

## **Swim Forum update 16 June 2020**

Thank you for your ongoing support through what continues to be a challenging time for us all.

The Swimming facilities remain closed, and although frustrating, this is really important to ensure the safety of our staff and visitors.

We are continuing to put plans in place to allow us to safely reopen the swimming facilities, once the Government has announced we are moving into Step 3 of the Coronavirus Recovery Strategy.

When we do reopen, there will be a limited number of swimming sessions and tickets available each day. We will keep the number of swimming sessions and the number of tickets under review and we will add more sessions and tickets, if it's safe to do so.

### **Online Booking and Payment**

Taking onboard feedback, we have now commissioned a Company to provide and manage an online booking and payment system.

At this stage the number of swimming sessions per day and the number of spaces available in each session have been based on conservative estimates to maintain social distancing at each facility. If it is appropriate these can be adjusted once the arrangements have been fully tested. The booking system will have flexibility to change both the sessions and to increase the number of tickets available.

The system should be ready for testing in late June and we will welcome your assistance with a trial run at each facility.

When we launch the online booking system, to enable as many people to swim as possible we are proposing the system is programmed to allow swimming sessions to be booked 7 days in advanced. Tickets will go live at 8pm and will be available for purchase until 5 minutes before the session starts (pending availability).

The system will restrict the number of sessions booked by an individual swimmer to 3 swims in 7 days and measures will be introduced to prevent abuse of the booking system.

### **Charges & Concessions**

On 3 June 2020, Members of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee agreed the charges for swimming during the Covid-19 Recovery Phase.

A session at the Bathing Ponds is £4 for an adult and £2.40 for a concession.

A session at the Parliament Hill Fields Lido is £4 for an adult and £2.40 for a concession.

The free morning swim for under 16's and over 60's will be suspended whilst the Covid-19 session booking arrangements are in place.

## **Family only sessions at the Lido**

We also propose to introduce family only swimming sessions during the middle of the day at the Lido. A ratio of 1 adult to 2 children aged 5-15yrs and 1 adult to 1 child aged under 5 is proposed.

The shallow end will be sectioned off for families. The deep end will have 4 swimming lanes across the width of the pool for lane swimming.

## **Covid-19 Secure Swimming Recovery Plans**

One-way systems, signage and operating arrangements are currently being developed and discussed at site meetings with the Swimming Associations.

### Highgate Men's Bathing Pond

Work has commenced to provide a new temporary level entrance to the facility, a section of narrow path is being widened and a new wet access to the Pond from the changing compound is being installed. The sunbathing partition has been partially removed to alleviate pinch points and the railings outside the Lifeguard Observation Hut adjusted to create a better flow towards the jetty. Some maintenance works are also being undertaken in relation to the paths and toilets. No children under the age of 16 will be permitted to use the facility whilst these temporary measures are in place.

The diving board has been removed and a specialist contractor is being sourced to repair, service and reinstall the board. The use of the board will be subject to operational assessment.

Risk Assessments are being updated in relation to the use of the showers and toilets.

### Hampstead Mixed Bathing Pond

The main work at the Mixed Pond is to establish a new temporary exit from the Pond to avoid congestion on the jetty. This involves adding a ladder to the timber Lifeguarding jetty. The majority of the work at the Mixed Pond is maintenance and repairs following damage incurred during the lockdown. Space will be made at the entrance gate for a member of staff to be able to manage the entry of swimmers for each session at a safe distance.

No children under the age of 16 will be permitted to use the facility whilst these temporary measures are in place.

Risk Assessments are being updated in relation to the use of the showers and toilets.

### Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond

There are a number of maintenance issues in relation to the observation hut shutter and the repair of the accessible shower, which are being progressed. The internal changing area has been varnished and grouting repairs completed in the showers. The red and yellow lines on the main deck have been repainted to mark the safe diving zones.

No children under the age of 16 will be permitted to use the facility whilst these temporary measures are in place.

Risk Assessments are being updated in relation to the use of the outdoor showers and toilets.

### Parliament Hill Fields Lido

The boiler replacement in the female showers is underway, the new boiler has a greater capacity and is more energy efficient. Terrace repairs are underway, and the aerator has been repaired and repainted.

The Planning Application for the temporary boundary fence is being considered by the Camden Planning Officer.

Risk Assessments are being updated in relation to the use of the poolside showers and toilets.

### **Possible Swimming start date**

Subject to Government guidance, we are working towards Monday 6 July. This will comprise of a phased reopening to fully test the arrangements. Should this coincide with extreme weather (heat wave) the number of sessions each day will be kept under review. There is a risk of the swimming facilities being overwhelmed which would put both our staff and swimmers at risk, and may result in closing/cancelling swimming sessions

### **Swimming area**

We have received feedback around the advantages of using the larger summer swimming areas. We are still considering what would be appropriate as each facility, and must make our decision in line with the guidance from the RLSS, who recommend historical rescue data is analysed to establish where interventions are known to be prevalent and to remove high risk sessions.

Further guidance has now been issued by Swim England which will inform the review of the Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work. The size of the available swimming areas will be determined through this process.

### **Communications**

Clear communication with swimmers who wish to use the facilities is crucial. We will also utilise our digital communication channels – the website and our social media feeds to

inform people of our plans to reopen, how they can access the swimming facilities and what measures are in place to ensure the facilities can operate safely. We will also email all season ticket holders with an update. Our Media Team is preparing a press release so the local media will be fully briefed on the plans.

Signs are being prepared for all of the facilities to ensure people can use them safely while maintaining social distancing.

## **Season Tickets**

The sale of season tickets was suspended in March when the swimming facilities closed due to Government Guidance. The sale and use of season tickets will remain suspended whilst these Covid-19 secure measures are in place.

When the facilities re-open in July (to be confirmed) all swimmers will be required to book and pay for a session using the online system.

This is to allow all swimmers an equal opportunity to swim. Once we move back into a usual service and the season tickets are unfrozen, we will extend the period they are valid by the amount of time that swimmers have been unable to use their season ticket due to the lockdown. We also appreciate that some season ticket holders may wish to receive a refund for portion of time they were not able to swim.

When an online booking and payment system is no longer required we will be introducing contactless payments and the Heath App. Season ticket holders will be issued with a wristband, to replace the current card system. Where extensions are required, these will be validated via the wristband. The cost of the season tickets will be subject to our annual review process which will commence in the Autumn.

The Heath's Support Team have been responding to enquiries regarding season tickets and a further update will be prepared and issued to all season ticket holders week commencing 22 June 2020. This will explain the proposed arrangements during the recovery phase and to set out the options on an extension or refund.

## **Access Arrangements**

Access Hoists are available for use at the Lido and Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond. If required, Staff will be available to assist any swimmers with specific access requirements. We propose to include a section within the booking system so that swimmers can indicate if they require assistance ahead of arriving for the session.

## **Assistance with booking a swimming session**

The Parliament Hill Office is open daily between 08.30-12.30 and 13.30-16.30. Staff will be able to assist swimmers who do not have access to the internet with making a booking.

## **Site visits**

Paul Maskell and Paul Jeal will be pleased to arrange visits to the facilities to discuss the Recovery Plans. Please contact Paul Maskell [paul.maskell@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:paul.maskell@cityoflondon.gov.uk) to arrange a visit.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Swimming Recovery Plans have been designed to allow flexibility to enable us to adapt our response at each facility. We welcome your feedback during the implementation phase, and we will setup a virtual Swimming Forum for mid-July to discuss changes and improvements.

You can also stay up to date with the ongoing changes on the Hampstead Heath website:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/swimming/Pages/default.aspx>