

Committee(s): Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood & Queen's Park Committee	Date(s): 25/11/2020
Subject: 2020 Summer Swimming Season	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2, 4, 5, 11 & 12
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	
Report of: Open Spaces Department	For Information
Report author: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	

Summary

This report sets out a review of participation, income and expenditure across the Bathing Ponds and Lido for the 2020 summer season.

The report also provides an update on the current Winter Swimming Season arrangements and the outcomes of the March 2020 Swimming Review.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of swimming and note the progress implementing the outcomes of the Swimming Review 2020.

Main Report

Background

1. Following Government Guidance, online booking and timed swimming sessions at the Bathing Ponds and Lido were introduced on a temporary basis for the 2020 Summer Swimming Season. Parallel phone booking arrangements were also put in place. The Summer Swimming Season ended on 20 September 2020.

Current Position

2. The Winter Swimming Season commenced on 21 September 2020. Following the latest Government Guidance received on 2 November, the Bathing Ponds and Lido closed from 5 November 2020 as part of the second National Lockdown. The licence for the Winter Swimming Club has also been suspended.

- The Chair of this Committee wrote to the Secretary of State on 2 November, asking the Government to consider keeping outdoor sports open during the second national lockdown, with strict social distancing and other COVID-secure measures in place.

2020 Summer Swimming Season Review

Participation

- The table 1 sets out the level of participation between 18 July 2020 and the 20 September 2020.

Location	Tickets Sold*	Adults	Concession	Children	Carer**
Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Ponds	29,452	19,774	9,537	-	141
Highgate Men's Bathing Ponds	27,209	17,954	9,238	-	17
Hampstead Mixed Bathing Ponds	20,000	13,975	6,021	-	4
Lido - Lane Swimming	31,735	23,402	8,314	-	19
Lido - Family	16,380	7,002	1,509	7,821	48
Total	124,776***	82,107	34,619	7,821	229

Table 1 – Swimming participation (18 July – 20 September 2020).

* not including any tickets eventually refunded/cancelled.

**Carers have free access.

*** in 2018/19 it is estimated that there were over 655,000 swims at the Bathing Ponds.

- Across all the sessions the average no show rate was 21.7%. These are defined as being tickets which swimmers neither cancelled nor used.
- A number of swimmers chose to book their session by using the telephone booking line. The number of session tickets booked for each facility is shown in table 2, below.

Location	Number of session tickets booked via the telephone service
Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Ponds	604
Highgate Men's Bathing Ponds	139
Hampstead Mixed Bathing Ponds	87
Lido - Lane Swimming	89
Lido - Family	275
Total	1,194

Table 2 – Session tickets booked via telephone

Income and Expenditure (6 month review)

7. Table 3 sets out the income and expenditure at the Bathing Ponds and Lido for the period of April - September 2020.

Bathing Ponds and Lido	£
Employee Costs	£603,000
Operational Expenditure	£239,000
Total Expenditure	£842,000
Income (Online booking fees and VAT have been deducted)	£232,000
Funding allocated from the Heath Local Risk Budget	£610,000

Table 3 - Income and expenditure at the Bathing Ponds and Lido for the period of April - September 2020

Survey Results

8. An online summer swimming survey was released on 1 September to seek swimmers' feedback on their experiences over the summer, taking account of the adaptations that were necessary to comply with Government Guidance and to maintain social distancing. The survey was publicised in an e-newsletter and sent to nearly 11,000 people who had used the Eventbrite booking system and using the Heath's social media feeds – Twitter and Facebook. The survey closed on Friday 11 September and received 1,108 responses.
9. The natural surroundings of the Bathing Ponds (79%), the benefits to physical health (84%) and the benefits to mental health (93%) as a result of swimming outdoors all came through as common reasons people swim at Hampstead Heath. There were a mixture of feelings about the COVID-19 secure measures, including the advance booking system. Over 80 per cent of survey respondents gave the COVID-19 safety measures a score of between seven and 10, with 10 ranked as 'excellent', while almost 60 per cent rated the online booking system between seven and 10. Some Swimmers commented that the measures were too restrictive and removed the spontaneity of being able to swim without an advance plan. Many responders commented that online booking resulted in a calmer atmosphere, in comparison to a busy summers day at the Bathing Ponds and Lido and felt it was a safe environment to swim in during the pandemic.
10. The results of the Survey are attached at appendix 1.

Operational Issues

11. No issues arose from queue management, or swimmers not complying with Social Distancing measures. The capacities at the Bathing Ponds were increased gradually as the Lifeguards and Stewards gained more experience with the new operational arrangements.
12. In order to prevent unauthorised access and damage at the Bathing Ponds in the evenings, contract Security Guards undertook overnight patrols.
13. Additional signage and patrols were implemented to provide advice to people swimming in the other Heath Ponds.
14. A small number of swimming sessions were affected by extreme weather.

