

For Extraordinary Development and Localism Committee Meeting Thursday 3rd August 2023 - Tennis Courts proposals.

Background

Tennis courts devolved from Cornwall Council – January 2021.

Improvements to perimeter fencing undertaken, including to the rear of the bottom court and the middle section of both courts.

Steps replaced.

Have continued to work alongside the LTA, who are keen to fund improvements.

Project Goals

To improve accessibility to the courts for all.

Future proof use of the courts, utilising the most up to date booking software. To improve the loose playing surface.



One of 2 recently renovated court in Six Bells, Abertillery, with investment of £37,516.70. Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA)

How will this be achieved?

The Town Council has been liaising with the Lawn Tennis Association, James Deem, since 2021, holding site and online meetings. Throughout this time the scope of the project has evolved at the same time further funding has become available via the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

The LTA / DCMS Park Tennis Investment Fund is a 2 Year project to distribute £30million of funding specifically to refurbish public tennis courts. This is made up of £20million from the DCMS and £10million from the LTA. Currently one year into this project – sites in Plymouth and Torbay are already live.

The need for courts to be refurbished across the UK is significant and way beyond this amount of money. A process has been gone through to select courts across the United Kingdom to be eligible to apply for funds.

James is a Parks Investment Delivery Partner LTA as part of a dedicated and seconded team delivering these investments – he essentially relationship and project manages the works to court in conjunction with local authority officers. The funding is distributed as fairly and evenly as is possible across large cities, rural and coastal locations to ensure local people have good quality public facilities. In most cases the local authorities provide match funding to enhance the projects delivery (e.g. accessibility). James has arranged a to visit the site to survey and provide costings to improve the facilities.

Timescales and Processes

The LTA strongly recommend that interventions to the tennis courts are grouped and viewed as one project, the LTA believes three court elements of the project (accessibility works, access gate and court works) are delivered as one combined project to improve the tennis courts. This is overwhelmingly how project delivery is being looked at across this investment and refurbishment programme.

It is time dependent – any money must be spent by April 2024 and there is a narrowing window of contractor availability to deliver all the projects in the 'pipeline'. Once the council has reviewed costs and agreed a scope, James can submit an application to the LTA funding panel, who meet every Friday and update on an outcome and decision the following Tuesday. Once survey results are received funding allocation can be quick.

Budget

Total Project cost £50,642.06 which includes all works and costs associated with resurfacing the courts, with repainting and lines put on. *The existing nets are retained, replacing them is excluded.*

Access gate, LTA to apply for separate funding for the gate.

Clubspark gate technology £2,500

Access path **Unknown to be funded and contracted by TTC (propose to be funded from Reserves-Accessibility improvements)**

Ground works including digging out the bank and shoring up **Unknown**. Court contractor being asked for a quotation for this work.

Signage **Unknown**

LTA contribution TBC – see information above.

Propose TTC Contribution 10% total re-surfacing project costs.

TTC's contribution would be £5,064 including the Friends of Thanckes Park donation received for accessibility improvements £1,894.

£2,000 from community funding groups (to be agreed).

Remainder of £1,170 from Reserves – Play area/tennis courts (currently £15,113 in 2023/24 budget).

Community Impact

An up-to-date facility would provide opportunities for the local and wider community to play tennis no matter at what level. The LTA provides support and trains tennis ambassadors, providing coaching and equipment to enable more of the community to trial tennis. The ambassadors could tie in with local schools to support the curriculum and encouraging visits to the courts.

The club spark booking fee of £30 per year is deemed affordable by those who already play tennis regularly, although the system allows the Council to offer a balanced mix of free and bookable times. The Tennis Foundation has a programme to make tennis accessible for all abilities.

<https://www4.lta.org.uk/globalassets/tennis-foundation/disability/documents/tennis-foundation---open-your-doors-be-an-inclusive-venue.pdf>. With the success of British players like Emma Raducanu and Andy Murray in recent years, the take up of tennis in areas with good facilities has been significant.

Day to day running costs

All are surface dependent

Ongoing running costs will vary depending on the finish recommended by the LTA contractor. Gate can be solar or battery for the key pad.

Cleaning regularly will be done in house by the operations team, but may need to purchase new equipment for this.

Annual cleaning by a contractor will also depend on final surfacing, some finishes need a power washing and anti-fungal treatment to prevent sliding. Others may need professional brushing.

Depending on use will depend on how or if the lines will need repainting.

Nets have been installed for 18 months now with little use, if usage on the courts increases, may need to replace more often.