
Ilkley Community Project Ideas for the Pool and Lido

1. Background

The local community who use the pool and lido and local stakeholders (e.g. sports clubs, arts groups) have met twice as a response to the Bradford Review of non-statutory services, and with the sole objective of securing the Ilkley Pool and Lido for the future.

Local people understand how vital the Pool and Lido are to people in Ilkley supporting their health and wellbeing, key skills for children, and as a core part of the Ilkley community identity. The community is prepared to do what it takes to ensure our Pool and Lido remains a vibrant facility now and in the future.

We have been meeting with Bradford Council Sports and Leisure managers to ensure that, no matter what the review proposes, we collaborate to secure income and footfall for the Pool and Lido, and to be ready if there is a scenario where Bradford Council cannot, for now, run the facility.

The Strategic Director Report (March 24) sets out the range of options being considered, in the context of a £60K saving in 2024/5 and £1,250,000 in 2025/6. The 3 options for the Ilkley Pool and Lido and all pools in Bradford are:

1. Core Sites - Steady state in terms of ownership and access
2. Marginal Sites where there is the possibility of keeping them open through collaboration or asset transfer, but could also close.
3. Closure Sites

Ilkley Pool and Lido is reported to be running at 280K loss.

Whilst the Council review is based on not just costs but also access, inequalities, state of assets etc. As a community we hope that by closing the 280K gap, and securing funding to sustain the estate, we can, in the first instance, ensure the Ilkley pool and lido remain open.

This paper sets out these early ideas and potential projects.

2. Methodology

In the few weeks since the 5th March report, Ilkley Community has formed the Ilkley Pool and Lido Community Group. Our aim is to

- (a) Mobilise the assets of the community in service to the future of the Ilkley Pool and Lido

- (b) Gather intelligence on best practice in pools and lidos where they have a sustainable approach; on the collaborative models that are the most successful; and pragmatic immediate ideas to increase income and reduce costs to bridge the gap. The group has joined the Future Lidos community and has expert advisory support from this community, and consultants who have worked on similar programmes of change.
- (c) Understand the financial basis for the current operation of the Pool and Lido in order to provide fresh perspectives on where income can be generated and savings made, and to prepare for a more substantial collaboration if needed. Understand the best organisational model for future collaboration if needed. The Group has a partnership and Legal entities working group.

We have held two public meetings, to begin a process of coproduction of ideas where the community can make a contribution. We have focused on the short term (immediately closing the gap) as well as the medium and longer term. The ideas would benefit from a more collaborative codesign process with Bradford Council.

These ideas are set out in this paper as a starter for discussion and action. These are not formal proposals for review. We continue to ask for a discursive approach where we work together (the Group and BC) to enable impactful projects to emerge, and this paper is provided in the spirit of setting out a starting point for that discussion.

Parameters

The project ideas must have an immediate impact on the current financial deficit by generating footfall and income, and/or reducing costs. If some costs need to be incurred to implement these project ideas, then the new community group we have established could generate funds for jointly agreed start-up on projects.

Next Steps

The Group is undertaking a survey of the Ilkley Residents to better understand preferences and usage. BC is being asked to contribute questions that can inform the review and current service in this survey.

The Ideas

Many of these ideas will not be new to the Bradford Council team, but we hope that the initial work we have done means that the ideas can be looked at again in the light of the commitment from the community to support the pool and lido and help eliminate the current deficit. The ideas generated from two public events, with circa 100 people at each event, resulting in a participation group of 400+ on our mailing list, are provided in the table below.

