

Community Matters Meeting 29 April 2020 – Agenda Item 7

PTC - PORTISHEAD TENNIS CLUB PAY & PLAY PROPOSAL

Background

Portishead current has no quality public tennis court access.

Portishead Lawn Tennis Club under the terms of its lease with NSC was previously committed to **“make one tennis court available for public use between the hours of 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday during school terms weather conditions permitting...by providing a key to the Council “**. It is understood that public provision was limited to term times as the club runs kids summer camps that are accessible to school aged children.

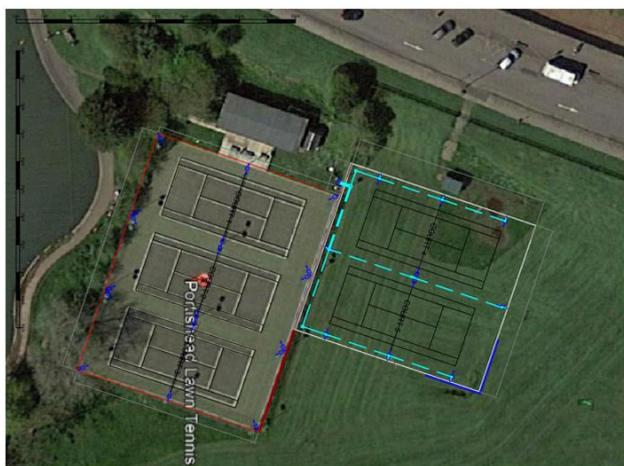
It has been explained that public provision became impracticable with the closure of the swimming pool as there was no longer any full time Council staff available to act as key holder.

The club currently has three courts for use by 215 members. These are congested at peak times (the LTA recommendation is 60 members per court) and the courts have reached end of life and require resurfacing and renovation. The Club has applied for planning permission to build two new courts and to resurface the three existing courts. The total cost of this project being around £200,000. In the longer term the club will also have to raise further funding to refurbish the club house, although this is not part of the current project.

In conjunction with making this investment the club has agreed a new 25-year lease of the courts with NSC under which there is no general provision for public access, although the club is committed to hold [6] public open days a year. Rent under the new lease increases pro-rata with the number of courts from 3 to 5. NSC are unable to grant a similar long lease on the club house due to its condition.

The Club is however also keen to provide a casual route into tennis that will encourage public participation in the sport. However, this must also be compatible with maintaining a healthy membership base and covering the costs of wider access. To enable public access, it is proposed to install an automated LTA approved online booking and court access system.

The project is at an advanced stage and will be considered by the PLTC AGM on 20 March. If approved expenditure, borrowing and construction of the new courts will start in late spring.



We are planning to build two additional floodlit courts (and resurface existing courts) to cater for current capacity and grow the membership.

We expect to construct the new courts in Late Spring / Summer 2020

The existing courts will be resurfaced later in 2020 or Spring 2021

Investment and Financing

The project cost and its sources of funding are:

Project cost:	£	Funded by:	£
Construction of new courts	85,000	Members accumulated funds	92,000
Resurfacing of existing courts	30,000	LTA Loan	90,000
Floodlighting	20,000	LTA grant	8,000
Fees – 8%	11,000		
Contingencies -10%	15,000		
VAT	34,000		
Total before access system	195,000	Total PLTC & LTA funds	190,000
Access system	8,000	Shortfall to be bridged, savings made	13,000
Total project cost	203,000	Total funding required	201,000

- Accumulated members funds have come from sinking fund provision over the past years
- Other fund-raising efforts at the tennis club have been directed to causes outside the tennis club.
- The club after sinking fund provision operated on a cash neutral basis until 2016
- Since 2016 it has run a surplus of between £5,000 and £10,000 as the sinking fund was enough to cover the maintenance of existing courts and so no further contributions were required. Income has also increased due to an active marketing campaign to attract new members in 2019.
- After maintenance, sinking fund and loan repayments the club is projected to operate on a neutral to slightly negative basis until the LTA loan is repaid in eight years' time. However, this does not include any provision for a new clubhouse.
- The capital cost of the automated entry system is around £8,000 with annual software and maintenance costs of around £1,000 per year.

Public Access provision

There is a balance between allowing public access and maintaining a viable tennis club, without which there would be no long-term future for the courts. This is both in terms of times and cost of access, arising from discussion with the tennis club the following is proposed:

Times of access:

- ***The two new courts are available for public 7am to 4pm on weekdays and from 1pm to 10pm at weekends***
- ***Public access being via the online booking system for up to two weeks in advance***
- *The club requires weekdays from 4pm to 6pm for coaching (including Junior coaching) and from 6pm to 9pm for members play. At weekends the period to 12pm is also required for coaching and members play.*
- *The exception to this is where the courts are occasionally required for competitions, league matches and open days on weekend afternoons and kids summer camps where the tennis club may make block bookings to reserve courts.*
- *Further in the summer holidays when normal kids coaching sessions do not take place the club will release the courts for public play until 6pm on weekdays.*
- *Club members will be encouraged to book the three existing members courts in priority to the two new courts and this will be monitored.*
- ***However, the utilisation of the two new courts on weekdays between 6pm and 9pm will be monitored and consideration given to making them available (on certain evenings) on as best endeavours basis if under-utilised by members.***

Cost of access:

