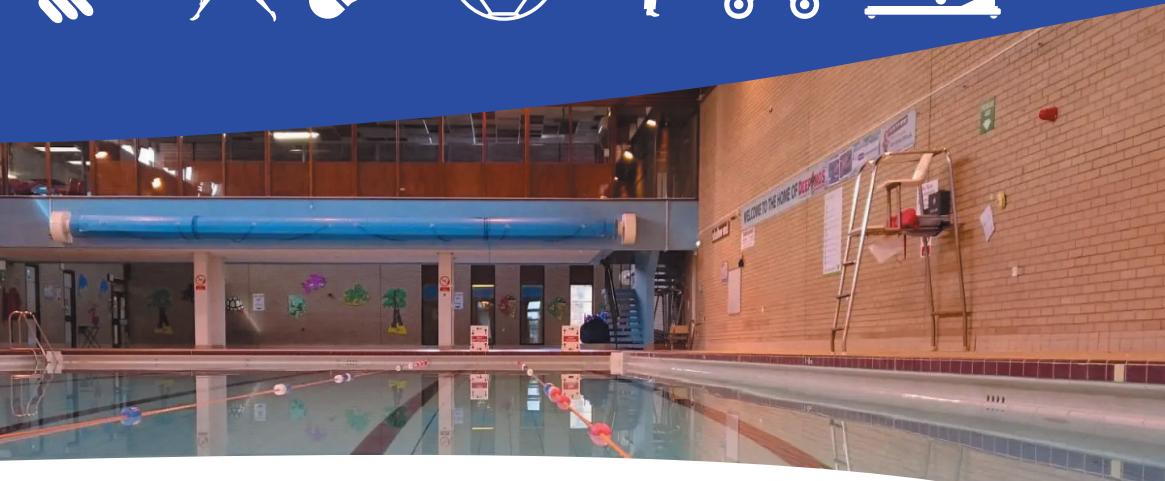


# SAVE DEEPINGS LEISURE CENTRE!



# Dear Councillor...

My eldest child has been swimming at Deeping since she was 3 years old. She has had and attended parties there, and now it's to be taken away. My youngest was about to start swimming lessons, which is a big thing when you have special needs (Deeping did special sessions for children with additional needs). It has sadly been snatched away and I fear he shall never learn to swim.

A journey to a different pool twice a week after school is just not practical if you work. I thought inclusion for all, mental health and physical activity is what is upmost at the moment ... not crushing dreams and leaving so many of us disadvantaged.

My name is [REDACTED], and my son [REDACTED] swims for Deeping Swimming Club. The club has been excellent for [REDACTED], as his main outlet for sport and fitness has been his swimming. He loves the club, the competing, the support from coaches and the strong friendships he has developed and continues to do so as he progresses through the different skills groups. When I informed [REDACTED] of the situation, he was devastated and we had tears.

The club have some stop-gap sessions in place for the time being, but [REDACTED] has said that if it's not Deeping Club, then he doesn't really want to swim for any other club. The permanent closure will have this impact for many youngsters who are just developing their goals and ambitions for their future, of which sport will play a big part, is incalculable. The centre is much more than pounds and pence.

When we looked at areas to move to, the provision of leisure facilities was important to us, and the leisure centre was an important factor in selecting the Deepings. We are just one family amongst the very many which have used the centre, as it is not just a facility for sports but is at the centre of the community. An area with an ever-increasing young population cannot afford to be without such a centre for an indefinite period. [REDACTED].

My name is [REDACTED], and I have lived in the Deepings all my life. I have always been very active but last year I was diagnosed with epilepsy, which was totally life changing. I have been unable to drive since, so using the local swimming pool has been vitally important to me physically – but more importantly mentally. I can walk to the pool and enjoy 45 mins of losing myself in the water and not thinking about my disability for a while.

Without the pool I have been devastated, as I can't access other pools and already my mental health has been affected. I also help coach at the Swimming club which my two children attend, so as a family the closure has had a massive negative impact on our lives.

Many thanks for listening.

I am 76 years old and have used the facilities at Deeping St James Leisure Centre ever since the complex opened. In particular I have used the pool for swimming every week, apart from illness and holidays. For the past ten years, apart from COVID restricting me, I swam every week day.

I taught my son to swim in the pool and then my granddaughters.

I do not want to drive to other centres, particularly when it will get cold and dark in winter.

Only those who enjoy swimming can truly appreciate the devastating sense of loss that we feel at being deprived of this facility. [REDACTED].

