



Partners strengthen ties to help fully restore Health Hydro

A plan to fully restore Swindon's historic Health Hydro has been given a boost after key stakeholders strengthened their commitment to the cause.

Swindon Borough Council, Swindon Heritage Preservation (formerly known as the Mechanics' Institute Trust) and Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and agreed to work collectively towards the full restoration of the historic Milton Road public baths.

The partnership will open up new grant funding opportunities for the Health Hydro, broaden community engagement and enhance the visitor experience.

It will also help to promote positive change and further regeneration across The Works heritage area including Swindon's historic Railway Village, uniting key partners in a shared vision for Swindon's town centre.

The current £8.6m restoration project is well underway and will see a number of elements of the Grade II* listed building refurbished including:

- the repair and conservation of a section of the building's façade on Faringdon Road
- roof and valley gutter repairs
- the conversion of the former Washing Baths Hall into a new entrance and reception area, gym and fitness suite
- new accessible changing facilities
- new plant areas to accommodate all future needs of the building
- new heating and filtration systems for the large swimming pool
- new ventilation systems to service the gym, changing areas and pool hall
- a new heater for the Turkish Baths
- an upgraded electrical supply to service the entire building

Progress is also being made to develop the next phase, which will focus on restoring the main pool hall. The Council is currently applying to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for further grant funding to support this. Should this be successful, some areas of the Health Hydro, including the main pool hall, will likely need to close again in the future to allow for further improvements to take place.

More news on the outcome of that funding application is expected in early 2026. The restoration is being carried out in stages as funding is progressively secured, to realise the

overall vision for this historically significant building.

Councillor Marina Strinkovsky, Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Placemaking and Planning, said: "I'm very pleased with the new partnership. It's exactly the way we should be working to secure the future of the Hydro, and GLL and Swindon Heritage Preservation are brilliant fellow travellers on that mission.

"Both organisations are fully committed to our bid to ensure the Health Hydro is completely refurbished and suitable for future use, and have already offered lots of expertise and advice on the first phase of regeneration.

"Work is well underway on the necessary repairs and updates that will enable the Hydro to reopen as a leisure centre, and we are already working on securing funding for the next phase. Beyond that, this new partnership will now put us in a stronger position when it comes to raising additional support and funding for a complete regeneration of the building."

Bob Wright, Chair of Swindon Heritage Preservation, said: "Swindon Heritage Preservation is proud to partner with Swindon Borough Council and GLL to secure the sustainable future of the Health Hydro.

"With a reputation for championing Swindon's globally significant heritage, and experience restoring Grade II listed buildings in the Railway Village, we bring with us the skillset and knowledge necessary to unlock the next stage of the Health Hydro's restoration.

"The new partnership will advance the cause of heritage restoration locally and demonstrate the viability of large-scale regeneration projects in Swindon, with an eye towards the future restoration of the Mechanics' Institution."

Barnaby Rich, GLL Partnership Manager for Swindon, added: "This formalised relationship is a hugely positive step.

"Not only will it enhance collaborative working and meaningful consultation, in practical terms it will mean we are able to bid for additional funding and, if successful, it will allow us to do even more to restore and regenerate the Health Hydro, making it fit for purpose for today's residents."

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

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Images:

Picture 1: Partners after signing the Memorandum of Understanding at the Carriage Works pointing to The Works area of Swindon (left to right: Karen Phimister (SBC), Barnaby Rich (GLL), Bob Wright (Swindon Heritage Preservation), David Dewart (SBC)

Picture 2: Councillor Marina Strinkovsky at the Health Hydro pool

Picture 3: Aerial shot of the Health Hydro and The Works area