

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee 27th Feb 2023
SUBJECT:	Lawn Tennis Association Funded Improvement Project for Arun's Tennis Sites.
LEAD OFFICER:	Oli Handson – Environmental Services & Strategy Manager
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor David Edwards
WARDS:	Marine, Felpham West, River, Beach
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) project will implement the Council's vision that aims to provide infrastructure that supports wellbeing, through easily accessible and safe greenspace, and encourage our community to embrace healthy and active lifestyles.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: The project sits within the Environment and Communities Directorate plan and supports delivery of the Greenspace Management Contract.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: A grant sum of £54k provided by the LTA will need to be drawn down for Arun to fund the proposed court improvements via a supplier(s) procured through the LTA.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides detail concerning the scope of an LTA funded tennis court partnership improvement project and seeks approval for use of the grant funding.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is requested to:

1. Approve the LTA grant funding for use as set out in this report

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 This report provides detail on a new online booking platform, court gate access control and refurbishment project for Arun owned tennis courts, funded through grant funding provided by the Lawn Tennis Association.

4. DETAIL

4.1 Introduction

In 2022 Matt Glazier, Parks Investment Delivery Partner for the LTA, approached Arun District Council concerning the potential to improve the customer experience in relation to the use of the Council's 4 tennis court sites. The Council through its appointed Greenspace Management Contractor Tivoli Group Ltd operate tennis courts at the following locations:

Swansea Gardens, Bognor Regis (3 hard courts)

Blakes Road Felpham (4 hard courts)

Norfolk Leisure Gardens, Littlehampton (3 hard courts and 4 'mini' courts)

Maltravers Leisure Gardens, Littlehampton (4 hard courts, 3 grass courts)

The LTA have undertaken an assessment of the courts listed above and considered the condition, demographic and potential capture rates for tennis use in Arun. On this basis the LTA recommended an improvement/funding package as per the project scope which is detailed in 4.3 below. With the exception of Swansea Gardens the condition of all other courts was rated as good.

4.2 Background & benefits

The LTA's aim is to support local authority partners to improve their parks tennis offer in order to increase participation and open up the sport to more people, as more people play tennis in parks than any other type of tennis venue.

This support includes, improving:

- local awareness of courts
- the quality of the courts themselves
- the ability to protect tennis courts for years to come via a self-sustaining model
- opportunities to play and compete
- the resident journey to court (i.e. court availability can be seen online, courts booked efficiently and access guaranteed upon arrival)
- the ability for LA's/operators to efficiently manage their courts remotely

LTA insight tells us:

- Park tennis courts are vital in helping open up the sport
- Over 1.7 million adults play tennis on a park court every year
- 44% of people who play tennis each year do so in a park (in comparison 20% played in a club setting)
- 3.4 million children aged 4-15 played tennis over the course of the year Over a third (35%) said they had played on a park court
- Key barriers to participating are finding, booking & accessing a court and finding someone to play with

4.3 Proposed Scope & funding

The project proposes the implementation of

a) Club-spark online booking platform – all sites

The LTA's digital platform for participation which helps to enhance the way players engage with tennis online, creating a simple online solution for finding, booking and paying for a tennis court. A modular platform which is free to LTA registered venues to use. Full training on the system will be provided via LTA for Tivoli staff, but the customer option for either phone or in person booking will remain with trained staff booking on behalf of the customer via the platform.

b) Gated court access mechanisms – all sites

Works with ClubSpark to provide a complete court booking solution, residents receive a unique access code upon booking and a battery powered key-pad provides instant access upon arrival, but only for that particular booking slot (no need for mains power). The system uses an algorithm to identify correct pin code access. – Creating a facility that is easy to access for residents and easy to monitor remotely for Tivoli, reducing staff time locking/unlocking courts, preventing unauthorized access and residents can play tennis when they want to play tennis.

Cost £4,000 per site x 4 sites = **£16,000**

c) Court improvements

Swansea Gardens only – 3 court porous asphalt surface course and repaint (inc. of new nets, posts and sockets at £850 per court) = £33,000 i.e. £11,000 per court

Prelims and Contingency = £5,000

Total indicative refurbishment cost = **£38,000**

Total cost £54,000

d) Coaching/added value/community outreach

A key initiative of this project will be to provide both free and tailored coaching opportunities, to open up tennis to all. By working with existing coaches in the locality, the LTA provide training opportunities for specialised coaching methods for a range of physical impairments and health needs. Opportunities to engage with services such as Wellbeing/Benefit who can signpost clients to tennis coaching opportunities/free use will also be explored.

