

JESMOND COMMUNITY LEISURE

Public Benefit Report 2016

As per the requirement of the Charity Commission, the following is our statement and evidence of how we have met our charitable objectives in the year, and the public benefit from these activities.

Our Mission

Supporting our community through the provision of swimming and other leisure related activities.

Our Values

- Belief in the power of sport and leisure related activities to benefit all members of our community, regardless of their state of health or disability, and
- Belief in the ability of local communities to meet local needs.

How we meet our Charitable Objectives

1. *To meet the swimming and leisure related needs of all groups in the local and wider community.*

- *Constantly review the programme and take into consideration customer feedback and community concerns;*
- *Network with other similar projects across the country, learn from them and assist them whenever we can.*

We change our programme of activities regularly, taking into consideration usage and feedback from users. This year we have added more classes for older people, and linked in with Age Concern to provide sessions for the whole city. We have also added Dance classes for younger children, and expanded Table Tennis use considerably.

In our networking with other single site groups, we have increased our swim school range of classes, and moved to a continuous direct debit system. We were also part of a National scheme to promote swimming for older women. Partnered with Tadcaster Swim Trust in Yorkshire and Osprey Trust in Dorset, we were very successful in attracting and keeping inactive women swimming regularly for 6 months or more. The scheme has been nominated for a national award through Sporta, who managed the scheme with Sport England.

We continue to monitor the use and diversity of classes and courses, and offer a good comprehensive range of wet and dry activities.

We monitor our activities as wet and dry, with wet being any activity that happens in the pool, and dry being anything else, apart from gym use.

For dry activities, general fitness classes tend to be the most popular with Yoga and Pilates classes very well subscribed. The other really popular classes are Spinning, Zumba, Tai Chi, Metafit and BLT. At the moment we have our highest ever use of the activity room, with 17 different classes over a week, offering activity for all ages and abilities.

Over the past 2 years we have worked with other partners to provide classes for older people, and those recovering from operations and trauma. As well as our ongoing Senior Fitness Group which operates in the gyms, we now have a class for older mens circuits and 2 classes for people recovering from falls. Many of these people have been referred to us from other parts of the City.

Following a presentation at one of the monthly older peoples forums at the library, we now have a blossoming table tennis group, that now have 3 sessions each week, and is used primarily by older people as a means to have fun, keep active and stave off dementia, as recent medical advice supports.

At the other end of the scale, we offer Baby Massage sessions, cater for childrens parties with soft play, have a junior dance class, and a Taekwan-Do club for juniors of all ages. The activity room is also used for the occasional meeting, and all Trustee meetings.

Our programme in the pool is full, with very little available space for clubs and groups. We still offer an excellent range of swimming activities for all ages from baby classes through to adult only and 50+ swimming time. The late evening 'Chill Out' sessions remain very popular, and customers appreciate our long opening hours throughout the week.

During 2016, we re-launched our swimming lesson programme as Jesmond Aqua Academy, following activity at our strategy day, and the results of this are very good with around 420 children on group lessons each week.

The school swimming programme is less popular, with only 2 state schools attending, and the increase we have had in private schools is good, but only for part of the year. The Dolphin sessions are now part of the Aqua Academy, and we are working hard to increase this usage, and enter the children into competitions.

We offer 2 sessions a week for adult Masters swimming, and there is now an early morning Triathlon club twice a week.

Use of the 2 fitness rooms (gyms) has increased during 2016 following a promotional campaign and review of pricing. We introduced a cheaper gym only membership, which has proved very successful with students, and makes up 61% of gym users. We also included free weights into the gyms, which has also been very well received.

Jesmond has declared itself as a Dementia friendly area, and we are in the process of awareness training for staff. We regularly attend the older peoples forums at the library, and give talks and presentations to aid their programme. We support the annual Jesmond Festival with some cash support, and include ourselves into the programme. One of our Trustees has staged several concerts as fund raising over the last 2 years, with the support of the Royal Grammar School, who kindly allow us use of their performance facility

Our impact on other similar bodies throughout the UK remains good, and we continue to be active members of Sporta, attending meetings and seminars. We helped establish a section of meetings for smaller single site trusts like ourselves, which is proving very popular and worthwhile.

