



October 14 2008

Heartfelt reception marks official gym opening

The recently refurbished Honiton Swimming and Leisure Centre was officially launched on 10 October with a prestigious reception hosted by Leisure East Devon (LED), the charitable trust which runs the centre. Among the 40 guests was Honorary Alderman, ex-councillor and ex-Primary Care Trust board member Tony Wilkinson who has directly benefited from the centre's Cardiac Rehab programme.

Mr Wilkinson, who has suffered from angina and underwent a triple heart bypass less than a year ago, undertook the centre's programme in order to boost his fitness with a special emphasis on regaining a healthy heart. The specialist programme, which runs for three months and includes two sessions per week, accepts GP referrals for people who suffer from heart disease or are recovering from heart attacks. Participants enjoy sole use of the gym whilst specially trained leisure centre staff closely monitor their heart rates and blood pressure. Mr Wilkinson began with cardiac walk circuits and gym sessions before moving on to the more advanced Pulse programme in June 2008, and credits the gym with helping to boost his energy and strength since the operation.

Around 40 other guests including the Lord Mayor of Honiton and trustees from LED joined Mr Wilkinson at the reception. Visitors were shown around the centre's new 65 square metre extension which houses 42 state-of-the-art exercise stations. A real favourite with the guests was the new PowerPlate, a workout machine designed to give the equivalent of an hour's exercise in just 10 minutes. Adding to people's enjoyment whilst exercising was a priority for

LED, so the trust installed a plasma screen in the fitness suite and a TV with Freeview on each new cardiovascular machine.

“Although the gym re-opened to the public a few months ago, we felt it was important to have an official launch to mark the hard work of everyone that has been involved in the project,” said David Pagett, Chief Executive of LED. “We were honoured to have a real life success story like Tony Wilkinson to cut the ribbon. His story and others like him really highlight the benefits of exercise, whatever age or level of fitness you are. Since the centre was refurbished and the new equipment installed we’ve seen visitor numbers steadily increasing across the board from children through to older people, which is really encouraging. It’s so important for everybody to take part in some form of physical activity and we’re pleased that the new gym has already been such a success. We hope that people continue to enjoy it for a long time to come.”

LED is a charitable trust that operates leisure centres, parks and the Exmouth Pavilion. It employs more than 300 staff at 13 facilities.

Ends

PICTURE CAPTION

05: Honorary Alderman Tony Wilkinson bursts through the ribbon to officially open the new LED gym at Honiton Swimming and Leisure Centre

Notes to editors:

1. Leisure East Devon Ltd was established on 1 January 2006. East Devon District Council’s leisure facilities and equipment assets are leased to it.
www.ledleisure.co.uk
2. The facilities are: Axe Valley Leisure Centre; Broadclyst Leisure Centre; Colyton Leisure Centre; Ottery St Mary Leisure Centre (Colin Tooze Sports Centre); East Devon Tennis Centre; Exmouth Swimming and Leisure Centre; Exmouth Pavilion; Exmouth’s Phear Park; Honiton Swimming and Leisure Centre; Seaton’s Seafield Gardens; Sidmouth’s Coburg Road; Sidmouth Leisure Centre and Sidmouth Swimming Pool.

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