

Open Water Access Assessment

GROUP: Services, Darlington Borough Council	SECTION: community safety team	Advising Safety Officer: andrew allison
Date Completed: 8/12/2021	Date Reviewed:	Name of Reviewer:
Weather conditions on day of assessment: Dry, cold and good daylight	Was river in flood or drought on the day of the inspection (consult colleagues on this if you are unfamiliar with area)?	Not applicable as these are all static reservoirs.

Risk Assessment (Summary)

The 3 reservoirs at Middleton St George are situated to the rear of the Community Centre on Station Road. There is access for vehicles next to the community centre which leads to a car park running adjacent to the levee of the first reservoir (marked as 1 on the image below). Next to the car park is a brick-built clubhouse which houses the MSG model boat club.

This building has a cctv system which covers the area immediately round the clubhouse but also the concrete steps that lead to the waterside of the 1st reservoir. The footage is recorded but the images are not actively monitored. There are concrete steps that lead from the clubhouse to the water's edge. At the base of the steps there is a concrete pad providing a stable standing area for operators to view their models on the water. The club operates a policy that their members must work in pairs as a minimum. The club provides a small boat to be used to retrieve models stranded on the water and lifejackets must be worn by members when this is used. The clubhouse contains a throwline in case of emergency. The club's policy also states that junior members must be accompanied by at least one parent when attending the reservoir. The clubhouse does not have any fixed open / closed hours so there is never any guarantee that members or their equipment will be available to assist members of the public if an incident occurs on any of the three reservoirs.

Reservoir 1 is approximately one metre deep apart from a small area where the sump is located which is deeper. In most areas the water is bordered by a concrete lip, but there are some areas where there is a shallow, sloped pebble area and then there is a levee covered in a mix of grass, shrubs and some trees. At the top of the levee is a well-defined path that goes all the way around the reservoir and links to paths along the other two reservoirs. The vast majority of the path has a small concrete kerb running along it on the reservoir side. The distance from the path to the water edge is approx. 3 to 4 metres and is a slope of approx. 35° downhill.

Reservoir 2 is approximately 3000mm deep apart from a small area where the sump is located which is deeper. It is similar to reservoir 1 in terms of its construction, the path around it and the levee.

Reservoir 3 is approximately 2750mm deep apart from a small area where the sump is located which is deeper. It is similar to reservoirs 1 and 2 in terms of its construction, the path around it and the levee, except that it has a number of fishing pegs around it, which make access to the water's edge easier than at the other two reservoirs.

The area is predominantly used by members of the model boat club, anglers and dog walkers. There is anecdotal evidence of young people using the 1st reservoir for swimming in when the weather is hot, despite 'no swimming' signs being in place and visible. There have been no 'water safety' incidents reported recently.

Signage -

Additional signs have previously been placed on posts close to the steps leading to the 1st reservoir, but these have been vandalised within a couple of weeks of being put up and so they have ceased to be put up.

There is signage with information on a number of themes on the main entry to the area and at two other key points on the paths around the reservoir (Image below – C + E) and this includes 'no swimming'. There is no advice on how to report incidents on these signs, but there is the location. There are ongoing incidents of vandalism to these signs, predominantly using stickers to cover up the wording. There are also posts with 'deep water' warning signs attached on three separate sets of steps (Image below - D + E + F) leading to the reservoir paths. There is no warning sign on the post on the route to the reservoirs from point 'B' on the image below. This is a set of concrete steps with a handrail that leads from the rear of the community centre directly up onto the levee and is well used due to its position.

Overall risk rating score

Risk Rating and Tolerability Levels	
0 - 30%	Very low level of risk
31 - 50%	Low risk level
51 - 70%	Tolerable risk level
71 - 80%	High risk level
81 - 100%	Very high risk

Description	Segment Risk Rating Score (with current controls)
All 3 reservoirs at Middleton St George water park	28%

When the further risk reductions from appendix 1 are implemented and maintained the assessment indicates a reduction in risk rating to the following level.

