

PROPOSED FLOODLIT TENNIS COURTS/MUGA DEVELOPMENT AT THE RECREATION GROUND



The proposal to provide floodlit tennis courts and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is in response to Public feedback arising from the Neighbourhood plan and the survey conducted earlier this year by the OF Community Tennis Steering Group. This showed that there is a sufficient level of support for a variety of new or improved sporting and lifestyle facilities within the village. There is spare capacity at the Recreation Ground and in the Club House, which can be utilised to meet this need, without affecting its present use by the football club.

Provision of the courts would be jointly funded by the Parish Council and the LTA who have already registered the proposed venue. The LTA can provide up to 50% of the cost of building the courts provided it is for the exclusive use of tennis. It is estimated that the courts and floodlighting will cost between £90,000 to £100,000.

The level of positive response to the questionnaire showed that initial potential membership numbers would support low-cost annual membership for local families providing easy access to the courts. This would encourage all age groups especially the young to participate and benefit from coaching. In addition, full membership will be available, which will entitle subscribers to further benefits such as additional playing times and competitive matches. Also, the popularity of wheelchair tennis has been identified as being on the increase and access for this will be designed into the scheme.

If these levels of membership are achieved there would be no further calls on the Public purse to pay for the annual and long term maintenance as these will be funded from subscriptions. No works will commence until fully funded. Any

additional costs such as improvements to the clubhouse, will be met from further fund-raising activities.

There is a high demand from other facilities for funding by the LTA and it is likely to take several months before this can be secured. Therefore, it is possible that it could take up to 3 years to complete the courts but will be the first phase of a multi-stage development of increased sporting activity at the Recreation ground.

Town Planning approval for the courts and floodlighting will be required before a business case can be prepared and submitted to the LTA. However, we believe that the existing use of the site and the presence of floodlighting on the site is a significant advantage in obtaining permission for lighting to the tennis courts and the MUGA. This will increase availability and therefore the attraction of the courts to a wider audience.

As other sports are identified, especially utilising the MUGA, similar applications for grant funding from their respective sporting bodies will be sought. Future projects will either run in tandem or in a subsequent phase, as funds permit.