

South West Olympians support London's 2012 campaign

Recent research showed that people in the South West are more supportive of the London 2012 bid than any other region in the UK and everyone can register their support on the website at www.london2012.org or by texting LONDON to 82012.

Many of Britain's Olympic stars from Athens, including Kelly Holmes, Matthew Pinsent, Jason Gardener and Amir Khan have already pledged their support, together with stars of stage, screen and television Sir Roger Moore, Jeremy Irons, Joseph Fiennes and Martine McCutcheon, who all feature on the official video produced by London 2012 to promote the bid.

A number of the South West's own Olympic and Paralympic heroes have also put their weight behind the campaign. Cornishman Ed Coode, a member of the gold medal winning coxless four in Athens, said: "I am 'Backing the Bid' because London is one of the world's three or four truly major cities and therefore it deserves to host a truly major event like the Olympic Games. I think it would be great for the Olympics and I know it would be great for London and all Londoners. British sport is on the up and this is what we need to keep the momentum going. It will be a breathtakingly spectacular event with a lasting legacy of inspiring our entire country."

Steph Cook, gold medalist in the modern pentathlon in Sydney in 2000 said: "I think it would be wonderful for the whole country to get behind the London bid as to bring the Olympics to this country would be a great national achievement."

Dressage star Debbie Criddle, who won three gold medals in the Athens Paralympic Games, said: "It would be fantastic to have the Paralympic Games in London. So many people have told me how much they enjoyed watching the Paralympics in Athens on television and it would be great for more people to have the opportunity to see them live in this country and realise what an amazing experience they are."

Bath based Georgina Harland, bronze medalist in the Modern Pentathlon in Athens, said: "I think it would be fantastic to have the Olympic and Paralympic Games in the UK, not just for the athletes who would have the chance to compete in an amazing atmosphere but for the whole country who would benefit from the new sports facilities and the increase in tourism. Having competed in the World Championships when they were held at Millfield, I can only say that when you compete in your home country, it always makes you rise to the occasion that little bit more and I can only imagine what it would be like to compete in an Olympic Games in front of a home crowd."

Veteran Olympic sailor Bryn Vaile, Gold medalist in the Star class in Seoul in 1988, said: "Weymouth undoubtedly has the best sailing waters in the UK and quite possibly in the world. The new facilities at Osprey Quay will provide a superb backdrop for the sailing events if London is successful in its bid to host the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012."

For further information, please contact the Sport England South West Press Office at Matchtight Ltd on 01225 383518.