

CLEVELAND POOLS CONSULTATION FOR THE BATHWICK ESTATE – COMMENTARY SUMMARY

Should the Pools be Restored?

Restoring the Pools is seen as “*unique opportunity*” that could be “*a tremendous asset to the heritage of Bath*”, a “*quirky historic gem should not be left to rot*”. Alongside their clear desire for re-development many felt that development should be “*in keeping with the local environment*” and that

“The impact on the Bathwick Estate must be key to the proposals”.

“First and foremost consideration of the implications to Bathwick Estate must be the priority.”

Is CPT’s plan a good way of restoring Pools?

Supporters note that “*it was a swimming pool before*” and that “*restoring the pools for swimming would be great*”, “*fantastic*”, “*very special*” and several request “*free access*” for local residents.

Concerned residents repeat the same phrases... “*too ambitious*”, “*too grandiose*”, “*not financially viable*” and many see practical issues of traffic, access, visitor volumes and noise within the, now, residential setting.

One responder summarised the concerns of many in stating, “*The site is too small to sustain the number of visitors that CPT require in order to make their proposal a success. The impact of the CPT proposals in the local community has not been taken into account*”.

“You only have to look at Warleigh Weir to see how popular this idea could be... but also the associated parking and litter chaos”.

Is CPT’s plan good for residential community?

Concerns over parking appear frequently amongst supporters and those less in favour; “*free access for residents*” is frequently mentioned by supporters

One supporter added the caveat, “*Provided opening hours are strictly monitored to protect residents. Boat trips encouraged. Residents can use the pools for swimming and the CPT have plans to mitigate traffic etc with use of boats, cycles, walking*”.

The practical problems of access, traffic, travel, parking and noise are mentioned by a high number of responders and concerns raised that “*little attention has been paid to*” these and the “*detrimental impact*” on a “*quiet residential estate*”, “*in effect a cul-de-sac*”. “*This is a quite residential area, unsuited to large-scale visitor through-put*”.

“36,000 visitors over a period of, say, 12 weeks (“the summer months”) means up to 3000 visitors a week, week in, week out. That’s without any parking facilities... Is that realistic these days? Would

that number walk to the baths? Even bus services, as well as being undesirable, are unable to cope, or be suitable”.

But undoubtedly emotional support for the restoration of the Pools is high....

“This is something we should be proud to have on our doorstep. We are trustees of an architectural/community gem and should raise above petty personal, narrow-minded fear/concerns. Shameful!”

“Even if CPT do not develop the site someone has to as important historic site that must be developed to be saved”.

Is CPIN’s plan good way of restoring Pools?

Supporters of the CPIN model felt it would be *“better for the environment”, “less disruptive”, “preserve local flora and fauna”, “more friendly for families”* and *“more commensurate with the scale of surroundings”*. It is seen as *“more sensible”, “realistic”* and *“appropriate”*. Most frequently noted was that the CPIN model was more *“reasonable”*.

But doubt was expressed about the detail of their model; *“there are no plans – only ideas”*. A *“NIMBY plan”, “wishy-washy”, “I would worry that CPIN’s plans don’t go far enough and may have limited, local appeal only.”* One responder regarded the filling in of the Ladies Pool as an act of *“historical vandalism”*, another that *“It misses the point.” “There is no rational as to why this would have less impact and serves a lot smaller and narrower part of the wider community”*.

Summarising a view expressed by several responders *“These appear to be much more realistic but without a pool will disappoint many from the wider area and some local residents too.”*

Which plan do you prefer?

Residents are strongly divided on this.

“The Pools should be pools – for swimming and recreation, not just looking at”. *“We should preserve the heritage of the pools for future generations”*. The CPT plan provides a *“workable future”* for the site.

But even CPT supporters state the plan *“is not perfect”* and *“would need inspirational leadership”*. Parking, particularly on Sundays remains a concern.

The CPIN model *“will cause less friction in a peaceable neighbourhood. Over commercialisation could be disastrous”* and provide a *“quiet oasis of calm for locals and visitors with minimal impact on the environment”*.

