

Recreation Committee



Community Tennis Courts Project

‘TENNIS ALL YEAR FOR ALL’

PROJECT GROUP RERORT OCTOBER 2014



Histon & Impington Parish Council
Community Tennis Court Project



HISTON & IMPINGTON PARISH COUNCIL RECREATION COMMITTEE

ALL YEAR TENNIS COURTS PROJECT BUSINESS PLAN (November 2014)

Project objective

TENNIS ALL YEAR FOR ALL

The proposal is for Histon & Impington Parish Council to replace the present four grass courts at Histon & Impington Recreation Ground with four new all weather artificial grass floodlit courts to create a unique shared club / public accessible community sports facility and encourage tennis participation for all ages which is affordable.

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1. Background

Histon & Impington Recreation Ground has been on its present site within the Cambridge Green Belt for over a century. It covers an area of approximately 16 acres (6.382 hectares) of which eight is owned by the Parish Council which includes the major facilities including the four grass tennis courts, and the remaining 8 acres all playing pitches is leased from Chivers Farms on a lease which expires in 2036.

The Recreation Ground has developed over the last decade into a thriving community sports and exercise hub through the Parish Council's vision in facilitating the £1m Recreation Ground re -development project. This project which was completed in 2006 including the building of a new pavilion, expanded car parking facilities, a floodlit Multi Use Games area and a floodlit hard court for tennis and netball use. There are occasional problems with water retention on the MUGA surface which affects the quality of the tennis playing surface.



The redevelopment project encouraged and enabled the sports clubs and the local sporting voluntary sector to progress initiatives and develop activities for all ages.

The vision and energy to improve facilities has been maintained over the last decade with the provision of a new major children's play area and an outdoor sports gym.

At Impington Village College there are five hardcourts which are used for netball and tennis. The school uses during the day and the Sports Centre hires out at other times. The courts are not floodlit, daytime access is limited and the tarmac surface is not a surface that tennis players really like playing on. The playing of tennis on the Recreation Ground has taken place since the 1920s on the grass courts through general public hire and Histon Tennis Club (HTC) which on average has about 107 adult members and 80 members aged under 18.

There are a number of underlying factors which first resulted in the formation of the project group in Spring 2012 to look at the provision of all-weather courts;

- the grass court playing season is five months at most only from end of April to end of September
- with a limited playing season the Club virtually shuts down over the winter period and any impetus from the summer is lost with a turnover of as many of 30% of members annually
- with the very nature of grass court surface playing time is limited to afternoons and early evening only and on average up to 20% of available playing time is lost through weather
- village tennis clubs are becoming increasingly under threat and closing because of lack of membership and in some circumstances modern facilities

The Project Group consists of; Vernon Dudley, David Rush and Nicky Wright from Histon Tennis Club, and Brian Ing and Neil Davies from the Parish Council Recreation Committee.

The Project Group feel certain that the provision of four new floodlit all-weather courts would provide:

- all year day and evening tennis facility for the community and club with public accessible courts



- encourage tennis development within Histon & Impington and the new growth areas in north Cambridge
- provide Histon Tennis Club with an opportunity to develop and become a Beacon club in the County to provide its members of all ages and standards with playing facilities not season dependent and this will provide a welcome facility for all ages in our community.

The Recreation Committee endorsed the project at its October 2014 meeting.

2. Facilities proposed

- The layout of the existing Recreation Ground would remain unchanged and the four new all-weather courts would directly replace the four grass courts in their existing location as shown on the location map.
- Drainage would consist of 80mm diameter lateral drains across the court area @10m centre and 110mm diameter perimeter drain. These will be connected to an outfall within 25mm of the court.
- A synthetic special tennis turf surface (the particular type has yet to be chosen) with lines for four tennis courts would be laid on top of 65mm Macadam surface.
- Court access would be through a double gate and site gate
- Floodlighting would comprise of six 10 metre high columns with sufficient luminaries to produce 300 lux complying with LTA minimum standards.