Short Term

- Advice from other Pools and Lidos: Only open the cafe if it is profitable. Otherwise bring in coffee vans/ food stalls and charge ground rent and profit on sales (short term) or reduce service to kiosk type service only. Sub contract (medium term).
- OPENING HOURS - better align with lido use e.g. early mornings and post-work; ensure consistency and/or advertise opening times (incl. on website/FB) so people know when food and drink is available. Advice from Ilkley cafes is 'the opening hours are the opening hours' if it's not predictable, people will behave as if it's shut. More income comes from regular and predictable opening hours.
Early morning coffee and breakfast: Need to work out coffees x days for morning use as an estimate, based on previous sales, and set a goal; monitor morning sales and footfall. Could e.g. try for month 1 and see if there is uptake, advertising with the use it or lose it ethos
- SUPPLIERS AND PRICING - review supplier options and see if more than one (Brakes) can be used; compare wholesale prices; review cafe price points. Pricing must generate profit (cover all cafe costs). Profit is aligned to being able to move suppliers quickly, and to good pricing. Ilkley cafes have offered to review the prices set at the Lido cafe. They tell us that significant income can be generated from cold drinks and goods. Also at La Stazione they say that they review their suppliers every week as bulk goods vary hugely week to week/ supplier to supplier in terms of costs. The key to profitability is the ability to flex suppliers. La Stazione owner and manager have offered to look at the cafe pricing and operations at the Lido for free to provide advice.
- STAFFING & VOLUNTEER SUPPORT - Secure a enthusiastic catering qualified leader for the cafe (share on Ilkley Chat and partner with catering college in the future); discuss what role volunteers could play and what requirements/restrictions would be (could range from hygiene-rated volunteers helping in the cafe to expand the food offer); to organising coffee mornings and bake sales or helping with a cafe makeover. However to ensure a reliable and quality controlled offer in the short term we suggest the option of pop up street food and drink vans is a better option as there is at least guaranteed profit to the Pool and Lido.

Medium Term

- ACCESS FOR NON-SWIMMERS - discuss ideas around opening an access hatch at the back for takeaways - need to consider issues such as pedestrian safety, traffic flow, road markings, litter etc. Cost benefit appraisal required.

3.1.4 Potential Income / Profit from these Ideas

- This lies with BMDC in terms of the impact of the pricing after review with Max and Enzo at La Staz who will support price pitch at the optimum for profitability; and understanding of the full cost in order to assess the impact of additional opening to align with pool hours.. Pricing must cover costs and the aim is to at least break even and take out the deficit related to the Cafe. Minimum target 10K additional profit.
- Increased income from pop-up rental space; increased income from sales as capacity increases.

3.1.5 What is needed now

- Full information on staff costs. We need a full picture of income and expenditure of the cafe as a discrete service.
- Costs of putting in an external hatch/ service for people not using the pool. Information requested.

3.2 Retail: Merchandise and Sales

3.2.1 Context

Pools and Lidos generate significant income from sales. We don't as yet understand the overall profit from sales at Ilkley Pool and Lido. The site is constrained in terms of capacity for retail. This lends itself to an online sales option with some visibility at the Pool, and to maximising rentals.

3.2.2 Aim

To generate 50K profit total on sales 2023-24 from hire & sales.

3.2.3 Ideas from other Pools & Lidos

Short Term

- RETAIL-sell goggles costumes swim hats sunscreen swim rings dry robes flip flops wet bags Note could be done by 'Drop shipping.
- RETAIL- SPORTEX contract (requires stock on site)
- MERCHANDISE items for sale with our logo-xmas cards calendars,recyclable cups (maybe install a free water fountain),lido jigsaw,towels and and and Issues. Immediately we need to sell the stock currently stored on site.
- RETAIL AND RENTAL. WETSUIT SALES AND HIRE there are very few suppliers in the north - its hard to buy a suit except online (and wetsuits need fitting) and hiring will be really great for helping more people swim in the cold. We are scoping this out at present with wetsuit suppliers to offer fitting service for sales (% on income coming to Pool and Lido) and hire services.
- RENTAL. Deckchairs. We are scoping Ilkley Companies to sponsor a deck-chair (with their logo) for rental at the Lido
- OTHER-a "swap shop" for sports clothes/equipment,pay a small fee and swap children's kits/rackets etc Cakebakes

Medium/ Long Term

- Explore a CHARITY SHOP in town with proceeds going to pool. Note for our area there is a lot of competition from charity shops and ground rent is high.

