

**BROCKWELL LIDO USERS FORUM AND AGM  
& BROCKWELL LIDO STEERING COMMITTEE AGM  
Sunday October 24th 2021, 6pm By Zoom**

**Panellists**

Ben Longman – BLU Chair  
Stephen Trowell – BLSC Chair/BLU Treasurer  
Alison Hicks – BLU Committee Secretary  
Jason DaPonte – BLU Committee  
Adam Bryan – BLU Committee  
Steve Embleton – Fusion  
Nigel Court – Fusion  
XXX – Lido Café, 400 Rabbits

**MINUTES**

**1. Welcome and explanation of the day Introduction of speakers – Chair**

- Attendees are able to view and hear panellists only, their videos are off and microphones muted. Questions can be asked via the chat function.

**2. Lido Report – Fusion**

- Steve Embleton presented Fusion’s annual review of Brockwell Lido and financial since the 2020 AGM.
- He then answered preliminary questions from the audience:
  - ***Will there be a Christmas Day swim?***  
Yes, the details being finalised and will be made public soon.
  - ***Who is responsible for cutting back the greenery around the Lido (wisteria, ivy, etc.) and when? I love it but it is taking over the decking and reducing the space for people to sit/change/leave stuff. Also small trees are taking root and undermining the wall.***  
Fusion is responsible and we are currently reviewing quotes for this work before it is carried out. We will ensure this does not adversely affect next year’s flowering.
  - ***What are swim prices going to be for next year? More affordable? Concessions?***  
This is currently under review as we are yet to see the full impact of post-lockdown on market forces. We have a range of concessions which I understand some people have had trouble access these, please contact reception directly to resolve. These include annual family passes which reduce the price of swims for children. Fusion will investigate the reintroduction of concession for local housing residents and was unaware this had been overlooked.

- ***Several questions raised about cleanliness of changing room facilities including: Why are the outside changing rooms so filthy? I have also heard this about the indoor ones and that there is an issue with cleaners or something. Now more than ever, cleanliness is of paramount importance.***  
New cleaning protocols were introduced on 18<sup>th</sup> October with daily inspections in response to this feedback and we are already seeing improvement.
- ***Will the outdoor sauna be reopening?***  
This is under review, no decision yet.

### **3. Update – Lido Café, 400 Rabbits**

- Jill Rutland provided an update on services available at the café and advised that weather-proofing for the terrace is coming soon as well as the introduction of hot water bottles.
- The issue of pizza box waste is recognised. They were replaced by paper plates where possible in the summer and boxes carry a message about recycling and contain greaseproof paper inlay for preservation. A Drop off point for boxes is being created.
- The return of the healthy breakfast menu is under review but was delayed by staffing issues relating to Covid. Hoping it will return before Xmas. In the meantime the provision of urns for hot drinks and porridge for early swimmers with an honesty box payment system is coming soon.
- The midday cut-off for the 10% swimmer discount will be queried with the owners and the café will provide an update on a potential extension soon.

### **4. Minutes of 2020 AGM & Forum BLU Financial report**

- Stephen Trowell advised the minutes from last. Year's AGM are available online but noted ongoing issues around pricing, cleanliness and booking issues. The minutes of this meeting will similarly be made public.
- Stephen presented the BLU Treasurer's Report:  
On the 1 October 2020 our account held £2,268.46. On the 1 October 2021 it held £1,916.70. The transactions during the year comprised:
  - Receipts from the Just Giving campaign to raise money for dry robes and small gifts for the lifeguards, and a few direct donations. These totalled £1502.74.
  - Payments out for the dry robes and gifts for staff totalling £1552.50
  - £52 for a bunch of flowers for Lauren the assistant manager.
  - £250 as a contribution to the funding of the book, Waterproof, being produced by Peter Bradley.

The Dry Robes and gifts were well received and clearly useful. The flowers were appropriate. Waterproof's production has been delayed. There is hope (but no more than hope) that it will be out by Christmas.

