

Plymouth Life Centre Customer Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 3rd July 2023

Present: Jan Epps, Ralph Powell, Marc Gardiner, Derek Bidgood, Teresa Floyd, David Coombes, Irene Wills, Sue Tickle, Lee Brown, Jenny Kumah, Jacquie Wain, Mark Jones, Liz Slater, Rhys Jones, Guy Westwood, Lee Cobb

Jan gave a warm welcome to all, particularly Jenny on her first attendance and Jacquie on her second attendance.

Rhys Jones, Chief Operating Officer for Plymouth Active, introduced himself, and reported some progress re the access to the EA Website for people with visual impairment – no longer posting documents as PDF and improving access. Working with *Autec*, a local charity which looks to access for people with physical and or emotional issues which might affect access; working with *Active Devon* - one of two sites also working on this – and, trying to be as accessible as we can.

We keep learning!

Little progress made with the installation of a cash machine at the LC. Less pressing as the Bowls Club had invested in a card reader.

1) Minutes of meeting held on 20th April

Ralph mentioned that it should have been noted that a campaign to oppose the PCC's proposal to introduce payment at the LC car park, which would have had a 'knock-on' effect on LC Users, and the wider recreational use of the whole of Central Park, was successful. The campaign involved many local community residents, schools and businesses, as well as Life Centre users.

The minutes were approved.

1. Correspondence

Secretary had received two letters with complaints re the unhealthy volume of background music affecting the instruction during group sessions. Particular problem not only for those with hearing difficulties, but also those receiving instruction. Jenny and Jacquie, having been affected by this, asked whether there was a written policy on noise levels – and could they be implemented.

There was a marker on the stereo as guidance to instructors not to go above this level, but Guy noted it's not there now. It is discretion, but they do have a decibel meter, and Guy committed to getting back into the habit of using this. It has a limit for 'acceptable limit' - and the team can then intervene.

Jenny said that she thinks some of the classes are way too loud - probably not good for people's hearing. She's raised it with 2 instructors, but would like to see it implemented by the LC. Could there be a log of feedback / complaints?

The instructors shouldn't need to shout, if amplified properly. Rhys will seek industry guidance re what is considered acceptable and what is too loud - then speak to instructors accordingly.

Gala music - the building set up is problematic, as designed to run up to 5 classes/groups simultaneously. Further guidance will be sought from national organisations.

Liz S mentioned PCC's and PAL's commitment to this too.

3 Management Reports. Rhys, Guy and Lee

Plymouth Active Leisure has been operating for 15 months.

The past year has been tough - setting up systems, then the big energy bill increases, thus resulting in significant operating losses.

Looking ahead – a need for developing a sound business plan.

Customer headlines -

2. These forums are part of the business plan - keeping engaged
3. Swiping in section - improve, less queueing
4. Looking at the demographic – being inclusive.
5. Connecting to health – LC becoming a health & wellbeing centre as well as a sports and leisure centre
6. Insight - customer service tool, a survey system - intermittently sent to customers - 9/10 promoters, 1 /2 detractors, 3 / 5 passive -

benchmark 42, currently at 62, but only 5% response rate; been going 3 months, will probably need 6 months to bed in. People seem very honest there. Very valuable.

7. Energy - continues a huge problem, £900,000 electricity, gas £650,000 last year. recent government driven energy project to reduce energy use
 8. Brickfields update - Plymouth Argyle led effort to establish it as a wellbeing hub, PAL will be ceding this site.
 9. Plymouth Marine Park - promoting (safe) use of the waterfront spaces of the city
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<Credit to PAL for opening early at Tinside for the summer solstice - 220 there; open again tomorrow - now doing it once / week, Tuesdays from 6.30am?

Could PCC make it free to park there for that session?

10. Discussion re the resources going into and coming out of the life Centre. All the money generated by PAL will stay in the city.
 11. PAL can get money from, for example, Sport England.
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12. Liz Slater commented - remember the cost of energy has gone through the roof.
 13. Remember we have the largest solar array in the city on the Life Centre. And energy is discussed monthly. LED lighting installed recently in the sports hall, plan to do the same in the bowls hall.
 14. Leisure is non-statutory provision, and we're proud that there's such high engagement with the Life Centre.
 15. We'll always have the elite sports here, but we're tilting towards a health emphasis
 16. Ralph asked how the numbers are holding up
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- Membership has exceeded targets.

- Swimming lessons not so much.

- Business moving forward, but still a lot of work to do

17. Questioning usage records and breakdown of active users of the LC by age: Yes, these demographics are available - Rhys will provide a report on demographics.

Guy reported:

18. Particularly hot in the summer – but hopefully by the coming Thursday the chilling system can be switched on covering 70% of the building. It has been an expensive and complex piece of work - but hopefully sorted.

The pool hall has been hot for 18 months, work on those units starting next week, 4 days' work and then should be OK there too.

Let's advertise it - when it's working, as it's putting people off coming.

19. The Dive Pool lift has been out of action for 3 weeks, should be back within a week. It has been agreed that from here on that only LC staff will operate the lift.

20. Also there have been no steps in use for pools C and D - but problem now resolved.

21. Bowls Hall probably shut for 4 weeks for the lighting refit

22. Festival of Fitness to showcase what the Life Centre can offer. Opportunity for us all to try something different.

23. Lee confirmed there's positive moves happening and planned in reducing energy use

24. Events - only 2 more weekends of events - the next 2 Sundays - until September.

Jan commented on a variety of problems recently with the accessible changing rooms, including the shower and toilet. A number of the aquatics team using the accessible changing room. There is also a problem with sectors of this space being visible!

Guy acknowledged these issues and will address and update Jan.

Teresa requested that, once again, the management team could look into her previous comment about serving hot (sometimes only warm!) food on cold plates in the café.

Irene also mentioned visibility issues re man's urinals – previously there was opaque material put in place to solve this problem – now it's gone. Can it be replaced?

Mark - 1st, thanks - a lot of significant improvements in the diving area. Please could PAL put a combination lock on the dry dive area? Mark received some abuse last week from young people for asking them not to use or leave this area.

Lee B questioned the protocol for the pool supervisors? What power do they have to manage and question anti-social behaviour?

Marc spoke about previous discussions, which concluded that it's understandable if a lifeguard might struggle to do that, and that they can ask the team leader (*red shirt with 'Team Leader' written on it*) to do this - or in some cases request the duty manager.

4. The Customer Forum

Rhys - maybe it's OK, good turnout at both the meetings he's been to, good discussions, outcomes from it.

Question of how to publicise this group - stand? PAL website. Approaching all the clubs?

Mark - can we widen the circulation of the minutes? Esp Leander, Bowling, Netball?

Bowls Chair has previously attended meetings and the secretary has been in touch - both are on the distribution list. Led to a strong discussion re membership, representation (groups and individual citizen users), publicising this group etc.

Rhys requests that this Forum should be about bigger, repeat issues, rather than day-to-day issues that can be raised day-to-day with the duty staff.

The meeting closed at 7.30 PM
