

Please support our planning application to install Solar Panels on our Plant Room roof.

Following a full sustainability review in 2022 we have begun our sustainability journey.

Below is a document submitted to Cheltenham Borough Council as part of our planning application for solar panels on our plant room roof which explains our reasons behind the scheme and future sustainability aspirations.

## **Sandford Parks Lido supporting document for Planning Application**

Set up to protect Sandford Parks Lido against imminent closure in 1996 our charity has diligently protected the historic nature of the facility whilst balancing the need for investment and modern technologies required to meet the needs of our community and swimming pool regulations.

As with many industries the leisure sector is facing a financial crisis and many swimming pools will close as a consequence. If we don't apply the findings of our recent sustainability survey the lido becomes financially unsustainable in its current form.

The resolutions proposed in our sustainability survey will need to be conducted in carefully considered stages to ensure the development opportunities for the lido and sustainability requirements are both completed in synergy.

### **Stage one - Site Efficiencies**

To ensure our facility is running as efficiently as possible, we are going to introduce new technologies to reduce the electrical demand in many aspects of our facility including on our heritage pumps and motors on the main pool filtration system. We are going to improve efficiencies on the pool water heating system, we will also reduce the speed the pumps are running at for the pool heating system. We have also installed energy saving systems on our changing room lighting. We are also considering methods of diverting the fountain water at night so it runs directly into the pool, thus removing substantial heat loss, but maintaining our iconic fountain during operational hours.

### **Stage two - Energy Generation via Solar PV**

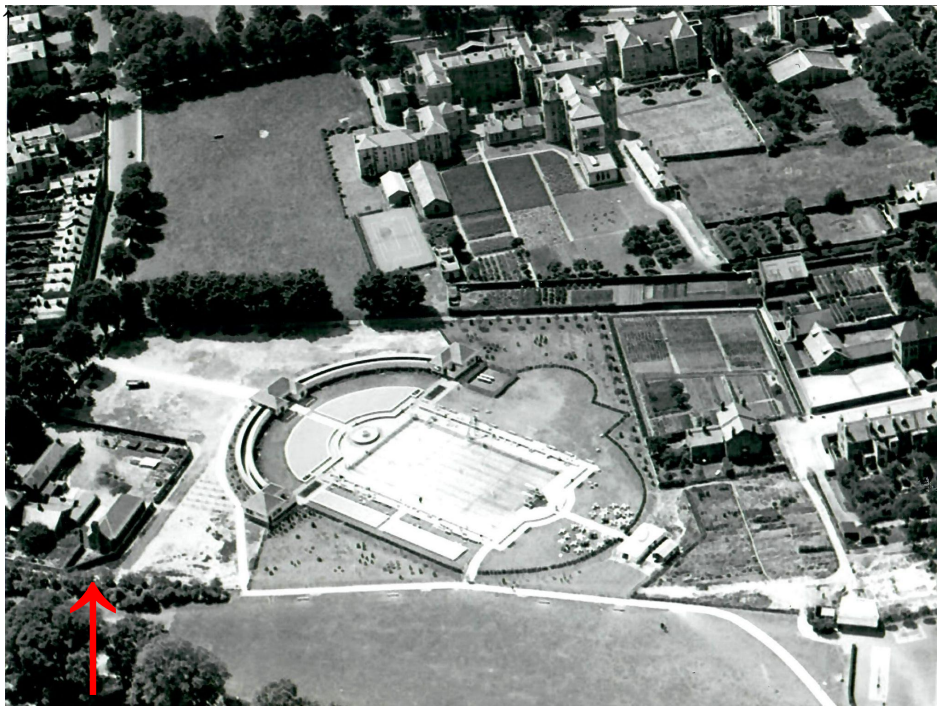
Once all identified energy efficiency savings have been tackled our attention needs to turn to methods of generating our own electricity to reduce the requirement to buy in. Our current electricity contract expires in September 2023. At which point we are currently predicted to increase from 14p to 49p per unit, increasing our current spend of £51,000 to £178,500.

The greatest demand for electricity is the main plant room which runs our heritage filtration and heating system for the swimming pool water. Whilst the building is grade II listed, it's important to acknowledge that the machinery within this building has been identified as a significant factor with regards to our listing status. We have enforced our own protection on said equipment over the last 25 years, long before our grade II listing, as we recognised its importance as part of our history. When the lido first opened it was considered ultra modern as it had filtration, chemical dosing and the pool water was heated, all very rare for swimming pools in the 1930's, an achievement Cheltenham Borough Council were rightly very proud of.

Our protection of this historic engineering comes at a significant cost to our charity not only in regards to energy, but also annual maintenance fees. We have been told many times over the years that we could reduce costs by replacing the pumps with modern equivalents, but in order to preserve the historical engineering we have refrained from its replacement, which has made our lido the most historically complete lido in the UK.

Our sustainability survey identified three areas suitable for solar pv - the cafe balconies, the car park on solar pv carports and the main plant room.

