

HATHERSAGE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk – Maura Sorensen, *Heart of Hathersage, Main Road, Hathersage, S32 1BB*

Mob: 07766629419 Email: clerk@hathersageparishcouncil.gov.uk

Hathersage Parish Council Swimming Pool Committee meeting, Tuesday 12 September 2023, 7.30 pm MINUTES

- Present** Councillors W Hanley (Chair), B Hanley, Tim Hill, Jane Marsden, Rosie Olle, Heather Rodgers
- In Attendance** Chris Cave, RFO to the Parish Council *CC running late*; Maura Sorensen, Clerk to the Parish Council; Mike Wellington, Leisure Services Manager (LSM); Ashley Watts, Pool Advisor (*part*); members of the public - Chris Wilkinson, Hathersage Swimming Pool lifeguard (*part*), Jo Wilman, Hathersage Swimming Pool lifeguard (*part*)
- 071/23 Apologies for absence accepted and received from Cllr Alex Campbell.
- 072/23 To decide any variation in the order of business: agreed to bring forward discussions on agenda item 9 – discounted swimming policy season ticket and entry prices – while members of pool staff (lifeguarding team) were in attendance.
- 073/23 Declaration of interests – Mike Wellington (pool staff member); Ashley Watts (paid Pool Advisor)
- 074/23 **Public participation** - a period of not more than ten minutes for members of the public and Members of the Council to comment on any matter.
- Pool lifeguards Chris Wilkinson and Jo Wilman made representations, on behalf of themselves and other members of the lifeguarding team, on agenda item 9 (Discounted Swimming Policy). They referenced the SPC Chair's attendance at a pool staff meeting the previous week where he had confirmed introduction of the policy (approved at the 5 September meeting of the Parish Council). Some staff at that meeting expressed surprise and dismay at the lack of prior Council consultation or communications with them. Staff had subsequently shared their concerns in emails and Chris and Jo had produced a comprehensive document listing their concerns and those of some other colleagues. This was shared with Councillors at the start of the meeting. The document included examples of benefits provided by (mostly private) leisure providers. Councillors also provided examples of non-private Local Authority providers where it is the norm to offer discounts rather than free access.
- Cllrs queried whether staff were specifically concerned about the amount of the proposed charge. Chris and Jo noted staff concerns both about the principle of being charged to swim, and about the introduction of the policy without prior communication.
- Cllrs noted the timing of the introduction of the policy was to coincide with the introduction of the pool electronic entry system through which the Council was looking to manage and monitor entry to the pool and to gather detailed data on pool usage to inform future planning on timetabling and maximising income generation. Cllrs also suggested a policy on staff paying something towards pool use outside their working hours would rebut any potential complaints from other pool users e.g. about access/issues with booking sessions etc. The Pool Advisor referenced that large scale operators such as Freedom Leisure were in a position to offer broader benefits to staff.
- Cllrs referenced comments in communications from staff that were highly emotive, and inappropriate; while appreciating the strength of feeling among some staff Cllrs noted that communications from staff to the Council (and vice versa) should always be respectful.
- Cllrs agreed that listening to staff and understanding their views was very important. The SPC Chair noted that, in the meeting between Cllrs and pool staff on Wednesday 20 September, he would be presenting broad ideas for the review of the supervisor posts; and this would be an opportunity for staff to share their thoughts and ideas for further consideration by the Human Resources Committee.
- HPC Chair Cllr Jane Marsden reiterated that the Council very much appreciates and values pool staff and noted that, in future, the Council would ensure that staff have the opportunity, at the right time, to input into the decision-making process.
- Chris Wilkinson and Jo Wilman left the meeting.*
- 075/23 **Pool Advisor's Report:** Ashley Watts noted his focus recently had been on the discounted season ticket policy and the staff response. He referenced pool trainer Dave Turvey's summary that the Council has a hard-working, committed lifeguarding team. He reiterated the importance of

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clearer communication, and about sharing the 'bigger picture' with staff on the challenges of managing the pool. Mr Watts flagged changes and greater professionalization across the leisure industry.

Mr Watts also referenced liaison with the LSM about disposal of old chemicals (hazardous materials) stored underneath the bandstand.

