



PRESS RELEASE

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New Boulder climbing activity for Leisure Centre

A new indoor Boulder climbing facility will be opening soon at the Leisure Centre. This will replace the ice rink, which has now reached a point where it has become beyond economical repair.

The Government has been informed that the refrigerant gas used to chill the surface of the ice is no longer manufactured. This follows the global drive to cut emissions of gas that contribute to global warming. In turn, this has reduced the supply available, led to a shortage and increased the cost of the limited supply of gas that exists.

The installation of new equipment, the chiller plant and compressors to take a different type of gas has been estimated to cost in the region of £470,000.

The replacement of the ice rink with a new Boulder climbing facility will also mean considerable recurrent savings for the taxpayer, since the ice rink has been heavily subsidised from day one. The cost of electricity alone has been running at some £8000 a month, when it has operated on revenue returns of around £3000 a month.

There have also been ongoing issues with water penetration from the ice rink to the bowling alley below, given that it was not designed and located on the ground floor. This has resulted in considerable costs to the taxpayer over the years. In 2019 alone, those operating costs, excluding staff and repairs to the bowling alley, came to nearly £150,000.

This has not been an easy decision to take given that there are some 20 people a day who make use of the facility, mainly through the Gibraltar Ice Skating Association, although more than half are not residents of Gibraltar. However, sadly, the operating loss and running costs to the taxpayer make it unsustainable.

The plan is to re-train the staff to operate the new Boulder climbing facility, which will have very low running costs and no negative impact on the bowling alley below. The Government expects that this exciting new indoor activity will prove to be a very popular challenge for the community as a whole.

ENDS

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