

# The Sharks



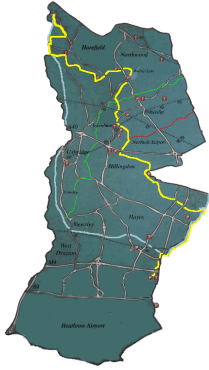
# A Plan for Hillingdon



[www.thesharks.org.uk](http://www.thesharks.org.uk)



## A Plan for Hillingdon – The Sharks



The following document is a working document looking at developing activities and opportunities for paddle sport across the London Borough of Hillingdon. It is a work in progress, it is also only the ideas of The Sharks, there has been no other input into this and we are now asking for comments and suggestions.

Some facilities are owned and operated by different organisation and we recognise that they have the final say in the areas relevant to them. There will always be matters of funding etc. Some of the projects can be done very quickly some are for the longer term. This is not a wish list but a discussion document.

### Pre-amble

The Sharks have been teaching and coaching and hosting events in Hillingdon for a number of years with great success.



We teach at slalom at Harefield, which has produced a number of nationally ranked paddlers. Harefield is a significant resource which has been used by many international paddlers, including Olympic medallists.

As well as teaching and coaching at Harefield we run a national ranking slalom at this venue each year and have held a number of other races at this site. It is a site with great potential.

We have until recently used the outdoor pool Hillingdon Leisure Centre, this is a fantastic facility which is very under used, we can increase its use dramatically but appear to not be wanted by Fusion who operate the Centre, after initially being invited in and made very welcome. This facility can be used to introduce people to canoeing and kayaking as well as for other more advanced activities.



We have also run some very successful come and try it events in Hayes Town Centre and our experience and feedback tells us that we could run a very successful canoe club at this location providing general lessons, as well as elite athletes training.

Ruislip Lido is a place we would very much like to use and believe this could provide a fantastic venue for many activities. Our experience at Osterley Park proves that we could make a huge success of an operation at the Lido, which would benefit; local residents. Local business, the local authority and the area in general.



There are also many other stretches of water in the Borough, we think we could utilise, which would make Hillingdon a significant player in Paddle Sport.



## Who are The Sharks?



The Sharks are London's number 1 Wild Water Racing Club, in 2015/16 they were ranked third in the Wavehopper challenge in Britain, a competition for developing new talent, this is despite not having much wild water in London. The Sharks have a home grown international Wild Water Racing paddler who has represented GB at the 2015 Under-23

World Championships in North Carolina and are the Country's largest provider of entry level races and have hosted national and selection races for the British Team.

In 2016, The Sharks came third best Sprint Club at the London Regional Regatta. Joel Gunnery won the London Youth Games for Hillingdon in 200m Sprint, the first person to win a paddle sport competition for Hillingdon. This actually shook the big clubs which have dominated this event.



The Sharks have a number of nationally ranked slalom paddlers, including one in National Division 1. The Club host a national ranking race at Harefield every year and plan to do more in the coming years.

The Club has run a number of entry level marathons at Harefield over the past few years, which have attracted people and clubs from a wide area and is developing plans for major events to be based in Hillingdon.

The Club regularly attracts over 100 people to recreation sessions at Osterley Park and has had over 1,500 different people paddling there in 2016, something we would like to replicate at Ruislip Lido.

We are sustainable and have a business model that supports elite athletes, introduces new paddlers, gives people a chance to try the sport and develop their own talents.

We run Satellite Clubs, one of which has been [judged the best in London by Sport England](#). One of this is already based in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

We are unique amongst Clubs in Britain as we provide all the equipment required at whatever level people participate at, so that cost is never a barrier to participation.

There are several areas on the Borough in which The Sharks want to be active, and already have some connection to, so starting with these seems a good place.

## Gunnery breaks London's sprint dominance



■ IMPRESSIVE: Joel Gunnery

### KAYAKING

WEST Drayton's Joel Gunnery broke the dominance of the big London sprint clubs after winning the 200m Kayak Junior Sprint at the London Youth Games for Hillingdon.

The 14-year-old, who paddles with the Sharks' wild water racing club, only began canoeing last year in sessions at Hillingdon Leisure Centre, in Uxbridge.

