



Hampstead Heath

Registered Charity

(DRAFT) Hampstead Heath Bathing Ponds and Lido Annual Report 2020/21

Introduction

There are three Lifeguarded natural Bathing Ponds at Hampstead Heath. The Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond and Highgate Men's Bathing Pond are open all year round, and the Mixed Bathing Pond is Lifeguarded during the Summer season.

The Parliament Hill Lido is a Lifeguarded outdoor un-heated chlorinated 60m swimming pool which also opens all year round.

This annual update sets out:

- A summary of the 2020/21 Swimming Season and the measures put in place to enable the Bathing Ponds and Parliament Hill Fields Lido to open during the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- The progress towards implementing the outcomes of the March 2020 Swimming Review.
- The arrangements for re-opening the Bathing Ponds and Lido on the 29 March 2021 and the Summer Swimming season, following the Government announcement on Monday 22 February 2021 and the publication of the Roadmap out of Lockdown.
- Topics for further discussion and the next steps.

2020/21 Swimming Season

This section sets the impacts of COVID-19 on swimming at the Bathing Ponds and Lido during 2020/21.

1. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic National Lockdowns, the Bathing Ponds and Lido have had to close several times as set out below:

- Closed: 21 March - 10 July 2020 (due to First National Lockdown)
 - Open: 11 July - 13 July 2020 (advance booking in operation)
 - Closed: 14 July - 17 July (to update online booking system)
 - Open: 18 July - 20 September 2020 (advance booking in operation)
 - Open: 21 September - 4 November 2020 (with Capped Free Flow arrangements)
 - Closed: 5 November - 1 December 2020 (due to Second National Lockdown)
 - Open: 2 December 2020 - 4 January 2021 (with Capped Free Flow arrangements)
 - Closed: 5 January - 28 March 2021 (due to Third National Lockdown)
 - Open: 29 March 2021 (subject to Government Guidance)
2. During the first National Lockdown the Heath Team implemented temporary changes in order to make the Bathing Ponds and Lido COVID-19 Secure to enable re-opening. This included: new access arrangements at the Highgate Men's Bathing Pond; installation of additional signage; temporary barriers and one-way systems tailored to each swimming facility.

Summer Season (11 July – 20 September 2020)

3. In order to prevent unauthorised access, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage at the Bathing Ponds, the Lifeguards maintained a presence during what would have been their normal opening hours.
4. Dead hedging was also installed at weaker points around the perimeters of the Bathing Ponds. Unfortunately, after finding evidence of night-time incursions, contract Security Guards were employed to undertake patrols during the evenings and early mornings.
5. A part of the COVID-19 Secure Operational Arrangements, timed swimming sessions were introduced along with a reduced bathing and facility loading caps, which were tailored to each facility. This ensured the Bathing Ponds and Lido were not overwhelmed, and that Social Distancing requirements could be maintained.
6. Ahead of opening the facilities on 11 July 2020, a number of carefully controlled test sessions were undertaken to ensure the COVID-19 Secure Operational Arrangements were sufficient and user-friendly. Swimmers with varying access requirements took part in the test sessions to ensure the arrangements provided access for a wide range of swimmers, whilst following Government Guidance.
7. Session tickets were available to purchase via an on-line booking platform ahead of re-opening on 11 July 2020. Between 14 - 17 July 2020 the facilities closed whilst changes were made to the online booking arrangements, following swimmers feedback.
8. Consequently, session ticket sales were re-launched via Eventbrite on 17 July and swimming recommenced on 18 July 2020. Swimming session tickets were available to purchase in advanced and a dedicated telephone booking line was introduced to ensure swimmers without internet access were not excluded from swimming.

9. Following re-opening on 18 July 2020, the bathing and facility loading caps were carefully monitored and it was possible to gradually increase the cap on the number of swimmers at each session, whilst maintaining the COVID-19 Secure Operational Arrangements.
10. A summary of the telephone bookings received is set out in table 1.
11. Due to the complexities around introducing timed sessions and pre-booking arrangements, it was not possible for Season Tickets to be used during the summer season, and sale of Season Tickets was suspended during this time.

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 1 – Session tickets booked via telephone booking line

12. An online summer swimming questionnaire was released on 1 September 2020 to seek swimmers' feedback on their experiences during summer 2020, taking account of the adaptations that were necessary to comply with Government Guidance and to maintain social distancing. The survey was publicised via an e-newsletter, and the Heath's Twitter and Facebook social media feeds. A link to the questionnaire was also sent to nearly 11,000 people who had used the Eventbrite booking platform. The questionnaire closed on Friday 11 September 2020 and received 1,108 responses.
13. The questionnaire showed that the reasons people swim at Hampstead Heath were: the natural surroundings of the Bathing Ponds (79%); the benefits to physical health (84%); the benefits to mental health (93%) as a result of swimming outdoors. There was a mixture of feelings about the COVID-19 secure measures, including the advance booking system. Over 80% of respondents gave the COVID-19 safety measures a score of between seven and 10, with 10 ranked as 'excellent', while almost 60% rated the online booking system between seven and 10. Swimmers commented that the measures were too restrictive and removed the spontaneity of being able to swim without an advance plan. In contrast, swimmers 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. The results of the questionnaire are attached at appendix 2.

Winter Season (21 September 2020 – 4 January 2021)

14. Due to the decline in demand for swimming during the colder months, arrangements were put in place to continue COVID-19 Secure swimming without timed sessions and pre-booking, by using Capped Free Flow arrangements.

Under these arrangements entry is managed by the Steward up to the agreed facility capacity. Once capacity is reached, further entry is managed on a one in one out basis.

15. Ahead of the commencement of the Winter Swimming Season on 21 September 2020, Season Tickets were migrated to an activated wristband system and reissued to swimmers. To use the wristband, Season Ticket holders need to touch the card reader with their wristband when entering the Bathing Ponds or Lido. When touched in, the validity of the Season Ticket is confirmed and a time stamp created. The wristbands do not track the movements of swimmers and the anonymised time stamp data collected will be used to establish participation data. Where applicable, Season Tickets holders were credited for the number of days which their valid season ticket could not be used during the summer.
16. Season Tickets sales resumed between 4 December 2020 - 4 January 2021 before being suspended during the third National Lockdown. Season Ticket sales resumed on the 11 March 2021. The take-up of the wristbands has been higher than predicted. Table 2 sets out details of Season Ticket issued.

Season Ticket Type	12 Month	6 Month	1 Month	Total
All Facilities - Adult	305	102	0	407
All Facilities - Concession	106	19	0	125
All Facilities - Free Early Morning Swim for U16's & 60+	109	363	-	472
All Facilities - Free Carer	6	-	-	6
Lido - Adult	181	72	30	283
Lido - Concession	58	18	10	86
Bathing Ponds - Adult	720	587	-	1,307
Bathing Ponds - Concession	298	265	-	563

Table 2 – Season Tickets issued up to 31 March 2021.

17. Following feedback around the issue of the Free Morning Swim Season Ticket for swimmers aged 60+, the validity of these wristbands has been extended. Swimmers will not be required to renew their Season Ticket after 6 months.
18. Season Ticket wristbands can be purchased online from the City of London Corporation website. For swimmers with no online access, a paper form is available at the Bathing Ponds, Lido and Parliament Hill Office. Card payments can be made at all of these locations. Cash payments for Season Tickets can be made at the Lido and Parliament Hill Office. Season Tickets can be renewed online by completing a paper form.
19. Contactless payment has also been introduced at the Bathing Ponds since the start of the winter season allowing swimmers to turn up, pay and swim. The option for cash payment is also accepted at the Bathing Ponds and Lido. Although, it isn't possible to provide change at the Bathing Ponds.
20. Alongside contactless payment and the activated wristbands, a Heath App has been developed. This enables wristbands to be managed by the account holder and also provides the functionality for the City Corporation to message

Season Ticket holders to provide a range information, such as closures and renewal alerts.

