

HILSEA LIDO

POOL FOR THE PEOPLE



1970s



2009



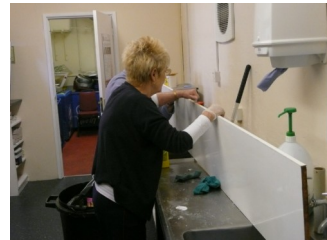
2013

STATE OF PLAY

Hilsea Lido Pool for the People Trust (HLPPT) welcome the opportunity to update PCC on the progress the Trust have made on re-commissioning Hilsea Lido and hope that this report will be an opportunity for PCC, HLPPT and the people of Portsmouth to celebrate initiative, commitment, creativity, partnership, independence and the power of serendipity.

Hilsea Lido Pool for the People Trust (HLPPT) took on the 99 year lease for the Blue Lagoon and Lido Pool site in September 2010 following negotiations with Portsmouth City Council as a Community Asset Transfer (following the Quirk report of 2007).

HLPPT is a registered charity (registration number 1133714) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (registration number 6940781). Information regarding the status of the Trust is available on the Charity Commission website. HLPPT has six trustees who are also directors of the Company Limited by Guarantee. In addition to the board of trustees there are a number of trust members, these are the guardians of the Trust and this is the group from which new trustees are drawn. Members of the Trust have voting rights and elect the trustees. This year the Trust invited five new supporters to join our existing members. These people were selected from our group of volunteers and had all demonstrated an understanding of the complex issues surrounding the project as well as showing commitment and support of the team delivering the Trust's objectives. The Trust also have a number of supporters who pay a subscription and receive quarterly newsletters. In other organisations these supporters are often termed 'Friends of' e.g The Kings Theatre or New Theatre Royal.



Working together to create a new Hilsea Lido, from left: Completing a pipe survey with the support of Bam Nuttall; Creating a site surround freize with local schoolchildren, supported by Covers; Ceaning & organising the working areas of the Blue Lagoon; Taking part in events to keep people informed.

The considerable progress the Trust has made since 2010 is due to the support it has gained from grant funders, local businesses, the probation service and most of all determined and committed volunteers. To date the social capital and grant funding invested in Hilsea Lido amounts to a considerable sum and this demonstrates the desire from local people to have their lido re-opened. The Trust has always worked towards providing the next generation with the same opportunities many of them experienced in their youth. HLPPT gains inspiration through the school children of this city who are looking forward to Hilsea Lido being open again. The particular interest of young people is often diving (jumping into the water) as well as swimming. In addition to our own consultations with young people and the widespread attention the sport has gained through the popularity of diving champions such as Tom Daley, we were alerted to this recently when it was widely reported that 200 children went to a diving squad selection event at Southampton. Twenty children were selected for the squad but sadly 180 keen divers were left without the opportunity to access facilities to develop their interest in this high profile and growing sport.

Over the three years since the Trust has been responsible for the site there has also been a process of engagement and development which has brought together a number of different groups and it is this 'ownership' by a wide group of individuals that makes this project so special. Indeed this developmental stage, where alternative resources are woven together to improve the fabric of the building and re-commissioning of the plant room is almost more beneficial, in terms of community cohesion, than the actual delivery of public swimming which has always been the ultimate aim of all those involved.



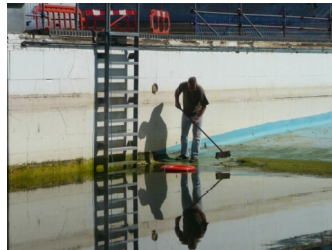
Working together to create a new Hilsea Lido, from left: Cleaning the pool with the support of Cosham Fire Service; Cleaning out the plant room with the support of Army Cadets; Repairing the scum channel; Pumping out pool supported by Selwood.

Eventually Hilsea Lido, which had been designed as a premier venue hosting gala events, will be fully restored complete with high board diving facilities to provide families and young adults with a social and educational hub. The site will provide employment for around 30 part-time and two full-time posts. However the time-scale for this process entirely depends on the resources available to the Trust.

Since a group of people came together with a desire to save Hilsea Lido, way back in 2007, we have grown and the Trust has learned a huge amount. Regeneration of Hilsea Lido is a massive task that has not been without challenges. Portsmouth has never experienced such a large and complex community endeavour before. National as well as local interest in this flagship project provides the Trust with added pressure but also confidence that lidos taken over by community groups are popular and there is a great desire for success. The Trust hopes that this report is evidence of shared thinking and how PCC and HLPPT can work together in order to increase the speed of improvements required at Hilsea Lido, all of which is what the people of Portsmouth wish to see happen. It is also hoped that together we can seize opportunities to open a dialogue on the cultural shift that occurs when management and funding systems are stretched and unable to deliver public services in the traditional way. The Hilsea Lido project is totally different and that means that there are new challenges for all the parties involved. In a city of innovation it is good to work together to support enterprising and dedicated people. Also, we want to be clear that this site is not a council run facility, and HLPPT does not receive any financial support from the council. Therefore whilst we fully appreciate the role of the council as landlord, and the considerable support it can provide, the management decisions must ultimately be made by the Trust as it is the Trust and more importantly the trustees, who are all volunteers, that bear the considerable legal responsibility for this facility, employees and volunteers on the site. Whilst there is a great deal of interest and support in what is being achieved, the Trust is grateful for any support that enables us to get this message out to the wider community. The Trust has to comply with the legal requirements of both Companies House and the Charity Commission, whilst under the terms of the lease the only requirement is to provide a copy of the annual accounts to PCC.