3.2.4 Potential Income / Profit from these Ideas

- Hampton pool has an income of 100K and makes 50% profit on sales. They sell a lot of goods from accessories to swimming, to swimming kit.
- 15% on sales in year 1 from Drop Shipping.
- SPORTEX delivers 20K direct income for a pool our capacity.
- Settle Pool Charity shop delivers 150K income (note limited competition in the town)
- Income from Hire/rental still being scoped

3.2.5 What is needed now

- Information on current retail income and costs (and therefore profit). Information requested.
- What are the contract limitations (space, current contracts and profit on those)
- Inventory of branded stock that needs selling this season. Information requested.

3.3 Reducing Waste

3.3.1 Context

Significant increase in energy bills will be driving the deficit. Sports England provided relief in 2023 but its not known if this is recurrent.

3.3.2 Aim

Seek energy saving measures to ensure energy bills are lowest possible.

3.3.3 Ideas from other Pools & Lidos

Short Term

- Pool Cover. Without a Pool cover we understand from Tadcaster that the Pool and Lido without a cover will be generating a £500 a week increased cost in energy. If BMDC can't provide a pool cover, Ilkley Pool and Lido Community Group will fundraise for one. Reduce Pool temperature. Need to ensure lower temperatures doesn't reduce utilisation, and need to know the impact on the energy bill.
- Low maintenance garden and grounds using Volunteers
- Other energy reduction options: Better insulate plant room, Automated dosing system for chemicals, Replace lighting with LED, dimmers

Medium/ Long Term

- Solar panels - requires investment. Pool and Lido community group could fundraise for this option,
- Data centre

3.3.4 Potential Income / Profit from these Ideas

- Data centre savings of 80K on energy bill for a 25m pool. Requires a 20 year contract. No set up costs. Deep Green <https://deepgreen.energy/host-a-data-centre/>.
- Solar panels generate 10% of electricity bill at Tadcaster

3.3.5 What is needed now

- The current metered energy costs, and we need monthly costs to see the impact of temperature reductions. Also need to ensure lower temperatures don't reduce utilisation. Information requested. Information requested.
- The cost of solar panels and how far BMDC has already progressed this. Information requested.
- Understanding of the planning/ logistics of a data centre and BMDC appetite. It generated a huge income.

3.4 Lido Events

3.4.1 Context

Events at the Pool and Lido are successful, and are a way of driving more regular utilisation as well as income generation.

3.4.2 Aim

To secure a 20K additional income (profit) to the Pool and Lido, and to drive regular utilisation.

3.4.3 Ideas from other Pools & Lidos

Short Term

- Improve income on current events - Dog Day and Solstice swim (we are comparatively under priced)
- Full Moon Swims every month - see our notes for timetable 6 events per annum
- Monthly timetable of events usually a Full Moon swim plus one other event a month - see Appendix for examples but we think there should be 2 events a month April - february
- Secure lifeguards for Ilkley Pool and Lido Community events and cold water swims (investigating with NOWCA/Leeds Dock/Bingley Lifesavers and Ilkley Swimming Club to provide a list we can use). We can then rent the Lido and profit can go to the Pool and Lido under a shared agreement.
- Sauna Weeks to increase footfall in cool weather - 2 long weekends staffed by volunteers. A big success at other Lidos in increasing use of the Lido in cooler weather. These are stand along units that are hired in. IP&LCG take the risk on the unit costs, and manages the bookings and income paying a fee to the Pool and Lido
- Ongoing challenges (swimmer of the month - attendance, length of swims) This is a marginal income generator but does bring a sense of energy to the lido.

Medium/ Long Term

- Restart Winter Swim Club as an IP&LC event covering full costs plus profit. This is dependent on BC risk issues. Other Council run pools are operating all year round opening in unheated pools. We understand the concerns re flooding and risk assessment. Also depends on knowing the costs of running the Lido for a winter week. Note the massive national increase in cold water swimming across the UK

3.4.4 Potential Income / Profit from these Ideas

- Aiming for 20K in the first year dependent on opening the Lido over the winter months.
- Double dog day income to £1200 to be comparable with other Lidos..
- Target income for Solstice swims £2,500
- Full Moon Swims: Target income £4K on 6 events.
- Sauna - 2 weekends generated 4.5K with volunteer staffing

3.4.5 What is needed now

- The costs of renting /opening the Lido for events out of season, and in season. Information requested.