21. In order to provide additional capacity for swimming in the Autumn, the Mixed Bathing Pond was kept open to the public for an additional six weeks until 25 October 2020. This proved popular in part due to warm weather, and the Mixed Pond remained busy, especially at weekends, until it closed on the 25 October. On 28 October 2020, the Winter Swimming Club commenced their licenced swimming arrangements.
22. Table 3 sets out the number of swims at the Bathing Ponds and Lido between 18 July 2020 and 4 January 2021.

Opening Period	Number of Swims
18 July – 20 September 2020	124,776
21 September - 4 November 2020 & 2 December 2020– 4 January 2021	35,396
Total Swims	160,172

Table 3 – Number of swims 18 July 2020 - 4 January 2021.

Children's swimming access

23. Following Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) Guidance in relation to minimising risk, swimmers aged 8-15 were not able to swim at the Bathing Ponds during summer 2020. However, dedicated family sessions were available at the Lido to enable children to swim when accompanied by an adult.

Water Quality Testing & Pollution

24. The Environment Agency (EA) has responsibility for monitoring and protecting designated bathing water across England. Normally, during the summer months the EA test the water quality at the Bathing Ponds weekly and post the results on their website. Due to COVID-19, the EA significantly reduced their testing regime on inland bathing waters that normally meet 'good' or 'excellent' standards, which includes the Bathing Ponds on Hampstead Heath.
25. The City Corporation undertook independent water sample testing on 24 June, 1 July and 16 July, ahead of reopening the Bathing Ponds, as the EA had yet to resume its testing programme. The EA subsequently resumed monthly testing in late July.
26. On 17 September 2020, following a sewage surcharge, the Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond was closed. The surcharge was reported to the EA and Thames Water, who maintain the foul sewer network. Thames Water used specialist root cutting equipment to clear the blockage that had caused the sewer to surcharge. This work took place on 17 - 18 September 2020. Thames Water reported an 80% blockage of the sewer comprising of tree roots, north of the Ladies' Bathing Pond Meadow. The section of sewer was subsequently surveyed to ensure there were no further defects that required immediate action. Following the incident Thames Water established a programme of works across the sewer network.

27. As of 12 March 2021, Thames Water confirmed they have completed further patch repairs, and that further sewer lining works will be undertaken in April 2021.
28. Following this pollution incident, the City Corporation commissioned daily tests at the Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond and the results of these tests plus the results from the Highgate Men's Bathing Pond and Hampstead Mixed Bathing Pond are available at: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/Green-Spaces/hampstead-heath-water-quality-report.pdf>. The learning from these incidents has been embedded into the Safe Systems of Work for the Bathing Ponds.
29. Swimming at the Kenwood Ladies Bathing Pond resumed on 26 September 2020 following satisfactory water quality test results. Unfortunately, the Bathing Pond was closed again between 4 - 9 October 2020 due to unsatisfactory water quality test results.
30. Water quality testing continues to be undertaken on a weekly basis. Further information around this pollution incident, and the actions taken in response are set out at: <https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/green-spaces/hampstead-heath/where-to-go-at-hampstead-heath/kenwood-ladies-pond>

Lido Leak

31. Investigations into a leak at the Lido have been on-going for a number of years. A number of non-invasive investigations and fixes to resolve the leak have been attempted but proved un-successful.
32. Further, more invasive investigative works to detect and fix the leak, commenced on 16 January 2021. Following excavations, leaks were detected on one of the pipes connecting the deep end outlets to the plant room filters. Works to replace and update the pipework and flanges have been completed and following checks, the filtration system is operating correctly. Re-instatement works are due to be completed on 15 March 2021. This project has been successfully undertaken during a challenging period. The City Surveyors Department have been instrumental in supporting and arranging these works. The Contractor worked through difficult weather conditions and maintained COVID-19 Secure working arrangements.

Implementing the outcomes of the March 2020 Swimming Review

This section sets out our progress towards implementing the outcomes from the March 2020 Swimming Review.

Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work

33. Extensive reviews of the Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work for the Bathing Ponds and Lido were undertaken during the First National Lockdown, to inform re-opening on 11 July 2020. The reviews took into consideration the outcomes of the March 2020 Swimming Review and the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) Advice. In addition, COVID-19 Secure Operational Arrangements were developed and incorporate industry guidance from Sport England, Public Health England and the RLSS.

34. Further reviews of the Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work are in progress and will be completed before re-opening on 29 March 2021.
35. Procedures to record assisted rescues, lifesaving rescues and incidents at the Bathing Ponds and Lido in real time are being developed, ahead of the commencement of swimming on the 29 March 2021, to inform decision making.

Preventing unauthorised access

36. During the summer months, a variety of safety signage was installed around the ponds. A targeted approach was implemented to discourage swimming in the non-Lifeguarded Ponds and to engage with members of the public around the associated dangers.
37. At the Model Boating Pond, large banners were placed on Heras fencing panels at strategic locations. Whilst at the Vale of Health Pond signage was placed on wooden stakes within the pond and the Constabulary engaged with people taking part in un-authorised swimming.
38. A range of fencing repairs have taken place along the Highgate Chain and further works are being progressed along the Hampstead Chain.
39. Volunteers from Heath Hands have worked with staff on a variety of habitat and wetland management projects from the Annual Work Programme around the Ponds and assisted the Ranger Team make landscaping improvements within the Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond.

Lifeguard Training

40. All Lifeguards have completed RLSS COVID-19 training sessions and the Open Water Training Programme. External validation will be undertaken during April/May 2021. Equality and Inclusion, Transgender Awareness and Unconscious Bias training also forms part of the Lifeguard's Personal Development Objectives.
41. In preparation for re-opening on 29 March 2021, Lifeguards will receive intensive refresher training around use of the rescue equipment and rescue craft. As well as resuscitation protocols and the COVID-19 Secure operating arrangements.

Additional Lifeguards

42. In accordance with the HSE advice received in October 2019, additional Lifeguards have been employed, and since re-opening on 11 July 2020 a minimum of 3 Lifeguards have been on duty at each facility to allow for breaks and rotation of duties to maintain alertness.
43. At the Bathing Ponds the introduction of meaningful breaks away from the water has greatly improved staff morale and has enabled the Lifeguards to maintain their alertness.

Operational Issues

44. A new City of London website was launched in July 2020, which included new swimming information pages. Social Media and a swimming mailing list have been used to regularly provide updates on matters relating to the Bathing Ponds and Lido. A designated email address, HH-swimming@cityoflondon.gov.uk, has

also been set up so the public can get in touch with specific questions on swimming.

Additional Heath Rangers

45. In response to the outcomes from the March 2020 Swimming Review, Stewards have been deployed at the Bathing Ponds to ensure the primary role of Lifeguards is focussed on bather safety. As a result of COVID-19 it has proved more efficient to keep this role within the Swimming Team.
46. The Stewards role includes managing and facilitating entry to the Bathing Ponds, providing information, supporting swimmers with the payment arrangements, responding to incidents within the facilities, liaising with other Heath staff and the Emergency Services, cleaning and assisting with the operation of the Bathing Ponds.
47. The role of the Stewards has been instrumental to successfully implementing the COVID-19 Secure Operational Arrangements and making sure swimmers feel welcomed and safe, especially over the summer months.

Contactless Payment Technology

48. Contactless payment technology has been successfully introduced at the Bathing Ponds and had been in operation since September 2020. Wi-Fi has also been installed and has improved the speed and stability of the internet connections to support the contactless payment technology.
49. The Wi-Fi connection at the Ladies' Bathing Pond has also improved the mobile signal which is critical for communications with the Emergency Services.

Applied Charges

50. At the Bathing Ponds, applied charges have been implemented since opening on 11 July 2020. As set out in the March 2020 Swimming review, the swimming charges for the Bathing Ponds and Lido have been included in the annual review of the Heath's fees and charges which took place during Winter 2020/21.
51. Following consultation, the Hampstead Heath Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee agreed to increase the majority charges by 1.3% from the 1 April 2021. However, the Bathing Pond Concession Season Tickets prices have increased to align with 40% discount on the adult price. Cash payments options have been retained at the Bathing Ponds and Lido.

