

## **Sittingbourne Area Committee Lawn Tennis Association Tennis Court Refurbishment Proposal**

### **Proposal**

The Lawn Tennis Association have approached the Council as Swale is a targeted area, with an opportunity to apply for funding for refurbishment of the existing hard surfaced tennis courts at King George's Playing Field, Sittingbourne, and Milton Recreation Ground. The following link provides more specific detail related to DCMS Parks Tennis Investment - [£30 million package to refurbish 4,500 public tennis courts in deprived parts of UK announced - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) with further general LTA information contained in Appendix I. Ultimately if successful with a proposed funding bid, a formal agreement and commitment to terms and conditions would be required.

The two sites require refurbishment to ensure they are safe and suitable for play and have been surveyed by the LTA, with proposals and the indicative investment values for each of the facilities indicated below:

- King George Playing Fields (4 Courts) - court resurface and repaint, reconstruction where required, re clad fencing, new nets and posts and lite access gate system.  
Estimated £68,000
- Milton Recreation Ground (3 Courts) = court resurface and repaint and premium access gate system.  
Estimated £44,000

### **Management & Sustainability**

King George's is straight forward as there is currently no established club and the courts are currently free to use, albeit they have a new informal booking system in place via the LTA's ClubSpark.

Milton is a greater challenge as there is a tennis club who currently use approximately 30% of the available court hire. In addition, the courts are currently considered designated as multi use (tennis/football/basketball), something that the LTA would require removing for their full funding to be agreed, given their tennis focus.

Apart from the Tennis Club where a formal agreement is in the process of being agreed, there is currently little/no demand for other uses, with occasional novice running classes which can continue without affecting any proposed agreement. As such a specific tennis facility would appear to provide the greatest participation potential.

In addition to the above the LTA have requested commitment/confirmation of several issues, ahead of taking the project to their funding panel.

- The Council will be required to commit to maintaining the refurbished tennis courts and a repaint/resurface within the 15-year funding obligation period, with the annual sinking fund recommended by the LTA at £1,200 per court per annum, and a further £600 for each floodlit court per annum.
- Commitment to ongoing sustainability to enable the above. This could be court income generation via an ongoing pay and play / season ticket charge or underwriting the cost of ongoing/future investment and writing into ongoing budgets. It is proposed that the Council introduce pay & play sessions at both venues while retaining some free sessions, alongside income from the incumbent Tennis Club at

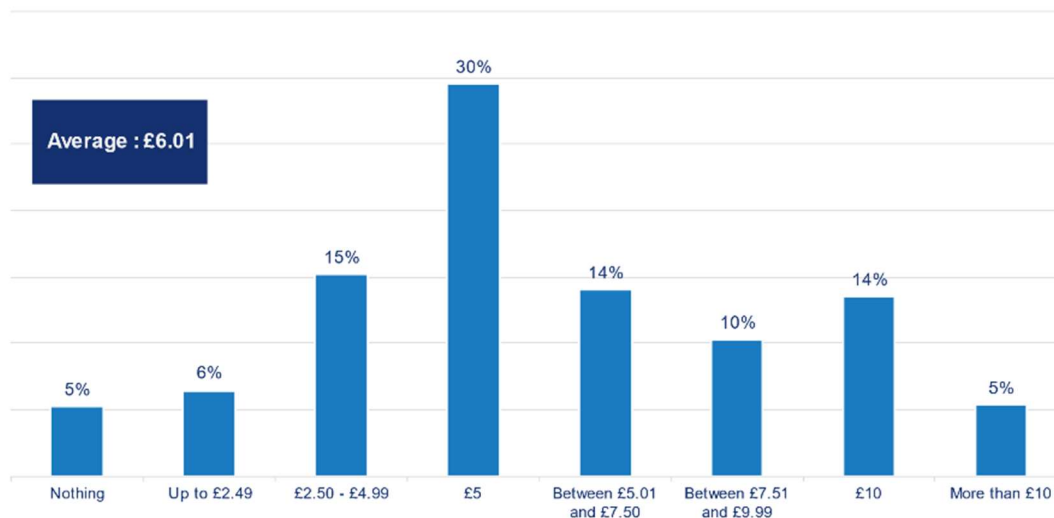
Milton. Season tickets will be available at both venues and coaching will be available at the Milton venue. More detail is identified below.