4.3.1 Please note, these costs are subject to change once the LTA appointed contractor/s visit site, the funding application is re-approved and the LTA's procurement framework process is complete.

4.4 Fees & charges

The operation of public tennis courts needs to be underpinned by financial sustainability to ensure that these community assets are protected for years to come.

The operation of public tennis courts is currently subsidised, in that Tivoli's annual operating costs and the overall maintenance costs for tennis courts exceed the current annual income.

It is the LTA's view that financial sustainability and increased use are not mutually exclusive and the LTA will not be prescriptive with how financial sustainability is achieved, but have been actively involved in discussions alongside Tivoli in order to determine an appropriate charging model which will support delivery of the LTA's aims. The LTA are fully supportive of the proposed charging model.

4.4.1 Current arrangements

As it stands, all sites are largely only bookable during the Spring/Summer months (with the exception of Norfolk Gardens) and during office hours. This is due to staffing arrangements at each site. This creates both an operational challenge and a poor user experience as there is currently an inconsistent method of booking, charging and access throughout the day/year. It also means courts are often not accessible during the Winter or outside office hours.

The current opening arrangements are as follows:

Swansea Gardens – Open 10am-7pm during bowls season April - Sept – free of charge. Closed during winter due to historical issues of ASB/misuse.

Blakes – Chargeable when cashier is onsite – Summer is 10am to 5pm. Free of charge outside of this and/or occasionally closed.

Maltravers – Chargeable during bowls season April - Sept. Summer open 10am – 7pm. Winter – used by Tennis coach and Howard Tennis club (charged) Free of charge to general public and/or occasionally closed

Norfolk Gardens – Chargeable year-round. Open in line with Kiosk hours in association with other activities on site.

4.4.2 Current charges

1hr hire - £7.50

½ hour - £4.20

Junior turn up and play (U16) – 1hr £5

4.4.3 Proposed charges

Tennis (Hard & Grass)	Junior turn up and play (u16) 1hr PER COURT	£5.25
Tennis (Hard & Grass)	Adult turn up and play ½ hour PER COURT	£3.75
Tennis (Hard & Grass)	Adult turn up and play 1 hour PER COURT	£7.50

Tennis membership	Blakes Rd & Swansea Gdns only	£49 p.a max 2 bookings of 2 hours per week
Supported household tennis membership	All sites – free for eligible households*	Free, max 2 bookings of 2 hours per week
Tennis (Hard & Grass)	Twilight 1 hour tennis	£3.75 Approx 1 hour before sunset, all sites
Tennis (Hard & Grass)	Winter (1 st Nov – 28 th Feb) 1 hr PER COURT	£5.00
Tennis coaching	1 hour free per week alternating between Blakes/Maltravers	Free
Tennis loyalty	6 games of the price of 5	£37.50

*denotes low income households signposted to offer from partners services

This new operational model will create a consistent method of access and booking, it will also mean all courts will be bookable all year round and during all daylight hours regardless of when the kiosks are open. This will help to drive an increase in usage and therefore physical activity across these sites.

It will also allow for an increase in revenue, so the quality of these community assets is sustained and ideally improved.

Based on this proposal, Swansea Gardens and Blakes Road will be moving from a part free/paid model to a model that introduces an affordable charge all year round, this will be achieved by retaining the current pay and play charges, but also by providing an affordable season ticket that in turn provides free court access for a whole year. The LTA will also be working with Tivoli and local coach/es to introduce weekly, free coaching sessions at key sites, to facilitate additional activity.

A £49 per year per household season ticket is being proposed at the two Bognor Regis sites (Swansea Gardens and Blakes Road). This season ticket will provide 4 hours per week of free usage for a whole year, in reality this would act as a more affordable solution, and a saving for those who use the courts regularly in the Summer months, who are currently paying £7.50 per hour and which in turn will support the increase in participation all year round. Therefore if utilising a court for 4 hours per week for 52 weeks of the year, a £49 membership equates to an hourly charge of just 24p per hour.

Given their close proximity, the Littlehampton Sites (Norfolk Gardens & Maltravers) will be operated in a consistent way, both retaining the £7.50 per court per hour pay and play fee. A new £5 per court per hour will also be offered during the Winter months to encourage more usage at this time of year.

All of the above will be supplemented by a free season ticket for low-income households, offered across all sites, to ensure the tennis facilities across Arun remain inclusive but are also safeguarded for the future through financial sustainability. This also means these targeted households will be able to make a saving on playing tennis across the District.

