

Victoria Park Buckfastleigh AGM 24 April 2023

Chair's Report 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

2022 marked the 8th year of our team running Victoria Park and Buckfastleigh Open Air Pool on behalf of our community. Perhaps more significantly, it marked the 125th anniversary since the opening of the pool and a huge 135 years since the Victoria Park Buckfastleigh charity was founded. We believe that our pool is amongst the oldest outdoor pools in the country - probably the 3rd or 4th oldest - and it is both a huge privilege and responsibility to manage it into the future.

This was our second season back after the Covid lockdown when we took the opportunity to repair and upgrade both pool and changing room facilities and to fix several longstanding structural issues. The facility was in its best state for many decades and looked great for the opening in May 2022.

We were very lucky to have a long standing, professional and highly experienced team of lifeguards to start the season, joined by a few new recruits and we started the 2022 season with a positive mentality and ready to drive the pool forward. However, this year brought significant new challenges with a record-breaking heatwave and soaring costs, especially gas and electricity costs, causing serious concerns about the longer-term future of the pool and the charity.

Pools across the country faced energy bill rises of over 400% with several pools closing each week during 2022 and all pools facing long term financial insecurity. Sport England, Swim England, the Local Government Association for Culture and Sport, and Active Devon all ran high profile campaigns to secure additional government support for pools and swimming, and to save the future of swimming in the UK.

We strengthened our network of local community run pools and our relationships with Active Devon, Swim England, and the Local Government Association Culture & Sport lead, and through our campaign, helped secure the inclusion of community run pools in the governments Swimming Pool Support Fund scheme which will be administered by Sport England. We worked with Active Devon to extend our innovative It's Your Pool Too scheme to access additional Sport England funds to other local community pools to help cover the costs of swimming tickets for those people in most need.

We also asked Buckfastleigh Town Council to consult with the community about providing additional financial support to help us keep the pool open, with the option of raising the town's share of council tax to meet the additional energy costs. At the Parish Poll in October 318 people voted "yes" to increasing council tax to help pay the fuel costs, with 248 voting "no". A series of political changes, new government budgets, changes to energy caps and continuously fluctuating energy prices made it incredibly difficult to predict the likely financial pressures for 2023 onwards, and in light of extraordinary cost of living crisis facing many local families, we

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Victoria Park Buckfastleigh

revised down our original request for extra funding from the town council to a level which we believe could be met from within existing budgetary underspend - eliminating the need for a rise in council tax. As ever, we are very grateful for the level of community support for the pool, and for the significant town council contribution to keeping the pool open for generations to come.

We were also delighted to be awarded £36,345 from the Valencia Landfill Community Fund to replace our ageing and inefficient pump, filtration, and chemical dosing system which will help us to reduce our energy usage once the new equipment is installed later this month. We are grateful too to Be Buckfastleigh for making a 3rd party contribution of £3,634 to secure the Valencia grant.

Energy bills are likely to remain high, volatile, and uncertain and they still pose a very real threat to the future of our pool and others across the country, and to the financial viability of the charity.

We opened the pool this year with the continuation on the previous years' timetable, including sessions for Buckfast and Buckfastleigh Primary schools, and Bidwell Brook school in term time, Camphill residents, parents and babies, and children with additional needs during the holiday period. We also increased our early morning lane swimming sessions to every weekday morning. We provided swimming and a range of park-based activities as part of the Hello Summer children's activity programme. Our cold-water swimming ran from October to the end of February and brought record numbers of swimmer to the pool and town from across the southwest each Sunday. Overall, we provided around 10,000 swims during the year.

With increased costs, we made the decision to increase ticket prices this year while still offering a range of concessions and free-swimming options for local people. We kept in place the TQ11 pass for local children and provided a TQ11 session each day for local children throughout the summer. We also gave local children a reduced rate to the normal sessions that we run meaning that all the children in the town were able to access the pool over summer should they wish to. We continued to be able to offer free and discounted swimming to local people as part of our "It's Your Pool Too" campaign thanks to very generous donations from a variety of national and regional grant giving bodies which cover the cost of each ticket. We are pleased that so many people can swim and stay active in our community because of this funding.

During the summer we hosted artist in residence Charlotte Pulfer at the Be Buckfastleigh Living Room, displaying her range of drawing, images, historical items and documents, video, and sound archives, to celebrate the pools 125th anniversary. Over 200 people attended the week long exhibition.

In October we ran our increasingly popular Halloween Changing Rooms of Doom free spooky experience. Over 250 children and their families enjoyed and screamed their way through the decorated changing rooms and we are proud to be able to create such a popular event for whole community. Many thanks to Gemima Savage for her creativity in creating the very spooky tableau.

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As ever, we are incredibly grateful to all our supporters, donors, volunteers, and staff that help keep this vital and much loved facility open for the community. We are especially grateful for the financial support from Buckfastleigh Town Council which means we can keep the charity solvent through these particularly challenging times.

Signed 

Pam Barrett - Chair of Victoria Park Buckfastleigh

Date: 15 April 2023

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Victoria Park, Suite 7 The Business Centre, 33 Chapel Street, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0AB
Registered Charity No: 200624, Ltd Co No: 09490008

Profit and Loss

Victoria Park, Buckfastleigh

For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	
Turnover			
Bungalow Rent	1,662.00	1,662.00	
Fixed Grants and Funding	23,811.00	23,811.00	
Interest Income	156.44	156.44	
Swim Income	33,992.51	33,992.51	
Training Income	2,250.00	2,250.00	
Tuck & Shop Merchandise Sales	6,043.29	6,043.29	
Total Turnover	67,915.24	67,915.24	0.00
Cost of Sales			
Tick & Merchandise for resale	1,785.33	1,785.33	
Staff Salaries	39,513.91	39,513.91	
Lifeguard Training Costs	1,089.00	1,089.00	
Light, Power, Heating	9,689.40	9,689.40	
Pool Equipment	590.08	590.08	
Cleaning	271.43	271.43	
Pump System	19,260.00		19,260.00
Water Utilities and chemicals	2,549.12	2,549.12	
Total Cost of Sales	74,748.27	55,488.27	19,260.00
Gross Profit	(6,833.03)	12,426.97	(19,260.00)
Administrative Costs			
Events Costs	9,177.56	9,177.56	
Audit & Accountancy fees	4,026.80	4,026.80	
Bank Charges	673.09	673.09	
Insurance	2,590.81	2,590.81	
IT Software and Consumables	447.72	447.72	
Printing & Stationery	418.39	418.39	
Pool Repairs & Maintenance	1,691.29	1,691.29	
Park Repairs and Maintenance	2,657.00	2,657.00	
Subscriptions	201.00	201.00	
Sundry Expenses	218.00	218.00	
Telephone & Internet	394.52	394.52	
Total Administrative Costs	22,496.18	22,496.18	0.00
Operating Profit	(29,329.21)	(10,069.21)	(19,260.00)
Other Income			
Ad-hoc Grants	27,348.00	27,348.00	
Charity Box	340.01	340.01	
Donations and sponsorships	3,144.44	3,144.44	
Total Other Income	30,832.45	30,832.45	0.00
Profit on Ordinary Activities	1,503.24	20,763.24	(19,260.00)