We continue to support other organisations seeking to operate facilities in the manner we do, and worked with:

- Fenham Swimming Project
- Re open Newcastle Turkish Baths Group
- Friends of Jesmond Library
- Friends of Elswick Pool

We had several requests for operational and governance information from organisations over the UK who had been referred to us, due to our experience in this area and longevity. These requests were by telephone conversations, and were mainly on aspects of how we were formed, and managed at present. This advice was given freely by our CEO, and it is encouraging that we are still regarded very highly by the leisure trust sector, as local authorities come under ever more financial pressures to maintain public buildings, and asset transfer opportunities are more prevalent.

2. To secure the long-term future of the project, by maintaining its financial viability.

Employ rigorous financial controls and management systems;

Operate in a way that meets Charity Commission and Company regulatory requirements;

Use regular budgetary controls, cash flow and pricing reviews;

Take reputable legal and financial advice;

Have a Trustee working group for financial matters.

We continue to employ rigorous financial controls and management systems through operational control systems and reporting monthly to the finance sub-group and the Trustees.

Our financial management remains a strong point, and we follow best practice, and use the advice of our accountants, Ryecroft Glenton. We report through monthly management accounts and annually through our financial accounts which are audited to International Financial Accounting Reporting Standards and report to SORP and Charity Commission requirements. The Trustees report within our statutory financial reports follows the format of proving our charitable purpose using the framework of our mission and objectives. The Trustees report includes much of the information gathered through the preparation of our social accounts.

The finance sub-group meet to consider the monthly and cumulative management accounts which are compared to budget expectations. The discussions at the meetings inform decisions on the possibilities of price changes, staff payments, changes to subscriber income and the management of cash investments.

Our day to day management of the accounts continued to improve over this period, with the help and efforts of our bookkeeper Margaret, and the overall guidance from our finance director Duncan Davies.

We have reviewed our reserves policy, and monitor our investments closely. During 2016 we reviewed our accounting systems and procedures, and have identified changes to be made during 2017. In December 2016 we tried a new CRM system, which was to allow us online booking and payments, but there were too many problems with the system, and we have now reverted to our previous system.

3. *To ensure that we retain local support, through a strong sense of community interaction.*

- *Be open and accountable in operating the project on behalf of local people, through communication with our community;*
- *Keep local people aware of the operation and updated on the progress of the project, and attend community events;*
- *Encourage the public to attend Trustee meetings;*
- *Provide a programme that reflects customer demand;*
- *Have a Trustee working group for communication matters.*

We have expanded our communications with our community, through direct and indirect means.

Our presence at community events remains a priority, and we were at every relevant occasion. We also support Jesmond Community Festival by offering our facilities at no cost, and through direct funding, and we helped the Cricket Club by selling tickets for the firework display in November.

Two of our duty managers conducted assessments of lifeguards in pools all over the area.

We continue to hold courses for new lifeguards regularly, and are producing around 60 new lifeguards each year. Many of whom go on to work for us in both voluntary and paid capacities.

We have set up a new Facebook site for our Aqua School, which already has 48 likes. Twitter is now up and running with 304 followers, and regular daily updates.

We continue to support many local charities and organisations in any we can, through training and work experience and donations to help their fundraising causes.

In educational and vocational support, we have provided workplace placements and secondments to several schools and Universities.

We have entered the St Hilda's Church Christmas Tree competitions in every year, and regularly win prizes, mainly due to the efforts of one of the duty managers (Terri) who is extremely creative and happy to take part.'

Terri also organised a Halloween discos at the pool, and the efforts made by the children in costumes was remarkable.

Our website contains a section with all of our annual accounts, social accounts and annual reports, available for anyone to read or download.

We have not had any members of the public attend our board meetings during the accounting period, which we take as a positive sign, as if something was drastically wrong, we're sure people would attend!

We have a group of Trustees and members who meet monthly with a view to overseeing our communications. This group reports back to the full board at Trustee meetings.

