

hampton pool trust

# Poolside Chat

The newsletter from the charity securing the future of Hampton Pool

## Summer Issue 2025



*Hampton Pool reopening party on 22 June 1985*

# Life Begins at Forty!

## A milestone and fresh chapter in the life of Hampton Pool!

**Chair's welcome** by Andrew Gill



Forty years ago in the summer of 1985, Hampton Pool reopened as a community-run pool following the campaign by local people to save their much-loved outdoor swimming pool from certain closure. This summer we mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the reopening which followed a huge community effort. I am delighted that this issue includes reminiscences about that first season.

With fortuitous timing this important anniversary in the 103 year history of Hampton Pool coincides with another turn of the page. We say goodbye to our pool operator of 17 years, YMCA St Paul's Group and welcome South Downs Leisure as our new operator who take up the reins from 1 June. I would like to thank the YMCA for their amazing support over many years.

The period of YMCA operation has seen significant growth in the popularity of outdoor swimming, resulting in steady increase in the number of pool users. As Hampton Pool operator, YMCA also supported the development of other areas of the business, including the programme of swimming lessons and the dry side offer with a varied offer of exercise classes. YMCA worked alongside Hampton Pool Trust to achieve planning permission and

*continued over...*

## Get on board

Hampton Pool Trust (HPT) is a small, independent, not for profit company and educational charity.

Our vision is to secure the future of Hampton Pool as a safe, sustainable, open-air environment for warm-water swimming and related activities to be enjoyed year-round by the community and to support health and wellbeing.

Hampton Pool is currently managed on behalf of Hampton Pool Trust by YMCA St Paul's Group with handover to South Downs Leisure taking place on 1 June. The Trust and operators are registered charities.

Members of Hampton Pool Trust care deeply about the facility and how it is run.

For more information about the Trust, visit [hamptonpooltrust.org.uk](https://hamptonpooltrust.org.uk)

*The HPT Board of Trustees are:*

Andrew Gill – Chair

Roger Gray – Finance Director

Gill Radcliffe – Company Secretary

Nigel Brown

Grahame Hadden

Roxanne Glaud

Stuart Leamy

Jill Livesey

Jane Savidge

Daphne Wharton

Michael White

**We continue to seek additional Board and Committee members to support our work.**

If you have professional skills and experience which relate to finance, oversight of a customer facing service, legal skills or experience of fundraising we would love to hear from you.

**Contact the Trust Secretary if you would like to become a member of the charity, or even a Trustee!**

[secretary@hamptonpooltrust.org.uk](mailto:secretary@hamptonpooltrust.org.uk)

**Have a story to share?**

Let us know by contacting:

[info@hamptonpooltrust.org.uk](mailto:info@hamptonpooltrust.org.uk)

Follow [hamptonpooltrust](https://hamptonpooltrust.org.uk) on Facebook, X and Instagram

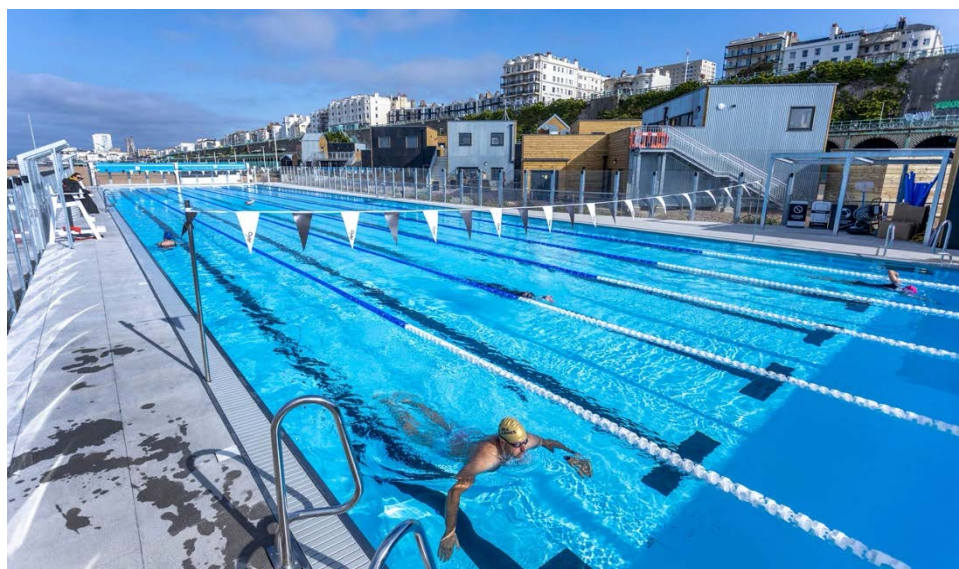
to reach the start of development of the elderly Hampton Pool building. The first enabling stage of construction is now close to completion with further details in this issue.

