

Newsletter

June 2025

A few words from the Chief Executive Officer

It's been a busy few months since the last newsletter and this edition is again packed with just a few examples of the fantastic programmes and impacts we are delivering across the City. It's getting harder and harder to choose what to include but its another edition that leaves me feeling incredibly proud of the staff at Plymouth Active Leisure and the work that we do to improve the health & wellbeing of the community.

You will read below about the huge achievement for both the Life Centre & Plympton in being awarded high praise and results in our independent QUEST assessment in March. These audits are thorough and totally independent and will help us improve our facilities for both staff and customers alike.

Plymouth Active Leisure is owned by the City of Plymouth and every penny spent in one of our facilities is kept in the city and used to improve the facilities and offer even more opportunities for everyone to become happier and healthier.

I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter.

Rhys Jones



Tinside Lido Improvements

Tinside Lido is benefiting from some significant improvements thanks to Plymouth's Horizons Project which is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Check out some of our behind the scenes shots!



The terrace on top of the main building is being renovated to include a new public seating area to include a coffee pod and multi-purpose event space overlooking the Sound.

A revamp to the single-storey building located between the Lido and Tinside Cove will provide a space for young people to develop skills for work and life. It will also provide a space to promote and support National Marine Park activities including pathways into technology that aid our oceans, innovation and creative industries as well as a safe space for exploring blue health benefits through swimming, coastal volunteering activities and general interaction with nature.

These new facilities will enable us to open up Tinside Lido and welcome a greater number of people whilst supporting spaces for young people and the community to use.



Improved Health & Safety Rating

Our facilities have recently been audited by industry experts, Right Directions, who undertook a comprehensive review of our policies, systems and procedures for managing health and safety, fire risk and how effectively these are implemented.

The Plymouth Life Centre received an overall score of 93%, achieving 100% in several key modules including First Aid and Safeguarding. This is a 5% increase on their previous audit score in 2024, which reflects the hard work and dedication shown by the team over the past 12 months in addressing areas previously identified for improvement.

Plympton Pool and Gym achieved an outstanding overall score of 95%. Significant progress has been made in addressing the actions highlighted in last year's audit, leading to an impressive 10% increase in the facility's overall score.

QUEST

Two of Plymouth Active Leisure's facilities have passed a tough assessment from Sport England's leading national quality scheme, Quest, which is the industry's recommended continuous improvement tool for leisure facilities and active communities in the UK.

Each facility underwent a one-day assessment across all areas of operation, as well as a mystery visit, to evaluate the management, operations, programming and the quality of services and facilities we provide to our customers.

We are proud to share that the Plymouth Life Centre achieved a Very Good rating, with Excellent ratings in key areas such as Tackling Inequalities and Team Management. Additionally, Plympton Pool and Gym received a Good rating, reflecting strong overall performance.



Fitness, Friendship & Fun at Plymouth Life Centre

Our Walking Netball sessions at Plymouth Life Centre are helping women of all ages stay active, build friendships, and boost their wellbeing in a relaxed, inclusive setting.

The weekly sessions are informal, welcoming and ideal for newcomers or anyone looking to revisit the sport they once loved. With no pressure or judgement, participants are free to move at their own pace while enjoying the benefits of team activity.

Women join for many reasons: to regain confidence, stay active in retirement, or simply take a break from daily responsibilities. For some, it's a chance to reconnect with netball after injury.

Many of the participants have stated that walking netball has improved both their physical and mental health, encouraged them to try new activities and feel more engaged with life.

Whether it's the joy of movement, the laughter with teammates, or the sense of belonging, Walking Netball is proving that staying active can be as much about connection as it is about sport.



Re-discovering Freedom on Three Wheels

Nigel, a former serviceman, has found a new passion and a supportive community through our adapted cycling sessions delivered at the Athletics Track in Devonport. After learning about the sessions, Nigel was introduced to a handcycle to meet his mobility needs.

With regular attendance and support from the instructors, Nigel has made significant progress. In just over a year, he's gone from completing only a few laps to cycling up to 15 laps in a single session.

The sessions, funded through the Active Travel Social Prescribing programme, are free and accessible to all. They provide a safe, welcoming space for people to stay active, build friendships, and enjoy the mental and physical benefits of cycling.

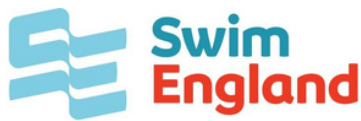


Water Wellbeing Accreditation

Plymouth Active Leisure are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our local communities and ensuring that more people have the opportunity to become active in the water. As a result, we have recently been awarded Swim England's Water Wellbeing Accreditation at Plymouth Life Centre.

The Water Wellbeing accreditation offers a range of resources, training and support to help staff better understand the customer experience, as well as personalise the aquatic offer to suit the needs of those with long-term health conditions. To enhance the aquatics offer, we have also invested in Good Boost, a programme that uses artificial intelligence to create tailored health programmes for people with musculoskeletal conditions.

Dr Hussain Al-Zubaidi, who is a Royal College of General Practitioners Lifestyle and Physical Activity Clinical Champion, said: "Making our swimming pools accessible is vital to help support our nation moving. Venues need to be inclusive and welcoming."



Water Wellbeing

Rising to the Challenge

Earlier in the year, Plymouth Active Leisure introduced a weekly Veterans swimming session at Plympton Pool in partnership with the Royal British Legion. To mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day one of the regular swimmers, Lee Whitfield, swam 80 lengths and raised over £2,500 for Blind Veterans UK.

Lee is a blind veteran himself, so swimming 2,000 metres was a real challenge which he achieved in just over two hours. As a child, he loved being in the water and found it therapeutic. However, since losing his sight it has made it difficult for him to access the pool on his own.

