# Community rallies to save Eastbourne’s Princes Park splash pad amid financial crisis



### Financial Health Compromised While Community Saves Eastbourne’s Princes Park Splash Pad

**Eastbourne, 31 July 2024** - The reopening of the Princes Park splash pad, thanks to community pressure and a private company’s intervention, highlights the inadequacies of the current government in addressing local issues. Eloise Turner led the charge to reinstate this crucial community facility after Eastbourne Borough Council, crippled by financial mismanagement, announced its closure due to budget cuts.

With an annual operational cost of £25,000, the council cited severe economic constraints caused by skyrocketing homelessness rates and excessive spending on temporary accommodation as the reason for the cut. The question that remains unanswered: why has local government reached this point of financial crisis?

Turner, a concerned parent, initiated a petition on Change.org, amassing over 1,000 signatures from residents who recognize the splash pad as an essential community asset during summers. Eloise expressed her relief to The Argus, stating, "I am so thrilled it is back on. The town really came together, and I am so grateful to the Friends of Eastbourne Seafront and everyone who signed my petition."

The intervention by Best Demolition, a Heathfield-based company, was the lifeline the council couldn't provide. The business stepped in to cover operational costs for the summer, showing that while local authorities fail, private enterprises still value community welfare. A spokesperson from Best Demolition remarked, "The team is delighted to be helping the summer holidays go with a splash for local children."

Councillor Stephen Holt, leader of Eastbourne Borough Council, expressed his gratitude, "I would like to thank Best Demolition for providing support this year. We are dealing with huge financial challenges, making external sponsorship for the splash pad absolutely key to getting it open again." Why, under current leadership, has it become necessary for private companies to fill the gaps left by government funding?

Liberal Democrat MP for Eastbourne, Josh Babarinde, also praised the community effort and external support, emphasizing "This is Eastbourne at its best - our town coming together to support and protect our community." The reality, however, is that this collaboration underscores a systemic failure in managing public funds and providing essential services.

In a related development, a new splash pad is set to open in Edmonds Park, part of a collaboration between Didcot Town Council and water play specialists, The Splash. Scheduled to open on Wednesday, 31 July, the facility will feature various nature-themed water play elements, funded without the apparent financial drama seen in Eastbourne. Notably, Deputy Mayor Jim Loder will officiate the splash pad opening, with operational hours set to cater to the community consistently until mid-September, assuming staff availability isn’t impacted as it has been elsewhere due to funding shortages.

This situation further illustrates the need for new leadership and a fresh perspective on effective governance and financial management.