

St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool is 5



On Saturday 12th March St George's hosted a celebration to mark the opening of the pool to the community five years ago.



The celebration was open to St George's users, their families and carers and the event provided an opportunity to welcome back some those who have helped and supported the pool over the years.

Here we capture some moments from the day...

The Mayor - Councillor John Peach - and Mayoress - Ms Janet Martin - made a welcome return to St George's to cut our bespoke birthday cake.



The cake, which anyone who has ever visited the pool will recognize, brought universal admiration and delight. It was also delicious and proved to be the talking point of the day.

The raffle proved to be another popular attraction. Thanks to Jane and June for their marvellous work.



Many thanks to Mrs T Cakes who created the birthday cake and helped make the day so special.

In response to numerous requests for her details:
Mrs T Cakes www.facebook.com/MrsTcakes (Peterborough)
Tel: 07703 271 232 Email: tcakes@4tates.co.uk

Our volunteer receptionist Andy's reaction captures the joy and amusement that the cake brought...



St George's was also delighted to welcome the Leader of Peterborough City Council (PCC), Councillor John Holdich, and Mrs Holdich. Councillor Holdich entered into the fun and made the raffle draw a most entertaining and enjoyable occasion - even for those of us who were unsuccessful.

He is seen here (right) passing the raffle tin to another special guest - Brian Rudgley. Brian was the headteacher at St George's School for 28 years, including when the pool opened in 1976.

After the school closed Brian Moss was responsible for managing St George's Centre and took care of the pool until it opened to the community. Sadly, we were unable to contact him.



Councillor Holdich (left) is pictured here with Karen Oldale and Bryan Tyler Peterborough's Disability Forum Manager. It was in 2009 that Karen (a hydrotherapy user) and Pat Baker (St George's aquatic physiotherapist - see page 7) began the search to find a local hydrotherapy pool that could be used by the community after the one at the Peterborough District Hospital closed. It was as a result, working with partners such as Healthwatch Peterborough and the Disability Forum, that Peterborough City Council opened St George's pool to the community in March 2011. Karen and Pat have continued to be very actively involved ever since.

Other guests who were able to make a welcome return to the pool were Leonie McCarthy and Chas Ryan.



Leonie was PCC's project lead for St George's 2011-13 and made it all happen, while Chas, with the help of aquatic therapy authority Mike Maynard (who was unable to attend) secured commissioning. Leonie is now Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service (PCVS), while Chas works in Health in London.



Angela and Heather from Healthwatch Peterborough were unable to attend the celebration but sent the following message:

"Healthwatch Peterborough continue to support the St George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool and send congratulations on their 5th birthday - the hydrotherapy pool provides an invaluable service to those that are most vulnerable and those with long-term health problems in our community. The work to enable this service to continue often goes unnoticed and unrecognised - so this is an opportunity to thank these people and celebrate the existence of one, of only a handful of community hydrotherapy pools. Healthwatch Peterborough is proud to support this valued community service - Happy Birthday and long may it continue."

Guests currently involved in supporting the pool and the future of hydrotherapy in the city included PCC portfolio holder, Councillor Nigel North, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital and Councillor Diane Lamb, Cabinet Member for Public Health.



Councillor North takes a seat poolside to talk with hydrotherapy user and advocate of the service, Trayce.



Councillor Lamb pictured (left) with aquatic physiotherapist Pat Baker, who conducted sessions through the day and volunteers Karen, Jane and Sam. Councillor Lamb (like other councillors) gave time to talk and listen to many different people.

Other councillors who were able to attend during the day were Councillors Chris Ash and Bella Saltmarsh, who are pictured standing at the far right of the group photograph on page 2 and Councillors Okonkowski, Ferris and Shearman.



Councillor John Okonkowski



Councillors John Shearman (left)
and Richard Ferris



The Mayor with a pool user.



Nikki Griffiths (left) from Inspire Peterborough made a welcome visit <http://www.inspirepeterborough.com/> as did Tom Payne, one of the founding partners of Tidal Tots (<http://www.tidaltots.co.uk/>) which hires the pool privately. Tom is seen here (right) chatting to Councillor North.



The visitor who probably travelled the furthest to attend was pool user Malcolm, from Hessle in East Yorkshire, seen here enjoying some very well-earned refreshment.



Although it was busy and hectic as seen here...

There were some opportunities for quiet thought.

Paul and Amelia Sykes are pictured next to St George's newly planted raised bed. A donation to the Friends from Paul following the death of his wife and Amelia's mother, Christine, was the inspiration for the project.

In addition, thanks must go to Diane and Colin Sanger (also guests on the day) who organized the purchase, planning and planting of the bed.





It was an enjoyable day for many but a tiring time for some ...

Although the main focus of the day was to celebrate, acknowledge and thank some of those involved with the pool's success; St George's supporters are notoriously generous and an amazing **£348** (which will be used to benefit the pool and its users) was raised.

And as always, there are a number of important and additional thanks to be made:

Thank you to every single person who attended to make it such a successful and happy day - it would not have happened without you.

In addition to those featured in the photographs there were some unsung heroes working away in the background, not captured on camera. Special thanks therefore go to Vince and Robert who manned the refreshment stall all day. It was so busy they were using three kettles at a time!

Also thank you to Howard who had the unenviable responsibility of transporting the cake to the pool.

Staff members Tom, Tara and Ashley were so busy attending to customers that we hardly caught sight of them.

Thank you to everyone who donated, including raffle prizes and refreshments.

We would also like to thank the following organizations for supporting the pool with their donations of raffle prizes.

- Huntingdon Racecourse - two vouchers for any race day in 2016
- John Lewis (Peterborough) - two Ecoya scented candles
- Tesco Hampton (Serpentine Green) - two £10 gift cards
- Savers (Peterborough) - toiletry gift set

Thanks for everyone's good wishes and messages, including this one from pool user Olive...

"Happy 5th Birthday and many more returns to St. George's Community Hydrotherapy Pool.

May the means be found to keep hydrotherapy available so that the community can continue to access its great health and well-being benefits.

Best wishes, Olive"

Hydrotherapy really works!