My name is [REDACTED]; I have recently moved to Deeping St James (2019) and I am absolutely gutted about the potential closure of the Deepings Leisure Centre. I myself work remotely in IT management and my wife is a secondary school science teacher, previously having worked as a research scientist. We are what some might call a 'young professional couple'. We are currently pregnant with our first child, and my wife is due to give birth in September. We moved to Deeping St James because it suited everything we were after to start our family. The leisure centre was a big part in us choosing to move where we did (Linchfield Road).

I have been using the leisure centre in the past for its gym, badminton courts, squash courts and swimming pool, and have really loved having the centre in walking distance to be able to enjoy all these activities. With the news of the closure of the leisure centre and no guarantee of actually getting a new one built (which even if it were guaranteed would still take many years to complete), it has made us start to question if this is where we really want to start our family.

I am confident we are not going to be alone in this thinking; many new families considering where they would like to move will see this news and will be thinking twice about moving to the Deepings. I have seen a lot of discussion about the impacts this is going to have on our

My name is [REDACTED].

I have lived in or near the Deepings for all of my 38 years; the leisure centre has been a fixture of health and well-being all that time.

Recently I have frequented the swimming pool as a way of exercising and relaxing to aid my post-natal health, and depression, with low-impact exercise necessary after a c-section. This is just one of the many ways the centre has been an important part of my life.

Leaving the town without a leisure centre will negatively impact me, my children, and the whole community.

local schools and community, but there is another side I do not think people are considering. People are far less likely to move to an area that does not have facilities for their families, and let's face it, we know this is going to have an impact on the surrounding schools that used the leisure centre as part of their curriculum.

I really hope something can be done and the leisure centre can be repaired.

My name is [REDACTED]: we live in the Deepings and have 4 children aged 3 to 13, who since a young age have used the leisure centre. My 3-year-old son was due to start his swim lessons soon as his older sisters did at a similar age; all three learned to swim at the Deepings Leisure Centre, he himself had his very first swim there as a newborn baby. Driving to and from Bourne/Stamford in the week is not viable, due to our work commitments and a busy family life.

Our ten-year-old daughter was due to complete swimming again with her local primary school this year, after missing it in years 4 and 5 due to COVID; she is now unlikely to be able to do so, or if she does, at a much greater cost to parents to cover transport. Our two eldest daughters attend the Deepings School, and we are concerned with regards to the facilities they will now have available to them for their PE lessons and extracurricular activities.

As a family we have made use of the leisure centre for swimming lessons for our children, family swimming, birthday parties, roller skating on Sundays and our own health and leisure needs over many many years; we feel extremely let down by the closure of our local leisure centre and urge the council to invest in the maintenance they should have done over the last decade.

My name is [REDACTED]. I am a widowed parent who takes my child swimming weekly, and it's one of the few things she enjoys doing out of school. We moved here not long before the pandemic started, and swimming is a great way for me to meet other parents and for my child to meet new friends outside school; this is a real lifeline when you are in my situation. As I also work and have sole caring responsibilities for my child, any extra hours spent travelling, petrol costs etc., that are added to my week can make my life even more logically difficult, and it will also mean that one of the wonderful local links I have to the community has been lost.

We moved the Deepings in 1993 with 3 young children. They learned to swim at the centre; they have been to – and we have held for them – children's parties in the pool and in the gym. I taught them to play badminton there and they have pursued martial arts training there. I have also attended the gym and played pool there, plus other sports. My children have been to discos and other events as well. As scouts they attended swimming galas there. My wife and I have attended the Christmas concerts arranged by the Rotary Club, and as a Rotarian myself I have been involved in organising them. The centre has been the starting point for the carnival, and I recall attending remembrance celebrations. I also attended a meeting held by our MP regarding the traveller community.

My name is [REDACTED]. I've lived in Deeping all my life. The leisure centre has been a huge part of our community. It would be devastating to lose this facility, for so many reasons. As a local teaching assistant, I know how many children will miss out on vital swimming lessons if our centre is closed. It's a life skill that is part of the national curriculum. The centre is vital for our community's well-being and mental health; with the recent pandemic I believe it's a necessity and it would be criminal to lose it!