The Project group have looked at different types of artificial grass surface and sought advice from specialist surface providers. ***The over-riding advice always made is that the type of surface cannot be compromised to accommodate different types of sport without fundamentally affecting the playing experience.***

Design and appearance

- A synthetic turf tennis court surface with lines for four tennis courts would be laid
- The existing perimeter court fencing would be replaced by new fencing comprising 3m high 6/5/6m twin bar with one single set of double gates

Light pollution

- Information provided from a potential supplier confirms that the light spillage from the six new floodlights would be confined within the existing Recreation Ground boundaries and no residents affected.
- It is proposed floodlights would be turned off by 22:00 hours on weekdays Monday to Friday and by 21:30 at weekends

Planning implications

The site of the grass courts is located in the Green Belt which is a planning constraint together with the neighbouring properties adjacent to the west of the site.



Planning history; planning permission was granted in 2004 for a MUGA and hard court and floodlighting to the two courts was approved in 2005. Car park lighting permission was also obtained four years ago.

A pre planning application enquiry was submitted to SCDC in July 2014 and a Planning Officer visited the site in September. SCDC have advised their Environmental Health department are satisfied that the spillage from the lights will have no adverse impact on neighbouring properties subject to the condition that they do not operate after 10pm and the lighting points downwards. They note that it would be preferable to enhance the screening on the southern boundary particularly south eastern corner.

3. Community tennis development plan & initiatives

Over-riding development objective - increase participation in playing tennis

There are three main partners in the community tennis development plan;

- **Histon & Impington Parish Council**- facilitators and providers of the courts
- **Histon Tennis Club**- the primary tennis court user
- **Friends of Histon & Impington Recreation**- take a leading role in sports development at Histon & Impington Recreation Ground with promotion of new activities and initiatives

The plan would be delivered through a working group with representatives from each partner to provide a coordinated and partnership approach.

Aims and aspirations

Increase tennis participation;

- Develop a life skill and interest that can lead to productive enjoyment and assist with physical fitness for people of all ages which include;
 - primary aged children
 - teenagers
 - young adults 18-30
 - 30-55s
 - families
 - over 55s
- Coaching programmes encourage players into structured social and team tennis
- Accommodate different needs of tennis participants - not everyone wants to play in a club environment
- Encourage young people to play tennis regularly socially and or competitively
- Provide linked affordable sessions for local schools and pupils in and at the of the school day

Children / young people's tennis development plan

Based on a community tennis development plan obtained a structured plan could possibly focus on the following stages:

Red (4-7 years)

Children are introduced to the basics of tennis and developing movement, co-ordination and ball skills. Children take part in lots of fun activities and play short matches and team competitions on mini-courts with low compression tennis balls.

Orange (7-9 years)



Children learn new shots and focus on tennis technique to help them rally in a bigger court with low compression tennis balls. Competition includes slightly longer matches as part of a team.

Green (9-12 years)

This is the final mini-tennis stage in preparing children for full tennis and will focus on developing tennis technique, tactics and fundamental athletic skills

Junior (12-18 years)

This is the learning to compete stage where juniors use full size tennis courts and there is a strong emphasis on competition.

There will be a special focus on encouraging and retaining young people in the sport which could have wider community benefits and Sport England's focus is on age 14 and over at present.

HTC, HTC development plan & club vision for the future

If approval for the Project is agreed by H&I Parish Council, HTC will produce a detailed business plan with aims to:

- Increase club membership. Four new floodlit all weather tennis courts will enable members to continue playing tennis throughout the year and in all weather conditions. This will end the stop start nature of the clubs activities caused by the courts being closed for a minimum of 7 months per year.
- Extend the tennis programme, coaching offer and opportunities for matches and competitive play right through the twelve months including:
 - Additional club sessions with some aimed at specific sections of the membership (e.g. Ladies only and Girls only sessions, 'Older' players sessions)
 - Working with the club coach look for opportunities to increase the number of and type of coaching offers
 - Seek opportunities to increase the number of league teams based at the club
 - A commitment to increase the number of Club social tournaments including junior and mini throughout the year
- Make it a priority to develop a sustainable junior section within the club, led by the club coach, this would include the aim to encourage the formation of junior teams.
- Support the Parish Council in its efforts to provide pay and play arrangements to the general public 365 days a year through a modern booking system and a workable controlled access to the courts.
- Support the Parish Council in its Sports Development aims centered on the new courts
- Further develop outreach work in schools led by the club coach
- Introduce new ways of playing tennis to suit the needs of different groups, for example mini tennis for young children, short tennis for adults new to the game and developing fitness and skills through cardio tennis sessions.