- The costs of lighting for evening events in the Lido. Information requested. This can be funded by Ilkley Pool and Community Group.

3.5 Utilisation

3.5.1 Context

The Pool and Lido have capacity in comparison to all the Pools and Lidos we have investigated, for higher utilisation driven by an understanding of the market locally (demographic) and tied into the review in terms of other pools remaining open. Demand in Ilkley is for lessons and clubs with long waiting lists for both. The timetable needs to reflect this demand to increase utilisation. From looking at the data supplied, clubs and lessons are much more profitable than other entry footfall.

3.5.2 Aim

Optimise utilisation for a regular and local customer base through some changes to timetable in terms of focus of sessions, and longer opening.

3.5.3 Ideas from other Pools & Lidos

Short Term

- Look at opening hours of the pool - early mornings, evenings, weekend afternoons (for lessons and clubs) as per other pools - possibly by hiring out to clubs etc. NOTE demand in Ilkley is for lessons and clubs. Pools operate timetables that run 06.00 - 22.00 weekdays and 09.00 - 17.00 weekends. We need to decide the best use of the pool for local population needs - a small pool, can't be everything to everybody - needs a strategy in terms of usage.
- It is possible to do more than one thing in the pool at a time to increase income - look at split sessions.
- At the public meeting the main issue in terms of using the changing rooms, particularly cleanliness. Pools we have talked to all employ cleaning staff as they say this was a major driver to footfall.. This is particularly important in the summer when the lido is open too.

Medium/ Long Term

- Medium term - Refurbish all changing facilities to make it fit for usage. This requires a significant grant/ bidding approach from the community to secure the funds.

3.1.4 Potential Income / Profit from these Ideas

- Depends on BMDC discussion to release time on the timetable for more income generating activities

3.1.5 What is needed now

- User Group review of timetable with BMDC. We need to sit down with the pool staff and review the timetable. We have example timetables from across the country. We have offered this already. Waiting for clearance for joint IP&LCG, Pool Staff meeting.
- Market research on what pools people use and why, and why not Ilkley (if they don't).

3.6 Classes

3.6.1 Context

The Pool and Lido staff are already scoping additional classes.

3.6.2 Aim

Our role would be to optimise this and generate capacity for the future.

3.6.3 Ideas from other Pools & Lidos

Short Term

- Work with pool staff to increase the number of classes on offer and introduce fitness and wellness programmes. We can provide social media and comms to members (use it or lose it). We can work with the staff to secure and support class uptake
- Lido Scuba diving, Canoeing, paddleboarding (lido staff looking into all of these). Only use a portion of the Lido for these activities so you can also generate regular user income.

Medium/ Long Term

- Grow our own personal trainers. A train the trainers programme to develop reliable and quality capacity.
- Investigate setting up of kids clubs after school and/or during holidays

3.6.4 Potential Income / Profit from these Ideas

- As yet we don't know the Ilkley interest or what is planned already. This is a collaborative opportunity to maximise uptake and income

3.6.5 What is needed now

- Market research to investigate interest in additional specific classes.
- What is planned in terms of classes for this season and costs associated.
- Discussion with BMDC pool staff.

3.7 Sports Hub Collaboration

3.7.1 Context

There is potential for a much stronger collaboration with sports clubs in Ilkley providing a home for the Ilkley harriers and Cycling clubs and increasing activity with the Triathlon Club and Tennis Club. In addition ground usage could be increased through this collaboration.

