hampton pool trust

Poolside Chat

The newsletter from the charity securing the future of Hampton Pool

Winter Issue 2026



Winter magic at Hampton Pool: moonlight swimming beneath the Christmas lights.

Beyond the Swim

Exploring the history, wellbeing and community connections that make Hampton Pool what it is

Chair's welcome *by Andrew Gill*



As winter settles in, Hampton Pool takes on a special character. The air may be colder, but the water is warm, and the familiar faces and friendships that bring people here continue all year round.

This edition of Poolside Chat goes beyond the swim to explore what makes Hampton Pool so special: its remarkable history, its setting within Bushy Park and the important place it holds in so many people's lives.

We also have significant news to share. In September, Hampton Pool Trust signed a new 20-year licence with The Royal Parks, securing the pool's home here until 2046. This important milestone strengthens our position as we seek the investment needed to improve our ageing building.

The pool's history reminds us that its future has never happened by accident. From the local determination that brought it into being to the community campaign that saved it in the 1980s, people have always been central to its success.

Fundraising for the next stage of improvements will be a major priority in 2027. I hope the stories in this edition show why that work matters and inspire you to stay involved.

Thank you, as always, for your support •

Get on Board

Hampton Pool Trust (HPT) is an independent registered charity and not-for-profit company, dedicated to protecting and improving Hampton Pool for future generations.

Our vision is to secure the pool's future as a safe, sustainable and welcoming place for year-round outdoor swimming and activities that support the health and wellbeing of our community.

The Trust holds the licence from The Royal Parks, while South Downs Leisure, also a charity, manages the pool's day-to-day operations.

Our members and volunteers help us look after this much-loved community asset. Becoming a Trust member is different from a swimming or gym membership: it gives you a voice in the charity's future.

The HPT Board of Trustees

Andrew Gill — Chair
Stef Welkers — Finance Director
Nigel Brown
Alex Dumbrell
Roxanne Glaud
Grahame Hadden
Stuart Leamy
Jill Livesey
Ian Moss
Gill Radcliffe — Company Secretary
Jane Savidge
Paul Seddon

Welcome, Ian Moss



We're delighted to welcome Ian Moss, who joined the Board in September and is working alongside Gill Radcliffe ahead of succeeding her as Company Secretary. Thank you to Gill for her continuing support.

Get involved

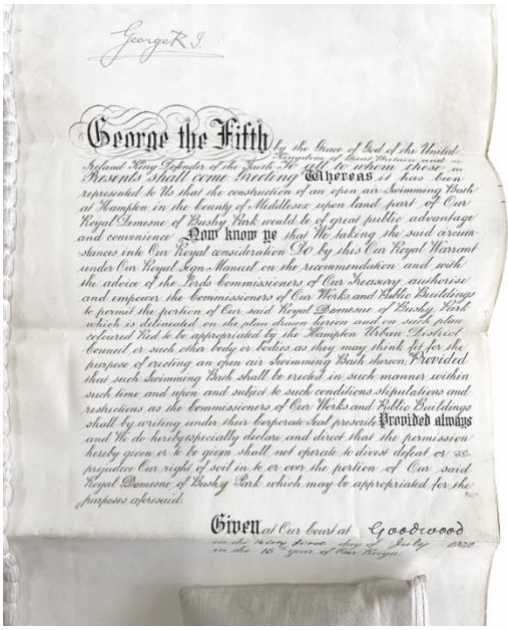
Visit hamptonpooltrust.org.uk

Email secretary@hamptonpooltrust.org.uk

A Unique Place in Bushy Park

Most Hampton Pool users know and love the pool, but fewer know the remarkable story of how it came to be built within Bushy Park. It is a story of community determination, royal support and a shared commitment to swimming and wellbeing.

In the late 19th century, Hampton had no public swimming pool. Children learned to swim in ponds, local waterways and the River Thames. Concern about water safety prompted Hampton Urban District Council to seek a safer place for swimming.


George R.I.

George the Fifth by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland King Defender of the Faith To all to whom these Presents shall come Greeting Whereas it has been represented to Us that the construction of an open air Swimming Bath at Hampton in the County of Middlesex upon land part of Our Royal Demesne of Bushy Park would be of great public advantage and convenience Now know ye that We taking the said premises into Our Royal consideration Do by this Our Royal Warrant under Our Royal Sign Manual and with the advice of the Lords Commissioners of Our Treasury authorise and empower the Commissioners of Our Works and Public Buildings to permit the portion of Our said Royal Demesne of Bushy Park which is delineated on the plan drawn hereon and on such plan coloured Red to be appropriated by the Hampton Urban District Council or such other body or bodies as they may think fit for the purpose of erecting an open air Swimming Bath thereon Provided that such Swimming Bath shall be erected in such manner within such time and upon and subject to such conditions stipulations and restrictions as the Commissioners of Our Works and Public Buildings shall by writing under their Corporate Seal prescribe Provided always and We do hereby especially declare and direct that the permission hereby given or to be given shall not operate to divest defeat or in any prejudice Our right of suit in to or over the portion of Our said Royal Demesne of Bushy Park which may be appropriated for the purposes aforesaid.