Income and Expenditure

52. Table 4 sets out the income and expenditure at the Bathing Ponds and Lido for the period of April 2020 - March 2021.
53. During 2020/21 the impact on the Heath's Local Risk Budget is above the agreed level of subsidy set out in the March 2020 Swimming Review. However, taking account of COVID-19, the impact on access, income and expenditure, further analysis will be necessary at the end of 2021/22 to reassess the achievement of the agreed subsidies and the wider impact on the Heath Charity.

	Bathing Ponds	Parliament Hill Fields Lido	Totals
Employee Costs	£794,723	£311,128	£1,105,851
Operational Expenditure	£172,260	£140,940	£313,200
Total Expenditure	£966,983	£452,068	£1,419,051
Income (Online booking fees and VAT have been deducted)	£367,649	£173,473	£541,122
Funding allocated from the Heath's 2020/21 Local Risk Budget	£599,334	£278,595	£877,929
% Subsidy for 2020/21	61.98%	61.63%	61.87%
	£599,334	£278,595	
<i>March 2020 agreed subsidy</i>	42%	35%	
	£442,000	£205,000	
% of Heath's 2020/21 Local Risk Budget	12.85%	5.97%	18.82%
<i>March 2020 agreed % of the Heath's Local Risk Budget</i>	10%	5%	

Table 4 - Income and expenditure at the Bathing Ponds and Lido for the period of April 2020 - March 2021

Support Scheme

54. An outcome of the March 2020 Swimming Review was to consider the establishment of a Support Fund. A further report was discussed and agreed by the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee in September 2020, and a Support Scheme was approved, which comprises of the following elements:
- Concessions and Free Swimming - A comprehensive range of concessions which provide a 40% discount of the adult ticket rate are available. Concessions apply to people in receipt of State Benefits including: Universal Credit, Job Seekers Allowance, Personal Independence Payments and Housing Benefit as well as people with a Freedom Pass; Disabled Card; Students and Under 16's.
 - A free morning swim until 9.30am is available for under 16's and 60+.
 - During the Summer 2020 free Carer access was introduced to enable swimmers to be accompanied where required. Swimmers or Carers can apply for a free wristband using the Season Ticket application form.
 - Officers continue to engage with Local Authorities and other Partners, such as the NHS to make them aware that free and concession swimming opportunities are available on Hampstead Heath.
 - Working with Partners (Health Connections) - Officers have established connections with the local Clinical Commissioning Group, GP's, Social Prescribers, Heath Hands and Global Generation. This group has an emerging

vision of a river of connections flowing through Camden from Hampstead Heath to Kings Cross, much like the river Fleet.

- In partnership we are working to map facilities and opportunities that are available to establish a framework to support the healthy growth of our communities and particularly different groups who experience more exclusion or disadvantage than others.
- In addition, the Heath Team will continue to work with a number of groups to facilitate free and discounted swimming. In 2020, this included play schemes, schools and migrant and refugee children, who were able to swim at the Lido.
- Volunteering - By volunteering on the Heath with our volunteer partner, Heath Hands, individuals are able to access day and season tickets for a range of activities, including swimming.

Property

55. A Capital Project relating to safety, access and security issues across the three Bathing Ponds and the Parliament Hill Fields Lido has approved funding of £755,000 from the City of London Corporation Capital Works Programme. Stakeholders will be engaged throughout the development and implementation of the project.
56. The City Surveyor's Department Cyclical Works Programme funding for 2021/22 is being prioritised towards safety related projects across the Bathing Ponds and Lido.

Updating the Swimming Regulations

57. The review of the Swimming Regulations has yet to be undertaken. Officers propose to commence the review during 2021/22.

Lido Fence Planning Application

58. The Planning Application and historic building consent for a temporary fence and perimeter lighting at the Lido was modified during 2020, following discussion with the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee. The installation of a temporary fence for the summer period was not required, in part as a result of the introduction of Social Distancing measures related to COVID-19 during 2020. Therefore, only planning consent for perimeter lighting was progressed and subsequently approved. Officers are looking into other methods to protect the Lido from un-authorized access, including additional planting, re-locating electrical boxes and security patrols of the perimeter.

Looking forward to the 2021 Summer Swimming Season

The Bathing Ponds and Lido will re-open, after the Third National Lockdown on 29 March 2021, this section sets out the arrangements for the return of swimming at Hampstead Heath, in accordance with the latest Government Guidance.

59. Season Ticket wristbands will automatically be extended by the number of days a valid Season Ticket was held during the time the Bathing Ponds and Lido were closed during the Third National Lockdown. Ahead of re-opening, Season Ticket sales resumed on 10 March 2021.
60. Initially, when the Bathing Ponds and Lido open on 29 March 2021 Capped Free Flow arrangements will be put in place.
61. Ahead of the commencement of the 2021 Summer Swimming Season, Officers will review the success of the Capped Free Flow arrangements during the first month of operation, which will include the Easter Bank Holiday weekend. If Social Distancing measures can be effectively maintained, the Bathing Ponds and Lido will continue to operate with Capped Free Flow for the Morning Session (last entry at 09.30) from 1 May 2021, with pre-booked sessions operating during peak hours.
62. Sessions can be re-booked and paid for using Eventbrite or a dedicated telephone booking line (020 7332 3779). Arrangements have been put in place for 2021 to allow Season Tickets to be used during the summer season. Season Ticket holders will be able to pre-book, without making a payment, by using Eventbrite or the dedicated telephone booking line and will be asked to bring their Season Ticket wristband when attending a session.
63. The dedicated telephone booking line will be in place during the mornings to assist swimmers who are not able to make a booking using Eventbrite. There is a risk that the telephone booking line could be overwhelmed if swimmers who can book online attempt to use this service, which will impact on swimmers who rely on the telephone service.
64. During 2021, there will be trial of an extended summer season at the Mixed Bathing Pond. The Pond will be Lifeguarded from 29 March - 31 October 2021. This will significantly increase the capacity for swimming on the Heath. The trial will be reviewed in November 2021 to inform the arrangements for 2022.

Discussion Topics

This section sets out a number of discussion items, and Officers welcome feedback and suggestions.

Reintroducing Swim Tests at the Bathing Ponds

65. Swimmers aged 8-15 swim are able to swim at the Lido where family and all-comers sessions are available. However, in order to provide further opportunities for swimmers aged 8-15, it is proposed to re-introduce swim test at the Bathing Ponds.
 - It is proposed that specific sessions are set aside to facilitate free swim tests. The swim tests could be booked on-line or via the dedicated telephone booking line. Views and feedback are sought on the proposal to allocate specific sessions for swim tests to take place. The swim test sessions could be programmed for weekends and during school holidays.

Free Morning Swim for Under 16's and 60+

66. A range of feedback has been received in relation to the Free Morning Swim arrangements.
- Views are sought in relation age eligibility for the free morning swim and the timing of the free morning swim.

Free & Discounted Swimming

67. We welcome feedback on underrepresented groups and organisations, who would benefit from free and discounted swimming.

Season Ticket

68. The impact of the National Lockdowns has meant that some Season Tickets no longer align with the summer and winter swimming seasons.
- We welcome feedback on proposals to re-align the Season Tickets with the Swimming Seasons and to have a 7 month Summer Season Ticket and a 5 month Winter Season Ticket. It is proposed that the 12 month Season Ticket would be retained.

Conclusion

69. Significant progress has been made towards implementing the Outcomes of the March 2020 Swimming Review, and this has been critical to maintaining safe access for swimming during a very challenging year. Over 160,000 swims have been facilitated across the Bathing Ponds and Lido. We are delighted that these arrangements have also provided opportunities for children and families to swim at the Lido.
70. Further analysis of income and expenditure for the Bathing Ponds and Lido will be undertaken at the end of the current financial year. We will continue to assess the impact on the Heath Charity, and work towards securing the long-term sustainability of swimming on Hampstead Heath.
71. The Lifeguards have felt confident in being able to support swimmers accessing the Bathing Ponds and Lido in a safe and welcoming environment. This has positively impacted of their moral and wellbeing. Carefully easing the COVID-19 Secure Operating Arrangements and continuing to manage the Bathing Load remain critical as we welcome swimmers back to the Bathing Ponds and Lido in 2021.

