GOLDSMITHS AND THE 2012 LONDON OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES

The External Relations & Development Committee met on 9 June 2008 to discuss Goldsmiths' engagement with the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games. The three documents produced as briefing for the discussion are attached, namely :

a) The Olympics – What others are doing and other opportunites (08-276)
A general overview by the Committee Secretary

b) Goldsmiths and the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games (08-277)
A paper by the Chair of the Olympics Steering group, Professor Simon McVeigh, who will be present at the meeting

c) Goldsmiths and the 2012 Olympic Games (08-278)
A paper by the Registrar and Secretary giving the Senior Management Team's view

Participation

The 2012 London games brings with it a startling array of activities for Goldsmiths to participate in. The Committee felt these needed to be prioritised in order to develop a uniquely Goldsmiths response, which they envisioned as falling within the following 5 strands :

Academic

We have few sports facilities and no sport focused subjects but what we do have is plenty of attitude. The Committee saw a natural role for Goldsmiths as cultural critic: removed, intelligent, contextual. This needed to be developed but one idea put forward was that a Symposium could be organised around the Olympic Play, being written by a Goldsmiths contact.

Bespoke Media

Although we wouldn't be playing a part in the official media circus, it was felt there was a strong role for Goldsmiths as an "alternative" media outlet. Possibilities discussed included preparing in advance interviews with IOC members and other key players with a counter-culture slant, also preparing pieces on key issues such as drugs and security. A global theorist could also be invited to join the fray.

Delivering the Olympics locally

Continuing the theme of the last meeting, i.e. Goldsmiths as good neighbour, a key role might be as deliverer of the games to the local community. The local authority's plans were still being formulated so the moment was ripe to approach them. Ideas in this vein included Big Screen events on the back field for the opening and closing ceremonies, acting as point of contact for all Olympic information, including how to volunteer – and possibly taking some responsibility for this locally (would need to get the SU involved) and even selling tickets to events if that were possible.

Commercial Activities

The above could be underpinned by commercial activities involving technological products developed by the College such as radio frequency chips for posters and intelligently enhanced textiles.

Public Events

As a publicly funded body it was important for Goldsmiths to engage with public events being planned by government agencies for the Cultural Olympiad. 10 major projects were already in development and the committee suggested that details of these should be circulated to academic departments to see which would fit best with our own areas of expertise.

Other activities

The forgoing are the high level aims for Goldsmiths as an institution; of course there will also be much independent activity by both our staff and students. It was suggested that an information gathering exercise would be in order to ascertain the full range of what these activities might be.

Legacy

Leaving a legacy, particularly for young people, was one of the unique selling points for the London bid. What the legacy of our particular contribution might be was a matter for reflection, as was how these activities could link with the next Olympics, the venue of which was due to be announced 2009.

Delivery

Finally and crucially, in order to deliver the above, a structure would need to be put in place with some urgency to co-ordinate, develop and act as point of contact for all matters relating to the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games.

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