Ilkley Pool and Lido Community Group Annual Report 2025

1. Introduction

This is the first Annual Report from the Ilkley Pool and Lido Community Group, and covers the period from when the group was constituted in April 2024 to our first AGM in September 2025.

Information on our Core Committee of volunteers is available here. The current committee comprises Becky Malby (Chair), Paul Stephens (Secretary), Phil Joyner (Treasurer), Carl Akeroyd, Jacki Barson (Joint Secretary), Annette Bearpark, Cath Brownlee, Chris Cody, Juliet O'Callaghan, John Pegington, Debbie Rosen, Davy Simpson, Roger Tilbrook. And we thank Di Lury, Joanne Bown and Jo Tinker for being fantastic members of the committee in the first year.

We also thank our subgroups who alongside Core Committee members include:

Finance: Sue Harris, Jens Schneider, Stuart McKinnon Evans
Events and Merchandise: Clare Brear, Lisa Dougherty, Sarah Edwards, Liz Hibbett, Jo Tinker, Clare Waddington and previously Louise Millar
Comms: Jo Welding, Dan Stapleton, Lisa Dougherty, Sarah Edwards
Gardening: Drue Wiggins, Alison Stretton, Alison Thompson, Anne McNaughton, Judy Screeton, William, Ken Whittington.

Once the threat of closure was lifted, the IP&LCG has focused on supporting income generation and access, the long term future of the Pool and Lido through the partnership group, operational feedback, running events, and fundraising. When we knew that community ownership was not an option BMDC was going to pursue, the committee decided to continue as a community membership group, and set up our Membership and Supporter options. Our Membership currently stands at 152 and our Supporters at 49 (as of 18th August 2025).

2. Bradford Council's Strategy and the Ilkley Response

2.1 Bradford Council's Strategic Review and Sports Strategy

The IP&LCG was formed in 2024 as a direct response to Bradford Council's Strategic Review of Leisure Services (March 2024), charged with delivering considerable savings. The review included all pools in the district, and for Ilkley also included the grounds and tennis courts. The March 2024 report noted that "Bradford has the lowest level of provision of all the comparable councils in West Yorkshire" and set out the ambition to review the various operating models, from partnership models for managing operations to fundraising by Friends groups. The review paper raised the issue of energy costs, energy performance and the importance of energy saving technology. The options in the paper were for pools to be identified as Core, Marginal or For Closure. Ilkley was identified as 'marginal' and the paper set out the need to work with the Ilkley Community to determine the future of our Pool and Lido.

The Strategic Review had a series of deadlines for decisions, but finally determined at the end of 2024 that, as set out originally, BMDC was underprovided for pools and that Ilkley Pool and Lido would not close. Over the 2024 period, alongside the review, BMDC sought to stabilise the finances by increasing income and utilisation and reducing costs.

Once the Review decision was reached, the next imperative for Leisure Services was to have a vision for a **longer-term** approach to the pools in the District. BMDC established the process of developing a coproduced Sports Facilities Strategy 2026-2036 to meet local needs, plan for sustainable facilities and buildings, and explore potential operating models (as BMDC is one of the few councils in the country that directly manages its sports facilities).

"*This will allow all sports facilities across the District to be explored and will look to create a robust operating model that is modern and efficient*." Cllr Ferriby November 2024 (BMDC press release)

To date, we understand that work on this strategy has not started. With Council elections on the horizon for 2026, it seems unlikely that a strategy will be developed and signed off before then. Our view remains that this strategy is needed to secure the future for the pool and lido and to provide the robust operating model as set out by Cllr Ferriby.

2.2 Ilkley Community Response to the Review and Strategy

In response to the Strategic Review the Ilkley Pool and Lido Community Group held a series of Public Meetings, inviting BMDC alongside our elected representatives at Town and District levels and our MP. This resulted in a report, Ilkley Community Project Ideas for the Pool and Lido (April 2024), which set out the immediate needs in the short term including to review cafe pricing, establish online bookings, review timetabling to increase opening hours and improve access, provide a pool cover to save energy costs, run events twice a month at the Lido and bring income in through merchandise. Medium term proposals included solar panels.