Despite these obstacles, Lee's passion for swimming remains undiminished. His VE Day swim not only raised vital funds for fellow blind veterans but also inspired everyone who witnessed his determination.



Swim Free

We are delighted to announce a new partnership with SWIM FREE, that has already supported over 120 children and young people from serving Naval families with free swimming lessons at the Plymouth Life Centre this year.

Funded by Greenwich Hospital and delivered through the not-for-profit Andrew Simpson Foundation, Swim Free provides free swimming lessons for children and young people from serving Royal Navy, Royal Marines, and Royal Fleet Auxiliary families.

This new partnership with Swim Free provides a variety of lessons from Adult and Baby classes, through to Stage 4 of the Swim England Learn to Swim Pathway. Our shared goal is to help more children and young people learn to swim and experience the health and safety benefits of water-based sports.



Party On!

We have just launched a number of new and affordable birthday party packages offering a range of fun and exciting activities. All our parties include a dedicated party host to make sure everything runs smoothly, party invitations and discount vouchers for all the guest's goodies bags.

Our new party packages include:

- Inflatable & Soft Play Party (Life Centre)
- Diving Party (Life Centre)
- Climbing Party (Life Centre)
- Pool Inflatable Party (Plympton)



My Mind, My Body, My Money

Plymouth Active Leisure was proud to support the recent Family Wellness Day at the Plymouth Life Centre that brought together over 60 organisations offering support and advice with mental health, physical wellbeing, parenting, finances and more. The event, organised by Plymouth City Council's Early Help and Prevention Team provided a relaxed, family-friendly space for open conversations and resource-sharing.

The day offered a variety of engaging and fun activities for all ages including yoga, dance, dodgeball, wrestling demos and inflatables. A dedicated creche was also available providing a safe space for the younger children. Plymouth Active staff delivered several of the physical activity sessions throughout the day and were able to provide advice and support on our Active Health programme and family friendly activities.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many describing the event as a vital showcase of the city's support network. Those attending appreciated the chance to connect directly with service providers, gaining valuable insights and materials to support their families and wider communities.



Inclusive Activity for Families with SEND

Plymouth Active Leisure, in partnership with the NHS Complications of Excess Weight Team, delivered a pilot programme at the Plymouth Life Centre to support children with SEND and their families to build positive experiences with physical activity.

The Adapt sessions welcomed 13 families into a safe, inclusive space that gradually progressed from open play to structured, coach-led activities including Boccia, Kurling and Table Cricket. This flexible and adaptive approach helped children grow in confidence, form social connections and overcome common barriers to participation.

As the pilot progressed, families reported greater wellbeing, improved access to community facilities and increased engagement in physical activity. We also saw children taking on leadership roles and rediscovering joy in movement. The pilot was a great success and evidenced how the power of collaboration and providing a family-centred approach can create lasting change.

"Being physically active as a family has changed how we spend time together. We've found joy, built confidence, and made friends." Parent Feedback

Official Sponsor for Britain's Ocean City Running Festival 2025

We were delighted to be the official Health and Wellbeing Sponsor for this year's Britain's Ocean City Running Festival. Working with local organisations and events that aim to provide people with the opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing is a key priority for us.

Leading up to the event we coordinated a ladies only Couch to 5k running group to support women who wanted to take part in the running festival or improve their fitness levels. Out of the 24 women who started the programme, 5 went on to complete the 5k on the event day.



Several staff attended the event to represent Plymouth Active Leisure and promote local opportunities to be active. 10 members of staff took part in the running festival at all distances, including our Head of Business & Commercial Development Manager Steph who completed the half marathon and Hayley who was the third female home in the 5k race. Two of our personal trainers, Jakki and Scott were also in attendance on the day leading the team warm-up.

Pioneering Social Prescribing Training in the South West



Hayley and Will from our Active Lifestyles Team recently completed the RSPH Level 3 Certificate in Social Prescribing course, the first to be delivered in the South West, in partnership with City College Plymouth.

This nationally recognised qualification provides professionals with the skills and knowledge to deliver personalised care through social prescribing, helping to enhance the health and wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities.

The course was a great success and marked a significant milestone for the region. Thanks to its positive impact, further courses have now been launched, helping to foster a more connected, compassionate, and holistic approach to community wellbeing.

Sport Apprentice of the Year



Plymouth Active Leisure is incredibly proud to announce that Cobain, one of our apprentices was awarded Sport Apprentice of the Year at City College's Apprenticeship Awards 2025 in recognition of his dedication and achievements over the last year.

Cobain started in leisure as a weekend membership sales consultant before taking on his sport and leisure apprenticeship. Initially interested in becoming a gym instructor, he soon found his true passion was teaching children how to swim. He has since gone on to become a level 2 qualified swim teacher and is regularly teaching classes at the Plymouth Life Centre. He is also a volunteer coach with Plymouth Leander Swimming Club.

Up and Coming Events

- **AP Events**
28 & 29 June
- **DRSA Summer Sizzler**
12 & 13 July
- **Sunset Silent Disco, Tinside**
19 July
- **GB Elite Underwater Hockey Training Camp**
19 & 20 July
- **Bora Bora Ibiza & DancersHip, Tinside**
02 August
- **British Firework Championships, Tinside**
13 & 14 August
- **Devon County Masters**
07 September
- **Lego Festival**
07 September
- **Seafest, Tinside**
13 & 14 September
- **Regional Diving Youth Development Camp**
13 to 15 September
- **Launchpad Live**
25 September

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These facilities
are managed
in partnership
with Plymouth
City Council

Find out more at
plymouthactive.co.uk