

Project – Rural Swim S.H. Galloway

Final Report October 2018

Background to the Project

1. The project came about in September 2016. Having always been a keen swimmer I was aware of the lack of facilities in our rural area and had an interest in Endless Pools which could provide an effective solution to exercise without the requirement of a 25 metre pool.

I decided to take a career break from Primary Teaching and investigate the possibility of a farm diversification. It was something I'd always had in the back of my mind and now my children were all in education I decided it would be the right time to try something new.

2. My husband was in full support of the venture as he himself was investigating changes to Farming in order to embrace the current agricultural climate. It seemed like a time to experiment and try to move forward.

We knew of a reliable local architect, Hazel Smith Architecture, and invited her round to begin the plans. We also got in touch with Ellen Grant at the Dumfries and Galloway LEADER office who recommended we put in a note of interest.

3. Aims and Objectives:

To provide an inviting exercise facility for the community and visitors in the heart of the Machars that can be used all year round.

To encourage users from different groups; fitness, physiotherapy, rehabilitation and leisure.

To make links with tourism and increase visitor numbers to our area.

To work with partners, including personal trainers to deliver a safe, exercising environment.

4. My husband and I put together the funding application in a short amount of time as the application deadline was November 2016. We were keen to meet that deadline rather than wait on the next round of applications due to the possible effects of Brexit.

5. We were successful with our application and the money awarded to us from LEADER was £49,986.00.

Match funding was provided as follows:

Private Investment (S.H Galloway)	£30,000
Private Investment (R&E Vance Ltd)	£22,200

Business Loan (Royal Bank)	£21,000
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The Project Experience

6. The Project started in 2017 with the purchase of the Endless Swimming Pool. The Ground works and foundation began towards the end of the year as we had a long wait on our Building Warrant. The project completion date was 30 June 2018.



7. The Project involved the building of an exercise facility on our Farm, Barvernochan, near Whauphill, Wigtown. The facility includes an endless swimming pool fitness system, where you swim on the spot against a swim current to suit your ability. There is also an underwater treadmill within the pool. A gym with 5 exercise machines, a treatment room and 2 wet rooms are also located in the building. A hydrotherapy spa sits on a decked area adjoining the building. The facility, 'Rural Swim' is available for members of the public as well as visitors to the area to hire by the hour. There is a website with an online booking system for members to use. There is also a pay as you go option for visitors.





8. Rural Swim fits with the Local Development Strategy for the following reasons.

Firstly, it allows an existing farm business to diversify its enterprises and provide a new stream of income to ensure its sustainability in future years.

As a new business within Dumfries and Galloway, it provided an injection of investment in to a rural community and provided work for local trades and supply firms. In the future it is hoped this business will become an employer within the local area and potentially expand into high quality holiday accommodation.

Rural Swim provides an exciting facility for the local community in a centrally located site in the Machars, catering for all ages and levels of fitness. It gives people opportunities to improve fitness or recover from injury in a private accessible environment.

Furthermore it creates links with other health professionals and provides an additional area of treatment or exercise to help benefit the ageing population and those with health issues.

It is an innovative idea that will help provide additionality to Dumfries and Galloway's already entrepreneurial tourist industry. Tourism is one of the key areas for development in the region. Rural Swim will help attract visitors to the area seeking fitness type holidays. This will add to the list of activity based facilities in the area, such as Kirroughtree Visitor Centre, Laggan Outdoor and Loch Ken. It provides a partnership with local Caravan Site owners and other accommodation providers where visitors can come and use Rural Swim.

Finally it will encourage young professionals to come and work in the area knowing there is an exciting exercise facility available.

9. Stuart and I managed the building of the project which involved different contractors: builders, electricians, joiners, plumbers along with several others. I have been in charge of getting the website, Facebook page and memberships up and running and will continue to be in charge of overseeing the running of Rural Swim.