There are a number of areas which the Trust has found difficult to progress, for example, improvements to the insulation of the buildings (which were built in 1935), new paving for the sun terrace, roof repairs to the spectators gallery building to stop further deterioration and also management of the trees on the boundary which have all reached maturity. This year two trees came down in the gales and several others look to be in need of management. The planned maintenance of these trees and a programme of replacement is an area of expertise that would certainly be very useful for the Trust. In addition, equipment like cash tills, display fridges, freezers, round tables, trolleys etc are all items that are required.

We anticipate that the major refurbishment works required to re-instate the diving boards will also be an opportunity for a wider re-appraisal of the aesthetics of the site and introduction of water harvesting and re-use.



Working together to create a new Hilsea Lido, from left: Creating a new gate access; Widening the entrance with the support of Colas; Removing the rapidly growing algae; Repairing the pool surface.

2014 Developments

Hilsea Lido

The Trust has gained funding from the Big Lottery through public votes via The News. This funding is to provide free sessions at weekends to 9-14 year olds from May to September. The Trust applied for this funding in order to relieve the pressure on the Hilsea Jubilee Splashpool and provide something a little more challenging for older children who are part of the visiting family groups. In addition the Trust plan to open the main pool on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, 4-8pm to the general public. Prior to opening the Trust are planning to have some 'live' training days where, with an invited client group, our staff team will become familiar with the difference between lido and indoor pool lifeguarding and gain confidence as a team before we undertake the public opening. The Trust is working with accredited trainers to recruit and train our lifeguards and assist with the public opening programme.

The Trust's plan to open Hilsea Lido for public swimming has to be managed effectively to minimise costs at the same time as providing a clean, safe and positive environment for people to enjoy. Whilst the initial opening will be limited, the Trust may increase opening hours as the summer progresses depending upon resources and demand. As well as developing good relationships with a number of local and national media outlets, the Trust has used Facebook and Twitter as main channels of communication and this will enable us to keep people informed instantly as changes to our opening hours are made.

The Trust will be focussing on the practicalities of the management of Hilsea Lido and gaining feedback on what people want from this facility and how the Trust can best deliver its objectives. The Lido buildings continue to be renovated thanks to our volunteers, they have recently been working to remove old Georgian wired glazing from the original Crittall windows and replace with polycarbonate panes, painting of the outside of the building and make the site look presentable. The paint has been donated by a local company and the Trust will continue to improve the buildings as best it can. The lack of revenue support, which is provided to other organisations within the city, certainly limits the speed of these improvements and creates additional challenges for the Trust. In addition the lack of working capital to pay for electricity, water, sewage, accountancy, chemicals, training, etc. hinders the purchase of building materials and expertise. Managing people's expectations under these difficult circumstances adds to the Trust's challenges.



Working together to create a new Hilsea Lido, from left: Removal of fallen trees with the support of Portsmouth City Council; Fundraising at Live@theLido, supported by a variety of local musicians; Spreading the word via media support; Preparing for painting.

Blue Lagoon

The Blue Lagoon building has been substantially improved since the Trust took it over, for example improved cellar facilities, toilets, dance floor and cleanliness. The venue is regularly hired for weddings and parties but there is still room for growth. Ironically the widely held public perception that the Blue Lagoon closed years ago may be reversed when Hilsea Lido is open. The Blue Lagoon was in a very tired state when the Trust gained ownership and lacked much of the equipment required to manage a facility of this nature. This lack of finance to make improvements to the Blue Lagoon and market the premises is certainly a hinderance to more rapid progress and the Trust's ability to increase profits from the Blue Lagoon to help support Hilsea Lido.

Hilsea Jubilee Splashpool

The Trust has been the PCC approved contractor to manage this facility for the past two years. This is a hugely popular venue and the considerable investment made by PCC to provide this free facility for young children has been much appreciated by local families and those who travel to visit it. The partnership between HLPPT and PCC has been a positive experience for both parties and, despite the very understandable initial concerns officers had prior to the agreement the Trust has delivered an excellent service. Last year the Trust substantially reduced the cost to PCC of security for this facility.

The old splashpool required two lifeguards and the new water play area is a non supervised play area. Changing the management and the culture was initially a challenge for visitors and and staff. However it provided an opportunity to create a dialogue and gain mutual understanding with clients whilst trying to implement alternative solutions and consider how best to manage risk. This has been a productive partnership and it is widely acknowledged that the Trust and its volunteers compliment the process which has created a sense of ownership by those using the facility. This has been demonstrated by our Facebook 'community' of in excess of 4300 people, through which we provide information and more importantly gain feedback and support.



Working together to create a new Hilsea Lido, from left: Painting the pool; Painting the newly repaired building; Taking part in a street collection; A collaborative project with University of Portsmouth results in student Niall Bird winning the Philip Webb architectural award in 2010.

The Future

HLPPT plan to develop the availability of public swimming as well as providing opportunities for a wider programme of activities on site. Major grant funding will be identified and pursued in order to enable HLPPT to develop the site and provide more facilities and improvements on site.

