

## A Response to the Brockwell Lido Options Report

*This is the initial response to the report from Brockwell Lido Users (BLU), an association that represents those who swim, attend classes or children's music workshops at the Lido. This response is made by the Steering Group with reference to the 873 questionnaires completed by our members in the summer and information gained from our own contacts with other Lidos. We may wish to make additional comments after our next meeting of members on January 19<sup>th</sup> and further liaison with other community groups.*

### **BLU welcomes the report and agrees with many of the findings.**

**The report's reference to the strong attachment that users have to Lidos is** supported by the questionnaires completed in which 90% indicated that the Lido's survival is very important to them and made frequent mention of the ambiance, the friendliness of staff, the mix of people who use the Lido and the fact that it is safe, especially for women and children. There were many enthusiastic comments about the size of the pool and the fact that it is an open-air pool.

**The users welcome the recognition that the Lido offers a year-round home to a number of thriving community groups** such as Whippersnappers and Yoga. In the case of Whippersnappers, the Lido is an essential base for extensive outreach work with schools, nurseries and community groups. It is important to our members that community activities such as these can continue to develop and thrive.

**The recognition that the Lido is not viable without subsidy or an additional revenue** source of some kind is consistent with the information that we have been given by other Lidos we have contacted.

**We particularly welcome the proposal to extend the current management arrangements to allow time to explore proposals for ongoing funding of the Lido.** We are concerned, however, that the proposed schedule for the procurement process is very tight.

### **The Way Forward**

Before commenting on the options suggested by the report we wish to make two comments about the initial brief for the study. This included:

- a) the retention of swimming (either indoor or outdoor)
- b) a nil capital investment or revenue input from the council.

Our questionnaires show that most swimmers are attracted to the Lido because it is a large open-air pool with only 5% unconditionally in favour of covering the pool. We would, therefore, want future specifications to include maintaining the pool as a large open-air pool.

Swimming is subsidised in other Lambeth pools but not in the Lido, yet 50% of those completing questionnaires live in Lambeth suggesting that some long-term support from Lambeth is appropriate and might make it easier to balance community and commercial considerations.

## The Options

### Option 1

This would be acceptable to our members but is only viable if the council decides to make a substantial financial commitment that would include sufficient funding to allow for maintenance and capital investment.

### Option 2

Our members would object very strongly to this option and would be upset to see Lambeth lose one of the most attractive leisure facilities in the borough.

### Option 3

This is not acceptable to our members.

### Option 4

This appears to be the strongest of the four options unless the council is able to fund Option 1. BLU would like to use the information from our questionnaires and the information we are gathering about other Lidos to contribute to the debate about the future of the Lido, the specifications for the tender and community involvement in management of the Lido.

The procurement process does require careful balancing of the community and park interests with the need to generate sufficient income to subsidise the Lido. Most of our members also use the park and would want to work closely with other park and community groups to:

- establish some fundamental principles about the balance between community and commercial interests;
- ensure that the specifications for the tender required bidders to balance these park and community interests with commercial viability;
- explore the most appropriate structures for community involvement in the ongoing management of the Lido.

We strongly endorse the concluding comments of the report “ Brockwell Lido is a treasured resource.....The foundations of its future are likely to be forged from a partnership between community, the Council and the private sector, .....”

### Some comments about specific details in the report

3.1 states that 365,000 people live within a 15-minute drive time of the Lido. We know that many arrive by public transport, walk or cycle. It is perhaps important to consider the good public transport links and proximity to the railway in estimating the potential client group. BLU can give information about postcodes of users and means of travelling to the Lido.

3.3.5 Whippersnappers began 8 years ago, not 3 as stated

Other comments: Keep in mind the importance of Creche facilities