Regular visitors to the pool will continue to see familiar faces when they come to swim and exercise as the existing Hampton Pool Team transfer across to SDL. We hope to make the transition as smooth as possible for staff and customers. We anticipate providing a more formal opportunity to meet the new team and celebrate our wonderful pool a little later in the year, once the current handover has taken place. I look forward to introducing our new operator to you in the coming weeks and months, starting below with a few words of introduction from South Downs Leisure. ●

## Introducing South Downs Leisure

**Paul Sandell, Group Marketing & Communication Manager for South Downs Leisure provides some background about the company**

South Downs Leisure (SDL) is a sustainable charity and leisure trust established with a simple aim: to help our communities live well, feel better and move more. We operate across Worthing, Lancing, Southwick and surrounding areas, managing leisure centres, swimming pools, football pitches, wellbeing hubs on behalf of the local councils, as well as a 50m heated outdoor pool on Brighton seafront.



*Sea Lanes, Brighton, managed by South Downs Leisure*

We believe being active should be something everyone can enjoy, whatever their age, ability or background. That's why we offer such a mix of opportunities to get involved – from gyms and swim schools to tennis and other racquet sports, group exercise classes, mindfulness and meditation sessions and even community allotments.

Over the years we've grown steadily from just a couple of sites in Worthing to become a multi-site operator working in several towns, and cross-county while keeping our local focus and community-first mindset. Being a not-for-profit means that every penny we make gets reinvested into the facilities, services and communities we serve.

We're also making long-term changes to reduce our environmental impact – whether that's through greener buildings, energy-saving measures, or by helping our communities learn more about sustainability.

Our collaboration with Hampton Pool is something we're genuinely excited about. While every site has its own character, what unites us is a commitment to delivering high-quality, community-first leisure. Hampton Pool, with its strong sense of place, loyal user-base, unique outdoor setting and community roots, shares many of the values important to SDL. We're here to build on those values, not change them!

We know change can be unsettling, but we also see it as a chance to do great things together which build on the history and ethos of Hampton Pool. We're really looking forward to the journey ahead and working to achieve more together. ●

## Making a difference at Hampton Pool

Raising the funding needed for our construction project continues to be a major focus of Trust activity.

With Stage 1A of the works completed we must ensure that we have sufficient funds for Stage 1B before we go out to tender for the next stage which focus on enhancing the main building.

With our major fundraiser, the Summer Picnic Concerts fast approaching and further grant applications under development, it's timely to reflect on what can be achieved when the community step in to provide support. If this hadn't happened in the run up to 1985 the pool wouldn't be here today! We are under similar pressure now!

Progress is being made but there's so much more to do!

**We hope we can count on your continuing support!**



### Donate Now

and help us raise **£1m** for the building improvements

Please use this QR code:



JustGiving allows us to collect the Gift Aid on your donation. 100% of your donation will be used for much needed improvements to the pool building and facilities.