Next Steps

Taking account of the feedback from the Swimming Associations and the Hampstead Heath Sports Advisory Forum an updated report will be presented to the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee on the 19 April 2021. A further report will then be presented to the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee on 26 May 2021.



Hampstead Heath

Registered Charity

Appendix 1 - Hampstead Heath Swimming Questionnaire Results



The 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 closed on Friday 11 September and this report summarises all 1108 responses.

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Q6. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is very much and 1 is not at all, how much do the Ponds and Lido benefit your physical and mental health? 9

Q7. And thinking about your visit overall, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is Excellent and 1 is Very Poor, how would you rate the Coronavirus safety measures that we had in place around the Ponds and Lido? 10

Q8. In your own words, please tell us your experience of swimming on the Heath this summer during the COVID-19 restrictions?..... 11

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Q11. How do you find out/stay up to date on swimming on Hampstead Heath?..... 16

Q13. Do you live or work near the Heath or are you a visitor?..... 17

Q14. What gender do you identify as? 17

Q15. What is your age? 18

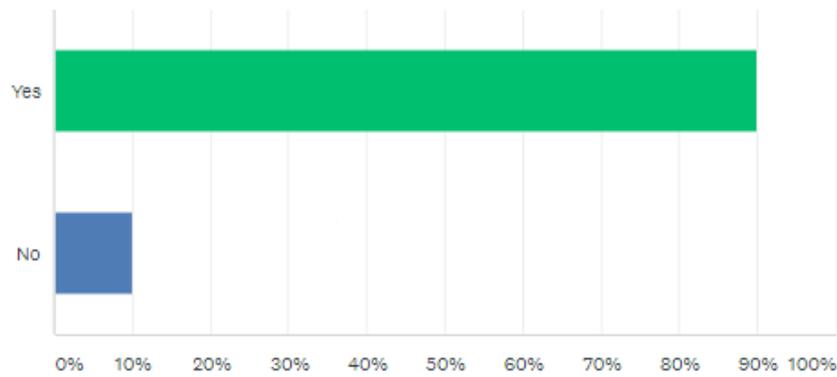
Q16. What is your ethnic group? 19

Q17. What is your main language?20

Q18. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?21

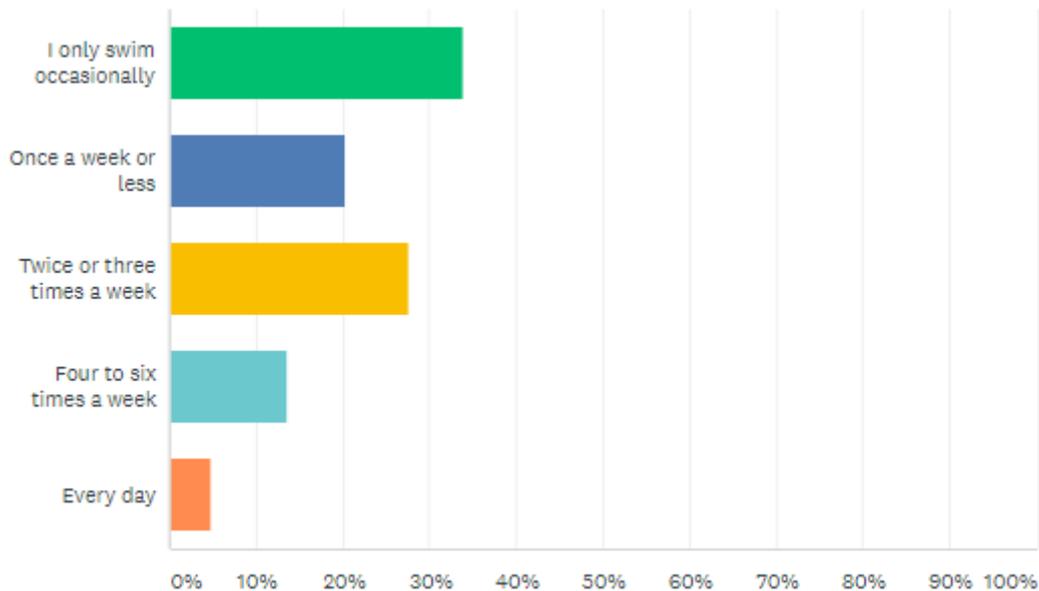
Q19. What is the first half of your postcode?22

Q1. Have you swum at the Heath's Bathing Ponds or the Parliament Hill Fields Lido prior to this summer?



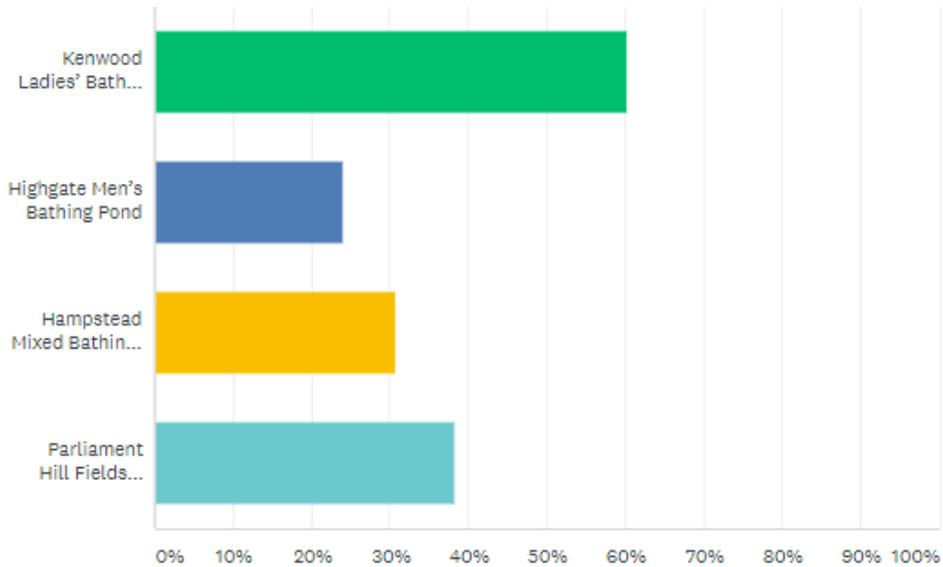
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	89.95% 994
No	10.05% 111
TOTAL	1,105

Q2. Outside of COVID-19 restrictions, how many times did you swim on the Heath?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
I only swim occasionally	33.82% 370
Once a week or less	20.20% 221
Twice or three times a week	27.51% 301
Four to six times a week	13.62% 149
Every day	4.84% 53
TOTAL	1,094

