

Dear Parishioners

The Shotley Parish Council was contacted by BBC News Online for a statement regarding the Swimming Pool petition and recent discussions on the matter.

The following press release has been issued. In addition, all the recent exchange of communications with the developers, including the Schedule of dilapidation from 10 years ago, which listed refurbishments costings in the region of £1.2M (which we only received last week) is being uploaded onto our website.

**Points of clarification:**

- a) The local authority responsible for planning decisions is Babergh District Council, not the Parish Council- who may only make recommendations.
- b) The £40,000 feasibility study commuted fund has not been received by the Parish Council or indeed by Babergh DC as yet. Any decisions for its spend would be subject to due democratic process if and when received by the Parish Council. The agreement reached in 2017 was that such funds would be spent in community projects, not that it would be placed in general reserves.
- c) Any decision pertaining to the future of the swimming pool remain with the site owners.

**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.