- **Weekday access at £6.50 per court per hour**
- **Weekend access at £7.50 per court per hour**
- **Floodlit access at £9.50 per court per hour**
- *This is the cost per court, per player the effective cost is halved or a quarter if playing singles or doubles respectively.*
- *Floodlit access will depend on time of year and for public play would only apply to evening weekends. The cost of floodlights is c£2 per hour hence the uplift from the weekend rate.*
- *These rates are considered reasonable relative to annual membership and other public access courts in the local area – see further details below.*

Benchmarking of Public Access Cost

In setting the public access cost the following principles have been applied:

- It must be sustainable for the tennis club relative to its membership charges, so as not to significantly cannibalise its annual membership income
- It must be competitive relative to other charges for quality courts in the local area and below commercial rates given the input of public funds

Sustainable cost:

- **Full annual membership for two people is £300 p.a. – if they played 50 times a year the average cost per court is £6.00**
- **Off peak (before 4pm weekday) membership cost for two is £168 – if they played 26 times a year the average cost per court is £6.46**
- **Guest membership is £5 per person**
- *The proposed charges are considered sustainable relative to the costs of membership, although at [£6.50] per court the club estimates it will lose several off-peak members to pay and play.*

Benchmarked cost:

- **An analysis of public access and charges at courts listed on the LTA website in the Bristol area are given in the attachment – charges range from £5 to £12 with an average of £7.44**
- **The average charge in the immediate Portishead and Bristol area being £7.37 ***
- *Accordingly, the proposed range of charges of [£6.50 to £7.50] for non-floodlit access are at the bottom end of those for other accessible courts*
- *The new courts are expected to be of a significantly higher standard than the school and public courts included in the benchmarks*

PTC Financial support proposal

In return for the above public access provision PTLC is asking for:

- An initial capital grant of £8,000 to cover the purchase cost of the online booking and automated court entry system; and
- Ongoing revenue support of £1,500 per annum, the first 4 years to be paid upfront
- If there is damage caused by non-club players totalling more than the amount of the capital grant provided by the town council, the club may close the pay and play before 4 years.
- The arrangement will be reviewed after 4 years

PTC would like to provide an incentive to PTLC to encourage public use of the courts and so would propose the following:

- An initial capital grant of £8,000 to cover capital costs.
- An annual revenue grant of £1,000 per year – with two years paid upfront and further years paid in May of each successive year. The revenue grant after the first two years being increased to £1,500 if pay and play sessions exceed 200 in a preceding year and reduced to £500 if pay and play sessions are less than 100 in a preceding year
- The proposed arrangements apply for 4 years and to be reviewed after that period. Public charges are not to be increased for the first two years of the arrangement and thereafter by no more than the annual CPI increase.
- PTLC will monitor weekday evening use of the courts and provide data to PTC for the last week of June and September each year. Where the courts are not fully utilised, the parties shall use best endeavours to provide public access on certain weekday evening or during holiday periods, although there can be no guarantee that access can be provided or continued if club membership demands change.
- If significant damage to the courts (other than by reasonable wear & tear) from public use exceeds the amount of the capital grant, in the initial 4 year period the club reserves the right to withdraw public access if a reasonable solution or financial arrangement cannot be agreed with PTC.
- If public access is withdrawn by the tennis club for any other reason than significant damage, the club shall repay the proportion of capital and revenue grants received, relative to the remaining part of the 4 year period (or remaining part of the year in respect of the annual revenue grant).

Summary

Public access to the new courts is to be welcome and commended. An access charge of between £6.50 and £7.50 per court is considered reasonable in terms of sustainability of the tennis club and good value relative to other publicly accessible facilities, the access and charges proposed being:

Access on weekdays from 7am to 4pm at a base cost of £6.50 per court.

Access at weekends from 1pm to 10pm at a base cost of £7.50 (£9.50 floodlit) per court

Weekday access during summer holidays to be extended to 6pm where kids coaching does not take place and the above may be restricted where the courts are required for competition, open days and kids summer camps. Otherwise, no public access can be guaranteed on weekday evenings although through monitoring and review it is hoped that some limited provision may be possible on selected days or holiday periods on a best endeavour's basis.

ANALYSIS OF BRISTOL AREA LTA LISTED COURTS

Club/Court	Public Access	Cost per court p.h.
Backwell Tennis Club	No general public access – only club open days	n.a.
Clevedon Lawn Tennis Club	No general public access	n.a.
Bristol University – Coombe Dingle	Public online booking	£8.00* (non-members)
University of Bristol Tennis – Coombe Dingle	Mix-In open play sessions – not dedicated court booking	£6.00*
Canford Park – Westbury-on-trym	Members only at £35 each	n.a.
The Redland Green Club - Bristol	No general public access	n.a.
Redland Tennis Community Courts	No general public access – only club open days	n.a.
Kings Lawn Tennis Club - Bishopston	No general public access	n.a.
St Katherines School - Pill	No online booking – charges unclear	n.a.
Nailsea Tennis Club	No general public access	n.a.
Gordano School - Portishead	Public online booking	£7.70 (summer only) *
Backwell School	Phone booking £31.50 for 4 courts	£7.80 *
<i>Others outside Bristol Area:</i>		
<i>Cleve School - Cheltenham</i>	<i>Phone booking</i>	<i>£6.50</i>
<i>Stoke Gifford</i>	<i>Phone booking – public courts not well maintained</i>	<i>£5.00</i>
<i>Clifton College</i>	<i>Online booking</i>	<i>£12.00</i>
<i>Somerton</i>	<i>Phone booking – only available at 24hrs notice (£15 with floodlights)</i>	<i>£6.00</i>
<i>Liverpool</i>	<i>Not-known</i>	<i>£8.00</i>
Average of quoted rates		£7.44