Given at Our Court at Goodwood in the ninety third year of July in the 10 year of Our Reign.

Royal approval and support

Finding a suitable site was far from straightforward. Permission was sought from King Edward VII to build within Bushy Park. The King was sympathetic to the proposal and had a keen interest in lifesaving. Although a site was identified, rising costs delayed the project and the plans were shelved in 1907.

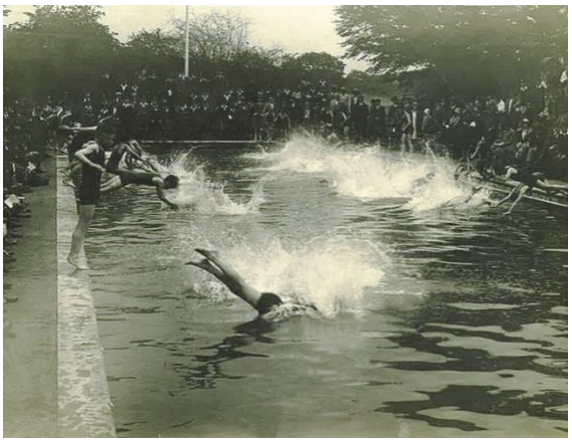
The proposal resurfaced in 1913. In August 1914, King George V indicated his willingness to approve the plans, subject to seeing the proposed design. But the outbreak of the First World War brought progress to a halt.

After the war, local efforts resumed. Hampton Open Air Swimming Baths finally opened on 24 June 1922. The original facilities were modest, with changing huts beside a pool measuring 120 feet by 30 feet. By the 1950s, improvements were needed, and the pool and building familiar to many swimmers today opened in 1961.

A place worth protecting

The same community determination helped save Hampton Pool after its closure in 1980. The 'Sink or Swim' campaign led to its reopening in 1985, beginning a new chapter in the pool's life.

Today, the relationship with The Royal Parks remains central to Hampton Pool's future. The organisations work together on matters including the site, sustainability and plans for improvements. The latest licence is another important step, but maintaining and developing this treasured place will continue to depend on people working together. •



Who does what at Hampton Pool?

Hampton Pool is supported by three charities, each playing a different role.

The Royal Parks looks after Bushy Park and has the site licensing relationship with Hampton Pool Trust.

Hampton Pool Trust holds the licence, safeguards the pool's long-term future and leads fundraising for major improvements.

South Downs Leisure operates the pool day-to-day, delivering swimming, fitness and other activities. •

Working together for Hampton Pool

What makes Hampton Pool unusual is that three charities work together, each with a distinct role, for the benefit of one much-loved community pool.

That partnership helps protect Hampton Pool's unique setting, support its day-to-day operation and strengthen plans for its future.

It is one of the things that makes Hampton Pool such a special place, and why its future depends on continued collaboration, care and community support. •

Hampton Pool through the years



1922 — Hampton Open Air Swimming Baths open.

1961 — The modernised pool and building open.

1985 — The community campaign leads to Hampton Pool reopening.

2026 — A new 20-year licence provides security through to 2046. •

More than a workout: The community behind the gym

For many regulars, the gym at Hampton Pool is about much more than exercise. It's part of the rhythm of their week: a familiar place to stay active, see friends and feel connected to the pool community.

That sense of belonging came through at a recent meeting with pool users, where members spoke passionately about the gym and what it means to them. For some, it's been part of their lives for decades, with friendships extending well beyond the gym itself.

We asked some of our gym regulars what keeps them coming back.

Here's what they had to say...

"I came for group classes in 2009 (circuits) and made friends for life. The south-facing sun terrace meant I spent a lot of time there, with lots of laughs and life advice. The ladies and gents who do circuits into their 80s and beyond are truly inspirational."

"I joined Hampton Pool in 1987, when I used to have a swim at 6.30am, then go upstairs for breakfast before heading to work. Once I retired in 2007, I was there the next day at the gym and pool and have been ever since, even though it's a seven-mile drive. It's so much more than an exercise venue; it's a second home."

"I've been at the gym for about 30 years, first coming only on my day off. After retirement, I started coming more frequently, enjoying the class but especially the coffee and chat after. For lots of us, the community of friends has been a huge support. And let's not forget our great instructors, who have made classes fun and often challenging."

These friendships and shared experiences show why Hampton Pool is so much more than somewhere to exercise, and why it's a community worth protecting. •

Life Around the Pool

Swim, run, repeat!



