley comes into question, especially in terms of best value. The nature of the site means that there is no scope to add the kind of income generating facilities, particularly fitness, that are essential to create a feasible business plan.

The Active York Swimming Pool Facility Strategy was updated in 2010, which calculated York to have a current under supply of pool space in the city of 189 square meters (this equates to approximately 4, 25m lanes of pool space) increasing to 639 square meters (13 lanes) as the population grows by 2030. The current supply of pool space is made up of: Yearsley Pool, Energise, Waterworld (the small pool only), and other private pools. (The York Sports Village Pool will add 8 lanes so in the short term we will be over-supplied).

Yearsley Pool represents over  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the current pool supply in the city and therefore its future replacement needs to be considered carefully: We need to replace Yearsley with at least the equivalent water capacity. This may be better delivered through 2 pools.

The Council, in 2007, confirmed its previous facilities strategy, committing itself to meet the city's remaining identified need through a plan to provide a city centre pool with a commercial partner; however, no progress has been made on this.

There are two further possible opportunities which could be important to contribute to the replacement of Yearsley and which will need to be considered together:

- a. The Community Stadium project at Huntington Stadium, should consider whether a pool could be provided as part of the new stadium scheme.
- b. The current Waterworld lease is up for renewal in 2012. Depending on the outcome, this could have an impact on the future of leisure water in the city.

A model needs to be pursued for any new pool similar to the arrangement with the University of York which will create a pool with over 90 hours p/w of public access at no cost to the Council tax payer.

Andy Laslett  
Charlie Croft

6 December 2010