- Provide skills training opportunities for young people who are keen to become involved in tennis and support the club coaching.
- Continue to communicate and consult regularly with members and strive to further improve the club's information, publicity, promotion and website
- Increase the club's volunteer base to help with young peoples' activities
- Achieve Tennismark accredited status
- Expand and build on the club's already successful social programme.
- Establish a succession plan to ensure success is sustainable

The Club will need to consider perhaps different membership packages to cover the needs of different types of players.

The Club held an Extraordinary General Meeting on 15th October to receive an update on the project and the 28 members attending voted overwhelmingly to support the project and commit an amount of £5,000 from Club reserves towards the cost.

Participation in tennis

The project group has looked at a Sport England Case Study Report (August 2010) in driving participation in tennis and the findings have direct relevance to our community.

The modelling found that active people who are younger than 20 or in their late 40s to late 60s, play tennis more often. In other words, if you are a 55 year old active person you are more likely to play tennis than a 25 year old active person, all other things being equal. This also relates to a 're-engagement with tennis at an older age- this is partly due to the adaptability of a sport like tennis, which enables people to play at a level appropriate to their age and fitness level. Ease of participation and the sense of enjoyment that older people can get from playing, relative to other sports, means that tennis can be enjoyed by everyone whether they are 8-80.

Another feature of the Case study was that while the primary drivers of satisfaction in tennis are more directly related to the sport itself (for instance the quality of the facilities) the social side to the sport is also an important factor and arguably adds to the sense of release and diversion, which is such an important driver of satisfaction in tennis.

The Sport England Inspired Facilities funding programme to whom an application will be made scores community and social activities highly.

This evidence validates the approach taken by Histon Tennis Club

Facility use by tennis coach

Over the last three years HTC has developed a close working relationship with David Nation a local professional tennis coach. He is very keen to develop a coordinated club coach development programme which could potentially look like this:

- Junior development coaching - ages 6 through to 14, 15+ adult coaching depending on ability
- Mini development coaching - ages 5-7, better players will be moved into a separate group.



- Girls members class - 2 courts required at current levels but it is hoped this would increase to 4 courts if numbers increase
- Junior member session - all four courts required
- Mini squads - 6-7 yrs, talented players will be fast tracked through the stages and playing tournaments
- Junior advanced squad - tactical based drills
- Adult improvers - could probably open up to three courts as there is a waiting list
- Adult beginners - expand to 2 courts and enlarge the group
- Sunday - Possibly work with Histon's teams or more junior sessions, scope to use 2-3 courts during the afternoon. Organise junior matches with other clubs
- 3-4 years - coaching with the pre-school on mini nets

In addition the new court facilities would be used by David Nation for private tuition. All coaching programmes will be open to non-members.



The opportunity to develop tennis is not only available in the villages of Histon and Impington but also in the new communities of Darwin Green. Although the Council maintains that the developers will provide new tennis courts through Section 106 funding the facilities in themselves don't help to develop the sport. A tennis club can do this but the club requires critical mass in terms of membership which Histon Tennis Club can provide.

Friends of Histon & Impington Recreation

The Friends have a dual role in the project through;

Community fundraising - this is detailed further later in the report.

Sport development and promotion / marketing

Over the last decade the Friends have gained much experience from the development and promotion of new sport and exercise activities / initiatives. Not everything attempted has succeeded and patience is often required when launching a new activity both in terms of attendance and financial viability.

Additionally the importance of making activities affordable cannot be under-estimated and to ensure tennis is as inclusive as possible.

