

Representations received from the HMPA, KLPA and HRFC

Men's Bathing Pond Association (HMPA)

Firstly, concerning the announcement charges would rise next year by 5 % in line with inflation.

I acknowledge this figure is lower than other current inflationary figures. However, I asked the chair if he could please identify what costs in the men's ponds reflected the need for another annual increase. I acknowledged that everybody understands that any energy costs, in the present economic climate, will understandably increase costs. However, in regards to energy use at the Men's Ponds I can only presume the energy usage is minimal. I state the obvious but we do not heat the men's ponds and the swimmers do not have hot showers. For instance, if we could see a statement from last year's use of electricity at the Men's ponds and this year's then maybe it will reveal the need for this increase. I can't see any other reason for continual increases in charges. To my knowledge no new equipment has been purchased. I appreciate the planned building works for the disability area will be expensive but that hasn't happened yet.

My point is, as a customer, if I can't see any reason why I am being charged more, year after year. I think the City, as the operator, has an obligation to provide the information to justify these cost increases to its customers. In fact John Carrier's point, that meetings should abide by the Sedley requirements, I felt, encapsulated the point. It suggests ; "sufficient reasons for the proposal must be provided to allow intelligent consideration and response".

- My second point was about the times when the Concessionary rates to over 60's swimmers.

This is presently from [7.am](#) until 9.30am. Since TfL's decision in 2020, to remove free travel during the early rush hour swimmers eligible for freedom passes and oyster passes cannot presently benefit from free travel until after 9.00am. The HMPA therefore request the city continue to offer concessionary swimming from opening hours, thereby accommodating those who work, or have other responsibilities such as carers. This also maintains the essential role in continuing fitness regimes, thereby guaranteeing levels of well being and mental health for the many in this age group who benefit from this concession. I was pleased to hear John Carrier remind us in the forum that the City is committed to maintaining the 'well being' of its stakeholders and users in the local community. These commendable values are clearly stated on the City of London website. So, I would be disappointed if the City simply move forward the start of the concessions a few hours and jeopardised this well being for what would be a negligible increase in its revenue.

With this in mind the HMPA as well as the other swimming associations asks the city to please extend free concessionary swims from opening times until midday 12.00pm for all three ponds.

Kenwood Ladies' Bathing Pond Association (KLPA)

The KLPA writes in response to the proposed increase to swimming charges in 2023/24. Please find below our feedback to the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee and the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Woods and Queen's Park Management Committee.

The City of London Corporation has proposed an increase of 5% which we acknowledge is lower than current levels of inflation. However we remain concerned about the year on year increases in prices since 2020, affecting both day tickets and season tickets. We urge the Consultative Committee and Management Committee to give serious consideration to a price freeze in light of the current economic climate, and the pressures on many local residents who are in even greater need of the wellbeing provided by the bathing ponds. Surely, as a charity, removing price as a barrier to access to swimming in the ponds is critical at a time when many are forced to choose between heating, eating or health improving activities such as swimming. However, if the proposed price increase were to be approved, we would expect to see some undertaking that front line staff at the ponds would receive a pay increase of at least 5% if that is going to be the increase in ticket prices.

Please note the following additional comments:

1. We seek a genuine consultation, and not simply an information giving exercise with the result already decided. For this to be a genuine consultation the proposals should still be at a formative stage, with sufficient reasons for the proposals being given to permit proper consideration/response, sufficient time given for consideration/response and for any responses to be conscientiously taken into account when a final decision is made, in accordance with Sedley Criteria. Having about 3 weeks to consider this through the holiday period before feedback must be provided to the Consultative Committee is problematic. Nor have we had explained the rationale for 5% being selected.
2. The table of information which accompanied the price increase proposals was somewhat misleading (see page 9 of attached). It refers to inflationary uplifts in 2021 (1.3%) and 2022 (4.9%) whilst not mentioning the disproportionate increase to concession day tickets in 2020 (140% compared to 100% for full price tickets) and to concession season tickets in 2021 (15-21.5%). It is concessionary prices which have consistently been increased most in a process of social exclusion since 2020.
3. We continue to press for an extension of the time for free swims for those under 16 and over 60 from 7 am to midday (instead of 9.30 am) to mirror the practice in Camden and allowing the use of concessionary travel to the ponds. Currently it is a matter of pay to travel or pay to swim. We would not welcome simply moving the 2 ½ hour time slot along later into the morning as recently proposed by the Superintendent, as this would just exclude a different group of swimmers. There are clearly understood public health benefits to encouraging exercise in these two age groups, and Camden Council has provided a precedent.