My son [REDACTED] has been using the Leisure centre for over 6 years; he learnt to swim there with the swim school, he has been making fantastic progress especially in the last year (COVID excluded). He really gets a buzz from swimming, and the last two coaches he has had ([REDACTED] [REDACTED]) have brought the best out in him and pushed him to do and want more. He has taken part in a distance swim challenge night, and has now made it onto the Deepings Swimming Team. He was so excited to make the team, and watching the Olympics this summer he talked and dreamed about making Team GB in the future. Being part of the swim school and now the Deepings Swimming Team had been brilliant for his confidence and independence. It is a time where he is totally responsible for himself and it has been the making of him. He has made many friends outside of his school group which I think is brilliant, and this he will sadly miss if the centre remains closed.

He has used the centre with his school (Baston Primary) too, and took part in a schools swimming gala – and more importantly tried new sports such as golf and hockey. All I want as a parent is to give my son as many opportunities as possible, and closing the centre for no matter how long takes these opportunities away from not only my son but everyone in the community and surrounding area.

My name is [REDACTED], a 46-year-old mum of 3 children who all use the Deepings Leisure Centre. Two of my sons attend swim school; one of them is doing well but the other had very little confidence in the water, but thanks to the swim school is gaining week in week. He still cannot 'swim' which is a safety concern, and we cannot get him to other swim schools in the area.

As well as swim school we attend the centre for sports classes too; my husband uses the gym and my daughter goes to the Deepings School, which will also be affected by this closure. Please don't close our leisure centre: it will have huge implications for our family.

I am a grandparent and have memories of my children and their children (my grandchildren) attending various events and clubs at the Deepings Leisure Centre. I was also a head teacher and know the headaches caused to the school timetable, trying to implement the sporting activities prescribed by the National Curriculum. These include the use of a swimming pool to teach children how to swim! (Many families cannot afford private lessons.) The National Curriculum requires sports to be delivered regardless of the facilities of the individual school. Schools in Deeping rely on the Leisure Centre to assist with this when needed. I have

I live in Deeping St James with my husband and my two daughters, aged 7 and 9. Both of my girls have been using the pool every week (apart from in lockdown) to learn to swim. This is an ongoing challenge for them which has been interrupted for the last 18 months by lockdowns. It is frustrating that only months after resuming their lessons they have now been stopped in their tracks by the closure of the pool. They have both also missed out on visiting the pool with their class in the school Easter term, due to COVID for 2 years in a row, and now this will continue for years to come. The girls have also attended roller skating parties at the centre, and have friends who attend many other classes and activities.

I swim at least twice a week at the pool myself, and have done so for the past 4 years. I have found swimming particularly therapeutic between lockdowns, as I have found it hard having to work from home (which I have had to do for the last 18 months) due to increased mental fatigue, reduced physical exercise and isolation from colleagues caused by working from home.

I don't understand how the closure of the pool can be justified in a time where mental and physical fitness for adults and children alike has been so badly affected by COVID. It feels more important than ever to have local facilities that can serve the local community. How are we supposed to manage with just Bourne and Stamford centres, which have their own populations to serve?

watched the local schoolchildren walk in all weathers to our swimming pool, to sports days and concerts that used the centre as their base. I took my grandchildren to some of these events and also to martial arts lessons in the evenings along with, yes, you've guessed it, the Swimming Club. (When it first opened there were indoor cricket nets, badminton and squash, to name just a few sports. The café held birthday parties. Small rooms had baby and toddler groups. It was a hive of activity. There was an active gym, adult keep fit, and roller skating on Sunday afternoons.)

I have neighbours who take their girls to the pool to train at 5.30 in a morning, no matter what the weather is like outside. This takes determination to a higher level.

The centre has been neglected. There is no doubt about that. There is nothing to replace it on the horizon. It requires attention, money, and – like the two girls who live near me – DETERMINATION to get it fixed.

From [REDACTED].

I recently retired and decided to join LeisureSK, as I want to keep fit and also have somewhere I can go to meet other people. I have been most dismayed at the recent closure of this facility. I feel that a local sports facility is an important part of any town, as the health and welfare of people of all generations is important and should be encouraged. I for one know that having to travel to another facility is not easy, and any obstacles to accessing the gym easily just puts me off going. It adds at least 30 minutes each way to what was previously a quick workout. Added to that, the additional fuel costs for such journeys have to be considered when on a limited income.

I would also like to mention that at no time have LeisureSK contacted me to inform me of the current closure and ascertained what I wish to do with my current membership.

I wholly support the effort to ensure that the Deepings Leisure Centre is reopened as soon as possible.