The Friends of the Rec have already been involved in a couple of initiatives during the year;

- Indoor Sponge tennis- held Wednesday weekly



in the Recreation Ground Centre

- Tennis coaching for Junior School children- new coaching class for Years 3 & 4 in the summer term

In 2013 the Friends worked with Histon Tennis Club on various tennis promotions which are shown in the poster 'a set full of chances' which is shown

New ideas could include the promotion of;

- Girls cardio tennis clubs after school
- Links with local children and young peoples uniformed organisations and clubs
- Link with U3A and offer sessions for older adults
- Developing pathways from existing activities such as the Active Start Club and Mini Sports
- Mini tennis for older people
- Weekday afternoon tennis and tea club for older residents
- Tennis for 'mums' whilst children enjoying other activities
- Building on activity links with village schools
- Para tennis
- Develop links with Forever Active in Cambridge and the District

In the longer term the Friends have possible thoughts of engaging a part time activities co-ordinator to help sustain and develop existing and new activities.

The Friends could assist in the promotion / marketing of the facilities through developing websites and its regular annual newsletter.

Public usage

The grass courts are primarily used by HTC members and there is not a great deal of general public use of these courts at present.

For example grass courts cannot be used before 1pm because of court preparation and early morning dew.

The provision of accessible public (self service) courts is vitally important in this project as not all tennis players, either casual or more serious, want to play in a general club environment

- Online booking of courts
- Courts will be available for public hire at 365 days a year.
- Availability of at least one public court all the time excluding Tennis Club general Club night
- Clear and effective information on public court hire use
- Differentiation in court hire costs day and night, school holidays use, regular block of court usage and special family times
- Ease of accessing the courts which would be open
- Provision of normal and short tennis equipment to the general public

4. Capital costs

Tennis courts

Over the last 15 months various court contractors have visited the Recreation Ground and cost information has been obtained as follows;

DOE - £176,000 including lighting
ETC Sports - £130,576 excluding lighting



Blakedown - £187,453 including lighting
Sports Courts - £210,000 excluding lighting

Blakedown's likely cost breakdown is as follows;

Preliminaries	6500
Earthworks	14000
Drainage	7100
Foundation surface	73000
Synthetic surface	42500
Fencing	21600
Floodlighting	<u>22750</u>
	187450 excluding VAT

There will be VAT payable of 20% which should be able to be claimed back but the Parish Council's professional VAT adviser has advised to budget for a potential VAT net liability of £14k. The reason being for this is that VAT incurred on the tennis court project would mean that the 'de minimis limits' could be exceeded based on the residual recovery percentage over the last three years.

The existing tennis court fence netting is likely to need replacing in the next five years as a number of posts are now breaking

Total estimated courts complete cost £201k including potential VAT

Maintenance equipment capital cost

A new drag brush together with a mini- tractor with low pressure tyres will be required.

This equipment would need to be purchased, indicative cost drag brush £1200 and mini tractor £2800=£4k

Possible that a brush could be covered with a Sport England 'Small Grant'.

Sources of funding

From the beginnings of the project it has been clearly noted that substantial Parish Council funding will be required for the project

Non Parish Council funding

Could compromise the following;

Tennis sources

Histon Tennis Club	5,000
T4Cambs	3,000
Cambs LTA	10,000

Community fundraising

Friends of Rec	3,500	(community fundraising)
Other	1,000	

Sport grant funding

Sport England	
Inspired Facilities	22,750

Other grants



Mick George Community	
Fund scheme	25,000
Amey Cespa	<u>15,000</u>
	85,250
Parish Council	<u>115,750</u>
	<u>201,000</u>



Over 40% could possibly come from non Parish Council sources



Tennis sources

Histon Tennis Club have committed to make a £5k donation if the project proceeds

T4Cambs and Cambs LTA are two County tennis based organisations who we believe may be willing to help fund the project although this has not been formally requested.

