

Minutes of the Brockwell lido Users' Forum and AGM and the BLSG AGM

Saturday 24th September 2016

Venue: Whippersnappers Room, Brockwell Lido

In Attendance: 65 attendees.

CJ Faucher – Chairman BLU

Miranda Payne – Secretary BLSG

Ian Cooper – Regional Business Manager

Mark Munday – Divisional Business Manager (also standing in for Luke Fenton, Lido General Manager)

Lesley Ambler – Lambeth Sports and Leisure commissioning officer

Matthew Saunders – Fusion General Manager

Sarah Hodgson – Fusion

Welcome

CJ welcomed all to the meeting and introduced the panel and explained the feedback process. He explained that comment sheets had been put up on the BLU notice boards and 550 comments had been collected, up 25% from 2015.

Before the meeting commenced, BLU Chairman read out a brief statement.

“Over the past few weeks, a high number of our BLU committee members, including myself have been subjected to an unwarranted vilification via social media, by a nominated member who seeks to join the committee today.

That member will be subject to sanction under our new constitutional rules, following this AGM and will in addition, be reported to the appropriate authorities.

And I do not however want these actions to detract from the important issues that need discussing today at this AGM and Forum.”

CJ also explained that Fusion had confirmed the AGM audience could make the decision on whether to keep the poolside sauna open all year round, or just winter season only and at the discretion of Lido GM. A show of hands was requested from the audience.

A vote of **9** for a combined Summer & Winter Sauna opening'
and **55** votes for a Winter season sauna opening.

Overwhelming support was noted with nearly 90% of the audience voting in favour of a **Winter Season Sauna Opening.**

Fusion summary report – Mark Munday (Fusion DBM)

Mark presented in the absence of Luke who is currently unwell.

- 2016 summer season trading is up on recent years (August/July up 30%)
- September 2016 best on record (better than the last 3 years combined)
- Winter season numbers down on previous year
- Quest Accreditation – ‘excellent’ status had been retained
- Huge list of events at the lido (including Christmas swim, school programme, Fun Palace, Synchro, water polo, ZSL event which raised £12,000, cinema screenings, increased number of sunset and sunrise swims etc.)
- 2016 has seen investment on spinning bikes and outdoor sauna
- Fusion to invest circa £300K in 2017 to include refurbishment of spa and gym equipment (decisions to be made in collaboration with BLU/users)
- Fusion to introduce a new website and mobile app within the next few weeks/months for bookings and payments which will reduce summer swimming queues
- More staff to be employed to enable whole pool to be open every day that the pool is open. Will take from 5 to 6 weeks to implement and applies to winter season.
- Swimmer summer season to start earlier next year from 1st April in 2017 with increased opening hours

BLSG summary report – Miranda Payne (BLSG Secretary)

Miranda started her report by paying tribute to Ruth Thompson (BLSG Chair) who died earlier this year. She is greatly missed by BLSG, BLU and everyone at the lido who knew her. Election for a new BLSG chair will be later in the year.

She outlined the following issues of concern:

- Number of classes that are not included in membership
- Turnover of staff (with suggestion of a handover instruction booklet for new staff)
- Lighting and security around the building still a concern
- Communication and responses to and from Fusion
- Future investment needed in the fabric of the building and staffing.

BLU summary report – CJ Faucher (BLU Chairman)

CJ paid to tribute to Ruth Thompson . He also made the following points

- The need to support/praise/criticise Fusion when appropriate.
- Absences of a General Manager this year was noticeable and had negative impact on running of Lido
- Launch of Lido beanies and baseball caps well received.
- Many events; Float Fit, Animal Mask Swim, Synchro Swim and Streamline Annual Swim Races, Crisis Swim, Sunrise Yoga, Windrush Aquatlon, First London Zoo Midnight Swim. Macmillan All out Swim and many more.
- BLU social media presence increased with Twitter over 5100 followers and Facebook near 500 likes. They are the most popular mediums of contact for Lido users.
- Views for the upcoming Gym refurbishment will be sought from all Lido gym users and BLU members.
- Ideas for upcoming 80th anniversary requested.
- Highlighted success of Peckham Lido crowd funding campaign
- Passing of swimmers Joyce Andrews and David Penry-Davey, who died earlier this year. They will be sadly missed.

Annual General Meeting – Adam Steinhouse - (Chair of Electors)

- Minutes of 2015 Forum were formally approved
- Financial report was presented and no comments raised and formally approved.

Election of BLSC members

Adam read the names of those nominated by the BLSG participating organisations.