15. On Thursday 17 September 2020 a surcharge of the Thames Water Sewer required the immediate closure of the Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond. Following this incident daily water quality testing was implemented until 23 October 2020. Weekly testing is currently being undertaken.

2020/21 Winter Swimming Season

16. The Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond reopened for the Winter Season on Saturday 26 September, following the sewer surcharge event on 17 September 2020.
17. A further closure of the Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond was necessary from Sunday 6 October – 12 October 2020 owing to a deterioration in water quality. This is most likely linked to torrential rain which occurred on 2 October 2020.

Season Tickets

18. In line with the outcomes from the Swimming Review the season tickets were reactivated to coincide with the start of the Winter Swimming Season on 21 September 2020. However, due to the current National Lockdown, season tickets were frozen again from 5 November – 2 December 2020. Season ticket holders have been notified and will receive an extension to their season ticket to cover the closure.
19. Season tickets are now issued in the form of a plastic wristband, with each wristband having a unique number encoded into it, which links to an individual's account. The wristband only records the date and time at which it is tapped against the device at the entrances to the Bathing Ponds and Parliament Hill Fields Lido.
20. Table 4 sets out the number of Season Tickets issued in 2020. A total of 2,139 Season Tickets have been issued up to November 2020.

Season Ticket Type	12 Month	6 Month	1 Month	Total
All Facilities - Adult	233	30	0	263
All Facilities - Concession	75	4	0	79
All Facilities - Free Early Morning Swim for U6's & 60+	-	302	-	302
Lido - Adult	151	33	13	197
Lido - Concession	50	7	10	67
Bathing Ponds - Adult	619	269	-	888
Bathing Ponds - Concession	248	95	-	343

Table 4 – Season Tickets issued in 2020.

21. The City Corporation is working with LoyLap as a Service Partner to manage the Wristband Season Ticket Holder accounts. LoyLap do not share personal or contact information with 3rd parties and expressly do not use personal information for marketing purposes.
22. Season ticket holders receive an email from LoyLap inviting them to create an account and set a password. This is optional and if swimmers choose not to set

up their account, they will still be able to use their wristband Season Ticket to swim. If a swimmer chooses to set up an account, they will soon be able to:

- Manage, link and remove a wristband season ticket through the Heath App (available on iOS and Android devices).
- Renew season tickets.
- Get weather warnings and announcements for the Bathing Ponds and Lido.

23. In addition to the wristband season tickets, day tickets can now be purchased at the Bathing Ponds and the Lido using contactless payment. A cash payment option has also been maintained.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

24. The provision of swimming contributes towards the achievement of the three aims set out in the City of London Corporate Plan 2018-23: Contribute to a flourishing society, Support a thriving economy and Shape outstanding environments, in particular the following Corporate Plan outcomes:

- (2) People enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- (4) Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.
- (5) Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.
- (11) We have clean air, land and water and a thriving and sustainable natural environment.
- (12) Our spaces are secure, resilient and well maintained.

25. The provision of swimming also meets the three objectives and outcomes set out in the Open Spaces Business Plan 2020-21 (a) Open spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible, (b) Spaces enrich people's lives and (c) Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

26. The provision of swimming supports the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018-2028 Strategic Outcomes A: The Heath is maintained as a flourishing green space and historic landscape, B: Improved quality of life for Heath visitors, C: The Heath is inclusive and welcoming to a diverse range of visitors and D: Greater number of and diversity of People taking care of the Heath.

Financial Implications

27. The Superintendent will undertake further work to analyse the expenditure and income figures to determine the contribution from the Heath Local Risk Budget required for the Bathing Ponds and Lido.

Resource Implications

28. Due to the second National Lockdown Casual Lifeguards and Stewards are being Furloughed. The permanent Lifeguards are being redeployed to support the wider Heath Team and will also be maintaining a security presence at the Bathing Ponds and Lido.

Equalities Implications

29. An initial screening exercise of the equality impact for the Winter Swimming Season arrangements has been completed. At this stage, it is considered that there are no negative impacts on the protected characteristics.

Conclusion

30. In line with the outcomes of the Swimming Review wristbands Season Ticket have been introduced along with Contactless Payment arrangements.
31. The 2020 Summer Season and the 2020/21 Winter Season have both been heavily impacted by the on-going COVID pandemic. The Team are working hard to ensure that the Bathing Ponds and Lido are ready to re-open, should this be permitted following the conclusion of the second National Lockdown in early December 2020.
32. The Superintendent will undertake a full review of the 2020/21 Swimming Season during summer 2021.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Survey results

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