PLYMOUTH ACTIVE

Newsletter

October 2026

A few words from our Chief Executive Officer



Welcome to this edition of our Plymouth Active Leisure newsletter, I hope you enjoy looking through it. What strikes me in this update is the variety of work taking place across our organisation and the difference it is making in our communities. I am so proud of what the teams deliver for our communities, and it is hard to settle on what is included in these updates as it is just a small sample! In this edition, we celebrate the refreshed gym at Plympton, the launch of Rise Gymnastics, our new Book Nook and our inclusive climbing opportunities, alongside award recognition, new colleagues and apprentices, positive staff survey results, and a record-breaking outdoor season at Tinside and Mount Wise. What an amazing summer we have had!

None of this would be possible without the hard work, care and enthusiasm of our staff, so thank you to every member of the team.

Rhys Jones
CEO, Plymouth Active Leisure

New Look Gym at Plympton

Plymouth Active Leisure has completed a major refurbishment of the gym at Plympton Swimming Pool and Gym, creating a modern, welcoming and high-performing fitness space for our members and local community.

The transformation reflects our commitment to providing high-quality, accessible facilities that support healthier and more active lifestyles.

The upgraded facility features carefully selected new equipment to provide a more varied and effective training experience. Improvements include enhanced cardio equipment, an expanded strength training area and an improved free weights zone, giving members more choice and flexibility in their workouts.





Welcome to the Team!

Caitlin Hodges

Multimedia Manager



Caitlin brings a wealth of experience in social media, marketing and content creation. Prior to joining Plymouth Active, she worked for a marine science charity, where she was responsible for managing social media channels and creating engaging digital content.

Caitlin is excited about her new role and is passionate about helping our customers see themselves as part of the Plymouth Active community. Whether it's celebrating a member's achievement, introducing one of our fantastic teams, showcasing what happens behind the scenes, or capturing the energy and atmosphere across our centres, she wants our content to feel authentic, positive and representative of the people who make Plymouth Active what it is.

With a particular passion for storytelling, Caitlin is looking forward to working closely with colleagues across the organisation to create engaging content that brings to life the incredible work taking place every day in our centres and communities.

Chris Sandham

Food and Beverage Operations Manager



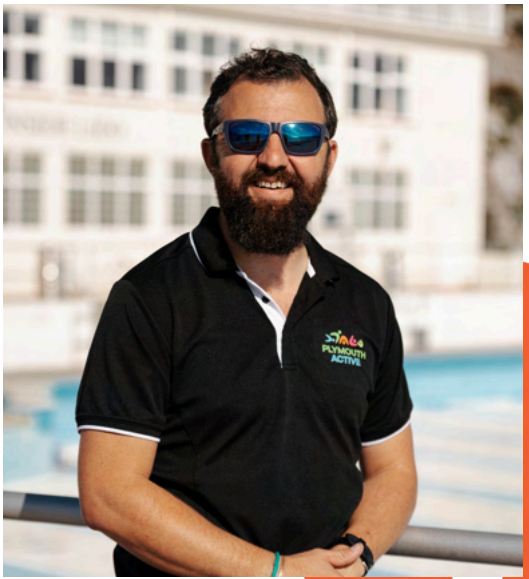
Chris brings over 22 years of hospitality experience working across Plymouth and the South West, having worked in a wide range of settings including pubs, restaurants, catering and large-scale hospitality operations. More recently, he was the Commercial Operations Manager for FullyCATERed Ltd.

Joining an already talented and dedicated team, Chris is looking forward to building on the excellent work already taking place. His passion for creating welcoming environments and delivering exceptional customer experiences will help strengthen our hospitality offer and support our continued growth.

In his new role, Chris will focus on further developing our food, beverage and hospitality services, enhancing the experience for customers while helping to drive innovation and excellence across the organisation.

Mike Hardie

Tinside Lido General Manager



Mike brings extensive experience in hospitality and leisure management, having previously worked as Visitor Services Manager at Plymouth Pavilions and Senior General Manager (South West) for Loungers Ltd. With a strong background in customer experience, operations and venue management, he is delighted to join the team at Tinside and play a key role in supporting its continued development following its transformation.

