

BRIGHTLINGSEA OPEN AIR SWIMMING POOL

“A Community Facility”



The Story so Far

Brightlingsea open air swimming pool was built in 1933 and is one of the few remaining lidos (open air swimming pools built mainly in the art-deco period) still in use in the UK. Brightlingsea Lido was originally a salt water pool, but is now a two-level, non-heated freshwater facility. The pool comprises a 15m children's pool and a 50m main swimming pool, with a 2.0m diving pit located in the deep end. The facility is always popular and regularly used by residents and visitors to the town.

The pool is an integral part of the Western Promenade and as such is not just an important part of the town's offering of leisure facilities, but of Tendring's as well. We know from surveys that users come from far and wide, therefore helping to support the local economy. Fenwick, a national chain of department stores names it in its advertising as one of the ten best places to swim outdoors. Positive comments are left on Trip Advisor.

“83 YEARS OF HERITAGE”

REVIEWS FROM TRIP ADVISOR

- Visited this summer, water can be cold. Changing rooms. Open play areas nearby. Easy parking. Small cafe adjacent. Reasonable prices. Usually open late May till the end of the summer holidays.
- Visited three times this summer, water in pool too cold on two occasions. Fortunately plenty of time for beach play and ball games on green for young children. Pool Café excellent value, extremely clean, good food and friendly Staff. No rip-off prices and good portions. First time tasted cheesy chips. Wide variety of drinks and ice cream, soft ice cream with flake particularly delicious.
- First ever visit to this part of the world. The lido is great value for money at £10 for a family of four for the day. Nice and clean, polite staff and no rip off drink/snack prices. A great council run attraction.
- One of the few places left in England with an outdoor pool - not in town but right next to the beach, with good access all-round, a good amount of space for a picnic etc', and for stretching the legs or a quick dip in the sea just go out and walk a few paces - bingo - the seaside, what more could you want, plus and this is the big plus parking is free on the road, brilliant.
- Lovely place to visit. Very clean and tidy. Only £10 for a family ticket. If weather is hot its a great place to cool off. Kids loved the floats.
- I took my grandson here while he was on holiday with us. It was exceptionally clean the life guards were lovely they played with the children when not on swimming duty. Highly recommended.
- Fab fun clean and much better than expected brilliant value cafe was great too defiantly like to come here again we spent all day here it wasn't over crowded once. A must for any holidaymakers in the area.

- Ideal family pool. Shallow pool for little ones and a larger one for more experienced swimmers. Very safe, lifeguards on duty. Shop selling teas, coffees, light meals and ice creams. Grassed area for spectators to sunbathe on. Just a tad too cold but ok when you get going. Great for families!
- We love coming here in the summer. We've already had our first of many visits this year. They've given it a bit of a revamp, and it does look cleaner/fresher. The kiosk is fab, and well priced, and the fact they no longer shut at lunch times is a bonus. I also like the fact you can hire sun loungers for the day. My only complaint, it's not a heated pool, and it is flipping freezing (ice cold freezing!) I spoke to the lifeguards, and they say the council won't pay to heat it. I personally don't go in the water because it is that cold, and I see others screaming when they try and get in. However, it's a cheap day out, and since they restricted the capacity, it's not so crowded, which is great. We'll hopefully be using this for many years to come.
- Visited here while staying in Clacton, what a great little find. The pools and surrounding area are all well worth seeing.
- The day we visited the weather was a mix of sunny/cloudy so the pool wasn't at all busy which was good for us. The pools are quite cold, the equivalent of a dip in the sea to best describe the temperature. Entrance fee for swimmers and spectators is very reasonable, snacks and drinks are again very reasonable and available at the pool side. A great afternoon out, pools aside lots to do and see, recommended!
- Had a lovely afternoon here. The schools had not yet broken up so was relatively quiet and very pleasant surroundings with astro turf to sit on and a little cafe. The water is of course quite cold as you would expect from a lido but lovely once you're in. Place was very clean and the pools (one normal one shallow paddling) were enormous! The changing facilities were a little more basic than I was expecting but adequate and for £3 odd who cares! All in all great day out and we will be back.
- We had fun, the weather was a tad chilly so this reflected with the pool temperature but the kids didn't care! cheap and a nice afternoon. Staff were good too.

- This is a little gem a beautiful clean pool with lots more close by . Staff are helpful and friendly Such a shame we can't enjoy during the day when school is still open would be nice for locals.
- Outdoor pool, lovely in this very hot weather, kids really enjoyed it. Cannot remember going to an outdoor pool in this country for years. I think years ago we went to one at Great Yarmouth. Great that the Council has kept this one going.
- A bright, sunny and warm day in July makes any review a bit biased, but for a review of an outdoor pool the weather is going to be a huge factor. We went on a bright sunny warm day in July where temps were around 27C (80F) so on a winner right from the start.

