

## **BROCKWELL LIDO USERS FORUM AND AGM &**

## **BROCKWELL LIDO STEERING COMMITTEE AGM**

**Sunday 16th November 2025, 10 am Whippersnappers Room**

### **Presenters**

Ben Longman, BLU Chair  
Marc Meryon, BLSC Chair  
Scarlett Hayward, Manager Brockwell Lido  
Mark Rogers, Fusion Lifestyle  
Simon Harris, Lambeth Council

### **Agenda**

1. Welcome and explanation of the day – BLSC Chair
2. Introduction of speakers – BLSC Chair
3. Sign off of 2024 minutes
4. Whippersnappers (Caroline Burghard)
5. Lido report (Fusion Lifestyle)
6. BLU Chair report (BLU Chair)
7. BLSC Chair report (BLSC Chair)
8. Lambeth Council (Simon Harris)
9. Questions from users
10. BLU financial report (BLU Chair)
11. BLU elections
12. BLSC appointments
13. AOB

### **1. Welcome and explanation of the day**

Marc opened the meeting by welcoming the speakers and attendees. He thanked:

- Mark R and Scarlett H from Fusion, Simon H from Lambeth, Ben from BLU
- Lambeth councillors Donatus Anyanwu, Deepak Sardiwal and Paul Valentine
- Caroline Burghard from Whippersnappers for use of the room for the meeting
- Helen Hayes – MP for Dulwich and West Norwood

Marc noted that while several commitments for investments promised last year had not been met, he asked for everyone to keep calm as a way to have everyone's voice heard.

### **2. Introduction of speakers**

Marc introduced each of the speakers listed above

### **3. Sign off of 2024 minutes**

One member of the audience noted she had not received the minutes or other documents despite being a BLU member. Ben asked her to follow up after the meeting.

The 2024 minutes were approved.

#### **4. Whippersnappers report**

Caroline B outlined the improvement to the room including a new floor, curtains, lighting and recording studio. This was funded by a grant from Lambeth of £25K supplemented by £20K reserves from Whippersnappers.

The group has been going for 31 years and supports 140 SEND children.

#### **5. Lido report**

Mark Rogers opened his report with an explanation of why the promised refurbishment had not yet come to fruition. The Large Business Interruption Loan scheme (aka Covid loan) of £13m to support this facility as well as 60 other centres in the country, expired in May 2025 and there is not yet a resolution to secure an agreement with the bank. This lack of agreement is preventing Fusion from filing their accounts.

Mark advised that there is a meeting with the bank on the 28<sup>th</sup> November where he expects a resolution, which means that the accounts can be filed, and funding secured for promised investments including refurbishing the gym, renovating the wet and dry side changing rooms and installing a new sauna. He stressed that Fusion would have gone ahead with these improvements if they had been able to.

He then reported on performance noting some areas had improved while there was more to do in other areas.

Improvements:

- Increase in members
- Increase in targeted participation e.g. over 65s
- Additional full-time technician
- Booking and programming
- £185K increasing in staffing costs/expenditure
- £751K surplus for the period April 2024 to March 2025

Key issues/themes and actions:

- He noted cleaning was still an issue and while Fusion have tried to improve this, some of the problems are linked to the state and age of the facilities
- Cleaning increased by 45%
- In January there will be 2 full-time equivalents (FTEs)
- Bert Greenwood, the new regional manager for Fusion and Bryn Taylor, Operating director for Fusion are looking to support the improvement efforts
- A new cleaning supplier has been engaged
- Deep cleaning will take place on a quarterly basis

Marc thanked Mark R for his explanation and report

#### **6. BLU Chair report**

Ben opened his report by advising that anyone is welcome to join BLU, however the User Group represents all users whether or not they are members.

He thanked Caroline for the use of the meeting room; he thanked Helen Hayes MP, Lambeth councillors, Simon Harris and Fusion management staff for giving up their time on a Sunday to attend this AGM.