Passionate about delivering exceptional visitor experiences, Mike is looking forward to building on the Lido's recent successes and working with the team to enhance what is already one of Plymouth's most iconic attractions. He is committed to ensuring Tinside Lido continues to thrive as one of the UK's most celebrated outdoor swimming destinations, balancing the preservation of its unique heritage with the exploration of new opportunities to strengthen its reputation and appeal.

Mike is excited to help shape the next chapter of the Lido's journey, attracting both residents and visitors alike while ensuring it remains a vibrant, welcoming and memorable destination for future generations.

Best Outdoor Season Ever

Tinside Lido

The fantastic weather throughout the summer contributed to record-breaking attendance figures at Tinside Lido. Demand was so high that additional sessions were introduced, opening hours were extended, and the Lido remained open until the end of September.

This season marked a historic milestone, with over 100,000 visits recorded, more than doubling the previous attendance record of 41,000.

Tinside was undoubtedly the place to be this summer, as it played host to 75 events including a sold-out Summer Solstice celebration, silent discos, a popular doggy swim and a number of unforgettable wedding ceremonies.
We also continued our successful partnership with the National Marine Park to promote water safety. Over the summer, 894 people took part in Rookie Lifeguard and Swim Safe sessions, helping more people gain valuable lifesaving skills and confidence in the water.








Mount Wise

It has been another busy and successful season at Mount Wise Pools, one of Devonport's most cherished community facilities.

The fantastic summer weather helped drive increased attendance, with 47,984 visits recorded this season, compared with 38,817 visits last year. The warm conditions, combined with a varied programme of activities, made Mount Wise a popular destination for residents and visitors alike.

Our early morning swims,late-night swims and Aqua Fit sessions proved particularly popular, providing customers with a range of opportunities to stay active and make the most of the outdoor pool throughout the season.

One of the standout moments of the summer was the Summer Splash event, which brought together families and members of the local community for a fun-filled day of activities, entertainment and celebration.

We also partnered with Harris Hounds to host our ever-popular Doggy Swim, giving four-legged visitors the chance to take a dip before the pool closed for the season. The event attracted a fantastic turnout and was enjoyed by dogs and owners alike.




Awards Round Up



2026 Westcountry Women's Awards

September brought exciting recognition for Izzie Roper who was announced as a semi-finalist in the Apprentice of the Year category. The awards recognise and celebrate women whose leadership, inspiration and contributions are making a meaningful difference across communities, businesses, charities and industries.

West Country Women AWARDS



2026 Bucket and Spade List Awards

We are proud to announce that Tinside Lido has been named one of the Top 10 Favourite Seaside Places and Experiences in the UK, following a public vote organised by the Seaside Heritage Network. The award celebrates the very best of Britain's seaside heritage and highlights the places, experiences and traditions that make our coastline so special. This achievement reflects the Lido's enduring popularity and its unique contribution to Plymouth's waterfront, attracting visitors from across the region and beyond.

2026 Holiday Activities and Food Awards

The Plymouth Life Centre Holiday Club was announced as the South West's Holiday Club Provider of the Year in recognition of its outstanding commitment toward inclusion and their dedication to ensuring all children can access and enjoy a positive holiday club experience.

Department for Education



2026 Michelmores Property Awards

Plymouth Active is delighted to celebrate the recognition of Tinside Lido at the 2026 Michelmores Property Awards, where the landmark restoration project was honoured in the Heritage Project of the Year category. The Michelmores Property Awards are among the South West's most prestigious property awards, recognising outstanding developments that demonstrate excellence in design, sustainability, regeneration and community impact.



National Fitness Awards

The Plymouth Life Centre has been named a finalist in the following award categories and will discover whether it has won at the national awards ceremony in November.

