

Business Plan for:



## Sittingbourne Tennis Club

Situated at:  
**Milton Regis Recreation Ground,  
Vicarage Road, Milton Regis ME10 2BL**

Revised: September 2020

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### Our Vision

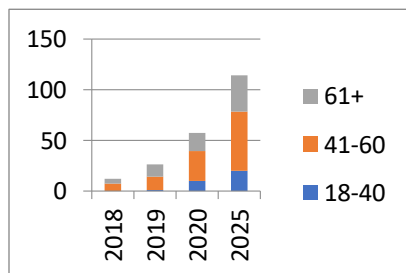
Our vision is to be the Tennis Club of choice in North Swale, making full use of the facilities available.

**Background.** Sittingbourne Tennis Club (abbreviated to STC) is a not-for-profit club, owned and managed by its members. It was formed in 2017 and moved to its current location in 2018 with about 10 regular players. Swale Borough Council (SBC) has given STC permission to use the three tennis courts at the Milton Regis Recreation Ground, Vicarage Road.

**Tennis for Everyone.** STC is a friendly club, and we are determined to provide a warm welcome to adults of all ages and any ability. We enable everyone to come and play social tennis, make friends, improve fitness and have some fun. We seek to resolve the problem – *“I would like to play tennis but I don’t have any partners to play with.”*

**Constraint.** Growth at this site is now constrained by the lack of a clubhouse / toilets, floodlights which are non-operational, and the courts have not been resurfaced for many years. We are in discussion with SBC to create a project to resolve these issues and to formalize our license agreement.

**Adult membership** – exponential growth – growth in each age group



Over the next 5 years we intend to make use of improved facilities, double our adult membership from 50+ to over 100, improve our training delivery, and provide courses for at least 30 juniors each week.

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**Business  
Overview (or  
Mission)**

**Tennis provision in North Swale.** STC occupy the only usable and available tennis courts in North Swale. 80% of our membership lives within 3 miles and 90% in North Swale.

**Welcome to Club Sessions.** Mixed-ability club tennis sessions are provided where members can play social tennis, meet other members, make friends and improve both their tennis skills and fitness. Each of our 3 sessions each week is over-subscribed so more are needed.

**Other activities.**

For more competitive tennis we have just started a singles league which has three divisions and 18 players. Thus 9 matches are played each week throughout the year. These numbers will grow and a doubles league is under consideration. Also:

- Groups of Members plan and arrange their own meeting times.
- Members arrange family time to support junior training.
- Tournaments are arranged at least twice per year.
- Inter-club matches need better facilities.

**Utilization** of our 3 courts has increased from 0 to 80% of peak time (evenings and weekends) over 3 years. It will be impossible to meet the expected peak-time demand over the winter months without floodlights. We will promote some midweek day-time tennis to alleviate this pressure.

**Junior Tennis Training.** Constrained by lack of shelter and toilets. Once these issues are resolved then we will publicize our training courses to schools, clubs and the local population. We are actively developing our use of social media to publicize the presence of our club to a wider audience.

**Opportunity.**

- Following Covid-19 more people are working from home, and therefore they have more leisure time available. The government is promoting healthy lifestyles and fitness.
- Several large housing developments are in progress or planned within our catchment area.
- We know nine local families who have joined clubs in Maidstone and Gillingham solely because of the lack of good tennis provision in North Swale.

Each of these factors increase the size of our target market.

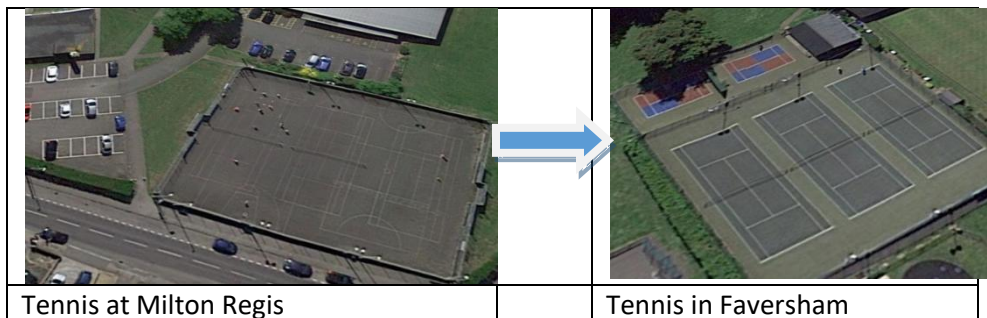
**Pricing Strategy** Currently we charge a nominal fee to cover our immediate expenses (insurance and minor maintenance) and this creates a small surplus. A formal license agreement with SBC will give STC longevity at this location and enable us to plan for our future. We expect our fees will increase to cover our extra costs (cleaning, moss treatment, court maintenance, advertising etc.), and to provide a surplus to cover more major repairs as they become due. Our future fees are likely to be in line with similar nearby clubs (eg Faversham and Bearsted), but considerably less than The Avenue in Gillingham.

**Advertising and Promotion** Over 3 years, we have seen our membership grow from 12 to 50+. Our usage of the courts has attracted enquiries from passers-by. And members have introduced friends and family.

The next step is to increase our visibility using a web-site and social media, as well as better signage on the courts.

The development and delivery of our training courses is under review. Then as soon as we have dates for the development project - we will actively market our training courses to local schools and other organisations.

**Objectives** To satisfy the demand for tennis in North Swale. Facilities need to be improved. Compare the facilities at Milton and Faversham as shown. Our aim is to achieve this transformation.



By 2025 we plan for an adult membership of 100, and at least 30 juniors in training each week. Court utilization will increase from over 70 hours per week at present to over 150 hours per week (mainly in peak times of evenings and weekends).

Progress towards these objectives is constrained by:

- The lack of a formal written license agreement with SBC to guarantee longevity.
- Non-operational floodlights to extend peak-time availability during the winter months.
- The lack of club-house / toilets – shelter and facilities are essential before training courses can be promoted to schools.
- Court resurfacing is needed to reduce accidents; to attract / retain the more skilled player and facilitate inter-club matches.

Our plan is to consolidate our existing membership over the next year or two, and promote more day-time off peak tennis. On completion of the projects below, our club will become more visible and membership will grow.

## Action Plans

To meet our objectives we have set the following targets:

Target Date	Objective
Oct 2020	Strengthen STC Management Committee Use data from members to monitor court usage Hold a virtual AGM Set up a review of training, delivery, and courses Create a schedule to create and deliver social media Set up a project to deliver and manage a website
Dec 2020	Courts Development Project - Agree a final development plan with SBC & obtain quotes Formalise a written license agreement with SBC Install new signage and windbreaks
Jan 2021	Working with SBC, Source funds for project
Apr 2021	Complete Phase I – Clubhouse & court surface
Sept 2021	Complete Phase II - Floodlights
2022	30+ juniors in training courses each week
2025	100+ adult members