Our autumn Aquathlon brought 70 participants together for a 12-length swim followed by a 5km run through Bushy Park. A huge thank you to everyone who took part and to the volunteers who helped make it a success. With three races planned for 2027, there's plenty more to look forward to. •

Winter magic

From the family fun of the Halloween Moonlight Swim to Christmas lights, festive swims and the much-loved Christmas Day Swim, the colder months bring a different kind of magic to Hampton Pool.

For the latest activities and booking information, visit the pool website or ask at reception. •



Community Connections

Wellbeing in Action

The pool team is building on activities that already help people stay active and connected.

Age UK: A weekly class in partnership with the charity, alongside Hampton Pool's *Fit For Men* sessions.

RUILS: People referred through the charity can receive a free three-month swim membership.

The Calm Lane: A monthly social swim, followed by coffee and cake upstairs.

The team is also developing a Health and Wellbeing Strategy to build on these opportunities and explore new partnerships.

A gym refresh from South Downs Leisure

South Downs Leisure has been making improvements to Hampton Pool's gym, helping to refresh the space for the members and fitness groups who use it.

For the latest information on gym facilities and activities, please check with the pool team.

Remembering Susan Woods



Susan Woods was a familiar face at Hampton Pool, enjoying the gym and circuit classes almost daily for many years. Sadly, Susan passed away in September after a short illness.

Her fellow circuit class members, affectionately known as the 'Gym Bunnies', together with the 'Aqua Ladies Do It Outside' group, have come together to remember her by setting up a JustGiving page in aid of Hampton Pool Trust.

The appeal has already raised hundreds of pounds for Hampton Pool Trust, with the group hoping to name the fourth tree from the Trust's TREE-MENDOUS campaign in Susan's memory.

It's a touching tribute to Susan, and a lovely reflection of the friendships and community spirit that make Hampton Pool so special.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed. •

2026 Summer Picnic Concerts



Our fundraising concerts in July once again provided great entertainment, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from audiences. Despite a couple of clashes with England's World Cup matches, we sold nearly all the tickets.

A big thank you to everyone who supported the pool!

What you told us

Around a third of ticket buyers completed our survey this year. You rated the atmosphere, unique venue and quality of the performers as the three things that make the concerts special.

All the headliners received high praise, from original bands **ABC**, **Haircut 100** and **The Manfreds** to tribute acts **The Counterfeit Stones**, **Cloudbusting** (Kate Bush) and **Queen of the Night** (Whitney Houston).

Your feedback will help shape next year's concerts. We'll share more as plans progress.

Made possible by volunteers



None of this would be possible without the volunteers who plan and produce the concerts, run the bar and steward each event, working closely with pool staff and lifeguards to ensure everyone has an enjoyable and safe evening.

The concerts also raise vital funds to support the future of Hampton Pool.

To hear the 2027 line-up when it's announced in March, join the mailing list at **hamptonpooltrust.org.uk/concerts**.

We hope to see you for another summer of fantastic live music!

Looking ahead: Securing Hampton Pool's future

Our Summer Picnic Concerts show what our community can achieve together. That support will be vital as we look ahead.

Our new 20-year licence is an important milestone, but securing the pool's home is only part of the picture. Our ageing building and infrastructure need significant investment so Hampton Pool can continue to offer year-round swimming, fitness and community activities for generations to come.

Fundraising for the next phase of improvements will be a major priority in 2027. We'll be working to build support from funders, local businesses and the wider community.

Our festive activities, from the Christmas light switch-on and carol celebration to the Christmas raffle, are part of that community effort. Look out for more ways to get involved in the year ahead.

Please support the Trust if you can, donate, join a fundraising event, volunteer or help spread the word. Together, we can protect and improve Hampton Pool for future generations.

Hello from Maddie!



Hi, I'm Maddie, and I've recently joined Hampton Pool Trust as Communications & Engagement Lead, helping bring together and share the stories that show what Hampton Pool means to people, and why its future is worth supporting.

I'll be working with the trustees, the pool team and community groups to strengthen our communications and build support for the Trust's future plans and fundraising.

Over the coming months, I'll be meeting different groups and sharing a short survey. I'd love to hear your thoughts, experiences and memories.

What makes Hampton Pool special to you?

Even a few words or a favourite photograph would be lovely. Thanks in advance for getting involved!

Get in touch:
maddie.moralee@hamptonpooltrust.org.uk

Support Hampton Pool's future

Help Hampton Pool Trust raise the funds needed for the next phase of improvements.

Donate today

Scan the QR code to give through JustGiving or use the donation machine at Hampton Pool.

You can also volunteer, support a fundraising event or help spread the word.

hamptonpooltrust.org.uk