745 people responded to our Community Survey, with responses from across the District. The results mirrored our previous report with an emphasis on longer opening hours and online booking but added to this was significant support for better changing rooms (a major reason for using neighbouring pools in Leeds and Skipton) and a better cafe, open for wider access to non-pool users.

We also established an Advisory Board of Lido leaders[1] from across the country to share their best practice, so that we could offer advice and expertise to BMDC. Our discussions identified the significant unrealised potential at the pool and lido and led to our briefing to Bradford Council as our contribution to the review of our pool and lido: Key Issues for the BMDC Sports Facilities Service Review July 24. Our view was and is that everything should be done to make Ilkley Pool and Lido viable and successful, securing its longer-term future. Other pools and lidos around the country are successful, and Ilkley Pool and Lido can be too if it draws on how they operate, for example by matching swimming sessions and opening hours to demand. Other pools are open longer, have more lessons, have different approaches to charging, partner with their community to offer a range of events, and cost less to run.

Some of the proposed community ideas were put into practice by Ilkley Pool and Lido staff moving to two sessions at the Lido during the daytime, and increased ticket prices. Alongside this there was a national reduction in energy costs. Our Finance subgroup pulled all these together, along with the rest of the suggestions and costed up their impact to provide a conservative summary of the impact on the financial bottom line. Our view was that there is over £323,000 net impact from the proposals for immediate change and from the current changes that have been put into action. We took information from other pools and lidos to benchmark these figures, as well as using data provided by BMDC. Our conservative calculations demonstrate that the potential from very marginal changes at Ilkley Pool and Lido, and show that the facility is viable this year, and it is sustainable in the longer term if there is a modernised approach to its management that responds to the needs of its customer base. The report can be accessed here: Impact on Financial Position of Outline Projects for consideration. Alongside this the Finance subgroup also advised the IP&LCG Committee on viable alternatives if BMDC decided to pursue alternative ownership models as suggested in the BMDC March Review paper.

As a result of the intensive investigations and community discussion the committee's overall view was and continues to be that:

1. There is wealth of untapped assets in the community, and that the Council can and should engage with the community to bring those assets to bear to secure a thriving vibrant Pool and Lido that meets local and district health and wellbeing needs, acts as a key partner in the sports services locally, and supports the town as a thriving tourist destination.

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[1] David Wilford, Bramley Baths; Chris Porter, Tadcaster pool ; Ian Orton, Settle Pool; Annabel Wright Jesus Green Lido (unheated); Bill Hanley, Hathersage Lido (heated).

2. At the outset we were concerned that we could contribute to securing the short-term future of Ilkley Pool and Lido but that the review should lead to service modernisation to secure its longer term future. More of the same does not protect the Pool and Lido's future. It is our view that whilst immediate service improvements will bring savings and new income, there has to be a longer term approach to the operational management of the facility to secure sustainable utilisation and income, alongside capital programmes to protect the facilities for the future, and reduce their costs (e.g. energy). We will be taking this to the Annual review meeting with BMDC.

3. Current Collaboration with BMDC

3.1 BMDC Activity at the Pool and Lido

This year the BMDC has provided regular Yoga and Circuit Training at the Lido, the Solstice Swim and Dog Days (now two), as well as collaborating with Bradford City of Culture 2025 (BCOC) including an outdoor cinema at the Lido and the 90th birthday celebrations. The change to two swimming sessions daily at the Lido in the school holidays has allowed for pool maintenance and cleaning and should have increased income on hot days.

The Swimming club has additional sessions now on Wednesday morning and evening. The Swimming Club has 180 members swimming up to 5 times a week and numbers continue to grow.