I have lived in Deeping St James my whole life; I am a married mother of 2 aged 10 and 14 years. I can honestly say I have used The Deepings Leisure Centre my entire life for a wide variety of reasons, the most important being learning to swim: in my opinion one of the most essential life skills to learn. Swimming for health (both physical and mental) and as a family, roller skating, squash, socialising, and have held many private functions in the halls available, as well as attending a great many private and public functions, occasions, and some fetes.

My daughters are currently learning to swim at the leisure centre, with excellent teaching from the many swim teachers employed here.

I do not drive, and work full-time; my girls have missed out on our family trips to the pool this summer holiday, as travelling to and from our next nearest pool on the bus now takes us approximately 1 hour 50 mins to do a round trip, severely cutting our pool time by half (our nearest bus stop is approximately 25 minutes away walking), not to mention the cost of the bus – walking to the pool in Deeping is both monetary and environmentally FREE!

The Deepings Leisure Centre is a valuable asset for the community, and should be restored as such.

Yours sincerely, [REDACTED].

I have been using the leisure centre to play badminton since 2018. It boosts my mental health as well as my physical health, and I get to socialise with my friends. We laugh (a lot!), we play, and we compete. We walk to the centre, picking each other up along the way from various spots in Deeping.

The likelihood is that sadly, if access to sport is limited, then it becomes less attractive for people like us who have limited time, money and ability to travel. This will damage the health and relationships for the people of the Deepings, and I, as well as many others, am devastated that this precious community resource could be taken from us.

I retired 3 years ago and then started going to the gym at Deeping Leisure Centre. I became fitter and it also had social benefits, as I live in a small village and rarely see people from day to day. During the COVID lockdowns I put on a stone in weight, and, like most people, lived a very isolated life.

Since the gym reopened, I started to lose weight, felt better physically and mentally, and looked forward to going again ... now it's been closed. Other gyms in Deeping cost twice the price, and market themselves at younger people who want the 'perfect body' ... the Leisure Centre gym is a place where people of all ages and sizes can feel comfortable doing whatever exercise they can.

Hello, I live in Deeping St James, I am writing to express how disappointed my family would be if our leisure centre doesn't reopen soon.

My daughter is 12; she loves to go swimming and roller skating with her friends, it is beneficial for her health and mental health, especially after the past year etc. It is a place she can go and I know she will be safe and have fun with her friends. My son is 15; he uses the sports hall to play basketball, he's not very confident but he has found a sport that he can play and interact with other people from The Deepings School in an after-school club.

I also work at DSJ Primary School; the children all use the swimming pool for their swimming lessons - I'm sure you would agree it is extremely important that they learn how to swim. It would be very sad for us to lose this facility; I think the people of The Deepings deserve to have this building fixed up at least until the new one is built. It is such a shame the building has been allowed to get into this state.

I have 3 children, all that have been part of the Deepings Swimming Club at some point over the past 9 years. My youngest is 14 and is still an active member, swimming 5-6 times a week at the pool. Not only is it vital for her fitness in keeping her body strong and healthy, but also for her mental welfare and social interaction.

She doesn't find it easy to meet friends outside of school, and lacks confidence sometimes with her schoolwork, but when she's at the pool with her club, with her friends, with her coaches, she's a positive, happy individual, so I see how this has an impact on her in so many ways.

Yes, you might say that it doesn't have to stop – that she could continue at another pool/club and carry on – but the reality of that isn't the case, as an alternative would either be Boston (a 55-minute drive each way) or Grantham (a 45-minute drive each way), and yes, if it was only once a week it would be OK to take her the extra distance, but in order for her to compete as she has done in the past, she needs to train 5-6 times a week or more. She swims before school, getting up at 5am three times a

My eldest son has been going to the swim school for the past 3 years. He is by no means a strong swimmer, and for this reason I feel it's even more important that he can keep up with lessons, so that he gets as much practise and confidence around water as possible – especially living in a town with a river running through it! He has persevered, because he knows that it will allow him to go in swimming pools and in the sea when we visit the coast.

Travelling every week is just not viable, both from a cost perspective, from the extra petrol used (and accompanying environmental cost from extra travel!) and the time – trying to get there after school. Not to mention that when my youngest (hopefully) starts lessons it could mean making that journey twice a week!

week; if she moved to another club that wouldn't be possible as she wouldn't make it back in time for school. She also swims on days when my son plays football in Deeping, and if it was changed to swimming at Grantham or Boston, I'd have to make a choice in who to take: I'd have to make a choice in whose health and well-being is more important - my son or my daughter.

