

## Why has Aspire stopped providing services?

This is a matter for the Trust, but the Council understands that, like all other leisure operators around the country, it had been severely affected by Covid and by rising energy prices as well as rising staff costs and inflation. The council had provided additional financial support to the Trust since 2019 and had offered to continue to do so until September 2024, but Aspire decided that it couldn't continue to deliver services and decided towards the end of last month to seek to enter liquidation.

## What had the council done to support Aspire?

- The Council has provided additional financial support to the Trust since 2019 totalling some £1.5 million.
- The council has held regular meetings offering ongoing advice and financial support.
- A partnership Delivery Plan was put in place.
- The council produced a Sport and Activity Strategy for 2023-28 outlining the council's commitment to improving health and wellbeing.

## When did the council first find out this was happening?

The council was informed on September 27 that the Trust Board had decided that it was not able to continue trading and would be closing the facilities on September 29. The council had been discussing with Aspire since March 2022 a contract extension to run from October 2023 to September 2024, had offered the additional financial contribution requested and had believed that the Trust would be willing to sign the contract extension on this basis.

## What is the council doing about this?

The Council's top priority is to appoint an interim leisure services provider to take over the running of the facilities at GL1 and Oxstalls to get them back into use as soon as possible. The Council and the University of Gloucestershire (which owns the Oxstalls Sports Arena) are also looking to see if they can enable some sports club and community usage of those facilities even in advance of a leisure services provider being in place.

## I paid up front for an annual membership or sessions will these be honoured or refunded?

This is a matter for Aspire Trust and, if they enter liquidation, will be a matter for the appointed liquidator. If you have paid for a booking or have a membership with Aspire which you have pre-paid for, the Council understands that you will be contacted during the next 10 working days by an Aspire representative.

The Council and the University of Gloucestershire will consider whether they are able to honour pre-paid bookings in their facilities on a case-by-case basis.

## I have equipment/personal belongings stored at GL1/Oxstalls – how can I get these back?

If you have belongings or equipment at the leisure facilities, you will need to contact the Aspire Trust who will be able to advise.

### Can you find me an alternative location for my club?

We are currently working to contact local sporting organisations to find out how we can best support them. Active Gloucestershire is also offering drop-in advice sessions on Wednesday, October 11 10am-11.30am and 6pm-7.30pm at Kingsholm Stadium, The Heritage. This is open to any sports clubs, groups and activity providers affected by the closure of the Aspire Trust. You can also contact [leisure@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:leisure@gloucester.gov.uk) with your specific query.

### When will swimming lessons re-commence?

Unfortunately, we're not able to provide this level of detail at this stage. We are working to open other facilities across our sites over the course of the coming weeks and will provide further updates as we are able to announce them.

### How do I get a refund for a ticket for an event I have purchased?

Please contact the ticket agency that you purchased the tickets from.

### When can I/my club book out the sports hall/pitches/courts?

We are working to open the facilities over the course of the coming weeks and will provide further updates on the Council website as we are able to announce them.

### Are there plans to hold the classes and clubs previously held at the centre?

Unfortunately, we're not able to provide this level of detail at this stage. We are working to open other facilities over the course of the coming weeks and will provide further updates on the Council website as we are able to announce them.