Description of further controls	Segment Risk Rating Score with further controls (appendix 1)
Add an additional sign to the existing information signs. "In an emergency call 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service" Your 'what3words' location is fools.aged.alcove	27%
Affix a sign to the wall on the left of the clubhouse door (as pictured). NO SWIMMING (with accompanying pictogram) "In an emergency call 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service" Your 'what3words' location is fools.aged.alcove	
Install a 20 metre throwline on the clubhouse wall adjacent to the levee. This should be secured using a combination padlock and affixed to an advisory sign (as pictured above). 'Quote Location – Middleton St George Water Park' Inform County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service of the provision and padlock combination code. The code should also be known to the members of the model boat club in case they are required to use it, but they should also still call 999 immediately.	

Affix a warning sign to the existing post at the top of the steps leading from the community centre car park area. 'NO SWIMMING' + Deep Water, including corresponding pictograms.	
Monitor the signs and rescue equipment after installation to ascertain if it is vandalised. Inform DBC water safety group (via Andrew Allison – andrew.allison@darlington.gov.uk) if it is.	

Assessor(s) Name(s)	Andrew Allison	Date of assessment	08/12/2021
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From Google Earth



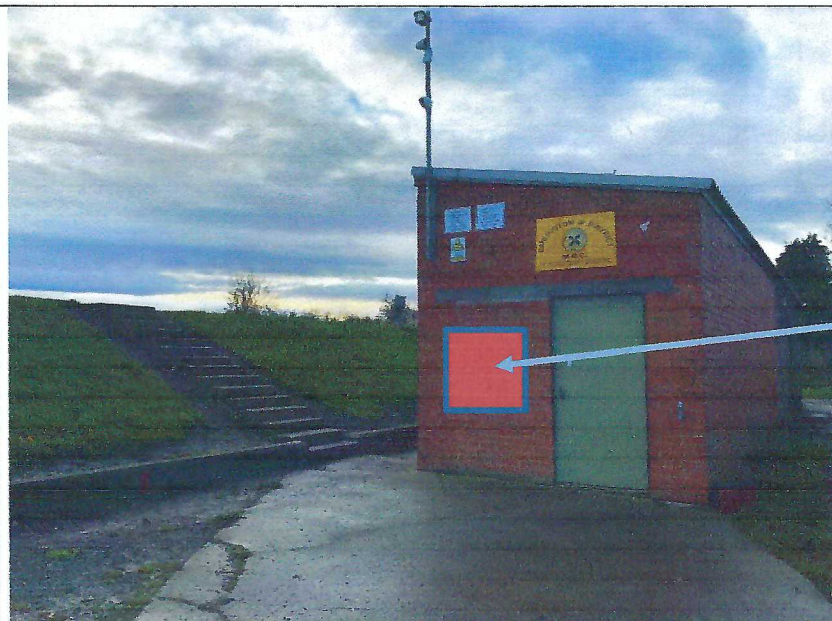


Entrance to the community centre parking and the reservoir area.



Signage at the entrance to the community centre parking and the reservoir area.

Note the sticker used to try and cover some of the wording.



Model boat club – brick built clubhouse next to reservoir 1. This end wall faces the car park and main entry point.

Additional signage could be fixed here to reduce the chances of vandalism.



Warning signs, a padlocked throwline and information on how to report an incident could be affixed here. This would be covered by existing cctv.

Well defined path leading past the clubhouse.



Steps down to the concrete observation platform used by the motor-boat club.

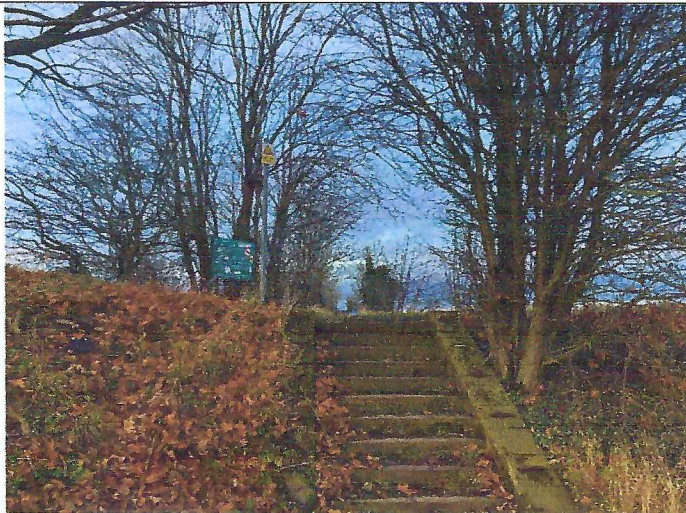


Example of the type of construction used for the fishing pegs around reservoir 3.