## 5. BLU Chair report

- I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Steve Embleton, Lauren Frankis, Joe Thomas, Teneisha Gibbs and the rest of the Brockwell Lido team for the work that they do. Without exaggeration, this lido is a lifeline for a great many of its users, and more than just a leisure centre. Sadly, Lauren has now left. We wish her every success in what she does next and know that she will be greatly missed.
- Running the lido is not easy, especially during the pandemic and post Brexit. Every pool and gym operator has faced financial challenges, glitches with booking systems, staff shortages, the stress of new rules, new systems and trying to get back to business as usual. We recognise the extraordinary effort the lido team have put in to ensure the site runs safely and stays open, a cleaner pool, the increases in capacity and (for pool users), opening hours and much more.
- I would also like to extend my gratitude to my fellow committee members on BLU, all of whom give up their time on a voluntary basis.
- BLU represents all users of the lido. We do not run the lido and we have no mandatory powers to enact decisions. Our goal is to ensure user voices are listened to and to provide a sounding board for Fusion, who do run the lido. In the past year, here are some of our activities:
  - *Fundraising for lifeguard dryrobes* – in December we organised a fundraising campaign to give a thank you to lido staff and to buy five red dryrobes with “lifeguard” embossed on them. They were delivered in March, just in time for one of the wettest springs in living memory. In total, lido users raised £1,540, of which almost half went towards the dry robes and the rest to lido staff.
  - *Organising a minute’s silence at the lido for Folajimi Olubunmi-Adewole* – Folajimi was the brave young south London man who gave his own life to try and save another’s.
  - *New outdoor sauna* – we have sought, with Fusion’s blessing, quotes for a new outdoor sauna and led discussions on trying to get a new, larger sauna installed. This may not happen in 2021/22 because of supply chain issues, costs and permissions but we remain hopeful it can transform winter swimming for what we hope will be a post-pandemic 2022/23.
  - *Planning for a gala* – we have started the planning process for a swimming gala in Q4 or Q1 2022. *FAQs* – with all the changes in booking systems, slots etc and the usual flow of casual swimmers in the summer month we wrote and updated FAQs to help guide users around the booking process.
  - *Promoting a sense of community and pride in the lido* – we actively promote member stories, photos interactions and the sense of community around the lido in the lido. We primarily do this via social media, our newsletter and website.
  - *Resolving member questions and issues* – we get questions, problems, requests for clarification each week and resolve as many of these as we can either directly or indirectly. We also actively support Fusion where additional communication is welcome or needed to ensure that any changes or new events reach a wider audience.
  - *Guiding policy* – both formally (as part of the steering group) and informally we work behind the scenes to help guide policy across a range of issues such as pricing,

timetables, member access, booking conditions etc. *Liaising with the lido café* – we meet regularly with the lido café management to promote a better user experience and give user feedback.

- *Promoting local groups* – BLU is an active supporter and promoter of other local community groups, in and around the park.
- As part of writing this report I went back over the comments my predecessor, Guy Wickett, made at the AGM last year. It is notable, perhaps, what has not changed. The wet side changing rooms are not clean enough. We ask Fusion to please resource this properly, especially during the winter months when more users will seek to change indoors.
- We remain vigilant about the fabric of the building, and in particular the drainage and flow of water from outside showers. With the growing popularity of outdoor swimming and the impact COVID-19 has had on outdoor changing meaning the outdoor showers receive much heavier use.
- For some years, members have raised concerns that staff and lifeguards do not receive the London living wage. What might have been seen as an ethical issue in previous years is also a practical issue today. We urge Fusion to reconsider its position.
- Lastly, the sign off for a new outdoor sauna is not yet a given. We would emphasise how much winter swimmers want one and how transformative it will be for casual and regular winter swimmers alike.
- We will continue to represent users, engage regularly with Fusion and promote the lido as we have done in the past 12 months. Our goals for 2021/22 will include:
  - *Attracting more members onto BLU* - We will be working over the next 12 months to double the size of the committee in line with our goals of encouraging greater representation and activity.
  - *Fundraising and merchandising* – To raise some money for BLU and also promote a sense of joy and community among lido users.
  - *Supporting the installation of a new outdoor sauna* – The current sauna is too small to cope with the increased numbers of cold-water swimmers. We are actively working to help instal a larger one.
  - *Supporting a BLU-organised gala* – It's time we had one, and we will. Offers of help gladly received.
  - *The promotion of outdoor swimming among less well represented groups* - the far lower numbers of black and minority swimmers generally and at the lido specifically is a focus for us. We will do everything we can to actively encourage wider participation among underrepresented groups.
  - *Supporting a food bank collection point at the lido* – we have provisional agreement from Fusion and the Norwood & Brixton Food Bank to put a small collection point at the lido.

## 6. BLSC Chair report

- The function of the Steering Committee is to bring together the users of the Lido, appointed to it through BLU, representatives of local community groups and Fusion to try and ensure that the Lido works as well as possible for regular users and the broader community. To that end we would normally hold meetings to raise our concern with

Fusion and consider the Service Delivery Plan which Fusion prepares each year for Lambeth.

