

Response to FOI request from Hilary Copson, dated 19 July 2021

Requests for information

1. What refurbishment work has the council had completed on the GRC centre, to date, and how much has this work cost?
2. What work is still to be done, to complete the refurbishments, and how much will this cost the tax-payer?
3. When plans for the building of the GRC were being considered, what advice was sought by the council with regards to sharing services (water, gas etc) with the Aqua Centre? Who made the decision in this regard that services would be shared?

Responses

1. What refurbishment work has the council had completed on the GRC centre, to date, and how much has this work cost?

Since the demise of CSYAL in March 2020, the Council has undertaken a number of priority works to the GRC. The table below identifies these works and the associated costs.

Task	Cost
Installation of separate water supply (this work was actually authorised prior to the demise of CSYAL)	£17,887
Construction of concrete hardstanding on Henhayes to facilitate parking for GRC delivery vehicles + Construction of pathway to rear of GRC to facilitate access to pre-school area	£4,365
Installation of separate gas supply	£3,973
Redecoration of GRC interior	£4,842
Installation of new fencing at the rear of the GRC	£4,050
Installation of vent fan in changing room area, to improve ventilation	£552

2. What work is still to be done, to complete the refurbishments, and how much will this cost the tax-payer?

The following works are outstanding:

- Electrical work to ensure that all emergency lights are fully functional (this work is currently underway).
- Construction of a storage area upstairs, to provide increased storage capacity for the building.
- Installation of new and improved locks for the building.

- Installation of air conditioning upstairs. Other measures to improve the environment upstairs are also under investigation, such as the application of reflective film on the exterior of the windows.
- Works to improve the building drainage.

I am not able to advise on the costs of these works as they have not yet been invoiced.

3. When plans for the building of the GRC were being considered, what advice was sought by the council with regards to sharing services (water, gas etc) with the Aqua Centre? Who made the decision in this regard that services would be shared?

Firstly I would like to clarify that the shared utilities relate to water and to gas. The history of how these two utilities came to be shared with the Aqua Centre dates back to the construction of the GRC. As I am sure you know, the builder – C.S.Williams – went bankrupt just as the building was completed. Over the years, the Council and CSYAL (the charity charged with operating the building) have unearthed numerous faults with the building, all of which point to the builder taking shortcuts during construction, presumably in an effort to save money.

The laying in of water and gas supplies required the extensive digging up of ground to lay in the necessary pipes. Very late on in the building's construction, in fact shortly before the building was due to be declared open, the Council was informed that the water and gas pipes had not been laid. The Council was therefore put in the position where, in order not to severely delay the opening of the building, the water and gas supplies would need to be shared with the Aqua Centre.

The decision to share the water supply with the Aqua Centre was made at the Full Council meeting held on 20 August 2012.

The minutes of that meeting read as follows:

Several Councillors expressed their dismay that the problem had been raised by the Principal Contractor at such a late time in the project build.

After considerable discussion it was agreed that the Town Council would adopt the water supply from Crewkerne Leisure Management in order to make a subdivision for both properties but on the following conditions:

- 1. There should be no loss to the preferential water rates the Aqua Centre obtained from Wessex Water after the change.*
- 2. A guarantee that there would be no loss of pressure or any other reduction of water due to the change to the Aqua Centre supply.*
- 3. The new sub-meter to the Aqua Centre would be positioned within the building for ease of access.*
- 4. Any interruption to supply during installation of the new meter should cause no inconvenience to customers and staff of the Aqua Centre.*
- 5. The split supplies will be completely isolated from one another.*
- 6. Should there subsequently be inadequate pressure then an alternative source would be implemented promptly at no cost to the Crewkerne Taxpayer.*

I have not been able to find any meeting minutes or other document which record a similar decision to share the gas supply with the Aqua Centre.

The situation of shared water supply prevailed until 2019, when the Aqua Centre reported a loss in water supply pressure. This triggered the Council to instruct contractors to lay in a separate water supply for the GRC.

Regarding the gas supply, immediately following the demise of CSYAL and the return of the building to Town Council control, the Council engaged contractors to lay in a separate gas supply to the GRC.