He thanked the Lido staff led by Scarlett, and presented Scarlett with some flowers as a small token of appreciation.

Ben then thanked members standing down from the Committees:

- Steve Trowell, former Chair of BLSC, and Treasurer of BLU
- Ian Matthews, BLU secretary
- Robin McIver, BLU Committee member

Ben outlined the user survey, noting the report had been sent to all BLU members ahead of the meeting. He noted it included the same questions and that 150 people had responded.

In commenting on the results of the report he emphasised that the replacement for the gym equipment scheduled in April had not been done.

He added that the issues raised in the report were not a failure of communications or engagement and thanked all the people involved in raising the profile of the issues.

He noted that Fusion does not have the ability to run this site properly and that revenues, which are significant, are being used for other means, at the expense of the fabric of the site, staff and customers.

He also noted that while it is clear from the survey what the issues are, he would like to talk about what comes next. He asked Lambeth Council to share their continuity plans and advised that BLU were looking at setting up a Charity in order to be able to take a more active role in the future of the facility. He is also looking to strengthen the Committee.

Ben explained that the BLU Committee was sounding an alarm in that the longer it takes to address the current issues the harder it will be and that substantial capital investment is likely to be required. He asked for a new operator to be accountable to users and for all money generated from Brockwell Lido to be used at the Facility.

He closed his report with a request for volunteers with time and energy to ensure that the site is run by and for the local community.

## **7. BLSC Chair report**

Marc M reminded everyone the Brockwell Lido Steering Committee comprises representatives of local community groups together with some of the BLU committee members.

The report was sent by email to BLU members ahead of the AGM.

Marc explained the BLSC has the right to receive information but no power to insist that anything is done. He outlined that it has been a year of broken promises. Per his report he urged Lambeth to refuse any price rises until the Service Delivery Plan matched Fusion's contractual commitments. A meeting was held in April with a site visit where concerns were raised over cleaning and maintenance and the poor state of the gym equipment, but the price increase was implemented the following day.

Marc asked for the quarterly meetings to become monthly, and he would like to thank Fusion to agreeing to this.

The ongoing issues are listed in the report, although Marc noted improvements in the turnstiles being repaired, and the paving stones and lockers fixed.

Marc noted he was pleased with the publicity that followed the newsletter issued by BLU. He acknowledged that Fusion was not happy and felt the reporting was one-sided. Marc added that while he had not accepted the criticism, the committee appreciates the efforts of the staff to keep the Lido open despite the lack of investment. He also added his thanks to Simon Harris for his contributions often out of office hours.

Marc stated his concerns about the future with Fusion being 300 days late filing their accounts. He urged the audience to accept reality but hopes that Fusion can turn things around in the next 2 week. In the event they can't, he stressed the need for a plan for a post Fusion Lido.

He noted that the committee have been working hard talking to other community run Lidos and to the chair of Herne Hill Velodrome, and to specialist advisors on community ventures. He added that he and Ben have personally incurred significant expenses such as obtaining legal advice on an application to the Charity Commission.

He added this was an opportunity to have the Lido run by a community venture and to return to the original vision 20 years ago of an oasis in the city rather than have the Lido treated as a cash cow. He noted it is good news that the Lido is currently profitable and therefore has a future and could be run for the benefit of the community.

Marc closed his report with a request for 3 things:

- A contingency plan from Lambeth
- Agreement in principle to consider a community proposal
- Volunteers with time and specialist skills

## **8. Lambeth Council**

Simon Harris thanked the Fusion staff on site. He also thanked Marc and Ben for investing so much time as volunteers.

He noted Lambeth are as frustrated as everyone else, and that the Council would continue to work with Fusion and with BLU.

He added that the lease is until 2031 and that Fusion has an important timeline coming up.

Councillor Donatus Anyanwu addressed the audience. He thanked the users and Lido staff and also Simon Harris.

