

PRESS RELEASE

The Shotley Parish Council has recently been approached by one of our parishioners regarding the possibility of saving the Ganges Swimming Pool, which is due to be demolished after not being in use for many years and reaching a non-financially viable state of disrepair.

Its refurbishment had been a condition of granting planning permission in 2012, which would see a development including 285 dwellings, 400sq m of retail/convenience facilities, 600sq m of office space, a hotel, and areas for community use.

But by 2017 developers informed the Parish Council that they would no longer pursue the refurbishment of the swimming pool. On the back of the UK financial crisis which had started in 2008, swimming pools all over the country were reporting unsustainable losses year-on-year and the additional cost implication of removing an industrial amount of asbestos from the site, coupled with a schedule of dilapidation costs reaching £1.2 Million, sealed the fate of this project.

There had been a commuted sum of £40k for a feasibility study agreed as part of the S106 agreement and it was suggested that the Parish Council received this amount in order for it to be used on local community projects. This was discussed as part of a public parish council meeting in 2017.

In 2019 the demolition application process and the change to the S106 Legal agreement were finalised.

The Parish Council contacted the developer following a request by a resident two months ago to find out whether the demolition process could be halted to allow time for a community group to be formed and look at whether the pool could be saved. The response included an assurance that the demolition process would go ahead but that an alternative site may be provided for a new, smaller, pool in the future.

Babergh District Council, as the local planning authority, is responsible for planning decisions and we have recommended that advice regarding any future appeal or legal challenge is procured.

As a Parish Council, we will seek to support proposals where there is a material representation from within our electorate, within the constraints of our £64,000 annual precept.