Fellow Sharks paddler Lianna Nolan also represented Hillingdon at the event at the London Regatta Centre in what was the Royal

Albert Dock. Nolan finished tenth in the slalom and then sixth in the senior 200m sprint to cap of a fine performance for the club.

Sharks development coach Neal Underwood said: "From beginner to London Youth Games champion in a year is impressive by anyone's standards.

"Two finalists is a good achievement and the beginning of something much bigger. The Sharks have some top coaches and some excellent youngsters coming through but we always want more."

The Sharks' slalom team paddle at Harefield on a Monday evening under the guidance of Gordon

Walling, who is part of the development coaching team for British Canoeing.

Their sprint team paddle on Tuesdays and Fridays at Sac, opposite Yeading Marina, with former Polish national champion Beata Fabinska.

The club is always looking for new members and anyone is welcome to join, regardless of experience. The Sharks will provide all necessary kit.

For more information about the club, visit [www.thesharks.org.uk](http://www.thesharks.org.uk), email [canoeing@thesharks.org.uk](mailto:canoeing@thesharks.org.uk) or call Underwood on 07951 770 241.

**CONTACT US**

**Call:** 01483 508 700 **email:** [tms-sport@trinitymirror.com](mailto:tms-sport@trinitymirror.com) **visit:** [www.getwe](http://www.getwe)

## Harefield



Over the past few years The Sharks have developed this site as a major canoeing site in the region. In 2016, we were awarded some funding from British Canoeing's slalom Committee to help upgrade the practice gates which we have there permanently. We had previously convinced the developers who are building on the Coppermill site to put rings on the wall enabling us to put up gates there.

We have already started to invest in this site and having attracted money and goodwill from outside partners. However, there is a lot more we want to do, to turn this into a really great facility for local development and build a slalom squad which can challenge the best in the Country.

We host sessions here throughout the year, from teaching beginners to coaching experienced slalom paddlers. This has been a host site for one of our Satellite Clubs. We also host an annual entry level (division 4) and a national ranking division 3 (one above entry level) slalom at this site. We have been supported by Clancy Docwra and the Coy Carp in running this and other events.

Other events we have run at Harefield are entry level Wild Water Races and Wavehopper events as well as a regular series of mini-marathons.

The site is a fantastic canoeing location, but has few facilities and is not easily accessible, we have offered a mini-bus service from Hillingdon Leisure Centre to improve access for youngsters.

### Future Plans and Development

The Sharks want to develop this site for a number of activities, building on what we have already done.

Ideally we need some sort of storage at the location, to store boats. One problem at the moment is that all kit has to be brought on site on every occasion we use it. There are few opportunities for this but one possibility is the island where the road Coppermill Lane meets Park Lane. Just something as simple as a container on this site would work, although something better would be appreciated. **There would be a lot of work required to prepare the land. However, the first thing is to find out who owns this land?** I am not even certain if it is in Hillingdon, although the weir and weir pool definitely are, as are most of the participants who paddle with us here.

We would like to put some temporary floodlights for Winter training.

The Club intends to re-establish its regular marathon series and to prepare to host a national ranking marathon race at the site. The Club will host a number of entry level Wild Water Races (Wavehopper races) as part of its development plan. The Club is investigating staging a major (round London) canoe race from this site.

The Sharks want to expand its weekly sessions at this site, to introduce more sessions on more days. To provide a pathway from beginners through to competitive racing in Slalom, Wild Water Racing and Marathon. To have a regular mini-bus service from Uxbridge and Ruislip to the site, providing opportunities for the large populations of Uxbridge and Ruislip.

## Aims for 2017

Expand Monday slalom sessions: 5pm for beginners, 6pm for more experienced paddlers and 7pm for adults only (the proximity of the Coy Carp, which hosts a quiz night on a Monday would make this an ideal site to encourage adults to paddle, where they could socialise afterwards).

Introduce a second days training for more experienced slalomists and Wild Water Racers.

Re-establish monthly Thursday evening mini-marathons during Summer months and weekend races during the Winter.

Sort out Transport links making it easier for young people to access this site.

Investigate the possibility of storage on site, start to clear the island and continue to improve the facilities (gates etc.).

## Hillingdon Leisure Centre

The Sharks were originally invited by Fusion, the Centre operators, to try and get more use of the outdoor pool. The idea was The Sharks could use the pool in the evenings all year round. However, Winter use has not been possible as the poolside lighting has never worked.