Safeguarding – Mr Watts agreed to share some safeguarding training links and resources.

076/23

CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING MATTER: an update was noted; further noted this no longer needs to be a standing agenda item.

077/23

Minutes of the 8 August 2023 meeting were **confirmed** and actions arising (*referenced in the Action Log*) from the minutes **noted**.

078/23

Pool Manager's Report including operational, maintenance and staffing matters.

Referenced pool signage either on order or quotes were being sought including; a Blue Badge sign for the pool car park; pool etiquette signage; staff noticeboard with staff photos and appropriate signage.

- .1 **Tile repairs** – pool closure dates; other repair/maintenance works planned. Response from Cumberlidge awaited but likely to be late September/early October. *To be tied in with other work such as clearance of items underneath the bandstand.*
- .2 **Disabled access ladder/pool access steps** – quotes had been circulated – **recommended accepting the Steel Line quote (to be agreed by full Council).**
- .3 **Pool staff noticeboard** – has been ordered and will be collected from Buxton.
- .4 **Solarium floor** – site visit arranged with Flex Flooring after which they will provide a quote for rubber crumbing. Pool management liaising with another contractor about removal of bench legs to facilitate work on the flooring.
- .5 **Staffing – lifeguard hours; monthly planning; training; recruitment:** nothing specific to report.
- .6 **Fundraising / Events / Marketing.** August night swim had sold out; September night swim tickets currently on sale. Cllrs asked that any pool and/or event updates be posted both on the pool website and on the pool Facebook page.
 - Liaison with Northern Rail on siting pool posters at Hope Valley stations: Cllr Olle referenced liaison with Peak Design noting Cllrs needed to make a decision on the artwork; **agreed** the original artwork (now the property of the Council) should be used - noted the original image needs to be located. Cllr Olle referenced quotes, noting the cheaper quote was in the region of £500 for siting posters on both sides of the station platform. Cllr Olle to liaise further with Northern Rail about siting posters at the station/s. **ACTION: Cllr Olle to share all quotes with the Clerk - for consideration at the next meeting of full Council.**
 - **Hilly Triathlon 2024** – a **request** to use the pool and MUGA on the weekend of 20, 21 July 2024 – booking the MUGA from 1pm on Saturday to 1pm on Sunday, and the pool from 6.45am to 1pm on Sunday 21 July. Noted organisers had made provisional agreements with landowners for use of the football field, and the farmer's field opposite, for parking. **Agreed** the request; charges to be agreed **ACTION October SPC agenda item – to agree charges. LSM to suggest charges based on hours of private hire and/or potential loss of income.**
- .7 **Swim Club** and free use of summer session times for Hathersage families. Average user numbers per session did not exceed 30 but noted it was a good initiative that should be tried again with the anticipation that usage will increase. Noted swim club had now resumed with the end of season gala on 27 September.
- .8 **Widening pool access to users with health conditions and/or specific needs: agreed to carry this item forward to October agenda.**
- .9 **Cllrs pool walk around Wednesday 20 September, 4pm – noted.**
- .10 **Cllrs and pool staff meeting Wednesday 20 September, 5pm – noted.**

079/23

Discounted Swimming Policy (season ticket and entry prices): *Pool Advisor Ashley Watts was present for this item.* The policy had been approved, in principle, by the Parish Council on 5 September. SPC members were charged with further consideration of the wording of the policy, and ensuring clarity, for implementation from 1 October. Cllrs referenced correspondence from pool staff, and discussions with pool staff members Chris Wilkinson and Jo Wilman earlier in the meeting. The SPC Chair noted the policy was essential for good governance; and that only one part related to regularising staff swimming outside their working days including the need for a

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nominal charge to pool staff to formalise this. The Pool Advisor agreed a nominal charge would protect the Council – and pool staff - against potential complaints from users about unfair treatment/access/issues with booking sessions. He also suggested staff should be able to pre-book sessions in the same way as season ticket holders. The Pool Advisor noted staff comments on the need to maintain fitness levels but flagged that it was the responsibility of the individual to ensure this. Queried whether all pool staff oppose the policy.