-Local Authority/ Leisure Trust Gym of the Year
-Best Aquatics Based Facilities
-Member Achievement Award
-Gym Team of the Year



2026 UK Active Awards

This year, we were delighted to be recognised at the UK Active Awards, with Plymouth Active Leisure named as finalists across three prestigious categories. Our Active Lifestyles Team's Adapt Project was shortlisted for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Project of the Year and went on to achieve a Highly Commended award, recognising its outstanding impact in making physical activity more accessible and inclusive for people across our communities.



Rise Gymnastics

In September we launched Rise Gymnastics at the Plymouth Life Centre, giving children the opportunity to build confidence, develop new skills and discover a love for movement in a fun and supportive environment.

Delivered through British Gymnastics, the new programme focuses on helping every child progress at their own pace. Whether they're taking their very first forward roll or developing more advanced gymnastics skills, each session is designed to be engaging, inclusive and rewarding.

The response to the new programme has been fantastic. Within the first week, 86% of available spaces had been booked, with demand continuing to grow and waiting lists already beginning to form.

We're incredibly proud of the team effort that has gone into bringing Rise Gymnastics to life, and we're excited to see the programme continue to grow and give even more children the opportunity to roll, rise and thrive!



Making Climbing Accessible for Everyone



The Active Lifestyles Team recently coordinated a six-week climbing programme in partnership with the NHS CEW Team, designed to make climbing more accessible for individuals with a wide range of physical, health, social and emotional needs.

The programme received overwhelmingly positive feedback, with participants reporting increased confidence, improved wellbeing, greater independence and stronger social connections. The pilot highlighted the transformative impact that inclusive physical activity can have when delivered in a supportive, welcoming and accessible environment.

Building on the insights and learning gained from the programme, Plymouth Active Leisure has developed new inclusive climbing and assisted climbing sessions. These initiatives further reinforce our commitment to creating opportunities for everyone to experience the physical, mental and social benefits of climbing, regardless of ability or background.

Read All About It

At Plymouth Active Leisure, we're passionate about supporting children's development both in and out of the pool. That's why we are proud to announce that we were successful in securing a Book Nook as part of the Raising Readers Fund working in partnership with Hatchette and the National Literacy Trust.

Located within the café area, the dedicated reading space has created a welcoming environment where children can enjoy books before or after their activities.

RAISING READERS
Books Build Bright Futures



A New Team of Apprentices

Our current cohort of apprentices, who joined us in September last year, are going from strength to strength and becoming valuable members of staff.

Izzy has now successfully completed all her gym, lifeguard and swim-teaching qualifications, which is a fantastic achievement in such a short space of time. She is now taking the lead on her own Stage One swimming lessons.

Jenson and Alfie have also made brilliant progress, recently qualifying as lifeguards and now working towards their SEQ Level One Swim Teaching qualification. Their confidence on poolside continues to grow, and they're quickly becoming trusted members of the aquatics team.

Their commitment, teamwork and willingness to learn are shining through and we're incredibly proud of the contribution they are making.



Staff Insights

At Plymouth Active Leisure we are committed to supporting and developing our employees and ensuring they feel valued, engaged and motivated in their roles. Each year we conduct a staff survey to measure employee engagement, satisfaction and wellbeing across the organisation.

This year's survey delivered highly positive results, with staff engagement increasing 22% compared to the previous year. In addition, 16 survey questions achieved higher scores than in last year's results, demonstrating continued progress across several key area of the business.

The staff are also involved, via our staff forum, in helping us to evaluate these results and use the insight to improve our business and drive meaningful change. Below are the top performing areas reported in this year's survey:

60% of staff would recommend Plymouth Active Leisure as a great place to work
73% of staff are proud to work for Plymouth Active Leisure
75% of staff are clear about Plymouth Active's vision and purpose as a company
75% of staff said they were treated with fairness and respect at work

Upcoming Events

13, 14 October - **Devon Business Show**

31 October, 1 November - **Plymouth Comic Con**

23, 24, 30, 31 January, 6, 7 February - **Devon ASA Championships**

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PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Plymouth Active Leisure are working in partnership with Plymouth City Council to deliver its sports and leisure services.

Find out more at
plymouthactive.co.uk