After two very successful seasons in the pool Fusion quadrupled the rent! Making it not viable for us to use the pool and leaving it empty rather than being used. The Club had also occasionally used the indoor pool on a Sunday evening. The Swimming Pool sessions had attracted large numbers of people, including Joel Gunnery, who went on to win gold in the London Youth Games for

Hillingdon, the first win Hillingdon has ever had in this event.

The rent hike also coincided with The Sharks successful bid for London Sport funding to establish a Canoe Polo team at the outdoor Pool. This would have created a club at the site, playing tournaments and using the Pool for matches. Reality is a facility as good this would have attracted national attention and may have been used to host national and maybe even international competitions. We would certainly have increased our use from one day a week to three or four.

The Pool provides a safe and inviting environment for both new paddlers and parents, who can see what is happening and feel happy that their children are being active in a fun and safe place.

**This is a fantastic Council owned facility, which can be used to provide local people with great opportunities. It can be sustainable, needing no Council funding and has attracted outside funding.** However, it is not being used because of the greed of the operators Fusion, who ironically have lost revenue from their decision and have created a bit of an embarrassment for Hillingdon Council; an under used facility.

The Leisure Centre has excellent communications being in Uxbridge and therefore is an excellent location for people to use. We regularly had over 30 people attending sessions.



## Aims for 2017

Get back to using the outdoor pool at least once a week, during times it is not being used by the public. Increasing usage of the facility and revenue for the pool.

The Sharks would like to start their regular weekly sessions for new comers and improvers, including introduction to flat water slalom. From these sessions paddlers would be introduced to slalom at Harefield and other types of racing and recreational paddling.

To establish a Canoe Polo team at the Pool on a different evening, offering teams for juniors, both boys and girls as well as seniors, both men and women. With the view to hosting at least one event in 2018.



To host at least one flat water entry level (division 4) slalom at the Pool, this would bring people from further afield to the facility, spending money in the locality as well as making an exciting spectacle for people to watch. To enter the facility at Uxbridge, people have to walk past the outdoor pool, better they see it used than empty!

To establish some use of the indoor pool for safety and occasional sessions during the Winter and hopefully be able to use the outdoor pool through the Winter.



# Coach praises her Fab Sharks making debuts

## Kayaking stars impress during first competitive outing

**KAYAKING**  
by Matt Lewis  
matt.lewis@trinitymirror.com

**HEAD coach Beata Fabinski was in buoyant mood after a dozen of Harefield Sharks' newest recruits made quite a splash on their competitive kayaking debuts.**

Seven girls and five boys, the majority of whom came through the training programme, overseen by former Polish national champion Fabinski produced encouraging performances, with Ella Conroy and James Reed achieving promotion in their respective events at the Division 4 slalom at Kingsland Basin, in north-east London.

Fabinski, appointed in March to oversee the development of the expanding paddling venture, joined in the spirit of things by swapping her beloved kayak for a first ever dabble in a canoe in the slalom doubles. She hailed the results as

evidence the partnership between the Leisure Centre and Hillingdon Council is bearing fruit.

She said: "The youngsters were brilliant and obviously having a great time. Nearly all of these paddlers came via our programme at Hillingdon Leisure Centre Pool, which has been a great success and great partnership. The centre and the council have shown great vision – long may it continue.

"This was fantastic fun, a great family event and an ideal way to get into competitive canoeing. It is the first time I have ever been to a slalom or in a canoe, so it was great to be part of the fun."

Conroy arguably produced the paddle of the day to be second on her competitive bow, earning her instant promotion to National Division 3 of Ladies K1.

Tallulah Lacey was the first of the Junior 16s home with new club-mates Megan Rice, Grace Hammore, Issey Nelson, Ellen Butcher and Caitlin Edwards not far behind.

Not to be outdone, James Reed came third in the men's K1, earning his promotion to National Division 3 in the process.

Khaleel Zainddin, 13, came eighth overall, while nine-year-old Alex Brennan was first U12 home with James Hammore and Eamon Brennan close behind. Two entries in the canoe singles, saw Amelia Comes win the ladies and Reed come second in the men's race.