3.7.2 Aim

Our role would be to maximise the whole grounds through a sports collaboration

3.7.3 Ideas from the public events - Medium Term

- Increase utilisation: Community/Joint Membership. Could ILTSC/Harriers membership include Pool/Lido membership in some way? This could potentially increase numbers and allow cross-selling. community ownership of the pool/lido

- Reduce costs: Sharing equipment and “services” (eg grounds maintenance) across clubs and sites
- Increasing footfall and income: More sporting events starting and finishing at the pool and lido. The key issue here is access to facilities - toilets, changing, registration, meeting space cafe etc and parking. The income generation would likely to be largely the cafe, and ancillary activity rather than charging the event organisers over and above covering costs
- Increasing footfall and income: Use of site as a focus for multi-sport-interclub competition and/or sports festival. Proximity to the cricket clubs and Rugby club gives added potential.

3.7.4 Potential Income / Profit from these Ideas

- We need to work with BC to model the costs and income for additional changed sessions. BUT overall clubs and lessons make more money per hour than any other utilisation.

3.7.5 What is needed now

- Joint discussions across the Clubs with BMDC
- Costings for Grounds Access.
- Review of joint membership option

4. Additional Issues for Generating Income

4.1 Online Bookings

The Pool and Lido Group are bringing community assets where possible to support the pool and lido. In doing so we have secured some intelligence from other pools and lidos about operational issues. A key one is online bookings

This is also from Jubilee Park:

2015 34,517 swimmers over the season

2016 online booking introduced with 40,497 swimmers

2017 10% increase from 2016 to 44,245

2018 90% increase from 2016 to 77,151

2019 onwards (except for 2020 this increase has been sustained with numbers around 77,000 66,000, 83,000 and 70,000 for 2019-23)

Now a whopping 2/3 of swims come from online bookings (1/3 members and 1/3 non members) with final 1/3 on the door sales.

Pre-booking a session guarantees entry within the first hour. They can get 250 people through within 10 minutes as opposed to 100 people an hour through the queue. Although the pool capacity is 190 people, like Ilkley Lido, they have large grounds that can accommodate 1000 people. What they find is that the fast track bookings tend to begin leaving as the queue filters through so they never reach capacity and overall increase volume of swims per session and season.

"I would recommend savoy systems tomhood@savoysystems.co.uk . We have been using them since 2016 and they have at least one other lido. They are continuously updating their systems and are very helpful and quick responding. The council will almost certainly have its own booking system but often these don't do what you want them too and so its well worth looking at other options. If your looking at doing something like Jubilee Park then savoy systems have access to our systems and could help get this set up-happy to help them."

Joe Stanhope, Chief Operating officer, Jubilee Park Woodhall Spa

4.2 All year opening

More to follow on this but other Lidos are saying by opening all year they build a loyal and sustainable customer base rather than starting again every year. This has not only increased usage by staying open longer it has increased usage through the previous regular opening months. More to follow on this.

4.3 Volunteers

Any of the ideas above are even more profitable when supported by volunteers. We are building a volunteer database to support IP&LCG/ BMDC events and activities. We have a current participation group of 400 people.

5. Additional Ideas that need scoping with BMDC

5.1 Better use of the Grounds

We are exploring this with ILTC in terms of the Tennis Courts, but there is also the potential of providing a Shipping Container for use by Clubs, Mens Shed, Arts groups for community workshops (who would also use the cafe).

5.2 Community Arts

There is the potential to develop a partnership with the Arts community for events (theatre/ poetry), for sales (art work - much like the Manor house) and a collaboration with the Manor House for outdoor arts events. The lido could be 'sold' as an Arts Hub. There is scope to work with artists to produce 'response' pieces of work - which could potentially be turned into merchandise. We can also explore the potential of working with the Rugby Club re camping overflow. We can tie in with larger events such as the Literature Festival, Bradford City of Culture, Ilkley Carnival and Marathon

6. Summary

This is our intelligence to date. All of this requires discussion with BC in terms of viability, appetite and cost benefit analysis. Below is set out some potential with estimates based on partial information.