3.2 Partnership Group

A newly established Partnership Group between BMDC and IP&LCG was established with the aim to:

" ..work together to secure a thriving sustainable future for the Ilkley Pool and Lido and maximise the potential of the wider site, through effective communication, sharing of information, and the involvement of stakeholders." (Terms of Reference Dec 2024)

The Group's remit/responsibilities are:

1. To act as a consultation forum for proposed operational changes at the Pool/Lido
2. To consider project ideas and other contributions that will enhance the offering at the Pool/Lido, increase income and/or save money. This will include considering business plans for specific projects.
3. To develop a joint understanding of the budget and other issues affecting the operation of the facility.
4. To make the most of local assets that could support the Pool/Lido, develop partnerships and a long-term plan for the facility and surrounding site.

As can be seen from this annual report, some progress has been made, but the delay to the District-wide strategy is probably the reason why we have made little progress on developing a plan to ensure the long-term future of Ilkley Pool and Lido.

We are currently awaiting a date for an Annual Review with BMDC, and the establishment of an Operations Group as we need a forum for sharing logistical and operational issues as they emerge.

4. Ilkley Pool and Lido Community Group Activity

4.1 Events.

The first Full Moon Swim took place in August 2024, and is now an established event at the Lido, currently drawing 450 people each time, with ticket sales generating circa £3k income per event for our fundraising. At the August FMS circa 70% of those that came were first time visitors to the Lido, with people coming from Kent, the Wirral and Liverpool, Birmingham, and across the District and Yorkshire. This event is a major showcase for the Lido.

We collaborated with BMDC and BCOC for the Lido's 90th community picnic and fun day, and with Yorkshire Life Aquatics to put on "Bollywood Meets Hollywood' synchronised swimming and dancing event.

4.2 Merchandise

The annual Ilkley Pool and Lido calendar is to be repeated after a successful first year with revenue at £833. We are stepping up sales of memorabilia with the new swimming hats, Lido 90th badges and wonderful 90th Tote Bags. We still have to find a way to sell items outside of our events.

4.3 Sports Hub

One of the key ideas from the community events was to bring the sports groups closer together to collaborate on space, access, and facilities. Ilkley Town Council hosted the first Sports and Wellbeing Hub meeting at ILTC, and a number of small groups formed to work on:

1. Sharing space and resources for the sports clubs that have no space or limited space. One group is going to find out what actual space there is available across the clubs to see if they can work out a plan.
2. Collaborating on marketing - there is so much going on in Ilkley; can we collaborate so that people can join in with the existing events and activities? There is lots going on at the Lido for instance but not everyone knows about it (e.g. the cinema).
3. A Youth Sports Pass - working out a pass that can be used for all sports, but which we can subsidise for children and young people that can't afford to access our clubs/ facilities.
4. A cycle path along the river and walking path extending from the current one and including the woods. Starting with space for cycling proficiency but having the ambition for walking / cycling that joins up the sports places, without using the main road.
5. A sports festival - with 'taster' events using the Pool and Lido surrounding grounds to start in 2026.

6. A container space for the 'Sheds' group for practical skills/ work and relationships (originally conceived from the Men's Shed idea) - this idea will be taken into the partnerships group between BMDC and the Ilkley Pool and Lido Community Group.

4.4 Community Swim

At the end of the season we thank our members and volunteers with a Community Swim and Social, sharing food, swimming and music - capturing the essence of the facility as a place for friendship, swimming and a love of Ilkley.

4.5 The Amazing Tote Bag historical display

A colourful and creative exhibition that brings the story of Ilkley Lido to life through the medium of tote bags is on display in the town. Created by local artist, gallery owner and Ilkley Pool and Lido community group member Joanne Tinker, this one-of-a-kind visual timeline celebrates 90 years of the Lido's history. There are key moments, images, and memories beautifully printed on reusable tote bags. They're going on display alongside vintage swimming costumes and hats, kindly loaned by Ilkley Playhouse to bring the eras to life.

The exhibition was originally unveiled during the Lido's 90th birthday celebrations and is now on public display at the Clarke Foley Community Hub. You can see pictures and find out more here

4.5 The Gardening Group

We are now so used to the lovely flowers and planters that it is easy to take them for granted. The Grounds WhatsApp group is alive with organising watering, compost, planting, and reviving so that we can all enjoy the lovely flowers at the lido. Thank you to all the gardening volunteers ably coordinated by Drue Wiggins.

5. Current Issues

5.1 Community Survey

There were 40 responses to the recent Community Update Survey. This is a small number. Overall the survey themes are:

1. Support for and appreciation of all the events provided at the LIdo this year
2. Concern about the impact of parking charges on usage for visitors and observations that there are less young people using the Lido after school. Overall utilisation seems to be good because of the weather.
3. Online booking has potential, but it needs improvement.
4. Pool and Lido members who pay a membership fee appreciate the value for money but think there should be better access for pre-paid members when the pool is busy (e.g. member only opening hour).
5. People remain frustrated as they were in the last survey last year by the cafe and changing room facilities, and commented that BMDC communication could be improved particularly for changed opening hours, new events, and session availability.

5.2 The Long-term Future of the Pool and Lido

We remain concerned that the Strategy appears to be stalled and are working with our elected representatives on this.

5.3 Fundraising

We are struggling to spend the funds raised by IP&LCG to support Pool and Lido activities. Currently we have £13,500 available. Our approach has been to ask BMDC what they want us to fund, and then for the partnership group to agree the priorities and oversee the expenditure. To date we have discussed two options, a replacement inflatable for the main pool and additional equipment for gym and yoga groups. At present the simplified process we have proposed for the purchase remains under review by BMDC. We do have an agreement to spend £1,707 on equipment for classes at the Lido. That leaves £11,793 which remains unspent.

In the event of BMDC not being able to spend the raised funds on specific projects and items, we will be making a proposal at the AGM to support the Sports Hub meeting commitment to young people, offering a subsidy (to be determined) to children accessing free school meals in Ilkley who cannot afford to access swimming. This will help encourage future use of the facilities and support the legacy of the Pool and Lido.

5.4 The Impact of Car Parking and Increased Entry Fees at the Pool and Lido

We have asked for an assessment of the impact of both the increase in ticket prices but also the new car parking charges, on who is using the Pool and Lido and the overall utilisation. Across the country Lidos are reporting a bumper year. Whilst we encouraged benchmarked increases in pricing we are concerned that the overall pricing for non-members is now too high, particularly with the additional costs of parking, and could exclude low income households.

There remains ongoing difficulties in publicising and managing access in busy periods through online bookings, queuing, and making live availability public.

5.5 Capital and the state of the Assets

One of our Committee members is building a relationship with the asset managers to explore how future capital expenditure can be focused on identified improvements - cafe, pavilion and changing rooms and ensure these compliment wider long term strategies across the portfolio such as renewable energy and general maintenance. This process has started, with the generous help of local architects, who have created preliminary drawings illustrating options. The plans require more work and will remain confidential until the team are confident they represent a realistic and achievable vision for the future. In the short term Bradford continue to scrutinise and apply for grants that are appropriate for the site. The work on potential capital projects will ensure we are ready to take best advantage of opportunities should they arise.

5.6 Slow Progress on Energy Saving

The BMDC review in 2024 identified the need for energy saving. Our community events identified considerable enthusiasm for and expertise in renewable energy options. However as yet the indoor pool remains without a cover and we have not been able to advance the ideas on energy saving through green technology through the partnership group..

6. Treasurer's Report

6.1 Financial Review

This financial report covers

(a) the 12 month period ended 30th April 2025 (FY25) and
(b) an update of the financial position for the 5 months ended 30th August 2025 (Period Ended 31 August 25).

The financial performance of the group is encouraging since it was constituted in April 2024 with a net surplus generated of £2,679 in the first 12 months. As the fundraising activities described in the IP&LCG group activity section above have gathered momentum, an additional £6,420 has been raised in the 5 months ended 31st August 2025, with the main contributor to the fundraising increase being the events organised by the IP&LCG (FY25: +£2,006, period ended 31 August 25 +£6,870).