We are starting our journey for sustainability with the plant room as it is a major consumer of electricity and is least impacting on the lido in terms of its heritage. I would like to draw your attention to one of the earliest aerial images of the lido which shows the plant room was never intended to be considered part of the lido and was actually built within the confines of what was the Cheltenham Water Corporation works (it used to pump groundwater out here for the town)



The plant room roof has been selected rather than ground mounting solar pv panels based on the best area for solar gain. Installing on our plant room roof ensures the panels are out of the

way from vandalism, accidental damage and theft and wouldn't take up valuable ground space as every car park space at the lido generates an annual return of £3k which is reinvested in the lido. In addition, this land has been identified within our lease with Cheltenham Borough Council as a space they would like to see be utilised as an area for wellbeing within the next 7 years rather than a car park, so is liable to change, whereas the plant room roof will always remain due to its listing.

### **Stage 3 - Development scheme for the lido to include sustainability at its core.**

Following the renewal of our lease which now runs until 2056 we are currently working on a full site design concept for the future protection of the lido. This project will aim to ensure the facility maximises its potential and serves its community to the best of its ability.

During this process we aim to move its reliance away from carbon fuel for its pool water heating (currently gas). We will look to install heat pumps, but these must be run using electricity at which point we will require maximum solar panels on carports within the car park to support the heat pump. Even with the solar panels on the plant room and car ports our electricity demand will exceed the energy they produce. So it will not be a case of either or they are both very much required to reduce our carbon footprint and ensure the financial viability of the lido.

Stage 3 is going to prove an extremely expensive project, one which will require grant funding, public donation, our own reserves and potentially loans to complete.

It's important that you understand that we have to nibble away at our costs, investments and improve income to ensure the lido survives.

Everything we do, have done and plan to do is to provide the lido for our community and town. We currently offer heated swimming for six months of the year and cold water swimming for a further four months of the year. We attract over 200,000 visits per year and provide a diverse range of activities such as theatre, cinema, dryside activities, sporting challenges, the dog swim, heritage events, courses and lessons, community social events and charitable fundraising events for local good causes. In the future we are aiming to be operational year round offering a well being experience for the whole community.

Our challenge is to maintain the historic nature of our facility, the enjoyment of its users, whilst playing our part in the global priority of reducing emissions and waste. Our strategy is to prioritise and pursue energy efficiency and sustainability measures that make economic sense and ensure a long and sustainable future for the lido.

As Cheltenham Borough Council own the lido, we are one of your scope 3's with regards to your carbon footprint. If we can reduce our carbon footprint we naturally reduce yours.

We believe we all have a duty of care to become more sustainable and that the historic impact of solar panels on our plant room has been duly considered and are far outweighed by the financial and environmental benefits during the current energy and climate emergency to ensure

this historic facility remains operational and thus continues to provide essential physical and mental wellbeing for all.

We would like to draw your attention to a solar pv project at Kings College Chapel Cambridge <https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/solar-panels-put-kings-college-26184985>

The paper states:

*More than 400 solar panels can be installed on the roof of King's College Chapel in Cambridge, despite concerns it could harm the Chapel's significance. Cambridge City Council has approved the application with councillors saying the plans would be a "symbol" for others around climate change.*

*They said: "In the context of the climate emergency we consider the very minimal visual impact caused by the panels to be insignificant compared to the benefits. The Chapel is part of a wider strategy. While each element has not been large, the impact of the whole is significant. The plans had been recommended for refusal by city council planning officers with a report stating that it was considered the panels would "detract" from the architectural character of the roof and "important views of the Chapel would be harmed".*

*It added that the benefits of the carbon reduction were considered on balance to be "not sufficient" to outweigh the "less than substantial harm to the Grade I Listed Chapel". However, councillors said they believed on balance that the benefits of the scheme did outweigh the harm.*

*Councillor Dave Baigent said the application presented an opportunity to "promote change". Councillor Alex Collis said they were all "committed" to a net zero carbon future. She said the city council had called on other organisations and institutions to "play their part as well", and said the plans were doing that. She highlighted that other "significant" buildings had also had solar panels installed, including Buckingham Palace.*

If we cannot address the long term financial impact of increased utility charges the lido will be forced to close and its heritage mothballed. Surely it's far better to afford its protection as an operating facility for the community to enjoy.

As part of our sustainability process we will encourage our visitors to utilise our facility in the most sustainable way, thus promoting the message that we all have a role to play in reducing the carbon footprint of Cheltenham.

As custodians of the lido for over 27 years we truly believe this is the right thing to do on many fronts without adversely affecting our heritage.

**Written by the CEO and Trustees of Sandford Lido Limited (Registered Charity 1052203)**

Help us do the right thing by providing comments on our plans to complete stage 2 of our sustainability journey. Please click on this link:

<https://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=RRWU6YELGH300> .....

Once the page has opened you will be able to read the full proposal, if you wish to support the project look for the comments tab and follow the instructions. Let the Council know how important sustainability and the lido are to you.

We all have a responsibility to reduce the carbon footprint of our town.

By helping the lido to reduce its carbon footprint we naturally reduce that of Cheltenham Borough Council, in addition it will reduce our running cost, securing the Lido's future as a community facility leading the way in combining heritage and technology that reduces our impact on the planet.

United we can make a difference.