(BLU) CJ Faucher, Humphrey Keenlyside, Yvonne Levy, Bianca Ioannides, Peter Burgess

(BPCP) Susy Hogarth (Brockwell Park Community Partners)

Effra Housing Coop - Miranda Payne, Michael Boyle **(Friends of Brockwell Park),**

Giles Gibson **(Herne Hill Forum)** and Sophia Marsh **(Herne Hill Society).**

All were re-elected onto the committee by majority vote of the Participating Organisation members who were provided with voting cards, with no abstentions or votes against. The voting system for the BLSG was questioned by the floor and duly explained.

Election of BLU Officers and Committee Members.

Before the elections, all Committee nominees spoke for 30 second to introduce themselves and explain why they would be good for the BLU committee.

(Two Independent Vote counters were provided by Fusion).

Uncontested nominations:

CJ Faucher (Chair) 40, Shelley Silas (Deputy Chair) 40, Sara Atkinson (Treasurer) 38, Linda Casbolt (Secretary) 38

All were re-elected by a show of hands from eligible BLU members who were provided with voting cards, and no abstentions or votes against.

Contested nominations:

The 9 nominees contesting the 8 committee member positions were:

Peter Burgess – 42, Bianca Ioannides - 40, Humphrey Keenlyside - 41, Yvonne Levy - 42, Lara Mifsud-Bonici - 42, Jessica Ryan-Ndegwa - 40, Carolyn Weniz - 41, Guy Wickett -39

Not Elected - Tim Sutton - 2

All 8 successful Committee nominees were duly elected by a show of hands from eligible BLU members who were provided with voting cards.

Feedback session – Julian Fox and Peter Burgess

Peter Burgess read out Fusion’s “Customer Pledge” and then he and Julian listed the most significant top 10 issues from users who commented on the feedback forms collected from the BLU noticeboards at the Lido.

Our Commitment to our customers.

“We put you, the customer, first in everything we do. We realise that without our customers, there is no Brockwell Lido.

We will do all we can to deliver the very best customer service and exceed your expectations every time you visit, by offering you a friendly high-quality and fun experience.

We want our facilities and services to be inclusive and accessible to all.

If our customers want something we will try to make it happen.

We will do all we can to respond both quickly and positively to all request from our customers. We always want to hear what our customers have to say and welcome feedback and suggestions. If any of our customers are unhappy, we’re unhappy. When a customer has a complaint, we will do all we can do deal with it courteously and quickly. If something goes wrong, we will do all we can to put it right straight away. We’ll also take steps to ensure that the problem doesn’t happen again.”

(Not all questions were read out due to time constraints, but all Top 10 questions will be answered by Fusion and submitted for distribution after the AGM.)

General

- General feeling of Lido being “let down”,
- Staff shortages/vacancies, very important to have consistent better paid Lido staff.
- Middle management problems - hindering rather than helping.
- Repeated issues keep recurring.
- Reinvesting Lido surplus into the Lido rather than other Fusion facilities.
- Pay staff London Living Wage.
- Transparency of finances and reinvestment plans.

Gym

- Staff vacancies and very low morale.
- No gym instructors for months.
- Equipment cleanliness
- Weight plates not replaced, despite being reported to senior management.

Pool

- Better pay for lifeguards (Southwark pay London Living Wage)
- Retain lifeguards - re-train and warning for staff who use mobile phones or remove phones rather than suspended them immediately.
- Whole pool opening
- Investment in the major infrastructure issues ie pool lining and plant
- Very late notification of lane booking cancellations

Classes

- Unacceptably high number have been cancelled
- Urgent need for better communication when classes cancelled or changed.
- More teachers and higher quality cover for absences
- Reception staff should have boards to show cancelled classes or at least know what is going on.

General Issues from the floor

There was a very strong groundswell of discontent from members. Comments such as:

“Lack of focus on the gym and classes is disgraceful”

“Lido is now propping up Fusion, Fusion is so big the decision making process is non-existent”

“Things have got worse, the worse since the contract began. Time for Fusion to go”

“Balance of spending on new projects and maintenance of existing work is wrong”

“Fusion are resting on the comfort of a long lease.”

“Fusion are losing too many lifeguards, and penalising them too severely – when a warning will do.

“If Fusion have made record profits from swimming, why are so many jobs outstanding at the Lido and only one man is painting the whole building “

“Via BLSC we’ve been working with Fusion to ensure the Lido is an environmentally sustainable resource for the community. Despite employing a dedicated person to work on

the project Fusion have singularly failed to deliver any improvements beyond changing to LED light bulbs for the three years they have been ³focused² on this issue. Throughout various meetings we were promised action but none materialised to the extent that the community managed to organise the solar power project for the Lido that would not require any investment from Fusion and would instead actually pay Fusion an income and Fusion still managed to fail to take advantage of it.