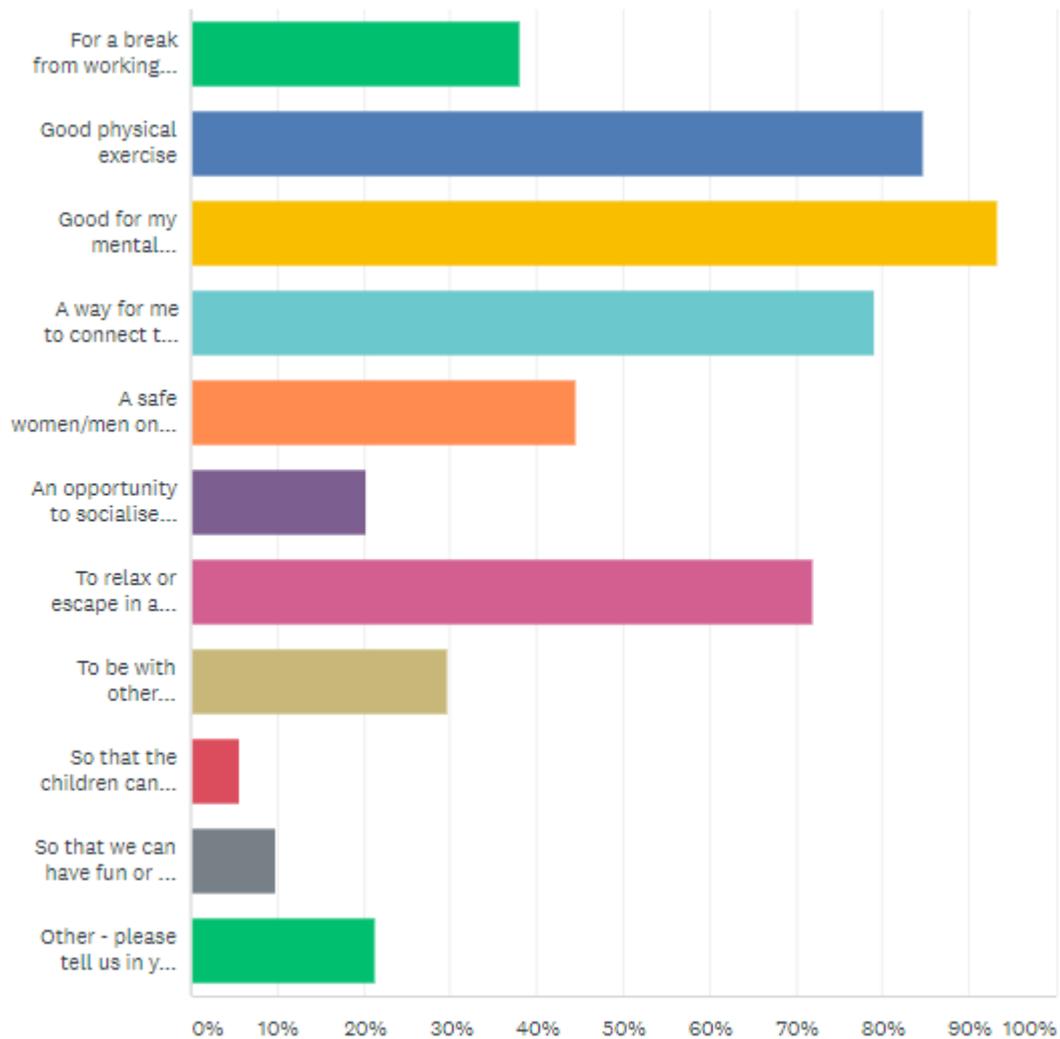
Q3. Which swimming facilities do you use?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond	60.33% 666
Highgate Men's Bathing Pond	24.00% 265
Hampstead Mixed Bathing Pond	30.80% 340
Parliament Hill Fields Lido	38.22% 422
Total Respondents: 1,104	

Respondents were asked to tick all boxes which applied to them

Q4. We have listed some reasons below why people might swim outdoors at the Ponds or Lido. Please tell us which apply to you.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ For a break from working from home	38.03% 421
▼ Good physical exercise	84.82% 939
▼ Good for my mental wellbeing	93.41% 1,034
▼ A way for me to connect to nature	79.13% 876
▼ A safe women/men only space to relax in	44.53% 493
▼ An opportunity to socialise in a safe way	20.23% 224
▼ To relax or escape in a pleasant atmosphere	72.00% 797
▼ To be with other like-minded people	29.81% 330
▼ So that the children can have fun, be entertained or kept occupied	5.60% 62
▼ So that we can have fun or be entertained	9.76% 108
▼ Other - please tell us in your own words the reasons you swim outdoors	Responses 21.41% 237
Total Respondents: 1,107	

Word map of 'Other' answers

important experience feel good beautiful places London heat
 swimming Ladies pond away work help improves winter
 natural space peace s well benefits back unique see day
 escape much reasons enjoy came place offers
 swim ponds physical health pool year round
 cold water city go community love chronic lido
 especially ponds facility swimming life water
 always nature started good safe space men pond
 free keep feel exercise women cool London trees
 mental health weather natural challenge
 women s pond hot cold chlorine special find way outside
 swim outdoors even calm summer Also able indoor pool
 wonderful Ladies pond people used body



Q5. What's your favourite thing about the Ponds or Lido?

Below are a selection of answers from respondents from various age, gender and ethnic groups who agreed to their responses being shared:

"A way to escape city life, and let your thoughts drift away! Growing up in and around the sea it's a real lifeline for me in the city, so much so being near the Heath, Lido and Ponds was a top priority when looking for a new property in the area!"

"The peace, tranquility and nature around the [Ladies'] pond. The Lido has a great sense of community and history. It's a privilege to have it so nearby."

"Just being in the open air, and able to appreciate nature while swimming in a more natural environment than an indoor pool"

"[...] in particular, swimming there is good for my health as I have MS and swimming, particularly in cold water, helps me to deal with this condition both physically as well as mentally."

"Having a swim before work and on my days off really relaxes me and has a huge positive impact on my mental health"

"The peace, the feeling of being properly 'outdoors' and away from London; the cold water, the kind atmosphere!"

"I love the women's only space. And the secludedness and privacy of the Ladies' Pond. The ducks and the trees and lying on my back looking at the sky. It's a magical, relaxing and restorative experience to visit and I always feel extraordinarily lucky to be able to swim in such a place. Thank you, City of London, for enriching the lives of so many north Londoners."

"The tranquillity, connection with nature. The timed entry made this possible once again on sunny days - much appreciated"

"I like how secluded it is and the fact it is women only (including trans women, and this inclusiveness is very important to me). I also like how friendly the environment is. Also just the experience of swimming in a non-laned pool which is hard to find in London."

"The community of people and the shiny bottom of the Lido. And that it's open all year, even through the winter. Oh, and the amazing new sauna at the Lido."

"Being in cold water really helps to manage stress. I love the Lido lining, which makes the feel and colour of the water so nice. My kids swim from May to September at the Lido and they love having such a big space to swim in."

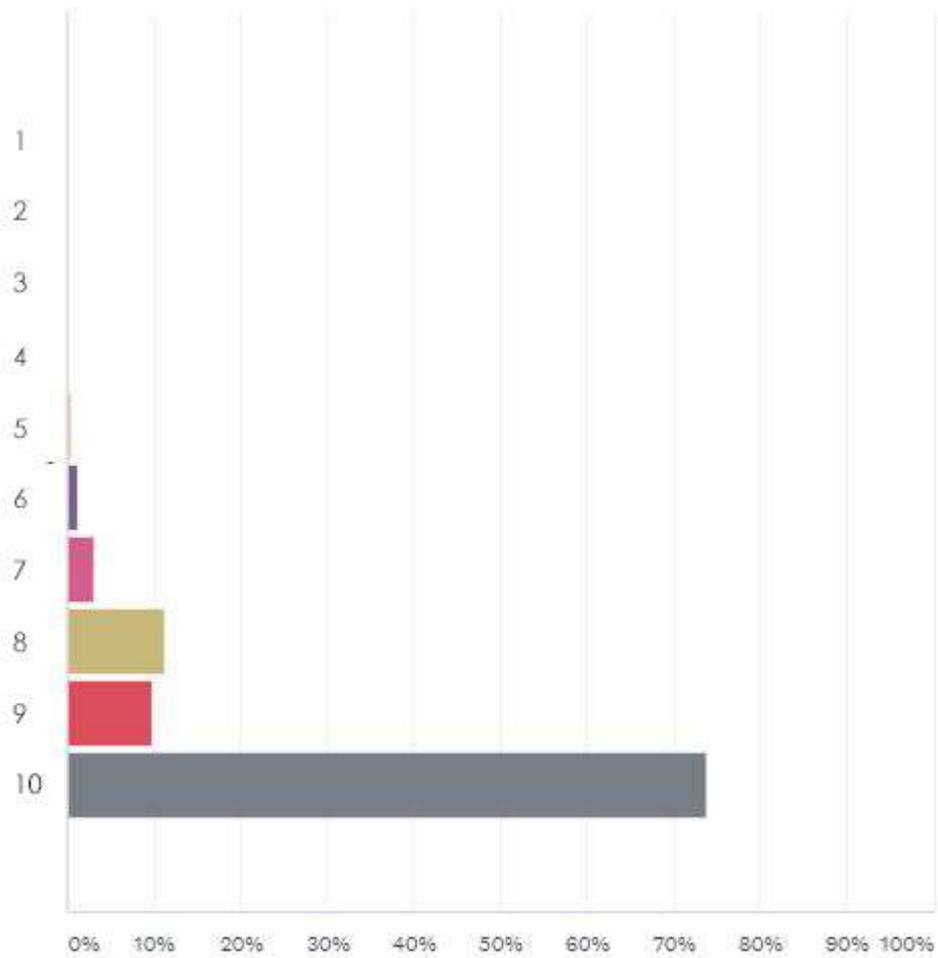
"As someone who grew up in the inner city, the option to try outdoor and winter swimming without needing to rely on support of a parent or income was an invaluable opportunity and improved and changed my life. The ponds have been a rock in my life, helping me through the tough times and have given me so much confidence.[...]"