Community fundraising

Friends of Rec

Direct project support from Friends of Histon & Impington Recreation has been agreed and additional indirect support may be required for any potential grants obtained that require 11.3% Contributing Third Party (CTP) donation ie Waste Recycling funders. Based on the above budget the Friends total commitment could be £7,900

Other - could possibly include Histon & Impington Feast

Sport England 'Small Grant' may fund equipment and free coaching for ages 14 and over.

Grant funders

Grant applications will be made by the Parish Council;

Sport England Inspired Facilities funding programme

This is a rolling grants programme which helps fund refurbishing and upgrading club facilities, and convert existing buildings into venues suitable for community sport. The overriding priority for the grant programme is to increase participation in sport.



Resurfacing of tennis courts is a low priority in the grant programme but floodlights is considered to be a priority so for the best chance of success an application should be made for the cost of the floodlights which is £21,500.

An application would need to be made in March 2015 for it to be considered in the summer of 2015. If the application is successful the project would need to be able to start within six months of the award.



Mick George Community Fund Scheme

Grants are available for capital improvement works to public amenity projects such as sports facilities, and grants of up to £35k can be made. Closing date for applications in the present round is 30 March 2015.



Amey Cespa Community Fund Scheme

Grants are available of between £10k and £25k from the scheme which are administered by the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. The first stage of the process is the completion of an Expression of Interest form- would need to be submitted March 2015.

The project group will need to consider splitting the applications to the grant funders, for example, the first application, perhaps to Mick George Community Fund Scheme, might be for two carpeted courts without floodlights.

Care must be taken to ensure that grant funding applied from funders for this project does not affect any other potential Parish Council project over the next 2 / 3 years. AmeyCespa may be one such example but provided there are no more than two applications from the same community in a year this should not be a problem.

Parish Council (PC) funding

Based on a project cost of £201k and assuming the non PC funding was forthcoming the amount required from the Parish Council would be £116k plus £4k for the maintenance equipment = **£120k**

In any even some capital funding will be required in the next 5 years to replace the existing grass court netting and this could cost in the region of £20k

5. Ongoing income, revenue costs and sinking fund costs



Income

Histon Tennis Club

At present Histon Tennis Club are charged £2440 for use of the four grass courts between late April and end of September, and £1520 for use of the hardcourt and MUGA during the winter months- giving a total of £3960.

Provision of the four new courts would greatly improve the offering HTC is able to provide to its members and this needs to be reflected in the overall Club charge. It is obviously up to the Club itself what it charges its members but Tennis Clubs elsewhere do have different categories of membership and costs.

The club are looking for some assurance on the charge arrangements over a five year period and are open to proportionate charge increases linked to increases in club membership. This is understandable and negotiable but the provision of new all year courts needs to be reflected in an immediate uplift in the annual charge at least to cover the cost of floodlighting. Figure for budget £1050

Tennis coaching

There is no formal charging arrangement with HTC Club Coach at present and a specific policy would need to be discussed and agreed.

For the purposes of this plan, courts would be provided free of charge for coaching exclusively for club members and for all other uses a charge of £3 per court is used. For budget purposes 14 court hours per week for 50 weeks has been included



Public hire

Grass court hire income for 2013/14 was £274 and hard court income £274 giving a total of £548,

Current charge for hardcourt per hour is £5, propose that daytime charge would remain at £5 per hour and £6 per hour for floodlit use.

An Online booking system would be introduced and the availability of court hire would be far more well publicised than at present. The responsibility for court booking could be outsourced and There are several on line systems available.

Our aim would be that one court would be generally available for public hire at almost all days except main HTC club evenings which run 6 to 8.30pm and that there would be availability for public hire for all four courts for 365 days a year with possibly 24 hour advanced booking.

Initial target would be for on average public court hire to be 2 hours hire per day @ £5 which based on 360 days could produce income of £3600 (new income £3050)

Operating costs

Maintenance

Soil / fertiliser costs for the grass courts are about £1k pa and we are budgeting for maintenance costs of a similar level for the new courts e.g. sand

Floodlights

Based on a six column scheme with 8 two kilowatt lights the operating cost per hour would be £2.50 for the four courts.