The sale of lido related merchandise is an additional, smaller source of fundraising receipts for the group. The 2024 calendar sales generated £833 of net cash receipts which has subsequently been reinvested to purchase additional merchandise which continues to be sold at IP&LCG organised events.

Payments for the group are controlled tightly with minimal running costs outside of organising events and the purchase of merchandise for resale. All IP&LCG committee members are volunteers and the running costs are limited to website and email costs.

The cash generated by the IP&LCG is intended to be donated to BMDC to support the Pool and Lido, however since the point of constitution the group has been unable to spend the funds raised with BMDC.

Upon constitution, a cash donation of £5,431 was received from the Friends of Ilkley Lido, a non-profit organisation that had previously supported the Pool and Lido and has now been wound up. As a result of this initial donation and the activity described above, the cash balance (reserves) at the end of FY25 was £8,128 with this increasing to £14,549 at 31st August 2025. There is an additional event that will take place following the issue of this Annual Report and prior to the AGM which is expected to generate additional income of c£2,000.

Outlook

Given the reserves in place of £14,549 with an expected additional c.£2,000 expected from the September event; the minimal operating costs and the reserves policy now in place keep £3,000 in reserves for ongoing operational costs, as detailed in the accounting policy section; it is the view of the committee members that the IP&LCG has sufficient funds in place to continue operating as a going concern.

6.2 Accounts

Statement of receipts and payments

Receipts	**12 months ended 30 April 2025**	**5 months ended 31 August 2025**
Membership	0	500
Event	3,158	7,779
Merchandise	1,483	675
	4,642	8,954
Payments		
Event	(1,153)	(909)
Merchandise	(694)	(1,492)
Operating costs	(117)	(133)
	(1,963)	(2,534)
Net surplus	2,679	6,420

Statement of financial position

Reserves		
b/f	5,451	8,130
Net cash in	2,679	6,420
c/f	8,130	14,549

6.3 Accounting policies

Basis of preparation
These financial statements have been prepared using a receipts and payments accounting policy. The policy involved summarising all cash inflows and outflows including bank and cash transactions.

Year end
The financial statements are prepared for the 12 months ended 30th April 2025. A trading update is included for the 5 months ended 31st August 2025 due to the summer lido season that has taken place since the year end of 30th April 2025 and the date of issue of the annual report.

Reserves policy
The IP&LCG has a policy in place to have minimum reserves in place of £3,000. This is to ensure that any fundraising events are able to be paid in advance where required to do so, to support the purchase of merchandise for resale and to cover the minimal operating costs of the group.

7. Conclusion

The Ilkley Pool and Lido Community Group has been vital in both responding to the BMDC review, but also reinvigorating community volunteers and collaborations to make the most of our beautiful Lido and our vital Pool. We want to thank the Ilkley Pool and Lido staff for all their work both to secure the current viability of the pool and lido and for managing a regional and local facility balancing these varied user experiences.

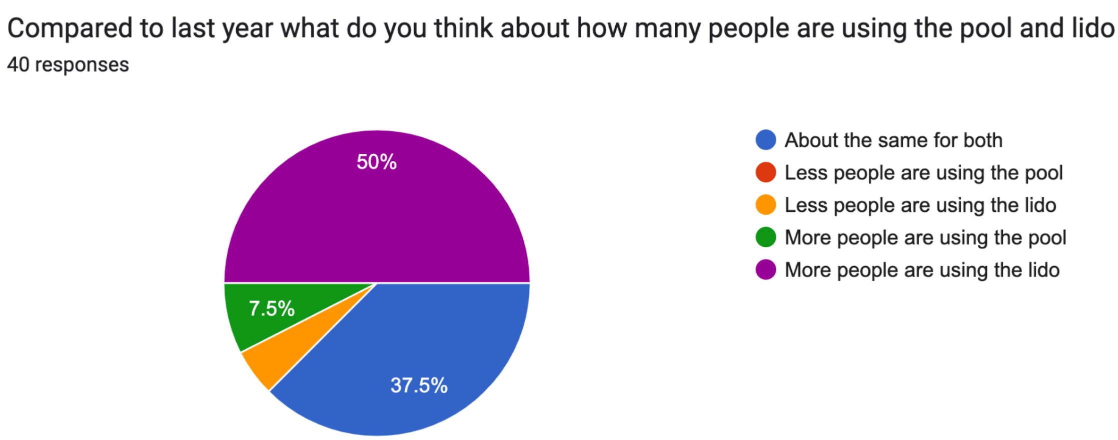
Appendix one: Community Survey

(n=40)

