



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee

9 January 2024

Report of Councillor Paul Stokes,
Cabinet Member for Culture and
Leisure

Update on the refurbishment of Wyndham Park Tennis Courts, Grantham

Report Author

Michael Chester, Team Leader – Leisure, Parks and Open Spaces



michael.chester@soutkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the refurbishment of the Wyndham Park Tennis Courts.

Recommendations

It is recommended the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Notes the positive update in relation to the refurbishment of the Wyndham Park tennis courts.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate priorities?

Healthy and strong communities

Which wards are impacted?

Grantham St Vincent's Ward

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 The Council identified an opportunity to attract grant funding from the Lawn Tennis Association to fully fund a refurbishment of the two public use tennis courts in Wyndham Park. As part of the funding arrangements, this required a collaborative approach with Grantham Tennis Club who have taken on the management and operation of the courts under a leasehold arrangement.
- 1.2 The costs of refurbishment works were 100% met by the grant award from the LTA with no requirement from the Council to contribute towards the costs of the refurbishment works.
- 1.3 The terms of the lease require a financial contribution from the Council of £8,428 to cover the first three-years contribution to the sinking fund and gate maintenance. This will be funded from the Special Expense Reserve for Grantham, from year four Grantham Tennis Club will be responsible for covering the costs in relation to the sinking fund.

Completed by: **Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer**

Legal and Governance

- 1.4 Legal advice and support was provided by Legal Services Lincolnshire to develop the lease between the Council and Grantham Tennis Club, with approval of the terms of the lease being obtained from Fields In Trust.

- 1.5 Other legal and governance implications are set out in the body of the report.

Completed by: **Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer**

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Council's Corporate Plan 2020 to 2023 contains the key priorities of investing in the health of our local communities and improving our parks and open spaces. Wyndham Park in Grantham is a much loved and valued community asset, which provides opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy being in the open air and to take part in informal activity.
- 2.2 During the 13 June 2023 meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, Members requested an update on the progress of the Wyndham Park Tennis Court refurbishment.
- 2.3 The improvements to the tennis courts in Wyndham Park have been wholly funded by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). Acceptance of the funding award and the entering of a lease arrangement with Grantham Tennis Club was approved at a meeting of Cabinet held on 8 November 2022 (See **Background Papers**).
- 2.4 Following this decision, the Council commissioned an LTA approved contractor to undertake the refurbishment works utilising grant funding of £58,826.46. The contractor was secured from a framework ensuring compliance with the Council's Financial Regulations.
- 2.5 In parallel to commissioning the improvement works, negotiations led by the Council's Property Team continued with Grantham Tennis Club on the terms of the lease. Due to the immovable timelines imposed on the project by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), it was necessary to sign the construction contract in advance of entering into the lease.
- 2.6 Construction works commenced on the tennis courts in February 2023 and completed in early March 2023, in readiness for painting once the court surface had sufficient time to cure. Following inclement weather issues in early Spring 2023, the painting of the courts completed in May 2023.
- 2.7 As the proposed lease between the Council and Grantham Tennis Club was for a term of 15 years, in line with the Local Government Act 1972, it was necessary to publish a Section 123 Notice. Notice was thereby given in the Grantham Journal for two consecutive weeks.
- 2.8 The lease negotiations between the Council and Grantham Tennis Club was complex, as Wyndham Park has Fields in Trust (FIT) status. This places certain

obligations on the Council to protect the park. Therefore, the draft lease had to be considered by the FIT Planning and Policy Committee.

- 2.9 As a result, there were several clauses within the draft lease which had been prepared and which required amendment and re-negotiation. This process took some time to work through, resulting in the lease not being executed until 17 November 2023.
- 2.10 A soft launch opening of the courts was held on 5 December 2023 with representatives from Grantham Tennis Club, the Lawn Tennis Association, Council Officers and Members in attendance.
- 2.11 As part of the agreement with Grantham Tennis Club, to encourage community usage, there are free slots on the courts each day which are bookable in advance. These are at varying times and those who can pay, will be encouraged to leave the free slots for people who would not be able to otherwise access the facilities. The availability and timing of the free slots will be monitored by the Tennis Club and changes made where necessary, to fit with demand.
- 2.12 In addition, there will be free weekly tennis coaching sessions hosted by the Tennis Club. Over the winter months, the Tennis Club will be recruiting and upskilling Tennis Activators to deliver these sessions which are planned on Sunday mornings from Spring 2024.
- 2.13 The Tennis Club have demonstrated a very collaborative approach and on the court booking website, are encouraging people where cost may be a barrier to participation, to contact the Club. The Club are open to exploring other initiatives Members may wish them to consider.
- 2.14 Officers will continue to work with the Tennis Club to plan a much grander launch of the tennis courts with the aim of coinciding with other events being planned in Wyndham Park.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 This report is an update of the conclusion of the works to refurbish the tennis courts as requested at a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a meeting on 13 June 2023.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 This report aims to reassure Members that suitable arrangements are in place regarding the tennis courts. It is for this reason, the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 To provide Members with an update on the progress made in offering tennis provision in Wyndham Park.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 *Grantham Parks – Tennis Courts*, report to Cabinet, published 8 November 2022 and available online at:
<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s35990/Grantham%20Park%20Tennis%20Courts%20Report%20Cabinet.pdf>