6.1 Short term

Overall at this very early stage of investigation it seems that there are some very quick 'wins' in terms of closing the 280K gap as follows:

1. Cafe Pricing - cafe currently at circa 10K deficit and it should be making a profit. Conservatively if we aimed for say 20K profit on sales, more sales through opening hours linked to swimming times, and linking in more sales to events.
2. Pool cover - at 2K a month cost without the cover.
3. Events at 2 a month - increasing prices and adding in events (all year) circa 20K
4. Merchandise and Sales -Suggest an increase by 50K
5. Online ticketing aim for 10% increase of sales = circa 35K
6. Utilisation - securing better per hour income as far as possible through timetabling swim classes and clubs. Income TBC.

6.2 Medium term

The big issue is savings on energy through a data centre and solar panels. If we can get 60% of the energy bills covered then on 21/22 prices that's a reduction of £135K in costs. Another 10% from Solar and its £160K.

18.04.2024

Appendix: Potential Timetable for Lido Events

(a) Increase Usage / Build on Current Usage

1. DOGGY DAY - add in another session as this sold out quickly and put the price up. Current prices £3 adult and £2 junior. Note Penzance Jubilee Lido charges £6 per adult and £3 per dog. Target: Double the income to £1200
2. SOLSTICE DAY - Add in a Winter Solstice? 21st Dec? Increase price on solstice swim and increase income from cafe. Target income £2500

(b) Add in regular events every month

3. FULL MOON SWIMS - a regular event (monthly) starting in May at 9pm
It will need lighting / glowsticks - need to ask the staff about how to organise it so they are confident they can see people. Other Lidos do it with glowsticks. See details below. Target income on 6 events is £4K
4. THEMED EVENTS AROUND CELEBRATIONS (which may or may not include swimming!) Target income is 1K per event = 10K
Suggest:
20th April 2025 Easter- Egg Hunt at the lido
May - Full Moon Swim; and Lido opening day
June - Full Moon Swim; and Swim the Channel Challenge
July - Full Moon swim; and a late night opening night in conjunction with eg the Ilkley Half Marathon - maybe a music night. Could we ask Bini bre/ Martinez?
August - Full Moon Swim; and a Late night with the arts (like Bard in the yard)
Sept - Full Moon Swim; and the Marie Curie Synchronised swim; Ilkley Triathlon
Oct - Full Moon Swim; and Dog Day(s); and Diwali event.
Nov- Full Moon Swim; and Halloween event at the Lido (no swimming)
Dec - Xmas Swim (reinvigorate the very successful Xmas Swim)
Jan - NY Day swim (its very popular everywhere)
Feb - if we do something can it be linked to beer festival or chinese new year?

FULL MOON SWIMS INFORMATION ON DATES

Full Moon Calendar 2024

- May 23, 2024 Flower Moon - 9-10pm
So dubbed for the blooms typically growing in glorious profusion in May.
- June 21, 2024 [Strawberry Moon](#)
9-10pm While a full, red moon might resemble a strawberry, this moon is named for the fruit that's usually ready to pick around the time of it.
- July 21, 2024 [Buck Moon](#)
9-10pm This moon coincides with the time of the year when male deer grow new antlers.
- August 19, 2024 [Sturgeon Moon](#) 9-10pm

Judging by its name, the fishing is good during this moon—especially for sturgeon, found in the Great Lakes and other northern bodies of water.

- September 17, 2024 [Harvest Moon](#) 8-9pm The full moon closest to the fall equinox, the Harvest Moon may occur occasionally in October. It is during the helpful light of this moon that corn is often harvested. In 2024, this moon will be the first full supermoon of the year.
- October 17, 2024 [Hunter's Moon](#) 7-8m
This moon marked a crucial time for hunters to store up meat before winter. The Hunter's Moon also was considered a feast day for Native Americans and many Western Europeans. This year, it will also be a full supermoon, the last of the year.
- November 15, 2024 Beaver Moon 6-7pm
Trapping beavers, prized for their warm fur, was popular during this lunation's activity.
- December 15, 2024 (4:02 AM) Cold Moon 6-7pm (OR we miss this one and do Xmas swim)
This moon marks the start of the year's coldest months.

2025

- Sunday Jan 12th Wolf Moon. Said to be so named for the wolf's hungry howling during mid-winter nights