Members then formed some interesting pairings for the canoe doubles, where 10-year-old Hammore partnered in-form Grant Underwood, who had earlier won the officials event, to victory.

Fabinski, meanwhile, made light of her transfer to an alternative water vehicle by coming in third alongside fellow coach Neal Underwood. Both crews were promoted to Division 3.

If you want to give canoeing a go visit [www.thesharks.org.uk](http://www.thesharks.org.uk) or contact Neal on 07951 770 241.

**'FANTASTIC FUN':** Harefield Sharks girls  
Contributed

In the Harrow League, previous table toppers Wealdstone... They remain gap to a side over North... Northwo match of the Harrow A... In Division 3 defeat to Meaway to... They triumph

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## Ruislip Lido

The Lido is a fantastic facility in the Borough, which we would like to use on a regular basis. At this site we could establish regular recreational sessions to bring new people into the sport and to the site, increasing revenues of local businesses.

The Sharks already run a very successful operation at Osterley Park in partnership with the National Trust and The Sharks have won an award from Sport England for this innovative project. [www.londonsport.org/news/sharks-canoe-club-named-best-satellite-club-london](http://www.londonsport.org/news/sharks-canoe-club-named-best-satellite-club-london).



Over 1,500 different people took part in canoeing/kayaking at our project in Osterley Park in 2016. Many becoming regulars. We have family canoes as well as individual kayaks. The age range was from 4 years old upwards, we had many adults including people of pensionable age. This really is sport for all.

Many of the participants are now taking part in regular activities. This project was a huge success and .....



The truth is Ruislip Lido is a much better site. It is bigger, has better transport links. If the Sharks operated here, we have no doubt that numbers would exceed 2,000 people per year. We would also establish a training base for our Sprint racers. This facility would be ideal and safe training facility. We would be able to host races, local regattas.

The Club has proved itself able to deliver, both in operational terms at the Osterley, and in terms of coaching in being able to get talent involved in competition. Not only did our coaches provide the opportunities for Joel, we also have a home grown international paddler.

Given access to Ruislip Lido The Sharks would build the biggest participation Canoe Club in Britain (possible in the World). We would also establish in Hillingdon a top flight Sprint Club. We have coaches with international experience. **Hillingdon really could be the envy of the Country.**

This partnership would earn money for The Sharks, enabling us to invest more in our paddlers and sessions. It would generate income for local businesses, tea, coffee, meals etc., and an agreement with Hillingdon Council would generate money for the Lido. As well as providing opportunities for local people to keep fit and have fun, both of which aids the wellbeing of the community and reduce costs in health care and other areas.

Additionally we could organise corporate activities, birthday parties in conjunction with local facilities, both of which we have done at Osterley Park.

We are currently investigating other opportunities at Osterley Park, including Stand Up Paddle Boarding and Open Water Swimming. Both of which we could establish at the Lido. We would also look at building partnerships with other clubs to provide other activities, such as bringing in run leaders and trail leaders to increase use of the facility for casual exercise. Orienteering in the woods. We have experience of working with a number of clubs, schools and other organisations. We would establish regular activity sessions for schools.

Recently Hillingdon Council has invested money on making the Lido a fantastic facility, now we want to help make it even better. Please not all our sessions are lifeguarded with instructors on the water.

### *Aims for 2017*

To establish canoeing and kayaking sessions at weekends and during school holidays at the Lido, along the lines of our very successful business model at Osterley Park. To include causal fun, come and try it sessions, family sessions and opportunities to take up the sport competitively.

Establish race training sessions at the lake and to expand our after school Satellite Club to operate here as well as at Harefield (and Hillingdon Leisure Centre if we can get back in there).

Hold some fun races.

### *Aims for 2018*

To build on the success of 2017

To introduce at least one local regatta.

To introduce more activities

To develop a schools programme and more.



### Hayes

The Club has for a long time been trying to establish itself in Hayes. The area has huge potential and the only thing stopping The Sharks from operating in the town is a lack of somewhere to operate from.

Come and try it sessions in connection with Hayes Canal Partnership and The Canals and Rivers Trust have been very successful, attracting over 100 people on a day.

We have looked at site including working with Tesco's at Bulls Bridge, High Point Village and Shackles Dock. All of which have been looked on favourably and attracted potential funding but none have actually been started due to storage and access issues.

