

MEETING OF FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD ON 24 APRIL 2018

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME - AGENDA ITEM 7

Question from Argoed Community Councillor John Holiday

As you are not doubt aware, despite considerable protests, FCC/Aura decided to close the squash courts at Mold. Brymbo Squash Club are building new courts and offered to purchase, dismantle and remove the glass back units from Mold. They never heard any more. It is now apparent that instead of salvaging this valuable asset, they were smashed and skipped. Bearing in mind that they cost £6000 each, this is a scandalous waste of £12.000 when FCC are supposedly desperate for funds.

In view of interest in making further use of court glass backs, why was this valuable resource smashed and thrown in a skip?

Answer

At the customer consultation meeting at Mold Leisure Centre on 23 January 2018 about the proposed capital development, a verbal request was received from a representative of the squash players about whether the glass backs could be given to a local squash club, either free of charge or for a small fee. The Manager at Mold Leisure Centre agreed to look into this and as a result the contractor, WFC, were asked whether the removal and setting aside of the glass backs was feasible. WFC agreed to try to meet the request prior to the demolition.

WFC have provided a report on how they dealt with the request including a diagram showing the fixing of the squash courts (see annexe 1). The salient points are as follows:

- The base of the glass was fixed into a 'U' shaped channel which was embedded within the structural concrete floor;
- It was secured by a heavy mastic product to hold it securely in place;
- The sides of the glass were also secured in mastic;
- The joints between glass sections were also filled with mastic;
- The details were commensurate with constructing the glass backs so that they were fit for purpose, secure, vertical and resilient to take the rebound and other substantial impact experienced in a squash court;
- WFC used their best endeavours by cutting out as much mastic as possible using appropriate glass handling tools for example suckers, to loosen and lift the glass panels;
- However given the nature of the original fixing method this was simply not possible without damage to the glass. The result was that there was no option but to break the various sections to get them out.

The Mold Leisure Centre Manager phoned the squash representative on 1 February 2018 to inform him that it had not been possible to successfully remove the glass backs.

In conclusion everything was done to try and meet this request as it was in the interest of all concerned including the Council, Aura Leisure and Libraries and the squash players and local club. Unfortunately this was not possible and this was communicated in a timely manner.

Considerable consultation has taken place about these developments, including specifically with squash players. The relatively low level of squash use from Mold can be accommodated at other sites in reasonable proximity including Deeside Leisure Centre.

The work at Mold Leisure Centre which is now well underway is part of a £1.4 million project, with no cost to the Council, which will double the size of the current fitness facility and create a bespoke group exercise studio. Aura Leisure and Libraries are an employee owned charitable company established by the Council and the employees. Aura are able to pay back the capital costs through an increase in revenue income.

Annexe 1