It has been apparent that the Lido is contributing very high revenue to Fusion. As one of the team from the local community who worked on the project to save the Lido, introduce inward investment to the Lido, contributed to the tender bidding process and evaluation of the bid and interviewed Fusion in relation to their bid it was stated by Fusion that the Lido would not be run to subsidise their other operations and that any surplus would be re-invested in the Lido. Given therefore that finance is not an issue it is apparent that it is Fusion policy not to re-invest.

The ability for Fusion to manage the site has been seen to be poor. Each year we have many of the same issues raised and each year promises are made to fix the problem. The decision making process is now very slow and convoluted with a large contingent of middle management that seem paralysed and unable to take simple decisions. For many simple things that used to be decided there and then on the spot now takes months, sometimes years.

The local community has initiated a project to reduce the amount of rubbish bins and waste in the Herne Hill area. It would finally rid the Lido of the Fusion eyesore of the smelly metal wheelie bins and overflowing rubbish that piles up outside the Lido. The Lido cafe want to join the scheme but their hands are tied as they have to use the Fusion provision. Fusion have not managed to engage at all on the scheme, failed to reply or respond despite numerous attempts to get meetings, visiting site and calling.

As a result of the lack of management expertise and their policy towards the Lido we should look at working with Lambeth to remove Fusion from the lease on the Lido so that it can be managed in the way that was originally intended.”

Lesley Ambler from Lambeth said it would be a last resort to revoke the lease.

Fusion panel responses

General

- Mark Munday (MM) accepted that ‘on walking through of the gym today’ he felt the cleaning standards did not met his expectations – he committed to follow up on this issue.
- Although cover has been provided from other areas of Fusion MM accepted that the General Manager has been absent for periods of time this year.
- MM commitment to responding to all comment’s in writing
- Apologised for lack of communications particularly about the Southwark facilities. MM would look into this issues and update BLU during the next meeting.
- Reinvestment of £300K to be spent on upcoming gym refurbishment
- Currently trialling a scheme to allow team members to earn London Living Wage with a view to rolling this out over the longer term.
- Fusion are currently 2nd highest payer in Lambeth when comparing to other sports and leisure providers.

- Agreed to reflect and review on issues and bring to next monthly meeting
- In addition to £300K refurb there seemed to be a commitment to significant long term investment into the plant/pumps and general building/fabric of the facility infrastructure (as Charity has to show that it is sustainable. They do have a plan for infrastructure improvement and a possibility of replacing the pool lining, but clearly Fusion need to convince BLSC and BLU of this.
- Reluctance to provide full accounts due commercial sensitivity but will talk to BLU and BLSG about expenditure
- Launching new website and mobile app soon
- Water pressure issue is currently under review with a plan to fix ahead of next year busy period when it may affect the site again,

Gym

- Will address machine cleanliness with robust regular staff checks
- Gym fitness instructors covering life guarding duties on busy days but this will improve with employment of more life guards?
- Gym refurbishment imminent with wide ranging consultation with users planned
- No plan to change the 6.30am opening time, but this will be added to the consultation

Pool

- Fusion are committed to implementing full pool all year round, within six weeks of AGM. November 5th 2016.
- Recruiting more life guards and running a lifeguarding course. There is an industry wide shortage of lifeguards; a skilled, but entry level position. Whole pool opening should aid retention as guards can be offered more hours.
- Plant failed and this contributed to the algae problem, treatment in August was not done quickly enough but now improving and reassurance that water quality was kept within safe parameters throughout the summer
- Poolside lights - there are pros and cons – continue review of this
- Two pumps (of the 3) are currently working. One should be kept on standby. In August pumps were not working properly but now this has been fixed.
- Lockers will be fixed

Classes

- Agreed that stats on classes were “not acceptable” with too many cancellations
- Unacceptable lack of communication to users
- There will be auditions for new teachers/instructors.
- Review of number of private and Fusion run classes with also take place.

AOB and Close

CJ thanked everyone for contributing to a very lively and passionate meeting and reminded everyone to put forward ideas for the 80th anniversary which will be celebrated in July next year.

Fun Palace 2016 takes place 2nd October, with BLU Deputy Chair Shelley Silas managing the event.

BLU honoured the Committee departures from Mary Hill & Judy Holman (Two of the original BLU founders) and Julian Fox by giving them all bouquets and a card. The audience gave them a round of applause.