**Or donate at Hampton Pool using the donations payment terminal located in Reception.**

**Help us raise funds when you shop**

Shopping online? Booking a holiday? You could be raising funds while you shop by signing up with *Easyfundraising*, and select Hampton Pool Trust as your nominated charity. It's easy and won't cost you a penny extra.



**Please get in touch if you would like to help with fundraising, or you have fundraising ideas to share by contacting**

[jane.savidge@hamptonpooltrust.org.uk](mailto:jane.savidge@hamptonpooltrust.org.uk)



# Back in the day! The 1985 reopening

Did you know that Richmond Council announced the permanent closure of Hampton Pool in 1983? The fact that the pool is still here and thriving is due to the huge efforts of local people who would not allow this happen!



The late Marshall Lees and Stuart Leamy led the campaign to save Hampton Pool. Here Stuart and Carrie Lees, Marshall's widow, share memories of the reopening and that first season.

As a Board member and Treasurer, Stuart remembers the efforts to secure funding: *"A vigorous local 'Sink or Swim' campaign resulted in the council challenging the campaign group to prove that there was sufficient local support for the reopening of the facility."*

*"The council offered to match-fund the community effort with a grant of a pound for every pound raised up to a total of £20,000. In fact, £25,000 was raised, thanks to an army of volunteers who rattled buckets, ran events and worked tirelessly in support of the pool. That, and a grant of £20,000*

*from the soon to be defunct GLC, which I collected in person from County Hall, helped persuade the council and The Royal Parks that the pool should reopen."*

The run up to the opening was far from straightforward. Planned for May 1985, public opening was delayed by difficulties finding staff and an ongoing concern about the chemical balance of the pool water. When the doors finally opened, the children of Buckingham School were the first to visit. The first day of public swimming was on 7 June.

Carrie's husband Marshall led efforts to persuade the council to transfer the pool to the community and he became the first Chair of Hampton Pool Ltd (which is now Hampton Pool Trust).

Carrie recalls *"The opening followed hours of clearing, painting and refurbishing the site by the volunteers. Getting everything ready in time was a huge challenge. In the mid 1980s, outdoor swimming didn't have the popularity it has today and the resurgence of lidos was way off in the future. A key decision was that the water should be heated and that hot showers should be provided for the first time to increase use – although the building remained unheated!"*

At the point of reopening, the pool remained seasonal, operating mainly during daytime hours from June to the end of September. Lack of paid staff meant that the hours gradually built up and significant operational support was provided by volunteers. The Manpower Services Commission's Youth Training Scheme (YTS) helped provide a young unemployed workforce from local Job Centres who helped with the refurbishment and later some became the first lifeguards! The launch of Hampton Pool Swimming Club (which is now the Poolside Swim & BBQ Club) contributed significantly to the volunteer ethos.

Stuart recalls the advice provided by staff from other local pools to the new Hampton Pool Ltd company: *"The new Board were all volunteers with day jobs. They didn't know how to run a swimming pool and had a lot to learn. Nilo Falcini (formerly responsible for the council pools in Twickenham, Teddington and Hampton) provided technical and operational advice. Fiona Nugent, a swimming instructor at Teddington Pool was loaned to Hampton to supervise the water-based activity providing invaluable support."*

Carrie remembers the involvement of Marcia Rogers, wife of Robin Rogers, then vicar of St Mary's Hampton from 1979-1995 (who later helped secure the funding for the learner pool). Marcia brought managerial expertise and a great personality to the team. *"The staff loved her and at the end of the first season, they picked her up and deposited her fully clothed in the deep end from where she doggy paddled to the shallows."*

In that first season, despite bad weather, Hampton Pool hosted 25,000 visits in water heated to 75-78 degrees Fahrenheit!

The formal reopening by the Olympic Swimmer and Gold Medal winner Duncan Goodhew took place on 22 June 1985, the day and month mirrored the original opening in 1922. This was a huge celebratory community party, with steel pans, fancy dress, synchronized swimming and of course a huge birthday cake! ●

## Mental Health Swims at Hampton Pool

We're delighted to be hosting **Mental Health Swims UK**, an award-winning, mental health peer-support community who are using Hampton Pool for their swim meets.

