

## Transcript from Plymouth City Council Website

### Seaton Pool – the facts

The Council has reluctantly made a decision to close Seaton Pool in April 2006. This information sets out the reasons for the decision and corrects some of the misunderstandings about it.

### The decision

The Cabinet's decision last November to close the pool on 9 April 2006 is now final after going through the Council's democratic process. This included investigation by the Council's Scrutiny Commission. At the Full Council meeting on Monday 16 January 2006 the closure became Council policy.

### Why the decision was made

The decision was made reluctantly because Seaton Pool needs major investment to remain open. **The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. Seaton Pool works! The customers are happy, and the pool could remain open for several more years with no major capital spending required.**

The costs of running the pool are very high and the Council has had to subsidise it by more than £160,000 a year. **The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. Even if the figure was correct, on this basis every library in Plymouth should also be closed as it is subsidised by the Council. Many other similar Council services should be suspended immediately. Additionally, Tinside and Mount Wise pools must not be re-opened.**

The latest survey on the Seaton site revealed that the following works costing more than £1million would need to be carried out if the pool were to stay open:

- **Works to the pool (comprising internal wall lining, decoration, pool surround coping, screed to pool surround and new ceiling) The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. The items are fit for purpose.**
- **New plant equipment The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. The items are fit for purpose.**
- **Revisions to drainage The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. The items are fit for purpose**
- **External works The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. The item is fit for purpose.**
- **Upgrading changing areas The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. Minor superficial work would improve changing areas. How are Central Park changing areas better?**
- **Upgrading of reception area and staff room The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. The items are fit for purpose.**
- **Works to ensure the facility is Disability Discrimination Act compliant. The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign dispute this statement. Many disabled people use Seaton Pool. They are happy with it. Better Seaton Pool than no pool!**

These needs need to be seen in the context that the Council does not own the site.

**The "Save Seaton Pool" accept that the Council does not own the site. However, the pool could remain open for several more years with no major capital spending required.**

The Council understands the value of the pool to local people but suggestions that 100,000 people a year use the pool are very misleading. This figure is probably relates to the number of swims at the pool, not the numbers of people who use it, which is a fraction of that amount. **That the 100,000 figure refers to admissions rather than users is accepted. However, are school users and club users included in this figure?**

## **The role of Regional Development Agency**

The Council's lease on the site expired two years ago. However, the Council made its decision due to the cost of running the facility and need for substantial investment. The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign is not arguing for Seaton Pool to be kept indefinitely! Rather, Seaton Pool should be kept until a similar facility is available, ideally in the North of the city, but if this is not possible, until the long promised and much vaunted improved facilities are available at Central Park.

The absence of a lease focused the Council on the need to make a decision. The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign does not believe that the South West Regional Development Agency would force the Council to close down Seaton Pool in the medium term. It is believed that Seaton Pool should be kept open until the Central Park plans have been approved and then a closure date for Seaton could be set. This date would need to be set for after completion of the updated Central Park facilities.

## **The Big Wheel in the city centre**

It has been suggested by campaigners that the Council 'wasted' money on the Big Wheel in the City Centre over the Christmas period instead of investing in the pool. The wheel was not paid for by the City Council but by the City Centre Partnership i.e. city centre traders. All Internet searches for "City Centre Partnership" and "Plymouth" seem to lead to the "Plymouth City Centre Company" which seems to be closely linked to Plymouth City Council. Ooops.

## **Alternative swimming sessions**

The City Council has issued a revised programme for Central Park which will accommodate all the schools being displaced from Seaton. If true, this is a laudable achievement. However, the question that must be asked is "Who has lost from this action?"

There will be a full programme of swimming lessons using the three pools at Central Park. If true, this is a laudable achievement. However, how many children will lose the opportunity to have swimming lessons due to the times/days being offered not being convenient.

Marjons have also been very co-operative about the use of their Pool for public swimming. This may be so but Marjons pool is not within the control of Plymouth City Council. At any time Marjons could become unco-operative.

## **The Council will not receive any money for closing Seaton**

There has been some suggestion that the council will receive a 'kickback' following the decision to close Seaton. This is categorically not the case. In the face of such a strident assertion, this suggestion has been removed from the "Save Seaton Pool" website.

## **The Council is committed to swimming facilities in the city**

The plans for a new Olympic sized pool at Central Park are now well advanced, with a £25m bid for lottery funding recently being submitted. The plan is for the existing pool at Central Park to remain open until the new one had been completed. The "Save Seaton Pool" campaign do not believe that it will be possible to fully maintain the existing facilities at Central Park whilst the new Olympic sized pool is being built.

*30 January 2006*

**LET'S CLOSE SEATON POOL IF YOU MUST THEN.....BUT ONLY AFTER THE WONDERFUL NEW SWIMMING FACILITIES AT CENTRAL PARK HAVE OPENED OR THERE IS ANOTHER PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL IN THE NORTH OF THE CITY OF PLYMOUTH.**