Word map

quiet well access facility lovely need close nature wildlife cold
relaxed atmosphere Swimming outside able beautiful peace quiet
mental health s pond enjoy women space great day open air
much experience love swimming pool city
natural environment made community pond feels
people summer outdoors exercise London amazing S
accessible relaxed friendly atmosphere environment
water natural surroundings ladies pond setting lido
beauty nature able swim swimming time ponds
fact feeling tranquility space surroundings love
connection nature place freedom cold water now
women safe space peace clean safe Covid free long
natural life used fresh air open staff
Swimming outdoors sanctuary peaceful natural setting go
friendly atmosphere also escape outside ducks connect nature really
calm sense Swimming natural heath good around unique one way
special

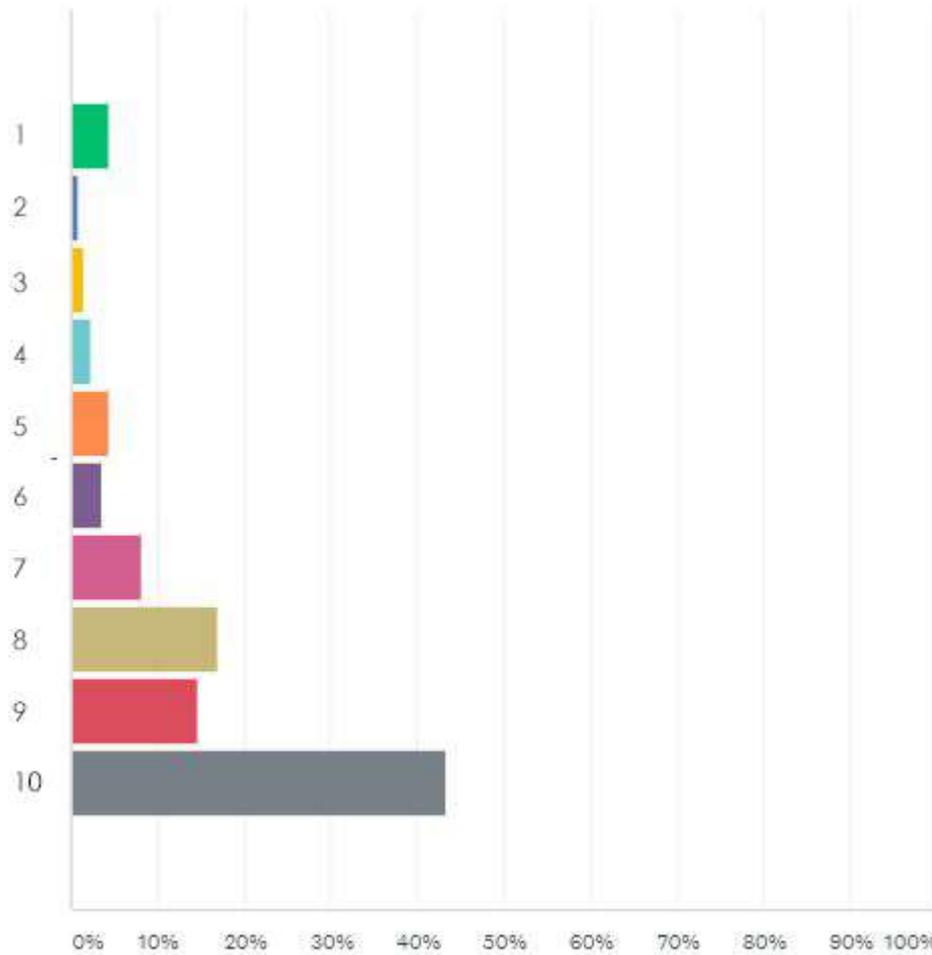


Q6. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is very much and 1 is not at all, how much do the Ponds and Lido benefit your physical and mental health?



NOT AT ALL	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	VERY MUCH	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
0.18%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.45%	1.27%	3.08%	11.32%	9.87%	73.82%	1,104	9.49
2	0	0	0	5	14	34	125	109	815		

Q7. And thinking about your visit overall, on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is Excellent and 1 is Very Poor, how would you rate the Coronavirus safety measures that we had in place around the Ponds and Lido?



VERY POOR	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
4.30%	0.92%	1.56%	2.20%	4.49%	3.57%	8.15%	16.85%	14.74%	43.22%	1,092	8.20
47	10	17	24	49	39	89	184	161	472		

Q8. In your own words, please tell us your experience of swimming on the Heath this summer during the COVID-19 restrictions?

Below are a selection of answers from respondents from various age, gender and ethnic groups who agreed to their responses being shared:

“Impressed by the hard work to reopen as soon as possible and as safely as possible and trying to accommodate all fairly. Well done and thank you.”

“Everything has been clearly communicated and the ticketing system has been effective.”

“The lockdown was handled in a very professional manner. The facilities were clean and in excellent shape. Lack of partition wall benefited the overall appreciation of the ponds.”

“Better organised, less crowded and more enjoyable having pre-paid slots than before the COVID-19 era.”

“A brilliant reprieve from everything else going on.”

“It has been fantastic to have the Ponds and Lido open again. Given all the worry and restrictions caused by the pandemic, swimming on the Heath has been an oasis of pleasure.”

“Very good overall experience as the measures to ensure the swimmers safety is evident. The Eventbrite app was a good addition to help facilitate booking and track n trace.”

“A blessing and also somewhat frustrating. I appreciate the great lengths you went to to facilitate reopening the ponds, but the requirement to preplan visits a week ahead seemed exclusionary and counter to the open nature of the ponds.

“Well-organised without being too regimented. No feeling of being rushed. Altogether delightful.”

“The Lifeguards are all excellent, and the site is managed very well. I have felt safe and comfortable during the COVID restrictions. I actually prefer it this way. I like the booking system. This is something that could remain it ensures that there is always a comfortable space to swim in. I’m sure it could accommodate season ticket holders - which I have been previously.”

“It has been my sanctuary. I felt very safe swimming and very much appreciate the efforts of staff to keep it going.”

