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Welcome to this news update from the campaign to re-open Arthur Hill swimming pool, with news about plans for the future of the Arthur Hill site and our activities over the summer period.

Reading Borough Council plans for the Arthur Hill site: please sign our petition

Reading Borough Council has published its proposals for the future of the Arthur Hill site in its new draft Local Plan. The plan states that the site should be developed for residential use, whilst retaining the frontage of the building "where possible", and indicates that between six to ten dwellings should be built on the site (Policy ER1h, page 193).

We disagree with this proposal, as the Arthur Hill site was donated by the Hill family for the benefit of the public, and not for Reading Borough Council to sell for private development. An online petition calling for the site to be retained for leisure, sporting, and community activities is on the Change.org website here (<http://arthur-hill.us15.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=e28821199d37283a3e1494f6d&id=a956940832&e=cabc45b74c>) . If you have not already done so, please consider signing it to show your opposition to the Council's proposals. The petition will be handed in to the Council at the Policy Committee meeting on Monday 17 July (6.30 pm at the Council Offices) and everyone is welcome to come along. We have also submitted a holding objection to the proposal through the formal local planning process, which will give us the opportunity to make further representations as the plan is developed further.

The local plan contains two more policies which are relevant to Arthur Hill Pool. Firstly, the Council has designated the frontage of the building (the reception area, and not the pool, changing cubicles, or gym) as a 'locally listed building'. The reasons they have done this are not clear, as this will reduce the development potential of the site without preserving the aspects of the building which are valued by local people. The local listing

apparently provides little genuine protection to the frontage, as the development policies in the Local Plan are hedged with qualifications about preserving the building.

The plan also contains a proposal to develop 3.08 hectares in Palmer Park for construction of a new swimming pool. This area is significantly larger than the Arthur Hill site, again eating into land which has been donated for public benefit.

Development of the Arthur Hill site in tandem with the Palmer Park project is evidently a sneaky back-door way of allowing development in parkland, despite Council policies for preserving public open spaces.

Next steps for the Arthur Hill campaign

The Board of Directors of the Arthur Hill community company is currently considering the next steps for our campaign and the company. We have a number of important decisions to make about the future of the company, including what shape our future activities should have and how to manage the money which our supporters generously donated to us in our Christmas crowd-funding appeal. We will be meeting in the near future to formulate specific proposals, and will then organise a community evening at the end of the summer to present our ideas to our company members and consult with you all on the next steps.

Summer festival activities

In the meantime, we have been attending local summer festivals to present our 'fitness challenge' activities, aimed at helping people to assess their fitness and learn simple activities which can be undertaken at home to stay healthy and active.

Earlier this month we attended the Reading Waterfest and the East Reading Festival, and we hope also to have a stall at the Reading Town Meal in the Forbury Gardens on Saturday 30 September. We are grateful to Persimmon Homes for awarding us a small grant to undertake these activities.

You can see photos of our activities at the Waterfest and East Reading Festival on our Facebook page here (<http://arthur-hill.us15.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=e28821199d37283a3e1494f6d&id=5b9f5e4a49&e=cabc45b74c>) - and congratulations to Harry and Zandra, winners of our prize draw at each of the events!

Get in touch with us

You can contact Arthur Hill – Save Our Swimming Community Interest Company in the following ways:

Web: arthur-hill.co.uk
Email: info@arthur-hill.co.uk
Facebook: facebook.com/savearthurhill
Twitter: @arthurhillpool
Mail: Arthur Hill Save Our Swimming CIC, 35-39
London Street, Reading, RG1 4PS

To become a member of the Community Interest Company please attend one of our forthcoming events or send £1 with your email address to the postal address above. We are in the process of setting up a system to allow new members to join online.

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** (<http://arthur-hill.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=e28821199d37283a3e1494f6d&id=2e4504b7d8&e=cabc45b74c>)

** (<http://arthur-hill.us15.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=e28821199d37283a3e1494f6d&id=37a81647d7&e=cabc45b74c>)

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