Cllrs further discussed the level of charge to staff for swimming outside working hours, and the booking of sessions. The Pool Advisor and (*at a previous meeting*) the contracted Pool Training Officer recommended a compromise and, based on their advice, councillors set a nominal charge as follows:

Agreed an annual charge of £20.00 (or £10.00 per season where staff work exclusively in the summer or the winter)

Agreed staff can book onto any sessions as per season ticket holders; noted staff should not book night swims, or classes.

Agreed further consideration be given to the wording of the policy and to ensuring clarity.

Cllrs appreciated the importance of fitness and training and staff commitment to training. Cllrs therefore recommended a further benefit of paying staff for an hour and a half, for attendance at the weekly (one hour) training session. **ACTION: recommend to HPC for approval.**

ACTION: Clerk to communicate the above to pool staff.

ACTION RFO to investigate tax implications of benefits in kind.

ACTION Chair of Committee to seek advice from HR Consultants.

080/23

Pool electronic entry system: confirmed the new system is now operational and staff are undergoing training. The SPC Chair suggested publicising it widely among pool users including reminding season ticket holders to ensure that from 1 October they always have their cards with them and making users aware of charges for lost cards.

ACTION: until the introduction of the new system managers should ensure that all staff require season ticket holders to produce cards and be reminded that after 1 October they will need a card for entry.

ACTION: pool management to procure plastic covers/wallets for cards (at an additional charge to users); it was recommended staff/users add card holder names to cards, in particular where there was more than one card in a family/household.

081/23

Finance

- .1 **Finance Report:** RFO referenced daily admissions – the Council had budgeted for 15% fewer users – but admissions had exceeded expectations. Noted electricity costs had increased by 67%.
- .2 **High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) and future funding:** the SPC Chair had received an email from HPBC Cllr Charlotte Farrell confirming that HPBC would pay the reduced payment of around £4K for 2023-24 – and that there would be no further pool funding as HPBC focused on other priorities including development of all-weather playing facilities at Hope Valley College. The RFO could now send a definitive letter about funding and that in future HPBC residents would pay the full rate. Letter to be shared with the HPBC Chair, HPBC Cllrs, HPBC pool users, and with other HPBC Hope Valley parish councils. **ACTION: Clerk to send the letter.**

082/23

Pool Heating Project – the next stage:

- **Funding options** – a report from a recent meeting with DDDCVS – no additional sources of funding (beyond those of which the Council was already aware) were identified. Further investigation to be undertaken on Sport England funding (with DDDC pulling together details of organisations/services seeking funding). Noted the Council would need support with completing larger funding bids and suggested looking to see if pool staff, or members of the pool user group, had some relevant background/expertise.
- **Exploring potential contractors to take the project forward** – report on recent meetings. Cllr Hill expanded. He had liaised with eight companies; engaged further with three; and referenced one company with whom more detailed discussions have taken place on solar thermal energies. Noted a primary focus is to look to make a significant reduction in pool electricity costs. Cllr Hill expanded on some of the technical details and possible structural changes in/around the pool to accommodate solar panels. Noted further detailed consideration was needed; some Cllrs pointed out that grassed areas were an integral part of the pool experience and should not be lost. Cllr Hill also noted advice/input

would be needed on regulations around entering into large, long-term contracts with providers. **ACTION: Cllr Hill to compile a list of contract-related queries.**

- 083/23 **Pool User Group: noted** outcomes of the recent survey. To date, 18 users had confirmed attendance at the 29 September event, at the pool.
- 084/23 **Engagement with other pool and leisure organisations and services**
- .1 **Future Lidos Project:** payment from Future Lidos for contribution to their project should be received soon. **RFO to check.**
- .2 **Other relevant providers, services, projects etc:** there were no specific updates.
- 085/23 **2023-2028 Pool Business Improvement and Renewal Plan** – nothing specific was raised or reported.
- 086/23 **Any additional business:** Cllr B Hanley referenced previous discussions on provision of a staff cold weather pool-side shelter. **ACTION: Cllr B Hanley to share details of some designs with the LSM and LSM to consult with pool staff.**
- 087/23 **Clerk – any additional reports and/or correspondence** – none.
- 088/23 Next meeting – **10 October 2023, 7.30pm**; and to **note** any items for the October meeting.

Meeting ended 21.50pm

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