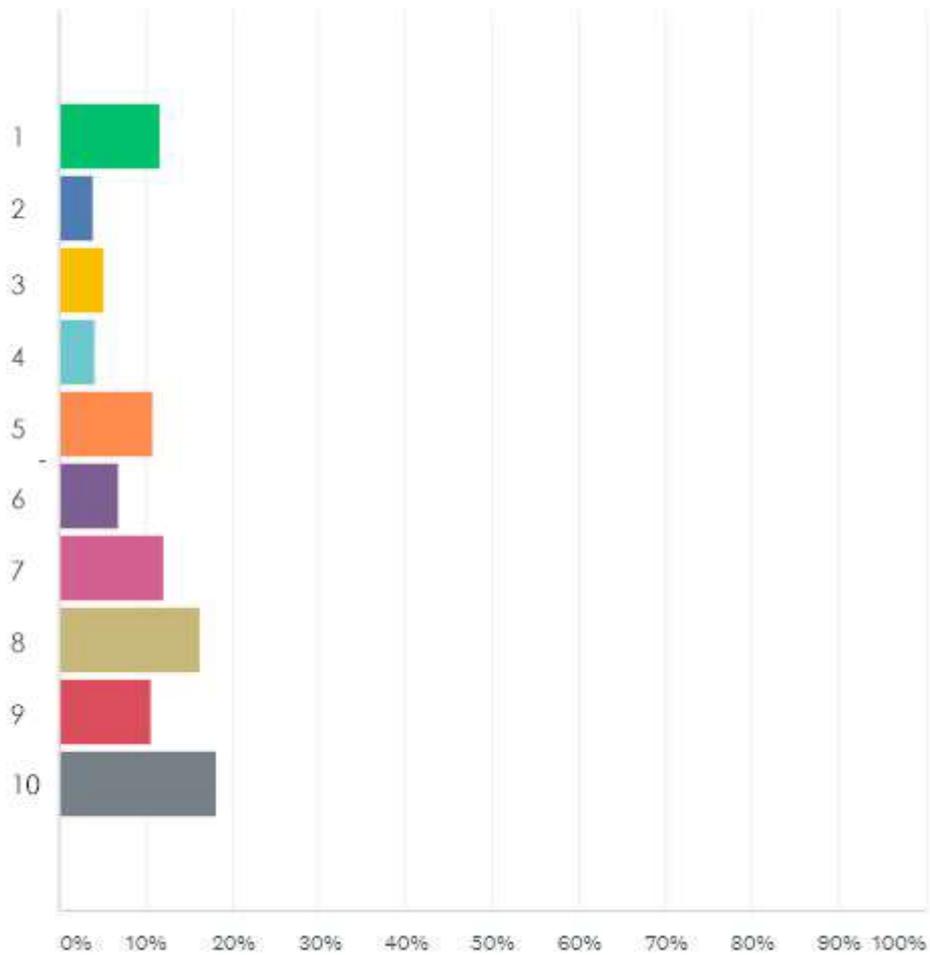
“I barely used the ponds over the Summer - initially the difficulties using the system and getting a slot made it impossible, and I gave up as I did not want to be constantly disappointed. I had a swim in September which was fine, and I appreciated the relatively low-key and relaxed atmosphere which staff had created.

Word map

Covid things safe disappointed place due relaxed take used now
frustrating facilities swimmers book slot open managed difficult
understand staff able However especially lifeguards season ticket
day restricted found bit really pleasant keep allowed feel
lovely lido water slot though think even experience
meant booked changed go know time way ponds
space swim given good fine booking system long
people expensive made will great visit also atmosphere
felt enjoyed summer well one turn much easy
well organised nice able swim queue S seemed
ladies pond wonderful pay crowded felt safe social distancing loved
Excellent needed shame tickets pool always hour swimming ponds
limited restrictions Thank session new week advance work



Q9 Due to COVID-19 restrictions an online booking system was necessary to allow safe access the Ponds/Lido. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is Excellent and 1 is Very Poor, how would you rate this booking system?



VERY POOR	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	EXCELLENT	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
11.65%	3.91%	5.28%	4.28%	10.83%	6.92%	12.10%	16.29%	10.65%	18.11%	1099	6.40
128	43	58	47	119	76	133	179	117	199		

Q10. If you have any specific feedback on the booking system, please tell us here

Below are a selection of answers from respondents from various age, gender and ethnic groups who agreed to their responses being shared:

“Actually easy to use and good at making me commit to the exercise.”

“Although I book online, I was delighted to see a phone booking could be made as this makes the Lido accessible to all.”

“The booking system has been well organised but I hate having to book in advance (+ it is often not convenient) and really miss being able to turn up without booking.”

“So difficult to book family swim sessions. Frustrating to book in advance and not be able to cancel or transfer. I was ill and had to miss two sessions which was a shame if someone else could have used them.”

“Outside of very hot weather, I’d prefer a more relaxed system- and season tickets for regular swimmers”

“I think you did a great job. It was easy to use with the option to phone for those not able to manage the online system.”

“I think the booking system is great and it should stay in place. There is just a nice comfortable amount of people swimming at any one time[...].”

“Having to book a week in advance is off putting. As a free spirit I prefer to swim as the mood takes me. If I book in advance I have to worry about the weather or I might not feel up to swimming on that particular day.

“The additional support via email has been good. Staff are very friendly online and a credit to the institution.”

“Overall it was good. And thank you for having it ready, it was online very quickly after reopening. Well done.”

It was so difficult to book slots and I’m a digital-savvy millennial. I wonder how many long time pond swimmers were excluded.

“It was much better than just turning up - it was brilliant to know you had a slot and guaranteed a swim instead of just turning up and queueing.”

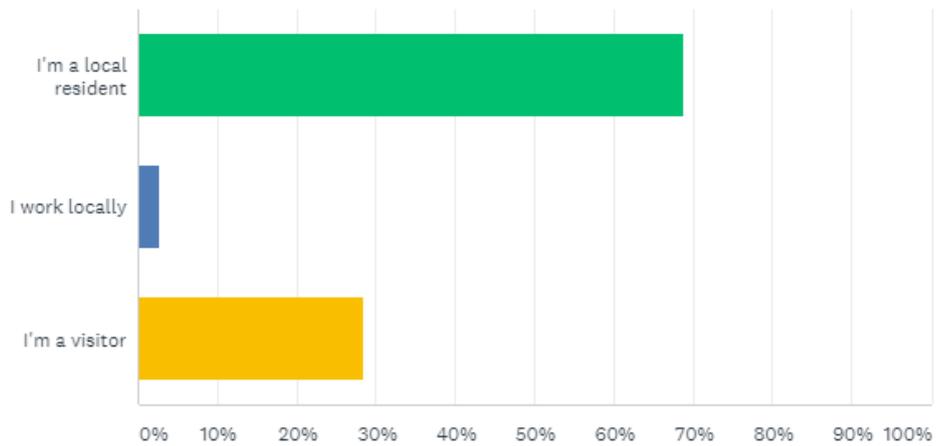
“I like having a specific slot because it means the Lido was never full or stressful, and I was able to access it even during hot summer days.”

Word map

issue advance free never turn option pay unable place look first early see clear
fine trying cancel hour way though easy use especially always
much better need keep know every time s show think online also
poor one now go rather tickets given ponds book slot
booking system lido people many time often
swim worked well book lot slots sometimes good
able day space system means use will Eventbrite
refund make app sessions sold easy hard find nice
difficult many people great able book take charging work annoying
frustrating said much problem seems necessary available start
really week advance None bit friend quickly even N allow understand access
book week advance

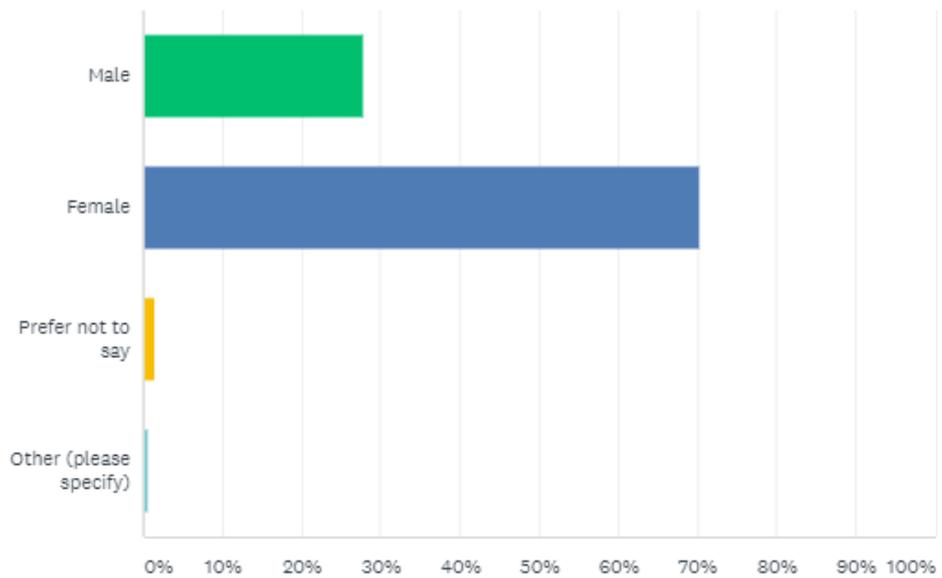


Q13. Do you live or work near the Heath or are you a visitor?