Cost for budget purposes - 4 hours per day for 6 days a week for 40 weeks per year = £2400

Sinking fund

The artificial grass surface is expected to have a life of 10 years and will need replacing after that time.

Based on estimated surface cost now of £40k an annual sinking replacement fund contribution of £4000 will be required and it is important that this is financed directly from court income and not precept.

Income & expenditure (tennis courts)

This focuses on the differences the new courts

Income		Expenditure	
Public hire	3050	Floodlights	2100
Tennis club	1050	Sinking fund	4000
Coaching	2000		
	6100		6100

Effect on Recreation Ground operation and management

The Recreation Groundsman estimates that he presently spends about 8 hours a week in the two months leading in the Spring and during the summer season preparing the grass courts for use.

The proposed artificial grass new courts will need to be dragged- brushed twice a month and other specialist court maintenance specifically a power-brush procedure so it is not anticipated that there will be any change in the overall number of hours and will be less weather dependent.

Public booking of the courts will be done mainly online with electronic online payment.



6. Local Case studies elsewhere

Great Shelford Tennis Club- the Tennis Club are seen to be one of the most progressive with four floodlit hardcourts and 300 + members. The Club itself leases the four courts from the Parish Council and is responsible for floodlights and surfaces. The Club also makes an annual contribution of £750

Haslingfield Tennis Club- the club is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year and in recent years has gone from strength to strength. The Club which has 150 members including 60 junior is now planning to expand with a third court and floodlights. The success of the Club is down to a dedicated committee and an enthusiastic coach.

Cambourne Tennis Club - only two courts were originally provided in the development and this has proved totally inadequate for the 200 members it now has. A further three courts will now be provided following successful grant applications to Sport England Inspired Facilities programme and funding from Cambs LTA and Tennis4Cambridgeshire.

7. Potential project timetable delivery

Autumn 2014 - preparation of draft business plan

October 2014 - presentation of summary Plan to Recreation Committee, and meeting of all Histon Tennis Club members

November 2014 - presentation to Parish Council of project plan

December 2014 - community consultation including an article in HISIMP news.

December 2014 - February 2015 - internal discussions within Council on merits and benefits of project

February 2015- indicative yes or no Parish Council decision on project, if positive then this provides a foundation on which to seek grant funding as otherwise funders will not entertain grant applications without the Parish Council commitment and support.

If positive outline tender document prepared to obtain project costs and submission of planning application

March 2015 - if positive preparation of grant applications

Late summer / early Autumn 2015- grant decisions.

October 2015- final formal Parish Council funding decision

November - December 2015 - procurement procedures completed and contractor appointed

February - March 2016 - work on site, programme could take up to 10 weeks to complete

April 2016- new courts open

8. Development plan implementation

With experience gained from the Recreation Ground redevelopment project the project work does not finish with the installation/ delivery of the new facilities.



A considerable amount of energy / drive is needed to implement the project goals over a period of time.

From experience gained from after the completion of the Recreation Ground development project it is vital that the project group membership remains to implement the project and initial momentum is sustained.

A couple of key individuals have extensive sports development experience and they are committed to the long term delivery of the project goals.

9. Other effects on Recreation Ground

MUGA football usage with change to more football friendly surface

With the potential provision of all weather tennis courts the existing surface on the existing MUGA court could be replaced by an artificial grass surface more suitable for football usage which would help reverse a reduction in court usage by childrens' and young peoples' teams because of the unsuitability of the present surface.

This should be able to be funded in 2016 from the MUGA surface sinking fund that presently has £14k. If the tennis court project did not proceed the replacement MUGA surface would need to meet the needs of tennis and football.

10. Conclusion

The benefits and potential of all year round tennis facility hopefully outweigh the grass courts loss.

It is acknowledged that some in the community and Tennis Club will regret the potential passing of the grass courts which have been a feature of the village Recreation Ground for 90 years.

This is an ambitious project which requires a large investment from the Parish Council but if delivered successfully and imaginatively will increase sport participation and improve the wellbeing of residents.

The investment in the new facility is one also for the future for our community.