He said that he knows there are challenges but that the Council will commit to the Lido and its users being protected. He gave his assurance that the Council would step in where needed and ensure that the Service delivers what it is supposed to deliver.

## 9. Questions from users

Q: What is the expiry date of the lease with Fusion?

A: May 2031.

Q: Does Active Lambeth want to take over the Lido?

A: There is currently a freeze on capital investment, so unlikely. An alternative is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party operator who would borrow to invest of a community venture as a charity.

Q: Will the alternatives be fully costed?

A: Agreement they would need to be.

Q: Is the Lido listed?

A: Yes grade II.

Q: How does this affect who runs it?

A: There are challenges with the heritage listing. However, this would be the same challenge for all operators. It was noted that at the start of the contract, Fusion supported the Lido to become viable.

Q: General query on when the following would be addressed: issues with disability access, faulty gym equipment, outdoor sauna, indoor spa and steam room, consistent cleaning.

A: Powerful points made. The lack of disability access is a legal issue that needs to be addressed, the other issues have already been raised.

Q: Why are there dogs in the dance studio on a Sunday morning? Why was the Lido not addressing concerns about allergies?

A: There is a puppy wellness session on Sundays. It was noted it is not unusual for accessibility dogs to be in a studio. It was acknowledged the question was a broader one on dogs and cleaning.

Action: Fusion to share their risk assessment on dogs being in a studio.

Q: Is a Charity a viable proposition?

A: There is a surplus, so in theory yes, but there is a caveat on the level of capital investment that will be required. The point of a charity is that it gives the organization the ability to fundraise.

Q: Is it time for a community group to act again? It was noted that the community previously saved the Lido and that Fusion initially put in £2.5m and there was a 5-to-7-year period when everything worked well.

Q: If Fusion exits, what would happen next?

A: Lambeth Council would need take it on or contract with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party operator or agree to a community venture.

Q: What is Lambeth's contingency plan?

A: Lambeth will work on a plan over the next few weeks, noting that the lease is complicated. The plan will need to be reviewed with the Councillors.

Q: Given Fusion has a risk of insolvency and Lambeth doesn't have a plan yet, how would the Lido not have to close?

A: BLU/BLSC working hard to prevent this from happening as especially a pool is very expensive to start up again once it has shut.

Helen Hayes MP expressed her thanks to the Lido staff, Lambeth and Brockwell user volunteers. She asked 2 questions:

- i. How confident is Fusion that there will be a resolution on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November?

Mark R noted that Fusion is a good charity apart from the issue of the loan. He listed the options: loan restructure; acquisition or administration. In the case of needing to go into administration he stressed that Fusion would work to ensure a long handover period.

- ii. What is Lambeth's plan?

Simon Harris replied that he had met with the newly appointed director and was confident that the Facility would remain open.

Marc M reiterated his thanks to Fusion for levelling with the public and for being candid. He closed this section with an appeal for volunteers with time and expertise.

## **10. BLU financial report**

Ben gave the report on behalf of Steven Trowell, who resigned from the Committee recently due to work commitments. Ben thanked Steven for his contributions to BLU and BLSC.

£2430 in account this year, £2449 last year.

The report was approved.

## **11. BLU elections**

BLU Committee members standing down: Ian Matthews, Stephen Trowell, Robin McIver

BLU Committee members re-standing: Marc Meryon, Ben Longman (Chair), Tina McKenzie O'Neill, Carole Stagg, Margie Patrick (Secretary)

BLU Committee nominations: Hugo Delamain, Anna Jane, Lucia Garcia, Emma Rowley-Conwy, Celine Cluzel, Trudie Goodwin, Kate Rist

All nominees and committee members standing again were voted in.

## **12. BLSC appointments**

BLU nominees will be subject to nomination and committee decision post AGM.

Other nominees:

Giles Gibson – Herne Hill Forum

Susy Hogarth - Brockwell Park Community Partners

Sophia Marsh – Herne Hill Society

Michael Boyle – Friends of Brockwell Park

## **13. AOB**

None