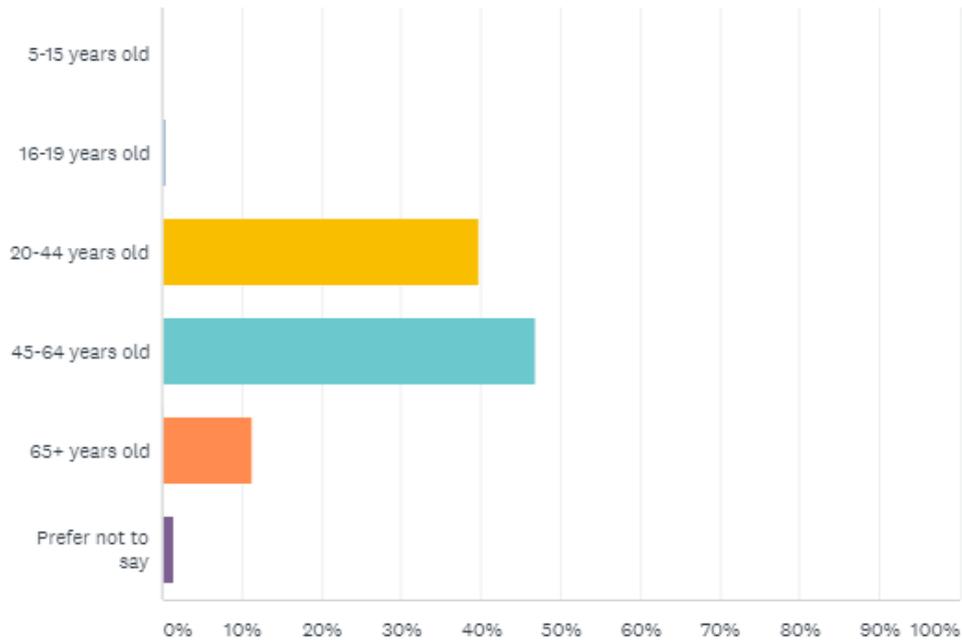
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ I'm a local resident	68.84% 749
▼ I work locally	2.76% 30
▼ I'm a visitor	28.40% 309
TOTAL	1,088

Q14. What gender do you identify as?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Male	27.73% 302
▼ Female	70.25% 765
▼ Prefer not to say	1.47% 16
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses 0.55% 6
TOTAL	1,089

Q15. What is your age?

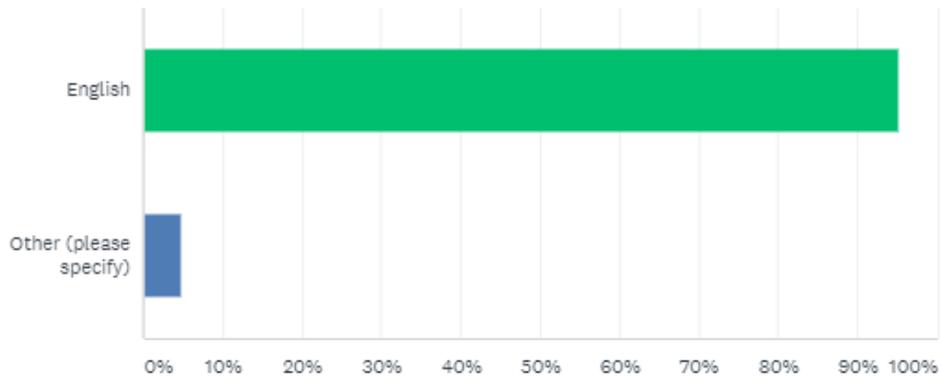


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ 5-15 years old	0.09% 1
▼ 16-19 years old	0.37% 4
▼ 20-44 years old	39.80% 433
▼ 45-64 years old	46.88% 510
▼ 65+ years old	11.40% 124
▼ Prefer not to say	1.47% 16
TOTAL	1,088

Q16. What is your ethnic group?

▼ White	47.79%	518
▼ White - Irish	5.54%	60
▼ White - English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	26.85%	291
▼ White - Scottish	1.11%	12
▼ Irish Traveller	0.00%	0
▼ Roma, Gypsy or Traveller	0.09%	1
▼ Other White background	7.38%	80
▼ Black or Black British - Caribbean	0.09%	1
▼ Black or Black British - African	0.09%	1
▼ Other Black background	0.09%	1
▼ Asian or Asian British - Indian	0.55%	6
▼ Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.00%	0
▼ Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.00%	0
▼ Chinese	0.46%	5
▼ Other Asian background	0.37%	4
▼ Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	0.65%	7
▼ Mixed - White and Black African	0.18%	2
▼ Mixed - White and Asian	1.20%	13
▼ Other mixed background	1.48%	16
▼ Arab	0.00%	0
▼ Not known	0.00%	0
▼ Prefer not to say	4.89%	53
▼ Other ethnic background (please specify)	Responses 1.20%	13
TOTAL		1,084

Q17. What is your main language?



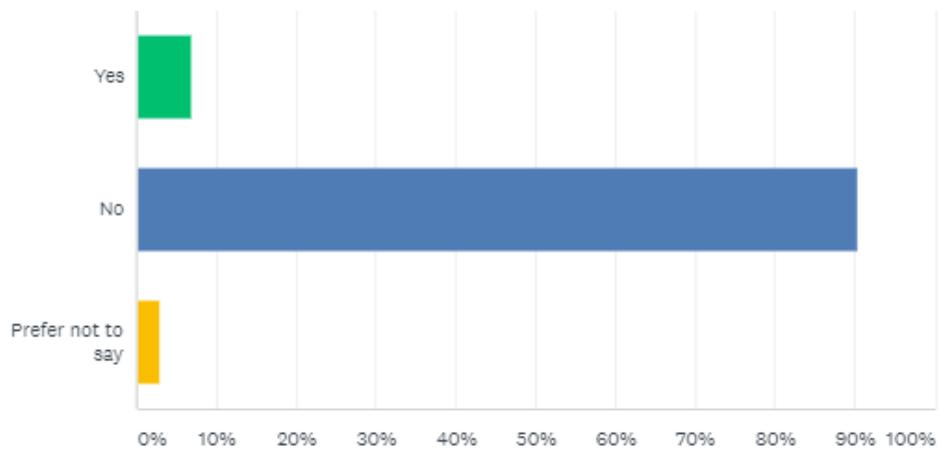
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
English	95.22% 1,035
Other (please specify)	Responses 4.78% 52
TOTAL	1,087

Word map of 'Other' answers

Portuguese Turkish **French** Polish **German** Spanish



Q18. Do you consider yourself to have a disability?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Yes	6.80% 74
▼ No	90.35% 983
▼ Prefer not to say	2.85% 31
TOTAL	1,088

Q19. What is the first half of your postcode?

Word map

N11_{EC1V} N12_{SE15} N16_{E8} NW10_{W12} NW11_{SW11} N2_{SE17} N8_{W9} NW1
N N1_{SE1} N6_{N17} NW5_{N3} NW3_{N15} N19_{NW4} NW6_{EN5}
N7_{E9} NW2_{E5} N4_{W2} N10_{W6} N5_{SE14} N22_{E10} E17_{NW9} NW



This is one of 14 green spaces managed by the City of London at little cost to the general public.