4.5 Contractual/legal implications

Tivoli have full liability for repair of tennis courts under lease, therefore from a contractual perspective there is little change to the current arrangement between the Council and Tivoli, whereby Tivoli manage a suite of 'Lifestyle' outdoor recreation operations on behalf of the Council. A basic change control note will be issued in respect of the addition of court access systems, required use of Clubspark on-line booking platform and compliance with the required conditions of the LTA.

An agreement between the Council and the LTA will be drawn up for the purposes of the funding allocation, breach of conditions and payment of suppliers (see 4.6 procurement below)

The LTA's online booking platform is provided between the LTA and Tivoli upon registration of tennis venues as LTA venues and would be transferable to any new supplier of services at the point at which the Council retenders its Greenspace Management Contract.

4.6 Procurement

The LTA are the lead on the procurement process for this project. This is a national procurement exercise to provide consistency and best value for the LTA's investment into Local Authority facilities. Once the LTA have finished our procurement process we will be able to instruct the gate contractor to provide a final quoted cost per gate, per site.

Two procurement frameworks have been established between the LTA and the Football Foundation, to deliver the parks refurbishment program.

Framework 1 includes tennis court surface works (including specific types of resurfacing, cleaning, repainting), repairing and installing specific grades of fencing, replacing gates, posts and nets. Framework 1 has 11 lots to provide national coverage (including Scotland and Wales). The appointed contractor for the geographical lot covering Arun District, is Spadeoak (Aggregate Industries UK Ltd) The call off contract that will be used for each individual site will be JCT Minor Works Contract 2016 (With Contractor's Design).

Framework 2 includes the installation of stand alone gates (projects as not part of framework 1 works) and gate access systems. This framework has appointed a single contractor to provide national coverage. This contractor is CIA FIRE & SECURITY LIMITED.

The reason for using a framework approach to deliver the "Parks Investment Programme" is to enable Local Authorities to directly contract with contractors who have been procured using the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 procedure. The framework will deliver the following objectives:-

1. Enable the LA to use the framework to deliver the projects.
2. Achieve value for money through a competitive procurement process.

3. Make sure projects are delivered on time, budget and to the correct specifications.

The procurement accords with the requirements of PCR2015 and has been procured using the Open procedure. Contractors have been appointed in line with PCR 2015 Regulations and have passed a pre-qualification questionnaire as well as being assessed on:

- technical compliance
- Competitive pricing
- proposed delivery team,
- Resource available to deliver projects
- Supply chain arrangements
- Social value in the delivery of projects
- Business continuity, resilience and risk

Once the necessary approvals and agreements are in place, the LTA will be able to instruct the gate & court contractors to provide final quotes for the required works

4.7 Timetable

To be determined once project has received Arun District Council and final LTA approval. It is hoped that on-line and court access systems will be introduced in Spring 2023, and court improvement works completed summer 2023.

5. CONSULTATION

Consultation has mainly been with Tivoli Group Ltd, the Council's contracted provider for Tennis booking and management and therefore key stakeholder for this project.

Consultation has also been carried out with the current registered tennis coach operating from Maltravers Leisure Gardens, who is supportive of the project proposal

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

1. *Not to proceed*
2. *To proceed only with the online/court access element of the project*

7 COMMENTS BY THE INTERIM GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1 There are no net budget implications

8 RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The Council are required to enter into an agreement with the LTA for the Standard Grant Terms and Conditions. The Council and its appointed operator/s will be required to adhere to the terms within the LTA funding agreement for the standard obligation period (15 years for court surfacing improvements, 5 years for gate systems), breaching

any terms of the funding agreement could result in the LTA clawing back the grant amount.

9 COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1 There are no direct legal or governance implications associated with this report. A funding agreement will be entered into as described within the report, which will be the subject of review by the Legal Services team.

10 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 None

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 Health & Safety risks will be considered by the project team and will be managed by the respective contractors during the construction works. All contractors have been procured through a robust LTA led procurement process which has considered appropriate management of H&S.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 Tennis Courts will continue to form part of the Greenspace Management Contract and therefore are under lease to Tivoli whilst this contract is in place.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 The improvement of the parks tennis offer will help to improve the social and well-being of the district, and tackle health inequality by providing a good quality outdoor leisure facilities. Targeted coaching for impairment groups and maximising inclusivity are key outcomes of this project.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 None

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 None

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 The proposed scheme fulfils the freedoms and rights within the Human Rights Act 1998. There are no negative implications in terms of human rights impacts.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 ClubSpark UK has its own Data Protection/Privacy Policy

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None

Appendix 1 – LTA summary presentation