- We have held meetings this year, albeit over Zoom. I very much hope that we will be able to hold them face to face soon. We have raised concerns with Steve Embleton, our local manager, who has taken time after his normal workday to join in those meetings.
- It is appropriate to pay tribute to the way Steve has managed the centre through a difficult year. While each of us can make complaint as to things that have gone wrong, it is necessary to stand back and remember that an awful lot has gone right with the centre. The pool is open and was open over the summer for more than just the hardened lane swimmers. The water has been clear. The gym has been open and relatively easy to secure a place. Classes are now returned, and at long last the indoor sauna can be used. These things cannot be taken for granted.
- There are however some negative areas to report. This year we did not approve the Service Delivery Plan that was submitted to Lambeth. In essence the problem that the committee faced was that we were given no financial information to judge the price rises that were being proposed. This year I fear we are going to be in the same position. We consider pricing to be critical to keeping the centre at the heart of the community. We are realistic enough to recognise that a well-run, well-maintained, clean centre is going to need to be funded and that requires us to pay. We are concerned however that a short-term lack of investment can hold back the Lido – an example was the shortage of lifeguards at the start of the Autumn university term when the sun was still in the sky and swimmers were turned away. And we think that the Lido should not set its prices in such a way as to lose families, occasional users, and those with very little money. We would urge Fusion to be open with our committee and to back the Lido. When the sun shines the pool will fill. Fire up an outdoor sauna and you will keep the pool busy all winter. Gym membership inevitably fell away during the lockdowns but there is demand there for a clean and well-equipped gym which is competitively priced.
- The running of the centre is ultimately up to Fusion rather than us but we do have experience of this Lido and quickly available customer feedback. And we do have a role in keeping the Lido as part of the community rather than just a commercial sports centre.
- Before I finish I need to say something about Ben. I see him through BLU and the BLSC and I often meet him by the pool. You all (and many who are not here) owe him a great deal. Half a dozen emails a day arrive from disgruntled or clueless users. Ben shepherds them to answers or to someone in Fusion who can sort them out. Every couple of weeks something goes wrong - such as when Fusion HQ introduced a no-show fee – Ben gets on the phone to Steve or meets up with him and talks him into a better way of dealing with the problem. He should be paid a salary by Fusion, but at the very least he should be getting our gratitude.

## **7. BLU Elections**

- Voting for the reinstatement of the existing committee members took place, 26 'For' votes were received for all candidates and nominations therefore upheld

## 8. BLSC Appointments

- All proposed nominees were re-approved.

## 9. Questions from users AOB

- **Several questions raised about increasing accessibility of minority/vulnerable groups to the Lido**  
Fusion advised it is liaising with Rodney Craig at Lambeth Council to agree outreach programmes and improve diversity of participation.
- **How can you become a member of the BLU committee outside the AGM election?**  
Individuals who has recorded at least six-month's membership of BLU can be considered for co-option to the committee. Please contact the committee directly if you are interested in joining. We are committed to increasing our numbers in line with our constitution but until then operate at quorate.
- **Was this AGM made public?**  
Yes, an invite was emailed to the mailing list several times and announced on social media making it literally and according to publicity, public.
- **Why does BLU not support Brockwell Swimmers?**  
Several meetings have addressed this point over several years but due to personal animosity of Chair Tim Sutton to various committee members this has not been resolved. A way forward was recommended with another Brockwell Swimmers representatives being nominated to handle relations, but this has not been accepted.
- **Can we have another gazebo to expand outside covered changing space?**  
Fusion to investigate.
- **Can class sizes at the gym be reviewed and range of classes expanded?**  
Fusion to organise a separate meeting to review with users to ensure range of issues are covered.
- **Can Fusion commit to paying staff London Living Wage to aid talent attraction/retention and safeguard accessibility for users?**  
Fusion to table this proposal with senior management team and formally feedback within before Christmas 2021. Noted that a recruitment day took place last week including fully-funded training. University outreach programme also being explored with BLU.
- **Can paper notices be reintroduced on BLU noticeboard to aim communication for offline users?**  
BLU to reinstate.
- **Can the booking system be removed?**  
Feedback from users is completely mixed. Fusion advised booking is not recommended rather than essential and for the gym/sauna 95% of sessions have last-minute capacity. The bathing lode is under review to allow more access to swimming morning sessions. This has already been expanded to 25 every 10 minutes and might potentially be increased further pending this review. However, it has been decided that the booking

system is essential is managed high volume of users safely during summer months. No plans to revert to “Brixton beach” extended bathing sessions as yet while Covid restrictions are still under review.

- ***Several complaints about contacting Fusion being incredibly difficult.***  
Fusion will increase drop-in sessions and improve signposting from various comms channels. Covid-related staffing issues have affected response times to email inquiries but this is improving. The system is set up to escalate emails without a response after 72 hours.
- ***Can we get a firm commitment that the ongoing issue of cleanliness will this time be addressed?***  
Fusion says yes, it will report back in a month’s time incorporating user feedback and image/check sheet evidence.
- ***Several complaints about drainage of outdoor showers/trip hazards.***  
Fusion to investigate and feedback within one month.

**MEETING CLOSED**

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