4. We urge the City to move forward on offering a 6 month free pass to recently arrived refugees as also offered by Camden/Better, which has received a favourable in principle response from Heath managers.
5. We await an update on the proposal for Direct Debit payment by instalment for season tickets, which the KLPA has been requesting since 2020. The upfront cost of a season ticket is prohibitive to many. We understand that the new IT systems currently being procured are intended to accommodate this option which is welcome.
6. We are disappointed at the lack of meaningful engagement by the City in a proposed support fund, and will respond separately to that matter. This is something which WAS promised by the City in 2020 despite more recent attempts to reinterpret those earlier undertakings.

Hampstead Rugby Football Club (HRFU)

We really value the relationship we have developed and what we have achieved, particularly in the last 20 yrs with the introduction of women's, minis and juniors rugby and the fantastic duathlon event. The growth of the club has been in part thanks to the support from the team at Hampstead Heath and we want to continue to work in collaboration to see continued success of Rugby on Hampstead Heath.

We would like to make a representation on behalf of the rugby club (and possibly on behalf of the football clubs that use the same facilities?), regarding the proposed price rises for the pitch hire at Hampstead Heath. Please let me know if you need this in any particular format, I wasn't sure if there was a template for such things. The increases, given inflation this year are understandable, but when you take these in context of the price rises we have seen since 2014 this is quite significant for the club. The pitch and facility hire also represent quite a sizable amount of the club's outgoings over a season and in the context of slightly dropping membership numbers this could be quite a challenge for the club finances.

Please see attached spreadsheet for information on the price rises we have seen as a club since 2014/15 and also comparison of pitch hire costs that we have been able to find from 3 other pitch hire facilities in London.

Benchmarking suggests we are paying between £1,692 and £3,563 more than others already. This is before looking at juniors and training hire costs.

Benchmarking 2022/23 fees						
	Changing rooms (£)	Pitches (£)	Match total hire	Comparison to Hampstead Heath 22/23 hire fees	Total difference in hire fees for 35 senior matches	Notes
Royal Parks	£ 40.00	£ 105.00	£ 145.00	-£ 48.35	£ 1,692.25	Includes Changing rooms x2 (20
London borough Hammersmith and Fulham		£ 104.00	£ 104.00	-£ 89.35	£ 3,127.25	Reduction in fees if booking more than 10 games
Hackney Marshes pitches		£ 91.55	£ 91.55	-£ 101.80	£ 3,563.00	Includes changing rooms
Hampstead Heath	£ 97.70	£ 95.65	£ 193.35			

- Player numbers are taking a bit of a hit at the moment across the sport therefore membership income is lower To attract new players our fees need to be reasonable and competitive. We are already one of the more expensive clubs to join in London and therefore can't match the inflationary increase through fees (especially having

recently raised them).

- Having to find alternative training venues when the weather turns as facilities at the track aren't suitable- additional costs to the club.

- Increasing numbers of matches now the juniors section is becoming more established which is fantastic and we aim to grow community rugby but this also means increased costs

- Additional costs of hosting teams after the matches as there is no where near the changing rooms suitable

- Additional essentials from the RFU like physios and first aiders which comes at a cost

- As well as actively contributing volunteer time to participate in meetings and support events on Hampstead Heath. We feel that Hampstead rugby club makes a positive contribution to the delivery of the City of London's Health & Wellbeing Strategy. Priorities are:

- Good mental health for all
- A healthy urban environment
- Effective health and social care integration
- All children have the best start in life
- Promoting healthy behaviours

- We are seeing other local clubs being able to offer more for less as they are paying less for pitch hire, match teas etc. we need help to remain competitive and attract players to the club, otherwise the future of the club could be in jeopardy. Alternative funding streams have also reduced. We continue to do our best to raise funds through events and sponsorship

- We would be happy to speak to other City of London Officers and Members regarding this. We recognise that what we pay in fees is very small compared to the overarching budget challenge, however the impact on our club's sustainability and offering is significant. As I mentioned at the meeting on the 15th, I am not sure if there could be a price agreed for a season booking or perhaps a discount offered for block bookings. We are very happy to discuss options with you, as we want to be in a position to be able to keep offering a vibrant rugby offering to players and the local community. Many of whom stop to watch a match on a Saturday or Sunday or who have children participating in the junior section for the club.