- The Council will need to retain all courts as tennis courts once refurbishment works are completed for the 15-year funding obligation period if the LTA. If Members take the decision to change the multi-use designation of the courts at Milton, then all the courts at both sites will be dedicated to tennis.
- The Council will remain responsible for the ongoing control, operation, management, and maintenance of both sites. The Council will then have contracts in place to outsource ongoing coaching/organised activity with local clubs/coaches.
- The Council are committed to the improvement of facilities and are in the process of £26,000 upgrade of floodlights on courts at Milton Recreation Ground, to include power requirements for gate access technology.

In order to consider some of the above issues, Officers have been in liaison with the LTA, gaining some benchmarking which has been captured by their Insight Team and the findings are displayed in the graph below:

### **MOST PEOPLE EXPECT TO PAY SOMETHING FOR AN HOUR-LONG PARK COURT BOOKING. £5 WAS THE FIGURE MOST OFTEN MENTIONED, WITH AN AVERAGE EXPECTED FEE OF £6**

Amount would expect to pay to book park court for an hour, assuming in good condition (asked as open question)



How much would you be willing to pay to book a local park tennis court for one hour, assuming that the court was kept in a good state of repair? Enter the amount £  
N= 1077

Having reviewed the above, it is proposed to introduce an initial court fee of **£6.00** per hour without floodlights, **£9.00** with floodlights and **£40.00** for a season ticket. Both sites are currently free of charge. Where Local Authorities in the past have moved from a free model to a paid model, the introduction of a targeted free/concessionary season ticket for those low-income households has helped with this transition, especially in the current climate.

The attached financial modelling for both sites, demonstrates the ongoing financial commitment for the 'sinking fund' and additional associated costs, as well as the potential income, based on LTA insight and averages from live projects in similar IMD areas.

Officers have utilised the LTA feasibility tool to calculate the projected revenue from each of the facilities and the required sinking funds. Suggested sinking fund of **£4,800** at King Georges and **£9,000** at Milton. The modelling allows for 5-10% of free court time for those who may not be able to afford £6p/h or a season ticket.

The projected % of usage for pay & play is 7% and 23% for Season Ticket usage.

Income	Milton	King George's
• Pay and play	£9,423	£5,298
• Season tickets	£3,316	£2,664
• Coaching	£1,000	
Total Income	£13,739	£7,962

Expenditure	Milton	King George's
• Clubspark and Payment Fees	£716	£417
• Gate access maintenance	£601	£320
• Code lock generator <i>(lite systems only)</i>	£0	£156
• Court sinking fund	£9,000	£4,800
Total Expenditure	£10,318	£5,693
Annual Profitability	£3,421	£2,269

Plausible cashflow for Milton in year 5 is £14,742 and £9,780 at King Georges. Closing cash position after sinking fund can be seen on attached Feasibility Tool, Appendix II.

### Recommendations:

The two key issues for Member consideration are the removal of the multi-use designation of the courts at Milton and the need to commit to future maintenance costs through the proposed management structures identified.

We seek Member agreement in principle to:

- Seek Community Committee agreement to change the designated usage from multi use, to tennis only at Milton Recreation Ground.
- Seek Community Committee agreement to a sinking fund commitment and the ongoing maintenance responsibility.
- Submit initial phase 1 applications for both facilities.
- Enter into an agreement with LTA for both facilities.

### Appendices

- Appendix I: LTA Parks Renovation Fund Presentation
- Appendix II: LTA Feasibility Tool