

CLUB SWIMMERS NEED POOL TIME

11:50 - 06 November 2006

With reference to the letter from Mr Newman (Wednesday) regarding the closure of Central Park pool, although this gentleman was right in saying we have probably the worst swimming facilities in the country, with the closing of two facilities in such a short time and swimming time at a premium, there is no need for such a negative response to youngsters having a swimming gala.

The pool was not closed all weekend; it was closed on Sunday for the City of Plymouth Championships. This gala was swum by children from Plymouth and the surrounding areas, all of whose parents pay their council tax just as you do, and they had to pay a high price to do so. These children put in a lot of hard work training and are taught the values of being positive in all they do. They get up at five in the morning to train; recently we had to move from our morning slot at Central Park because of gripes from the older fraternity. The children swam from 6am until 7.30am. We had to be content with two lanes out of six from 7am to 7.30am, which overlapped an adult session starting at 7am. Even though we had 20 swimmers in two lanes, the other four were not enough for the handful of adult swimmers at the time. We now train at Plympton pool in the mornings.

To put you in a more positive frame of mind, Mr Newman, we have probably one of the best swimming clubs in the country in Plymouth Leander. This club has got to the top of its sport with the help of good coaching and hard work from many parents and volunteers. To do this with the facilities available in Plymouth is outstanding; this is all down to the positive ethos at the club.

As to galas, perhaps Mr Newman would like to know there is another gala at Central Park on November 25 and 26, the Plymouth Junior Level 1 Open meet. Perhaps he would like to come along and see the positive side of swimming; it's open to all and there is sure to be some top swimming. If not, don't kick the youngsters because of the lack of swimming facilities in Plymouth; it is no fault of theirs. Take it up with your MP or local councillor.

M BRIGGS

Derriford

SWIMMING CRISIS IS NOT OUR FAULT

11:50 - 20 November 2006

Mr Briggs (November 6) takes exception to my previous letter (Postbag, November 1) which complained about the lack of availability of Central Park Pool for public swimming at weekends.

My letter was merely trying to make the point that there should be some balance between public use and private hire of the pool, and that there should be some attempt to share the inconvenience. Of course, Mr Briggs may disagree with me about where this balance should lie. Others may even believe that private hire should always take precedence over public use. Such arguments constitute legitimate debate, to which all are entitled to contribute.

I adhere to the view that some check is required as to how far private hire is allowed to erode public swimming time. It surely ought to be possible for a member of the swimming public to make this point without incurring the antipathy of those who wish to use it for private hire.

I have no complaint against Mr Briggs or anyone else who wishes to hire the pool. After all, we all share the same plight - lack of pool availability - and none of us is to blame: rather, those who shut Seaton Pool without any apparent regard for public opinion or the consequences.

On the closure of Seaton Pool I did, as Mr Briggs suggests, write to the council and to a local MP. The council didn't reply; the MP gave assurances of how they feel our pain. Both, I think, would rather that the subject of Plymouth swimming pools would just fade away.

Plymouth Leander's achievement in developing an elite swimming club, able to compete at the highest national level, is widely recognised, and applauded in the city and beyond. I do, of course, wish Mr Briggs, and all the swimmers, coaches and support staff of the club, all the success that their hard work and enthusiasm undoubtedly deserves.

TREVOR NEWMAN

Roborough