

Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee

A meeting of Arts Leisure & Culture Select Committee was held on Monday, 1st October, 2007.

Present: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell (Chair), Cllr Hilary Aggio, Cllr Dick Cains, Cllr Andrew Sherris

Officers: P. Mennear, M. Jones (LD)

Also in attendance: P. Bone (Tees Tigers Canoe Club), A. Butterfield (Powerhouse Dragon Boats), G. Butterfield (Dragon Boats), J. Green (tees Rowing Club), S. Hayward (RTWC), V. Laing (Tees Rowing Club), D. Munt (Get Hooked on Fishing), A. Slater (British Waterways)

Apologies: Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Mrs Kath Nelson, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Mick Womphrey

ALC 12/07 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared at the meeting.

ALC 13/07 **Minutes of the Meeting Held 29th August 2007**

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held 29th August 2007 be agreed as a true record.

ALC 14/07 **Work Programme: - Project plan (to follow)**

The Scrutiny Officer tabled an updated Work Programme.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.

ALC 15/07 **Scrutiny Review of River Based Leisure Facilities: -**

Members received evidence from sporting clubs and organisations based at River Tees Watersports Centre.

The representatives noted that their major concern was personal safety and the policing of the area. Each representative had experienced abuse from youths that gathered at the River Tees, which included stones being thrown at users, and verbal abuse. A. Slater advised the clubs to contact the police every time youths gathered by the river, so that the police were alerted to the size of the problem.

It was emphasised that just as important as personal safety was the issue of water safety, and the need to get the message across to those young people who at present combined alcohol and water. Similarly, it was pointed out that safety for rowers was important and Tees Rowing Club had a policy of 'if in doubt, don't go out' if conditions were not suitable.

It was queried whether the differing sports the clubs provided conflicted on the river. The clubs stated that there was little conflict between the differing sport disciplines that used the river. The sports worked together to use the river to each clubs mutual benefit.

It was noted that the Get Hooked on Fishing scheme provided an excellent example of providing a route for children away from anti-social behaviour. Other clubs could help in this regard but it would be necessary to raise aspirations and convince some young people that the other watersports were for them to enjoy also.

There was a recognised need to increase the involvement of local business in the funding and sponsorship of activities on the Tees. At present, many approaches for funding are made on an individual club basis.

The clubs believed that there needed to be an corporate umbrella group that supported and represented all the differing users of the River Tees. The purpose of this group would be to engage those who gathered by the river into the sporting activities. The group would also raise funds for all the clubs that used the river rather than the individual groups raising their own funding for equipment and facilities. It was noted that some of the clubs incurred problems when they applied for funding as they were not seen as a 'viable' sport.

Previously a Watersports Festival had been held on the Tees in order to raise awareness and it was felt that this was an idea that could be resurrected.

Access to the river at Yarm was discussed, and more information on the progress of the plans made for Yarm was needed. It was noted that Yarm Parish Council hoped to hold a Gala event on 28th June 2008, which would include a Regatta. This event had not been confirmed, but plans were advancing.

CONCLUDED that the information be noted.