



CPUG Statement on the Clissold Park Paddling Pool

15th June 2026

The information in this statement was provided to the Clissold Park User Group (CPUG) by Hackney Council's Parks Department and Clissold Park staff or obtained from the Hackney Council website.

This subject has been on the User Groups agenda for many years, and discussed extensively at meetings, on social media and in person in the park. The former Clissold Park paddling pool is often remembered fondly by local residents, but its closure was not simply the result of a lack of capital investment.

Clissold Park paddling pool was closed primarily because it had reached the end of its operational life. Built in the 1930s, the facility had become increasingly expensive to maintain and could no longer meet modern safety, hygiene, accessibility, and environmental standards without major investment. Hackney Council decided to replace it with a modern splash pad instead, a decision which was strongly influenced and supported by the User Group.

Why it was closed

The main reasons given by Hackney Council were:

- **Age of the facility** – The pool was around 90 years old and had deteriorated significantly.
- **Safety concerns** – Assessments found it could not continue operating safely without substantial upgrades.
- **Lack of modern filtration** – The pool required new automatic filtration systems to improve water quality, hygiene, and reduce water consumption.
- **High maintenance costs** – Repairs were becoming increasingly frequent and expensive.
- **Accessibility issues** – The old design was not fully accessible to wheelchair users.
- **Need for a more sustainable facility** – The replacement splash pad uses modern water-management systems and is easier to operate.

Problems encountered while it was open

Before closure, the paddling pool experienced several ongoing issues:

- **Frequent breakdowns** - Maintenance work was needed regularly, sometimes forcing long closures during busy periods.



- **Ageing infrastructure** - Much of the original structure and equipment was outdated and nearing failure.
- **Water quality challenges** - The lack of modern filtration made hygiene management more difficult than current standards require, forcing long closures during busy periods when water became contaminated.
- **High water consumption** - Older pool systems are less efficient and use more water than modern splash-pad technology.
- **Fill and empty time** – The pool took some 8 hours to fill and around the same amount of time to empty.
- **Accessibility limitations** - The design did not adequately accommodate wheelchair users and others with mobility needs.
- **Staffing and safety** – There are insufficient staff numbers on site to properly and safely monitor and maintain the pool.

Why Reopening is Not a Practical Option

While grants or capital funding might help pay for refurbishment or reconstruction, they do not solve the longer-term challenge of ongoing maintenance and staffing. Any water facility requires a reliable revenue budget for day-to-day operation, repairs, cleaning, inspections and supervision. Historically, the paddling pool required significant staffing and maintenance resources. During opening periods, staff supervision was needed to ensure the facility remained safe and suitable for children, including preventing dogs from entering the water area, discouraging glass containers, monitoring behaviour, and maintaining cleanliness.

Operational issues such as leaks, pump failures and general wear and tear were recurring challenges that required ongoing attention and expenditure. As the infrastructure aged, these maintenance demands became increasingly difficult and costly to manage. A capital grant can fund construction, but it does not usually provide a long-term solution for operational costs. With the Council already struggling to maintain existing facilities, investing in a high-maintenance paddling pool could simply recreate the same problems a few years later.

The replacement splash pad was partly designed to address these issues. Modern splash-pad systems use less water, have improved filtration and control systems, are more accessible, and generally require less intensive maintenance than a traditional paddling pool. While no water feature is maintenance-free, the splash pad offers a more sustainable long-term model for the Council to operate through leisure group, Better.

The debate therefore is not only about whether the paddling pool could be rebuilt, but whether there is a realistic and sustainable plan to maintain, supervise and fund it over the long term. Without that commitment, capital investment alone is unlikely to resolve the underlying challenges that led to its closure.



Plans for the space

In 2021, more than 1,100 people took part in a consultation about both the new splash pad and the future of the old paddling pool area. Residents were invited to vote on a range of possible uses for the site, while also submitting their own ideas and suggestions.

However, the consultation generated such a wide range of responses that no clear consensus emerged on a preferred future use. The Council received not only votes on the proposed options but also a significant number of alternative suggestions from residents. As a result, the Council stated that further engagement would be needed before any final decision could be made.

At present, there are no confirmed plans for the former paddling pool area, and the site remains closed. The Council intends to undertake a new consultation on the future of the space once the current playground improvements and depot works have been completed.

Links and contacts

For more information or to pass on your comments or concerns, please contact Hackney Council.

Hackney Parks email
parks@hackney.gov.uk

2021 Consultation
<https://consultation.hackney.gov.uk/leisure-parks-green-spaces/clissold-consultation/results/clissold-consultationreport.pdf>

Hackney Council website, Clissold Park
<https://www.hackney.gov.uk/libraries-parks-and-leisure/parks-and-green-spaces/parks-list/clissold-park-and-house>

Thank you
Clissold Park User Group.