10. In order to market Rural Swim we have created a Facebook business page which has shown progress of the build right through to advertising the open day. The page continues to inform the public of events, membership and promotions.

Fliers have been printed and placed in several hotels around the area as well as self-catering accommodation. Links have been made with the local WigWam Holidays project. I have had meetings with local clubs and physiotherapists to promote Rural Swim and they have taken fliers to give to players and clients.

11.

As mentioned previously, local trades were used in the build wherever possible and therefore benefitted from the business.

Both local people and visitors to the area will benefit from using Rural Swim as an exercise facility. Whether it's for fitness, training, rehabilitation, physiotherapy, relaxation or fun Rural Swim will provide an exercise facility to cover people's requirements.

12. We did go over the original budget due to an unexpected expense. This was covered by ourselves.

Initial Budget	£123, 186.00
LEADER Funding	£49,986.00
Match Funding	£73,200.00
Final Budget	£150, 013.00
Over Spend	£26, 827.00

13. We underestimated how long it would take to apply for and obtain our building warrant. This held us up in the initial months. By using individual trades to complete the project there was much more management involved and it was very difficult to stick to timescales. We overspent by £26,827 If we had taken more time to work out the costings of the finer details of the building such as insulation costs, floor finishes and costings of fireproof doors we would have had a more realistic budget to start off with.

14. The project will continue to be run privately by ourselves.

15. Rural Swim has been designed by ourselves to utilise the best available equipment for a long term facility which can be managed and maintained without high costs. The choice of pool has been selected as it provides the best possible swim features and user experience. Other similar pools which are cheaper do not have the smooth circulation of the Endless pool which is vital to attract a regular user. The features within this self-contained pool unit increase its attraction for users therefore increasing revenue returns. The running costs of the pool are rated at £70-£90 per month in comparison with similar conventional pool costs, which are more than double. The running costs of the building itself are being kept as low as possible with the inclusion of energy saving electrical features and heating and circulation systems.

The building design is a simple sustainable structure which will last in excess of 25 years with low maintenance costs or repair requirements. The internal features of the building are all designed to provide the best use of space provided with facilities designed for disabled use as well quality cost effective finish.

Rural Swim is situated on our own farm and is an investment we have long term commitments to.

The pool is going to generate a self-maintaining income stream from hire of the facility by individuals or small groups. The pool, gym and hot tub will be open 6/7 days a week with users being able to book a one hour or two hour slot to come and use. This will be done through a website with payment taken at that point and full terms and conditions and

disclaimers completed then too. On site they will gain access to the pool through a security keypad on the door. Charges will be £10 per person per session with full use of facilities available.

In the future, we may build some high quality holiday accommodation which will encourage more visitors to the area and access to Rural Swim.

Target Evidence	
No of businesses supported to diversify	S.H Galloway farm business has been able to diversify. The building and website are evidence of this.
No of farm diversification projects	S.H Galloway farm business has successfully completed the diversification project, Rural Swim. The building and website are evidence of this.
No of projects supporting the development of tourism businesses across the region	The project supports Tourism now it is complete as it provides an exercise facility for Tourists to use. Evidence is our Website, our Facebook Page and Flyers that are being made for local Caravan Sites and Tourist Sites.
No of community facilities created and new services provided	Rural Swim Exercise facility has been built. The building, the website and our Facebook page are all evidence of this.
No of projects developing urban/rural relationships	Links have been formed with local groups in villages and towns, including Newton Stewart and Stranraer to enable them to access the facility. A local physiotherapist from Stranraer, Alison Howie, is a member of our Facebook page and has received fliers to give to her clients. As a result we are getting several users travelling from Stranraer to use the facility. Members of the local Swimming Club, Triathlon club and Rugby Club have also joined our Facebook page and made direct enquiries. Accommodation providers, both rural and urban have joined our page also and requested fliers for Rural Swim.
No. of people noting an improvement in Health and Wellbeing - 10	I was unable to gather evidence for this target as users could not use Rural Swim until the project was complete.