

Pool campaigners in at the deep end

by Adam Hewitt

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A GRASSROOTS campaign to turn a derelict Edwardian lido into a gleaming pool complex is optimistic despite struggling to raise money.

In October The King's Meadow Campaign (KMC) was given two years by Reading Borough Council to work up its plans for the Thames-side pool off Napier Road and to try to find the money to make their vision a reality.

At its first six-monthly update with the council's culture scrutiny panel on Wednesday last week, council head of development Bruce Tindall said: "When KMC made their initial proposals, the economic situation in the country was far rosier than it is today.

"Lottery funds are few and they tend to be directed more at the Olympics and match-funding is also required. Raising capital funding has become

much more difficult." He said the scheme could be split into two, with a refurbishment of the changing rooms, pavilions and a cafe coming first and the pool later.

The campaigners are planning a fundraising drive and want to involve young people not in education or training (Neets) in running the complex.

Cllr Warren Swaine asked when the KMC will be able to start raising revenue from the pool complex and campaign chairman Bob O'Neill said: "We're getting very well ahead with the plans and hope to come back to you soon with those details."

Anne Jessel, publicity officer for the KMC, said after the meeting: "We really want to put out the message that we mean business. The fact that the meeting was so short and sweet means they trust us to get on with this and that's great."

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