Emma Woodley coordinates the Mental Health Swims sessions at Hampton Pool. We spoke to Emma to find out more.

*"Mental Health Swims is a supportive community bringing people together through swimming. We create inclusive spaces where everyone, regardless of swimming ability, can connect, chat, and share experiences in a non-competitive environment. Our goal is to foster well-being, build connections, and promote mental health through our monthly swims."*

*"We've been running monthly swims at Hampton Pool for nearly a year now! It's been lovely to create a great community here and allow local people to enjoy to benefits of the swimming pool and peer support. We have had some super feedback about the experience at Hampton Pool from our swimmers:"*



© Emma Woodley @mhs\_hamptonpool

*"Mental Health Swims Hampton is something I look forward to every time. Before my first session I felt nervous to go, not knowing what it would be like. But I'm so glad I went and experienced such a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment, thanks to wonderful host Emma and the other attendees. I love that you have the space to both swim and share as much or as little as you feel like."*

*"MHS gave me the courage to get out of my comfort zone and meet new people! Thank you so much Hampton Pool for supporting such a great charity."*

If anyone would like to join one of the upcoming swims, please follow **@mhs\_hamptonpool** on Instagram or use this link to sign up: <https://bit.ly/3RPuqpe>

# Building Development Latest

Readers of Poolside Chat will know that we were counting down the days to the start of our building work. With the planning permission expiry deadline looming, we needed to make a material start on construction to retain planning approval for the development of the building. However, we were unable to start without Royal Parks and council permissions in place. We are delighted to report that we met this deadline and work on Stage 1A is now close to completion.



The new wider entrance to Hampton Pool, photograph by Grahame Hadden

Significant progress has been made; the newly widened entrance is now fully open, with new gates and fencing in place, funded in part by a Richmond Community Fund grant award. The concrete foundations for the substation are in place and infrastructure for gas and power rerouted. Works on the High Street have been completed in liaison with the council (S278 works). New drainage across the works area is complete and ready to link up to the sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the new roof and studio in due course.

Foran Construction Ltd, our appointed contractor, was very responsive and in the main all went very smoothly thanks to great liaison. Grahame Hadden provided the technical input required and Simon Bailey and the pool team have maintained operation of the site throughout and ensured a flow of information to customers.

Stage 1A also included the installation of solar panels on the main roof funded by the Swimming Pool Support Fund Award, administered by Sport England. We are already reaping the benefits of these as can be seen by the report with 25% of energy for the site supplied by the panels in April thanks to the sunny weather!

The works remaining as part of 1A relate to the installation of the substation which awaits further licensing by the Royal Parks and the finalisation of the agreement with UK Power Networks.

Thank you to our pool users and neighbours for bearing with a degree of disruption through these works. ●



## The Hampton Pool Summer Picnic Concerts

Once again set to be a summer highlight, they offer a fantastic blend of live music in a relaxed outdoor atmosphere.



Photograph by Caolan Humphries

As always, these events support the ongoing upkeep and development of Hampton Pool, helping ensure its future for generations to come. They are the perfect way to enjoy summer evenings with friends and family, all while supporting a local treasure.

Over the years, we've welcomed some amazing acts, and 2025 promises more of the same. **Nik Kershaw** and his special guest **Chesney Hawkes** (fresh from *Celebrity Big Brother*) will each play a full set on the opening night on 11 July.



Another highlight will be returning Hampton Pool favourites **The Shires**, with **Kezia Gill**, the rising star of UK country music, in support on 19 July.

See our website to book tickets for these concerts



Hampton Pool Trust is the Governing Body of the public open-air swimming pool at Hampton, having taken over responsibility for this from the Council in 1985. It is a not-for-profit Company limited by guarantee which is registered as an educational charity.