Good points:

- Cheap (9:70 for family ticket)
- 2 pools, 1 of which is great for children
- Lifeguards on duty
- Sunbeds available if you get there early
- Changing and shower facilities
- Onsite cafe that serves food
- Free parking on roads within few minutes walk

Not so good:

- Decor and 'ambiance' are quite basic
- Restricted numbers - late comers on sunny days will be queuing
- Onsite food is limited (although cheap)
- Grass areas are actually astro turf and there isn't that much of them anyway

For a few hours on a sunny day this is good value and we'll be going back again.

- One of the few remaining public open air swimming pools left in the country! Tendring District Council and Brightlingsea Town Council have worked hard in upgrading this wonderful facility for families. Worth a visit if sea swimming is not your thing!
- So nice to find an open pool. Its really lovely and for me quite special. its right on the side of the estuary so you can swim and look out to sea. Obviously its not the med but on a hot day its good enough - finished off by fish and chips down the road - what could be better!!!
- Brightlingsea open air swimming pool was built in 1933 and consists of a 50m. main swimming pool and a separate 15m. children's pool. Although the pool is right on the promenade, by the sea, it is a fresh water pool. The pools are large enough to have room for those who just want to swim but there is also enough space for those who prefer to have fun with inflatable toys or balls. Around the edge there is room to sunbathe or have a picnic or maybe a snack from the snack bar. On a warm summer's day it can be a very pleasant and economical way to spend time outdoors. It is open from late May to early September. Like all pools that are open to the elements the water will never be as clean as one would get in an indoor pool; however, Brightlingsea fared pretty well in the pool cleanliness stakes on the day I visited. It is certainly cleaner and more hygienic than the other outdoor alternative of swimming in the sea. It is also probably safer as there are lifeguards on duty. As the pool is nearly 80 years old one won't find all the modern conveniences of a new indoor pool. For example, the changing rooms are very basic indeed, just one shower in each - it was however clean and the water was a good temperature and at a suitable pressure. There are a few lockers -you need a 20p returnable deposit to lock these, although there weren't many lockers I actually had a choice of which one to use. There are no hairdryers. As I said -all very basic, however it was adequate. Car parking is available almost next door on the promenade - a charge is made for this but I believe the car park was free after three oclock. On a hot day I would consider returning to this pool again.

REVIEW FROM FENWICK – THE TEN BEST PLACES TO SWIM OUTDOORS

For Fenwick Colchester shoppers: a 1930s lido that has stood the test of time, the Brightlingsea Open Air Pool includes a 50 metre main pool as well as a smaller paddling pool for children. The upside is that it's a freshwater lido; the downside is that it's not heated, but on a glorious summer's day it is just the place to cool off.

Open May to September. 10am-6pm on weekends and during school holidays. 3:30-6pm at all other times. Children £2.85; adults £3.80.



ISSUES

- Repairs – capital expense
- Running costs – revenue stream
- Management – lack of planning, despite representation from Brightlingsea Town Council, maintenance and refurbishment has always been left to the last minute, therefore leaving little time to react
- Media reporting – portfolio holders, comments in press release not helpful as it intimates a decision has already been made
- Perception of under-funding – compare the Brightlingsea spend to Harwich, Frinton and Clacton facilities
- If pool is closed negative impact on the Western Promenade
- What becomes of the site? What are the decommissioning costs?

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVES

METHOD

ACHIEVEMENTS

To raise capital for repairs

Review quotes received and Brightlingsea Town Council to share costs with Tendring

Approached local firms for competitive quotes.

To be proactive in generating income thereby cutting overhead deficit

Explore forming a Trust to take on management in conjunction with Tendring District Council and Brightlingsea Town Council

Public meeting held on the 23rd May, which was organised by a local resident. Feeling of the meeting was that the residents would participate in a trust.

To ensure that management structure is robust

Implement a co-ordinated maintenance and improvement plan

Contacted a specialist who deals with supporting outdoor lidos and has contact with Fusion Lifestyle, who are Leisure Consultants.

To raise awareness

Using all advertising avenues

Social media already used, online petition with over 2,500 signatures.

To view all Tendring Leisure Facilities as a whole

Business plan to be specific so budgets can be used to greatest effect

Compared other TDC leisure sites. The comparison using a broader approach.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVES

To review officer report

METHOD

By requesting one of our new Town Councillors who in his professional life has vast experience of evaluating and compiling reports

ACHIEVEMENTS

His response attached along with article from the Guardian regarding an open air pool in Penzance

SUMMARY

- A proven heritage
- Unique facility
- Part of Tendring's diverse leisure offering
- Recognised nationally
- Partnership with Town Council
- Ownership with local community
- Measurable maintenance and improvements plan
- Positive awareness
- A different way of funding facilities
- What services do Tendring provide in Brightlingsea which the Town Council could do, thereby releasing funds to go to pools upkeep?