1. **What has improved since last year?** There was overwhelming recognition for the increase in the events this year, and some appreciation of online booking and the flowers got a mention.

2. **What has not improved/ got worse?** Car parking charges are a real issue with particular concern for visitors who may not return as the total cost is now so much more. People who pay for leisure membership are finding access restricted with no adjustments for the fact they have already paid to swim - whether it is because the lido is very full or because of short notice changes to opening times (because of events). Where there are timetable changes for events which restrict member access. Lack of progress at the Cafe, and the cleanliness of the changing areas is still frustrating users. Opening times are still not long enough compared to other lidos. The booking system is unreliable. Finally communication in general is poor from BMDC to users with some events passing members by.

3. **Compared to last year [usage]**:



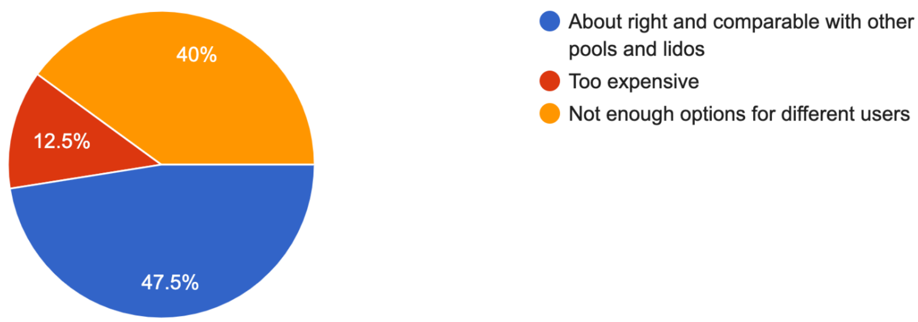
Most respondents think this increased access is because of the weather this year. However there were also responses about the impact of prices "Despite the fantastic weather the usage hasn't increased as much as it should. Due to cost and parking changes and lack of flexibility over ticketing ."

4. **Events.** Responses on the events were muddled between the Ilkley Pool and Lido events (Full Moon Swims, Community swim) and the BMDC organised Events (Solstice, 90th, Dog Day) but overall the events are really appreciated, with people commenting on how many come from outside Bradford for the Full Moon Swims to enjoy the Lido. The only suggestions for improvement are to capitalise on new visitors so that they come

back, and to get suggestions from other Lidos and Pools about events that could be provided.

5. **Compared to last year [prices]**

Compared to last year what do you think about the prices? (note we suggested an increase in prices to get the P&L in line with others, do you think they got this right?)
40 responses



In line with our original survey people want differentiated prices for after school, a junior membership for U14s. Those who have a 3 month membership think it is extremely good value for money. In terms of benchmarking one user said “The card is great but it’s expensive if you want to bring a friend and just swim for half an hour. To compare, Pool Bridge farm which is arguably a lot bigger and better, is £8 for the day”. Overall a number of comments were that there are less young people using the Lido than usual.

6. We asked about **progress against the ideas the community suggested** last year. On the whole everyone was very complimentary in their feedback about the progress on events, but there is more to do “There has been great progress but still so much much more that would be great to do! Lovely ideas in this mix.”

7. And finally we asked **what else people wanted to tell us**:
    a. Make the most of the parkrun - cafe, reduced price swimming.
    b. Solar panels
    c. Earlier opening before work and a way for members to access in busy periods (members only swim at the end of the day?)