

Report to Assistant Director for Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing

Subject: Christmas and New Year Opening for Leisure Facilities 2025/2026.

Date: 2nd September 2025

Author: Leisure Centres Manager

Wards Affected

Borough Wide

Purpose

To seek approval for opening hours for the Council's leisure facilities over the Christmas and New Year holiday period 2025/26.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision

Recommendation

THAT:

- 1) Approval is given to the opening hours for the Council's leisure facilities over the Christmas and New Year holiday period 2025/26, as set out in appendix 1 to this report.**

1 Background

- 1.1 Previously, reports have shown relatively poor income and attendances over the Christmas and New Year Period as most regular and block booking customers do not attend. Generally, usage is low which is why leisure centres reduce their normal opening hours around the bank holidays.
- 1.2 By operating a reduced service over this period, it allows staff to take annual leave where required, without providing full replacement cover. It

therefore seems sensible in both operational and business terms to reduce the opening hours.

- 1.3 The opening times at Arnold, Calverton, Carlton Forum and Redhill have been reviewed holistically to offer customers access to the full range of leisure activities on a reduced opening basis. Opening later into the evening from 27th – 30th December has always proved unpopular and therefore a daytime-only operation is proposed.
- 1.4 Over the past six years, opening Carlton Forum until 3pm on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve has proved successful and it is proposed to continue this in 2025.
- 1.5 In 2022 the Bonington Theatre opened between 11am – 5.30pm on Christmas Eve. However, due to low usage, the theatre has been closed on Christmas Eve since. It is proposed to continue this again in 2025.
- 1.6 Swimming lesson direct debits are calculated on a 50-week direct debit basis, therefore the last day for these will be Thursday 18th December, with a recommencement on Friday 2nd January 2025.
- 1.7 There are currently no planned maintenance works at any of the sites over the Christmas and New year period.

2 Proposal

It is proposed that:-

- 2.1 The Christmas and New Year opening hours of the leisure facilities, as shown in appendix 1, are authorised.

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 The council could do nothing and continue to open the leisure facilities with the normal operating hours. This option would mean a waste of resource in terms of heating, lighting and staffing of the facilities for extremely low levels of customer use.
- 3.2 Alternative opening hours to those contained in the proposal could be considered. However, the proposal considers usage from previous years and customer feedback of still wanting to access facilities from 6.30am until the early evening.

- 3.3 The Richard Herrod Centre could be opened on Boxing Day. However, usage has traditionally been very low on this day and the cost of opening on this day is approximately £1,000 more than if the centre was closed, which is down to additional staffing costs.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The proposed closure days are in accordance with a schedule previously agreed with the unions. However, for the reduced hours staff will be expected to take this time as annual leave or lieu time.
- 4.2 Following consultation with employees at the centres, all sites can be adequately staffed on the days and at the times proposed for opening. Where appropriate, employees agreeing to work on agreed closure days will have appropriate rates of pay applied to them.
- 4.3 The proposed opening and closure dates are consistent with the approved base budget.

5 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with the revision to the opening hours.

6 Equalities Implications

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

7 Carbon Reduction/Sustainability Implications

There are no carbon reduction/sustainability implications arising from this report.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 The Christmas and New Year Opening and Closure Schedule for 2025/26 is attached at Appendix 1.

9 Background Papers

None identified

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To allow for a reduced provision in customer service at the Council's leisure facilities over the Christmas and New Year period, as has happened in previous years. This is based on customer usage and feedback from previous years.
- 10.2 To allow staff to take annual leave without the need to provide cover.
- 10.3 To ensure that the centres are operating within the approved base budget.

Appendix 1 – Opening Hours 2025/26

	Arnold	Bonington Theatre	Calverton	Carlton Forum	Redhill	Richard Herrod
Tuesday 23rd December	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
Wednesday 24th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	7am – 3pm	Closed	10am – 11.30pm ¹
Thursday 25th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday 26th December	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Saturday 27th December	7.45am – 3.30pm	9.30am – 8pm	8am – 4pm	7am – 3pm	8am – 4pm	12pm – 7pm ²
Sunday 28th December	7.45am – 3.30pm	9.30am – 8pm	8am – 4pm	7am – 3pm	8am – 4pm	12pm – 7pm ²
Monday 29th December	7am – 3pm	9.30am – 10pm	6.30am – 4pm	7am – 3pm	6.30am – 4pm	12pm – 7pm ²
Tuesday 30th December	7am – 3pm	9.30am – 10pm	6.30am – 4pm	7am – 3pm	6.30am – 4pm	12pm – 7pm ²
Wednesday 31st December	Closed	9.30am – 3pm	Closed	7am – 3pm	Closed	12pm – 1am ³
Thursday 1st January	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday 2nd January	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal

¹ – bar to close at 11.00pm

² – bar to close at 6.30pm

³ – bar to close at 12.30am

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

Assistant Director for Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing