

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 25 JULY 2019

Question to Mark Winnington
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

By Cllr Susan Woodward

Question

After the recent tragedy at Chasewater when a young man lost his life, statements by the Council have indicated that there is to be no full safety review of the site. The Cabinet Member reiterated the message in the media that Chasewater is “not a swimming lake” yet, three weeks previously, the well-publicised Ironman event took place in the same waters. Does the Cabinet Member agree that the County Council is sending out mixed messages about swimming at Chasewater and, if so, what does he intend to do about the ongoing safety concerns of those who know Chasewater best?

Reply

- At all times of the year, public swimming/ use of Chasewater for recreational swimming is prohibited and there are signs around the lake which make this very clear to all who make use of the Park.
- When we know that there is a period of warm weather, communication is increased to reiterate this message and as this is recognised as good practice it will continue.
- Staffordshire County Council Rangers patrol the area as much as possible, they use a megaphone to inform people in the water why swimming is not allowed. All incidents are logged. If people refuse to come out and there is any indication that they may be under the influence of alcohol etc, or if children are at risk, the police are called.
- Following the incident, staff from Rural County and SCC Health & Safety reviewed the provision of signs and life rings at Chasewater. There are numerous life rings in place and these are regularly checked, as well as a significant number of signs, as noted above.
- We will await the outcomes of the inquest into the recent tragic incident and will review our approach with input from emergency services to see if there is anything further which we can do.
- **Ironman** is a professionally planned and managed event; the welfare of the competitors is at the forefront of the planning process and therefore there are extensive safety measures in place. The competitors have experience of

open water swimming and they're wearing wetsuits which trap a layer of warmth and guard against cold water shock.

- We do recognise that there are other users of the water who do swim in the reservoir (i.e. Chasewater Open Water Swimming and Tri Club), however, as with Ironman these are time limited, regulated and fully supervised.