

Fordbridge Park Tennis Project

Community Tennis Ltd has submitted a proposal to take on the management of the tennis courts in Fordbridge Park. Spelthorne Borough Council is keen to pursue the proposal to reduce costs, enhance the boroughs tennis offer and ensure the long term sustainability of the facility.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the proposal for the Fordbridge Park Tennis Project?

The plans include the installation of floodlighting and a new pavilion and for Community Tennis Ltd to take on the management of the existing courts.

The proposed pavilion building would include an office, an accessible toilet, storage for equipment, a seated spectator area and a kitchen area which will enable the provision of a café service in the park. The site would become a professionally run outdoor community tennis centre. The centre would be run by Community Tennis Ltd, a not-for-profit limited company. Community Tennis Ltd would be responsible for maintaining the facilities and they would contract the tennis coaching to Tennis Focus Academy who currently provide tennis sessions in the park. The new facilities would be funded through Tennis Focus Academy and external funding bodies. There would be no cost to the council for the new facilities.

The majority of tennis sessions on the courts would become chargeable and Community Tennis Ltd would therefore become responsible for the daily maintenance of the facility as well as providing staffing. They would be fully responsible for maintenance, health and safety, and running costs of the building and the floodlights. Income would be generated through coaching activities, use of the floodlights and the sale of refreshments.

2. What are the benefits to the council and the community of this project?

This project will provide the following benefits to the community and the council.

- Community Tennis Ltd will take on all court cleaning, repairs and maintenance which will save the council money on maintenance costs.
- It will save the council money on insurance costs.
- Floodlights will be available to enable tennis to be played until 9pm each evening. This will help enhance tennis provision in Spelthorne as there are currently no floodlit public courts available in the borough.
- The provision of an onsite first aider and defibrillator within the park.
- An improvement to the facilities provided to the public, e.g. the café and additional accessible toilet.
- A regular presence in the park will reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour and vandalism, especially in the evenings.
- The provision of an outside tap for dog walkers.
- Community Tennis Ltd will provide specialist advice on the repairs and maintenance of all tennis courts throughout the borough.

- Maintenance of the notice boards next to courts. The boards would be used to promote tennis activities to encourage participation and to promote local council leisure services activities.
- Organised coaching sessions with community groups and a free racket loan system for community sessions will help to encourage residents to try tennis and hopefully to continue to participate regularly. This will help to increase physical activity in Spelthorne and therefore help to address the issues connected with inactivity such as obesity. Spelthorne currently has high rates of inactivity and obesity when compared with the rest of Surrey.
- The general public will be able to book a court, which is not possible at the moment.
- It will provide an additional focal point for tennis within the borough.
- It will encourage increased use of the courts by allowing the courts to be used all year round in the evenings.
- The community tennis project will engage with the local residents and local organisations. It will work closely with Spelthorne Borough Council Leisure Services and groups such as Age UK, The Lifetrain Trust, Spelthorne Mental Health Association and Spelthorne Disability Sports Club. Outreach work will take place with local schools to encourage participation and schools tournaments will be held in the park. The free court use and the free loan of rackets will ensure those from disadvantaged backgrounds will be able to continue to use the facilities. Tennis is a sport that can be played at all ages from 3 upwards and children, parents and grandparents can play together. The programme of activities will bring people of all backgrounds and ages together. Parents and carers will be encouraged to watch or join in activities whilst their child is playing, enabling them to benefit from the social aspects of the game.

3. What are the proposed charges for the courts?

There would be an average of 10 hours of free community use per week on the tennis courts, with free loaning of rackets at these times. Additionally, there will be two free holiday sessions for children per year, offered during February and October half terms.

Courts outside of the free times would have a minimal booking fee of:-

Adult Rate - £3 per court (£5 per court floodlit)

Junior/Over 65/Disabled £1.50 per court (£4 per court floodlit)

There will be a centre discount card available. The discount card would enable the user to have free use of the courts, 10% off group coaching, 10% off refreshments, free floodlights, booking of courts up to 7 days before.

The costs of the discount card would be:

£45 per household

£20 Adult (50% discount for over 65's and disabled adults)

£10 Juniors (50% discount for disabled juniors)

£5 Mini Tennis

4. Will I still be able to play tennis for free in Spelthorne?

There would be an average of 10 hours of free community use per week on the tennis courts at Fordbridge Park with the free loan of rackets at these times. In addition there is free public access at a number of other sites across the borough. The locations of these courts are shown below.

Park	Address	Number of Courts
Ashford Recreation Ground	Rosary Gardens, Ashford, TW15 2HH	6 full size and 2 mini
Cedars Recreation Ground	Green Street, Sunbury-on-Thames, TW16 6QQ	3
Staines Park	Commercial Road, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 2QJ	3
Bishop Duppas Recreation Ground	Walton Bridge Road, Shepperton, TW17 8NR	3
Lammas Recreation Ground	Wraysbury Road, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 4XZ	3
Stanwell Recreation Ground	Stanwell Close, Stanwell, TW19 7LL	2

Spelthorne is very well served for free tennis courts compared to other local boroughs as shown below.

Borough	Number of Free courts*	Population **	Residents Per Court
Spelthorne	24	90,390	3767
Hounslow	30	254,000	8467
Elmbridge	20	130,875	6544
Hillingdon	12	275,500	22959
Ealing	8	339,300	42412
Runnymede	3	80,510	26837
Woking	1	99,198	99198
Slough	10	141,838***	14184
Windsor & Maidenhead	5	144,560	28912
Surrey Heath	3	84,000	28000

*Based on figures from Sport England's Active Places Database

**Based on figures from 2011 Census

***Based on figures from 2012

Spelthorne has the lowest number of residents per court at 3767, and is geographically the smallest borough out of those listed above. On average, Spelthorne residents have less distance to travel to gain access to a free court.

5. How would I book a court at Fordbridge?

Bookings would be made online, either in advance, or if the courts are available, only 15 minutes before the desired time slot, using a tablet in the pavilion. Bookings would be made online to activate the lights, which will be operated with a code.

6. What hours will the courts and floodlights be in operation

The courts will be in operation from 8am – 9pm.

7. Will there be organised tennis activities available at Fordbridge Park?

Tennis Focus Academy would provide tennis coaching, social tennis, organised tournaments

and would also provide free community sessions to encourage participation. Tennis Focus Academy currently provides tennis coaching on a weekly basis at a large number of schools within the borough of Spelthorne and this will continue. Schools, Scouts, Guides and local community groups, such as the Mental Health Association will be encouraged to come and use the facilities for free.

Spelthorne Borough Council is keen to pursue the development and improvements of the facilities at Fordbridge Park and welcome comments on the above proposal. If you would like to comment on the Fordbridge Park Community Tennis Project, please complete the online form.

For more information, please email leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446433.