4. To maintain and develop the building, at least in line with lease requirements.

- *Enhance and develop the building as funds allow;*
- *Have a Trustee working group for building matters.*

This year we have upgraded our heating system at a cost of over £20,000 and finished with our programme of replacing all lighting with LED's. The sauna was refurbished and a new generator fitted to the steam room. We have redecorated much of the building and replaced the majority of ceiling tiles and shower fittings.

The Trustee led building development group has overseen much of this work.

The Trustee led Building Development Group have overseen many other building improvements over this period, and in many cases the work has been done by ourselves with Mike Miller leading the way, doing shower repairs, and general plumbing works himself. David Rushworth and Mike have saved us significant costs by attending to these works themselves, and using contacts and experience to source goods and materials. We are still suffering annoying leaks in the building, due to poor workmanship from our 2003 upgrade, where the changing room flooring was not 'tanked' before applying the new flooring.

We have now replaced all of our lights with more environmentally friendly and aesthetically pleasing LED lights. These lights give a more 'daylight' appearance, and use significantly less power than the original lights. These lights are more expensive to buy, but we feel it is worth it.

In 2016, over £28,000 was spent on maintenance of the building, which was £8000 more than the previous period. We are far exceeding our lease requirements, but we are happy to do this, as we want the building to be available for community use for many years to come. One of our customers volunteered to repaint our outside railings, which took him several weeks working in not the best weather. One of the staff has decorated the entire internal stairwell and many of the door frames during this year. We have also installed new boilers and shower water storage.

5. To provide a working environment that values and develops all of its people, to ensure business success, whilst being inclusive and participative.

- *Recruit, train and retain motivated, highly qualified, flexible and empowered staff;*
- *Encourage full staff participation in the running and success of the company;*
- *Enhance the skills of staff by providing excellent training opportunities;*
- *Offer high quality training and support to all operational volunteers, enabling them to gain paid employment at Jesmond Pool or elsewhere;*
- *Make full use of volunteers as Trustees/Directors and members of the company;*
- *Have a Trustee working group for human resource matters.*

Our development of our own staff to meet business needs remains high, and we have an inordinately high percentage of qualified leisure staff, in both management and occupational requirements. Our ethos is to develop our own trainers, thus reducing costs, and offering development opportunities to our staff.

Our recognised status as an approved IQL (Institute of Qualified Lifeguards) training centre was again obtained. This allows us to train our own lifeguards, and offer training courses for new lifeguards. Our own lifeguard training is a weekly occurrence, and each year we develop around 60 new lifeguards, many of whom are local teenagers and students.

Volunteers are required to keep up their fitness and skills, by attending training sessions conducted by our own developed trainers. We offer up to 3 hours each week to ensure everyone's skills are up to scratch, and keep accurate records, as these are needed before they can re-qualify, which must happen every 2 years.

We provide references to volunteers who leave the area, for work in other leisure centres, and to our knowledge, all have been successful in obtaining work.

Once someone has obtained their lifeguarding award with us, or are volunteers, we ensure they have their training records kept up to date, to help them in the future.

We are the only facility that we are aware of which offers direct work experience opportunities to new lifeguards, before they have paid work. This gives a great advantage over others, and satisfies the requirement to have at least 20 hours training in an approved training centre, or have to once again attend a full course. Usually people applying for work in leisure centres might have the qualification, but not the experience. Our system here at Jesmond benefits more than just us, and the IQL were unaware of this. We have suggested that they take our lead into consideration, as this will help many others nationally.

We involve as many of our staff as want to in our bi annual Strategy events, so we can have their input to our strategy, and how we address it.

The personnel group lead in all people issues, and meet monthly to review staff matters, and oversee development, training and support. This group also reports to the full board at Trustee meetings.

In order to accommodate the staff shift working pattern, volunteer availability, and other commitments, staff training sessions are held both during the week and at weekends. All lifeguarding staff have a training requirement as part of their terms and conditions. They must attend sessions on a regular basis, and keep themselves up to date with new developments and techniques, and maintain their personal fitness levels.