Hayes has excellent communications and a large local population.

### *However, things are changing*

Shackles Dock has been bought by developers, whom are keen to look at ways of utilising the Dock with canoeing as an activity.

Also the Nestles site is being redeveloped with residential usage and the developers here have shown interest in using the canal frontage for canoeing.

Both these developments have potential.

**Shackles Dock** could be developed as a mini-activities centre. We could teach canoeing/kayaking in the Dock area where there would be no moving traffic, but still have access to the miles of open canal for experienced paddlers and race training.

With proper facilities, this could be developed and a significant site, hosting flat water Slalom, Canoe Polo as well as Sprint and Marathon paddling. It would be an excellent



teaching base; providing opportunities for school sessions, after school activities and family canoeing as well as serious training and recreation.

Additionally other activities could be established here; Stand Up Paddle Boarding, Dragon Boat Racing, Climbing. Running (tow path) for fitness sessions, with run leaders, Healthy Walks, and other activities based around the Dock and the Canal.

**Nestles Site** would provide excellent training facilities, linking in with a gym being built on the site. The site could be used for teaching, recreation, schools, after schools clubs and training.

If both Shackles Dock and the Nestles Site were to come to fruition, the Club would generate enough interest to operate out of both sites, using them for different types of sessions at different times. The Nestles site also provides opportunities for other land based activities, which The Sharks are interested in developing.

#### *Aims for 2017*

To secure at least one of the development opportunities for The Sharks

To establish a presence in temporary accommodation in Hayes, whilst waiting for a permanent home.

#### *Other Opportunities in Hillingdon*

The Borough of Hillingdon has some amazing attributes, swimming pools, the Lido, miles of canals and some rivers.

We have for a number of years in Ealing run outreach sessions, by taking boats to other locations where the canal is close to residential areas and conducted sessions there, both with schools and general public (similar to how we operate at Harefield). With a base in the Borough we could easily service sessions in Uxbridge and West Drayton as well.

These sessions could be even better served if we could access a broad-beam boat to use as a moving club house.

Additionally Hillingdon has some rivers, which could be used for paddling. The Sharks are London's number one Wild Water Racing Club and can see plenty of potential in stretches of the Colne and the Frays which flow through the Borough.



We have some Ergo paddling machines (like rowing machines but set up for kayaking – can be configured for canoeing as well). We would like to make use of these in schools and other places, particularly during the Winter months, to get more people active. We could set up a paddling machine league, the great thing about using the Ergos is, you can't fall in (get wet and cold) and anybody can have a go.

#### *Aims for 2017*

To continue to investigate other sites for paddling opportunities.

Get into schools with the Ergos.

## Conclusions and Summary

This is a long document and a lot has been stated, this is because Hillingdon potentially has more opportunities than any other Borough in London.

**Harefield** – is up and running and can be strengthened.

**Hillingdon Leisure Centre** – needs to be brought back as a canoeing facility, it really is in everyone's interest. Hillingdon Council's, Fusion's, The Sharks' and most importantly, the local community.

**Ruislip Lido** – this could be used as a canoeing venue very quickly and be up and running for 2017. All we need is an agreement.

**Hayes** – bringing this online is a longer-term project, but some activity could be happening as soon as we can find a suitable storage solution, even if only temporary storage or a boat.

**Other Options** – again the potential for other areas is huge and these need to be investigated for the future.

What is clear is that Hillingdon can have a major competitive and recreational canoeing/kayaking club based in its borders, providing opportunities for its local residents both young and not so young and all it needs is support from the Local Council, we are not asking for money (we would like some but know the financial climate is not flush at the moment); we can get funding from outside sources, all the sessions we run are sustainable and will be paid for through revenue charges.

We will bring economic and health benefits by being successful and active in the Borough.

*So what do we need from Hillingdon Council?*

We need an agreement to move forward.

We would like to meet with senior and local (ward) politicians on the Council to explain what we will bring and what we will do. We also need to meet with Council Officers who have been given the go ahead to help us.

*Specifically we need from Hillingdon Council:*

**An agreement to use Ruislip Lido**

**Agreement to get back into Hillingdon Leisure Centre**

Anything and everything else we can do in partnership with other bodies. Although some help, advice and support will always be welcome.

