

# FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

## PRESS RELEASE

5 December 2023

### **Special offers at Fenland leisure centres to mark five years of Freedom Leisure partnership**

Free leisure centre day passes and a special offer for new members are available for a limited period across Fenland in celebration of five years of management by Freedom Leisure.

Fenland District Council and Freedom Leisure have been working in partnership to provide leisure centre facilities across the district since December 2018.

The two organisations entered into a partnership to maintain and improve leisure centre provision across the district at a reduced cost to the taxpayer.

Cllr Alex Miscandlon, Fenland District Council's portfolio holder for leisure, said: "We're delighted to mark this milestone with our partners Freedom Leisure.

"Recent years have been extremely challenging for the leisure industry with Covid and then the energy cost crisis, but together we have kept our leisure centres open and continuing to attract more users, which is great news for the health and wellbeing of our district.

"We remain committed to maintaining and improving leisure provision in Fenland and continue to strive for that."

To celebrate the anniversary, Freedom Leisure is offering free one day passes at all Fenland sites and scrapping the joining fee for new members until Sunday (December 10).

Fenland District Council continues to own Chatteris Leisure Centre, March's George Campbell Leisure Centre, Wisbech's Hudson Leisure Centre and Whittlesey's Manor Leisure Centre. But in December 2018, handed management to Freedom Leisure, a not-for-profit charitable trust, on a 15 year and four-month agreement. This arrangement is estimated to save the council around £5.6 million over the contract period.

Figures from the financial year ending in March 2023, showed levels of learn to swim members and fitness members were significantly up on pre-covid levels. They stood at 3,179 learn to swim members (176 per cent of pre-covid numbers) and 3,998 fitness members (121 per cent of pre covid numbers).

Since the partnership began, Fenland District Council has invested in major improvements to Wisbech leisure centre's reception and gym, roof work projects at Wisbech and March as well as skylight repairs at Chatteris and new gym equipment across all sites including spinning bikes.

Recently, the council invested in improved changing rooms at the gym facility in March leisure centre.

In addition, the council [secured £191,000](#) from the Government's Swimming Pool Support Fund, administered by Sport England, to offset the impact of massive energy cost hikes that have seen some swimming pools elsewhere in the country face closure.

Ivan Horsfall Turner, Freedom Leisure's Chief Executive Officer, said: "We are extremely proud of the achievements and the improvements we have been able to make at the leisure centres and to the health and wellbeing of the people of Fenland during the last five years.

"This is only possible with our excellent relationship with all the team at Fenland District Council. We have a common vision to improve lives through leisure and I look forward, along with my amazing colleagues that work at the centres, to continue that good work which benefits the whole community and we'd encourage as many people to visit their local leisure centre soon."

**ENDS**

**Notes to Editors**

For media enquiries, please contact the Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226 or email: [communications@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:communications@fenland.gov.uk)