

Address by Jane Alexander and Heather Dalitz, Oxford

Health Consequences of Poor Decisions

We have been hearing from numerous people about how they are adversely affected by poor decision making by others, namely Oxford City Council.

All sorts of people, including some who work for the council, have been telling us for some time about how they are unable to access any pool for exercise since the closure of their local swimming pools at Cowley.

In the style of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn who clearly listens to the people, I would like you to hear this letter to Andrew Smith from Heather:

Dear Andrew

I am delighted to hear that you are still supporting a local swimming pool for East Oxford residents.

I have a newspaper cutting I keep and treasure of you beaming with delight as you jump into the Temple Cowley pool with three fellow Councillors. It would be lovely to be able to see you re-enact that leap.

My whole family from my young niece to her 90 year old granny treasure Temple Cowley pool. Generations of us have used it for fun, to keep fit, for exercise, for learning, for friendship and community service. We have gone there pregnant, glad to have aqua-natal classes to keep us exercising, our bumps buoyed up by the water, making invaluable new friends to share our first experience of maternity; we have taken our newborns there for aqua-babies and ducklings; we and our children have attended swimming classes there, from our first attempts to keep afloat to strenuous lengths timed against the clock; we have learned personal survival and life-saving skills to care for ourselves and benefit our communities; we have met friends in one of the heartbreakingly few locations where all ages can come together in the same place, young, old, with children and without; we have celebrated our children's birthdays with swimming parties and pirate ships. It is the last place I saw my dear friend Jacquie Porter, who did so much for Oxford and has the home in Rectory Road named after her, before she so sadly died. It is not just a pool. It is a place which has played a fundamental role in Oxford lives for decades and has an important place in all our hearts.

We need places like this. We need them where we can walk to them and cycle to them. They need to be in the community, not miles outside the ring road. We need to be reducing the amount of traffic on the roads, not increasing it. The pools will only be used if people can access them easily. Temple Cowley Pool is no more than a ten-minute cycle ride each way from East Oxford. Blackbird Leys is too far to cycle, especially with children, and by bus or car is well over an hour's round trip, given the amount of traffic on the roads.

Please, please, on behalf of me and my two children and my mother and countless other Oxford residents, please do whatever you can to ensure that we in East Oxford once again have access to a local swimming pool. And if there is anything you can

do to delay the wanton destruction of the finest pool in Oxford, with the widest choice of types of changing facilities, the best water quality, the loveliest views of sky and sunset ... please do so.

Best wishes

Heather