

## An Update on The Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign

Given recent events, and the length of time since the last Council meeting, we thought you would appreciate an update on what the Campaign is doing.

You will hear later in this meeting from our head petitioner the reasoning behind the latest petition. As you know, 1500 signatures are needed on a petition to force a debate in this Council. The Temple Cowley Pools issue, whereby the Council wants to close two leisure facilities to improve the profits of the leisure operator Fusion at the expense of the public's amenities, remains the biggest issue in the City.

We are continually asked, wherever we go, about the campaign's progress, and what we are doing now that the council has voted to build the proposed new pool.

Well, the answer is simple, the Campaign continues. It continues to support the majority of the public's need and desire to keep our swimming pools, gym, studio, sauna and steam rooms in Cowley.

And it continues despite all the propaganda directed at us by the council, through the Press and on the council website.

We also continue to reveal the Council propaganda as a combination of misleading, inaccurate, incomplete and untrue.

And we continue to find that Labour councillors are still repeating incorrect information that they have accepted unquestioningly – we heard only last week of a councillor telling a voter that the proposed new pool would be “bigger” than that at Temple Cowley!

The proposed new pool – 25m x 8 lane.

The present TC pool - 25m x 8 lane

PLUS the present Blackbird Leys pool – 18m x 4 lane.

PLUS a 12m x 12m diving pool

What stretch of imagination and physics enables a 25m swimming pool, the one proposed for Blackbird Leys, to be bigger than the 25m pool that exists already in Temple Cowley?

The clue is in the description – they are both 25m!

And as you have just heard, in terms of water space, the existing facilities have a great deal more water swimming area now, than the proposed new pool.

We also have more gym area, in that if we lose TCPools then we lose the gym too. And the exercise studio, and the steam room which, for some reason, someone somewhere on a payroll thinks is less well used than the sauna, when in fact most people refer to ‘sauna’ meaning ‘sauna suite’ as it is called by the council, when in fact most people seem to use the steam room as much if not more than the sauna!

Again, poor and inadequate consultation. The wrong questions asked. The wrong words used to find out the truth. And not asked of the people who use the facilities.

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And there is more - the latest is the truth about an often repeated claim, fed to Labour councillors who willingly repeat it ad nauseam, that the operating costs at Temple Cowley Leisure Centre last year were half a million pounds. This is not only untrue, but a complete fabrication without any substance whatsoever.

Your own council accounts for last year reveal that the actual cost was under half that figure. And yet, this lie was presented as part of the case for proceeding with the new pool, and accepted willingly as true by the City Executive Board meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> July.

This 25m swimming pool, if built, will be the most expensive in the country, on many levels, actual monetary build cost, health impact on hundreds if not thousands who will be prevented from continuing their health/exercise regime due to the inaccessible location (due to time distance and cost), ...

The Council has continually refused to listen to reason, and seems determined to press ahead with its white elephant vanity scheme in Blackbird Leys. Why is it spending over £9m of our money on what is only a 25m, non-Olympic swimming pool in a place where there is no evidence of demand, when, for only a third of this amount, £3m, wisely spent, will refurbish and improve both the existing Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool and Temple Cowley Leisure Centre?

Well, we have, reluctantly, had enough of demonstrating how Councillors have been provided with information to make decisions that is a combination of misleading, inaccurate, incomplete and untrue, as clearly you prefer to believe your 'experts' rather than what is plainly in front of you. So, as I am sure many of you know already, we are now proceeding to Judicial Review.

President Obama made a comment on Steve Jobs after he died on Thursday, praising him for being 'brave enough to think differently, bold enough to believe he could change the world, and talented enough to do it'. I hope that at least some of you can find the same courage.