Example of the signs used around the reservoirs. Note the stickers used to try and cover some of the wording.

There is no guidance on how to report an incident, but it does give a geographical location.



Deep water sign and warning / information signs used around the reservoirs.



The concrete edging surrounding most of the reservoirs.



Shallow, sloped, pebbled edging found at some areas of the reservoirs.



Steps leading from the rear of the community centre up onto the top of the levee. There is a post at the top of the steps but whatever sign was on it has been removed.



Suggested type of sign and throwline that could be affixed to clubhouse wall.

Risk Scoring sheet for: (Location/Segment)						Middleton St George					
Misjudgement ignorance or disregard			Unlimited access to water			Supervision			Ability to save oneself or be rescued		
Lighting	3	0	Footpath	4	1	Adjacent locations and facilities	3	3	Previous accidents on site	5	0
Water depth	4	4	Freeboard	5	2	Direct supervision of users	3	3	Additional hazards	4	1
Nature of bed 1	3	2	Edge gradient bank	4	2	Facility likely to be used only in good weather	1	1	Likelihood of being noticed if in trouble	3	1
Nature of bed 2	4	1	Pinch points	4	0						
Alcohol/drugs	4	1	Unexpected drops	3	0						
Obstruction in water	5	0	Proximity of routes to water	4	2						
Use by <8yrs	4	1	Inviting nature of water	4	4						
Use by those with impairments	4	3									
Water currents	2	0									
Max score = L/H Column, Actual score R/H Column											
Max score	33	12	Max score	28	11	Max score	7	7	Max score	12	2
Percentage score	41%	15%	Percentage score	35%	14%	Percentage score	9%	9%	Percentage score	15%	3%
Significant findings: Most signage does not include advice on how to report incidents or provide additional location information – 'what3words'. No rescue equipment is readily available for members of the public to utilise.								Total potential risk score		80 (100%)	
								Risk score, excluding current control (appendix1)		41%	
								Risk score with current controls (appendix1)		28%	
								Risk score with further controls (appendix1)		27%	
No	Recommendation					Target Date	Action By	Completion Date	Signed		
1	Add an additional sign to the existing information signs. "In an emergency call 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service" Your 'what3words' location is fools.aged.alcove					1 st April 2022	MSG parish council				
2	Affix a sign to the wall on the left of the clubhouse door (as pictured).					1 st April 2022	MSG parish council				

	<p>NO SWIMMING (with accompanying pictogram)</p> <p>"In an emergency call 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service"</p> <p>Your 'what3words' location is fools.aged.alcove</p>				
3	<p>Install a 20 metre throwline on the clubhouse wall adjacent to the levee. This should be secured using a combination padlock and affixed to an advisory sign (as pictured above).</p> <p>'Quote Location – Middleton St George Water Park'</p> <p>Inform County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service of the provision and padlock combination code.</p> <p>The code should also be known to the members of the model boat club in case they are required to use it, but they should also still call 999 immediately.</p>	1 st April 2022	MSG parish council		
4	<p>Affix a warning sign to the existing post at the top of the steps leading from the community centre car park area.</p> <p>'NO SWIMMING' + Deep Water, including corresponding pictograms.</p>	1 st April 2022	MSG parish council		
5	<p>Monitor the signs and rescue equipment after installation to ascertain if it is vandalised. Inform DBC water safety group (via Andrew Allison – andrew.allison@darlington.gov.uk) if it is.</p>	1 st April 2022	MSG parish council		