More responders indicated their indifference to current plans in this section than any other in the survey stating *“not sure”, “neither”, “neither is satisfactory.”*

Anything else?

Most responders added their own further comments at the end of the survey. The full details of these comments have been recorded and provide an insight into the concerns and deep feelings of residents. Traffic, parking and access issues are the subject of the majority of additional comments. The following is a selection which indicate the weight of feeling on both sides:

Public funding should go to better and more urgent use (eg affordable rent for old people, public care, environmental initiatives)

I think the most important thing is that the Cleveland Pools are restored; and that either proposal is vastly preferable to the status quo.

I supported the original plans to restore the pools, but looking at photos of years ago I never thought swimming could take place again – real problems. I cannot see CPT's future plans are practical.

I hope the Bathwick Estate ensures a majority voice is heard – and an unbiased one. Unlike the letter accompanying this survey.

Access should be by boat only.

A halfway house between the two proposals would seem reasonable but it appears that boat has sailed in as much as the CPT seem incapable of consultation with the neighbours. I hope the National Lottery see sense here and withhold any funding until an agreed workable solution can be agreed.

36,000 visitors is an average of 692 a week and more in the peak weeks. This is not acceptable in a residential area.

The lottery money could be put to much better use than the CPT's plan.

There is already far too much disruption locally by the RUI Chinese restaurant. This restaurant brings far too many problems to the immediate area – and the Council has not done enough to curb the problems. Any further incursion of tourists will add to the local problems of too many tourists.

It's a National Treasure, the CPT have worked hard to restore it and the sooner it's done, the better.

How could the CPIN plan be funded in a sustainable way?

People walk to the boating station all summer without causing massive parking issues.

It is a real shame that CPT did not work with local and immediate neighbours on the Estate to find a better way forward. However personally though it would be lovely to pop in for a swim it has to be sympathetic with its location. I fear it will not be economically viable – if the Pools were for local people – they would have to be much more modest. Thank you!

The CPT plan is primarily driven by the developers who will profit from it rather than the needs of the local community.

I thought the last BERA incredibly biased and one sided. The CPT should have been invited to speak. I hope this survey will be independently collated.

CPT plans will impact on house prices locally in a negative way and will not benefit Bath residents.

Do not want this. Will affect locality. CPT being driven by non-residents.

I don't think CPT have given enough detailed info on how their project would work. The people most likely to use an outdoor bathing facility are youngsters, who would prefer to bath at Warleigh Weir free of charge, rather than pay £5 or so to go to the pools.

As a member of the community, we should be VERY mindful of the impact on the estate and supportive of the immediate neighbours.

Happy to help or volunteer if needed, patrol for parking etc. Scheme will get people involved.

A revised CPT plan, based on much lower visitor numbers, could be acceptable.

If there are all these thousands of pounds available to spend, then we are duty bound to spend it where it is most needed and directly on people who need it rather than on heritage sites.

There won't be an impact on parking as we live in a CPZ. Much of the travel to the river will be by river so won't increase much pressure on the streets. It won't impact any more than the boating base does at the moment.

The Estate is currently quiet and I would like to live here in the same way, thank you.

This survey has no value as a fair way of assessing local opinion. The questions may be "neutral" but it is accompanied by a partisan opening statement on the reverse.

Please consider our views seriously.

The Council have done great things with the Friends of Sydney Gardens – it can be done again with the Pools.

It is in the wrong location to be a major attraction.

I'm hugely supportive of the restoration of the pools, but it must be an appropriate restoration which can be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike and which does not have a negative impact on local residents.

Whatever happens, the Pools need saving.

This is very difficult. Everyone wants to save the pools, but how to fund it?

I am saddened by the increase in the eradication of nature and trees all over the Bath area. Humans aren't the only residents. If CPIN project goes ahead, I would enjoy being able to use the small pool myself (68 years old 😊)

It's a scandal that the neighbours weren't consulted.

It should only be cream tea Monday-Friday 12 – 3pm served by (a) nice old lady.

Thank you BERA for gathering this information.