

## JOINT PROVISION & DUAL USE IN CORNWALL by Roger Luke

The county of Cornwall provides an interesting contrast to Nottinghamshire and Cheshire and most other areas of the UK. Dual use, rather joint provision, has largely been the order of the day in the County. Sports provision could not be more rooted in an area's heritage than in the county of Cornwall.

Cornwall is recognised by Cornish and Celtic political groups as one of six Celtic nations alongside Brittany, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Scotland and Wales. Cornwall Council considers its unique cultural heritage and distinctiveness to be one of the County's major assets. Its distinctiveness lies in its language, Celtic identity, political history, patterns of settlement, maritime tradition, industrial heritage and its non-conformist tradition.

While most of the school gymnasia and playing fields were hired out to clubs and organisations in Cornwall, joint provision of community leisure facilities was not undertaken by Cornwall County Council and the 30 small Urban, Rural and Town Councils in the Duchy prior to 1974, mainly due to the limited financial resources available to each Council.

Two areas, Camborne/Redruth and St Austell saw the development of modern Leisure Centres provided by the outgoing councils in those areas and handed over to the newly formed District Councils on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1974 to operate. Carn Brea Leisure Centre and Polkyth Leisure Centre were Local Authority Centres, but they set the ball rolling in the provision for future Community Leisure Development in Cornwall.

Following Local Government Re-Organisation in 1974 and the creation of the 6 larger District Councils to cover the County, Community Leisure started to make positive moves forward, with the initiative coming from the new District Councils.

West Cornwall	Penwith D C Kerrier D C	Penzance , St Ives & Hayle Camborne, Redruth & Helston
Mid Cornwall	Carrick D C Restormal D C	Truro, Falmouth & Perranporth St Austell & Newquay
East Cornwall	North Cornwall D C Caradon D C	Bodmin, Wadebridge, Bude & Launceston Liskeard, Saltash & Torpoint

Development of Joint Provision facilities was slow, but progress was made in the 1980's and 90's

Year	Development	Partners	Management Now
1985	Helston Sports Centre	Kerrier/Cornwall CC	GLL
1986	Budehaven Leisure Centre	N Cornwall/Cornwall CC	School/Community Group
1988	Wadebridge Leisure Centre	N Cornwall/Cornwall CC	GLL
1990	Lux Park LC – Liskeard	Caradon/ Cornwall DC	GLL
1992	Camelford Leisure Centre	N Cornwall/Cornwall CC	Community Group
1996	Truro Leisure Centre	Carrick/ Cornwall CC	GLL

Joint provision in Cornwall was always initiated by the District Councils who provided the capital funding for the building of the new facilities, while the County Council made suitable land available on each school site.

In the 1980's, **Kerrier District Council** Leisure Department, needed to replace an old Indoor Swimming Pool in Helston, and chose to work with the County Council and place the new facility on the Helston School site adjacent to the School Sports Hall to create the **Helston Sports Centre** which was opened in 1985 by Mr John Smith Chairman of the Sports Council at the time. Facilities included a 25m Indoor Pool and Fitness Centre, together with the use of the School Sports Hall and outdoor sports pitches. Recently the original school has been demolished and is being replaced by a new development.

**North Cornwall District Council** set up a Leisure Department and looked to provide modern wet and dry facilities in most of their major towns. Many of these were close to school sites but not all were Jointly funded by the District and County Council. **Budehaven Leisure Centre** was placed on the Secondary School site, and both **Camelford Leisure Centre** and **Wadebridge Leisure Centre** were close but separate to their local schools.

**Caradon District Council** developed **Liskeard Leisure Centre** in 1990 as a joint project with the County Council.

In the Truro area, when the new Truro College was being built in 1996, **Carrick District Council** Leisure Department combined with the Further Education College to create the **Truro Leisure Centre**, containing a 25 M Indoor Pool, Sports Hall, Fitness Centre and Artificial Floodlit Football and Hockey pitches.

In 2009 further re-organisation of Councils in the county saw Cornwall Council become a large Unitary Authority for Local Government functions and most of the Leisure Facilities provided by the 6 District Councils became the responsibility of Cornwall Council.

Cornwall Council initially ran all the former District Council Leisure Facilities in house, with the exception of the Carrick Leisure Ltd sites. The Council explored the effectiveness of externalisation of their leisure facilities and eventually Carrick Leisure Ltd (renamed Tempus Leisure Ltd) took over all but one of the previous District Council sites in December 2011 on a 5-year 3 months contract. Camelford Leisure Centre transferred to a Community Group.

In 2014 with Cornwall Council facing ongoing budget pressures they produced a Leisure Services Strategy Report to consider their way forward with the Service. The Cornwall Council Objective stated in the Executive Summary was as follows:-

*“The Council's ambition for leisure provision in Cornwall is that there is a sustainable network of leisure facilities and activities available to residents and visitors across Cornwall that contributes to local health, wellbeing and the economy of Cornwall, AT NO COST TO THE COUNCIL.*

Tempus Leisure continued in their management role until Cornwall Council went out to tender in 2017 for the management of all their public leisure facilities that had not been handed over to Local Community Groups to operate.

In 2017 the 25-year contract was won by GLL (Trading as Better) and they have operated 14 former Council sites since taking over. The contract included access to funds to undertake long overdue investment across the leisure estate and GLL have undertaken a widespread programme of improvements on a number of their sites.

A local Community group later took over the running of Par Athletics Track, and in 2019 Newquay Sports Centre was taken over by Newquay Tretherras School.

## **DUAL USE IN CORNWALL**

Nearly 40 Secondary Schools have developed modern leisure facilities on their sites as part of the modernisation of educational facilities in the late 1990's and early 2000's. These are available for hire by local clubs and organisations in towns around the county, during evenings and weekends.

Joint Provision of Leisure facilities was never seen as a major policy of Cornwall County Council, although they did provide use of School sites when receiving requests from the District Councils that were proposing to meet the strategic leisure needs of their areas, by working closely with local secondary schools.

Dual Use has played a major positive role in providing leisure opportunities around Cornwall and integrated well alongside the other facilities that were provided by each former District Council, either directly or by Joint Provision.