In-house training is carried out by the duty managers, who are nationally recognised Trainer Assessors. They are qualified to train, and examine lifeguards, in all aspects of

their roles. As well as training our own staff, the duty managers regularly carry out assessments at other leisure sites around the area. Lifeguards cannot be examined by the people who train them, so there is a reciprocal arrangement with other Trainer Assessors throughout the region.

Our board of Trustees continues to lead us in a very effective, professional manner, and involve the staff at every opportunity. The Trustees operate through a series of sub groups, reporting to the full board each month. Trustees can choose which sub group to be on, to make the most of their skills. This gives the staff great support, and many of the Trustees are extremely active in their work for us, as well as having their own busy careers.

Recently we have had a survey of Trustee and members skills and experience, and we are reviewing how Trustees help us, and providing them with up to date information and guidance.

6. *To operate the building and activities, following current industry and best practice guidelines.*

- *Ensure operational managers are industry qualified, and keep Trustees updated with industry trends;*
- *Regularly train all staff in operational matters, following industry best practice guidelines.*

The general advice to operational leisure centres offering swimming is to have at least 1 manager, who is professionally trained and qualified. We have 3 such managers, and will have another shortly, who meet this criteria, who have all also undertaken more commercial training, not normally available to those in the public sector.

Our professional body is now CIMSPA, the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sports and Physical Activity.

Phil and Tim are qualified members, and Terri will join them later this year. Glenn is a Chartered Fellow, and in 2014 he was invited to sit on the national board of CIMSPA, as a Trustee.

As swimming pools have specific technical requirements, we also need at least 1 person with a specific technical qualification. Well, we have 4, and intend to train all main operational staff to the required standard.

All public leisure centres are required to follow the operational safety advice of the Health and Safety Executive, and produce emergency and normal operating procedures and risk assessments, which cover all aspects of their operations. Our regular weekly training sessions refer to this documentation, to ensure that all of our systems conform,

and our managers who attend regional and national professional events, are kept up to date with any adjustments. All of our systems are subject to interrogation as part of our Approved training centre status.

Our high proportion of qualified leisure managers, ensures we remain at the cutting edge of developments and industry trends. We attend all necessary events locally and nationally to maintain currency, and make our presence felt.

Our systems in operational management, staff training, building upkeep, activity provision and health and safety, remain good, and we endeavour to attain whatever awards and recognitions we feel appropriate.

7. To reduce our environmental impact.

- *Operate the building in an energy efficient manner;*
- *Identify and reduce our carbon footprint;*
- *Provide facilities to encourage users to walk, cycle or use nearby public transport to reach the pool;*
- *Actively recycle products used within the pool by staff and customers;*
- *To keep our chemical impact as low as possible by using new technologies.*

Our use of energy continues to be either reduced, or held, but our costs increase due to external factors. Our electricity consumption has reduced over this period, due to our building improvements, and we expect our gas consumption to also reduce in the future following our upgrade to the heating systems.

The Solar panel installation continues to help our costs, but unfortunately we cannot reclaim any rebate from this, as our installation was too early to take advantage of the governments scheme.

Our costs are mitigated to some degree by the City Council allowing us access to the North East Central Purchasing prices, which through volume, are better than we can get alone. Our consumption of energy remains as low as we can get it, without major investment in the building.

Although we do provide a bike park, and many of our users arrive on foot, we do still have a high proportion of users who travel by cars. This causes a problem for them, particularly in the late afternoon and early evening, when children's lessons are in progress. It is perfectly understandable for parents with several young children, to need their cars, and the current parking restrictions exacerbates the situation.

New, extra bike parking is now established at the front of the building, and we have seen an increase in bike usage.

The council used to provide us with recycling facilities for bottles and cans, but this service has been withdrawn, and we can no longer recycle in the way we did. We do

reuse as much paper as possible, but that is all we do, and our limited space limits severely other methods of recycling.

The fact that we sterilise our pool water with ultra violet, means that we do not need the amount of chemicals available in the water, which other pools do. This has many advantages in that we use fewer chemicals, the water is fresher, costs are less, and most importantly of all, our system has the ability to neutralise the worst of 'pool bugs', that only ultra violet, or ozone will kill.

So we are very happy with our use of chemicals, and will continue to adapt and change, as resources and technical developments allow.