I would love for someone who makes decisions to answer that, or to tell me that it wasn't a waste in supporting my children when spending everything spare, I had to pay for it, that it wasn't a waste in getting up at silly o'clock most mornings even when I've been so tired from work, and that it wasn't a waste in driving them back and forth to the pool hundreds if not thousands of times over the years to help keep them fit, healthy and happy. What is it the government keep saying - that we all have to play our part, that we all have to do what we can to stay fit and healthy and not put extra pressure on the NHS? Because that's what I've been trying to do for years.

How do I truly explain to a teenager, to my teenager that has been through so much these last 18 months, that the one thing that gives her confidence and self-belief isn't there now, because the man with the wallet says she's not important enough any more.

My daughter is 7 and just getting her confidence to swim again after lockdown. Her skills and stamina quickly declined during lockdown. She was just about back to where she was, and then the leisure centre closed. This is a life skill that she needs to keep improving on. My husband learnt to swim there too when he was in his thirties; a life skill that he now has thanks to the local pool and instructors.

I also used the pool for exercise and walking netball.

Part of the reason we moved to Deeping St James was to be close to the leisure centre. It is within walking distance of our home.

I am concerned about the closure of the leisure centre for several reasons, one being that I grew up in the Deepings and learnt to swim as well as spent much of my childhood doing various activities there, and I want my children to have the same opportunities. My husband and I were also members of the gym until lockdown.

My daughters have both been learning to swim at the pool for a number of years, and since lockdown my 12-year-old daughter, who has a disability has, not been able to return to her lessons unlike the other typical children. This, I have been told, was due to the leisure centre being advised against resuming lessons which require teachers in the pool with the students until further easing of the COVID restrictions. Thus meaning that the smaller children – and children like my daughter who learn better with a teacher in the pool – have not been able to take swimming lessons in 18 months. I understand that the guidance has now changed, but with the pool closed, she is still unable to

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have the opportunity to learn this valuable life skill, unlike her non-disabled peers. I had made enquiries just before the closure and was not given any indication of when her lessons could resume. I would like to know how SKDC are going to meet their obligations under the Equalities Act and start making swimming lessons accessible to disabled children of the Deepings, like my daughter. I understand that other non-disabled children have been offered alternative lessons at another pool, but we seem to have been forgotten and are still waiting to be contacted. Any assistance that you can give to try and help my daughter and the other children with SEND in her swimming class to get some local(ish) swimming lessons would be greatly appreciated.

**We moved to DSJ attracted by all that it could offer a young family, particularly the Leisure Centre within walking distance of our home. We loved our family swims, and our daughter was progressing well in the swim school thanks to the brilliant instructors. We are all devastated that the Centre has been forced to close. Other pools in the region just aren't practical for us, so I fear that without regular swim sessions our daughter will lose this valuable skill that she worked so hard to learn.**

My name is [REDACTED], for me the Leisure Centre means everything for my mental health. I am a swimmer; I attend every morning at 7.15 am, and it's my fuel for the day, my chance to clear my mind and get off on the right start each day. The centre is not just four walls where I let go and swim a mile or more each day; I have made the best friends I could ever wish for. All ages, all abilities, pulling together and learning from one another. I have really suffered with my well-being since this place has been closed; I fear many others do too.

My name is [REDACTED]. Previously a member of staff at Deeping Leisure Centre. Where do I even begin? Those 4 walls are not just a sport centre. It's a home for many: The loving family of staff. The children who partake in lessons to gain a life skill to prevent them from being in danger. The elderly that come in to socialise because they have no one at home and the leisure centre is their safe place. Those that come in to help their mental health and leave with a sense of achievement. My list could go on and on. Seeing a customer leave with a smile on their face would be enough to complete our day!

Deeping is a loving and humble community. We pull together, we fight for what is right. We need our Centre open.

A new Centre would be amazing and that would be great if that was the end goal. But unfortunately, that isn't good enough. We need something now. We need something for the residents of Deeping and the surrounding villages. We cannot be expected to wait. We deserve the Centre open which has been home to many for years. We deserve some well overdue investment.

I am 14 years old. I attend the Deepings School; I love my swimming lessons provided by the school and swimming with my friends. I am worried about where GCSE exams will be held when it comes time for me to take mine. I also go swimming when we are able, with my family at weekends and have lots of fun.

I love the cafeteria too, and we go after our family swim for a snack or meal.

I have been to many parties within the centre, and roller skating too; I miss the fact I cannot go now spontaneously without planning days in advance.

“ Leaving the town without a leisure centre will negatively impact me, my children, and the whole community ”