

The Friends of Jesus Green Lido – Trustee report

Charity detail:

Charity name: The Friends of Jesus Green Lido
Charity number: 1203117
Registered address: 13 Aylestone Road, Cambridge, CB4 1HF

Trustees:

Name	Designation	Appointed	Resigned
Nicky Blanning	Chair	18/5/2023	
Jo Lockhart	Secretary	18/5/2023	
Andrew Herbert	Treasurer	18/5/2023	
Simon Biggin		18/5/2023	
Iain Shaw		18/5/2023	
Becky Allen		18/5/2023	
Colin Campbell		18/5/2023	28/5/2024
Branwen Brockley		18/6/2024	

Constitution: CIO Foundation

Governing document: FJGL Charity Constitution dated 21/3/23*

Trustee selection: By invitation of the Trustees with reference to experience, skills and contacts suitable to further the aims of the Charity.

* In line with Charity Commission guidance

Objectives:

Charitable purpose: “The advancement of amateur sport”

To safeguard the future of the Jesus Green Lido for the benefit of the people of Cambridge and the Nation; to enable residents and visitors to Cambridge to participate safely in outdoor swimming; and to promote the many social and health benefits of outdoor swimming and related activities.

Core aims:

- to safeguard the future of Jesus Green Lido for the benefit of the people of Cambridge and the Nation;
- to encourage and enable residents and visitors to Cambridge to participate safely in outdoor swimming;
- to champion outdoor swimming and its many social and health benefits, as well as related activities.

Background

Jesus Green Lido (the Lido) is owned by Cambridge City Council and is currently operated by GLL (Better) under contract as a public facility. It is open throughout the year and has more than 2000 registered users, plus thousands of ad hoc visitors from Cambridgeshire, the UK and overseas.

The Lido was built in 1923, at a time when many former servicemen faced unemployment in the aftermath of the First World War. Originally named Cambridge Swimming Pool, the Lido is unheated, it is 100 yards long and runs parallel to the River Cam. It takes its name from Jesus Green, the large public park close to Cambridge city centre, where the Lido is located.

The Friends of Jesus Green Lido (The Friends) was formed by a small number of volunteers as a community group in the 1980s to safeguard and promote the Jesus Green Lido in Cambridge, one of the longest and oldest lidos in the UK.

The purpose of The Friends was to ensure users of the Lido had a voice, particularly during a period when the future of community swimming pools was under threat. Over the past 40 years The Friends have continued to support the pool and promote its use through events and modest fund raising, supporting provision of artwork, floral displays and organising volunteers to help the operators with maintenance.

In the aftermath of the COVID pandemic and its impact on public services, The Friends committee was approached by an individual who was prepared to make a donation to help increase opening hours of the pool. The Friends facilitated the use of that donation by GLL (Better) to enable the standardisation of opening hours in the summer months, and to encourage the introduction of winter swimming and year-round opening for the first time in the winter of 2022.

The pandemic also led Cambridge City Council to extend the management contract with GLL (Better) by a further three years to March 2026. This was to provide more time to consider the requirements for the Lido into the future.

The Council has recognised the need to invest in the Lido and its surrounds and is developing plans as part of its broader remit to provide leisure facilities in the greater Cambridge area. It was in recognition of this and with a concern to ensure The Friends were able to contribute in a meaningful way to the planning and implementation of any changes to the Lido that the Charity 'The Friends of Jesus Green Lido' was established. There have been a number of projects across the country to rejuvenate Lidos for the benefit of the public and these have been financed, at least in part, through funds raised by charitable organisations. The purpose of The Friends of Jesus Green Lido Charity (The Charity) is to provide the vehicle through which similar support can be offered to Jesus Green Lido.

The Charity, while conceived by The Friends, is separate to the community group and is managed by a small team of Trustees, all of whom bring specific expertise, skills or contacts. This approach enables the Trustees to focus on the future of the Lido and investment plans while The Friends continue to deal with social and other supporting activity. Collaboration

between the two is enabled by certain Trustees also continuing as members of The Friends committee to ensure the aims are synchronised.

Objectives:

When The Charity was established, the Trustees committed to achieve its core aims by undertaking the following actions (fundraising, awareness, inclusion, impact, campaigning):

- embark on a fundraising campaign for the benefit of the Lido and its surrounding area;
- draw upon the impact and publicity of the 2023 Centenary Celebrations to grow awareness of the Lido;
- encourage communities traditionally removed from outdoor swimming (such as disabled swimmers and schoolchildren) to access the Lido and benefit from the sport and the supportive community;
- promote the physical, social and mental health benefits of outdoor swimming to the local and wider population;
- lend its voice to national and international campaigns for cleaner waterways and increased access to outdoor swimming.

Activity to date:

Initial activity of the Trustees was to understand the landscape for investment in and development of other lidos and how similar charitable bodies had been able to influence outcomes and raise funds to support their objectives.

We made contact with members of similar charity groups and heard how they had approached their particular situation, gleaned advice on what had worked and what had not and also potential sources of funding.

The Trustees also visited a number of lidos around the UK where renovation projects had recently been completed. We were interested to understand the features that attract greater use and diversity of users.

Initial meetings were arranged with officers of Cambridge City Council and local representatives of GLL (Better) to make them aware of the formation of the Charity and to offer input and advice on plans for the Lido. GLL (Better) operates under a contract that is due to expire in 2026. The Charity is keen to see future contracts with extended tenure to allow the operator to invest alongside Council and other funding sources.

The Trustees organised a survey of users of the Lido, seeking views on aspects that attract users and on areas for improvement to remove any barriers to greater participation in swimming at the Lido and its broader amenity. The feedback informed a vision document which has been presented to and discussed with council officers as they continue to develop plans for the Lido. The survey was also used to identify local people with relevant skills and expertise to help enhance the capability of the Trustee team.

The Trustees are canvassing the views of relevant council members, seeking to establish the general attitude towards investment in the Lido. Cambridge City Council has made it clear that it faces financial challenges.

One specific priority identified by users is an improvement/upgrade of the sauna facility in operation at the Lido. This is very popular with winter swimmers and has the potential to attract non-swimmers as well. Recent visits to Parliament Hill Lido by Trustees reinforced the opportunity to expand user numbers by offering a good quality sauna / cold bath facility. The Trustees are in discussion with specialist operators to determine how an improved facility may be introduced to the Lido. This has been identified as a first potential a fund-raising activity.

The Trustees have looked into potential sources of grant and other funding for development of the Lido. Any fund-raising activity requires a clear purpose and costed financial plan. The Trustees continue to work with Council officers towards this goal.

Finances and Accounts

The Charity has opened a bank account but to date has not engaged in any financial activity. Any expenses of the Charity have been met by Trustees from personal sources.

There are no accounts to present at the financial year end (30/4/2024). All balances are zero.

Future plans

It is our expectation that Council Officers will present a plan in the coming months and an investment strategy for the Lido alongside proposals to tender the contract to manage the facility. Once the scope of that plan is clear, and assuming there will be elements (which may be significant) that the Council or future operator is not prepared to finance in the short to mid-term, the Trustees aim will be to engage with potential sources of funding and work with the Council on an accelerated investment plan.

Our aims have not changed, they remain as follows:

- embark on a fundraising campaign for the benefit of the Lido and its surrounding area;
- draw upon the impact and publicity of the 2023 Centenary Celebrations to grow awareness of the Lido;
- encourage communities traditionally removed from outdoor swimming (such as disabled swimmers and schoolchildren) to access the Lido and benefit from the sport and the supportive community;
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