



PARK / LOCAL AUTHORITY SUCCESS STORY

REVIVING TENNIS COURTS IN BATH'S DESTINATION PARKS

A SUCCESSFUL LOCAL AUTHORITY AND LTA PARTNERSHIP

Bath & North East Somerset Council in the west of England neighbours major urban areas of Bristol and South Gloucestershire. The council own and manage several historically and locally important green spaces, three of which contain tennis courts.

HOW THE PROJECT DEVELOPED

Working in partnership, the council and the LTA created a business case for developing the tennis courts to engage council managers, elected members and funding partners. Providing a clear rationale, it comprised a court audit, condition survey, budget, legal position, draft timeline and anticipated return on investment (ROI).

Once initial sign-off was achieved, project delivery continued with:

- a more detailed business plan to secure final approval from council cabinet officers, politicians and funding partners
- financial projections relating to income, expenses and usage to ensure sustainability of the courts
- resolution of legal issues, such as the return of leases from park trusts and town council
- sourcing funds from housing developments, Sport England, the LTA and local partners
- costing the works at each site with consultants, producing a scope of works
- delivering a tendering process for contractors
- appointing an operator and signing an agreement to operate the courts.

BACKGROUND

The council and the LTA have been implementing a strategy to refurbish 14 tennis courts in all three parks since 2015. At the beginning of the project, courts were in poor condition with little evidence of regular use and a mixture of free and paid-for models. No online booking structure was in place.

The images below show the council's tennis courts prior to refurbishment: Alice Park, Bath (top), Sydney Gardens, Bath (middle), Keynsham Park, Keynsham (bottom).



THE OUTCOME

Over £600k was invested in the complete refurbishment of all 14 courts across the three parks. Key successes include:

- installation of **Gate Access Technology**, providing an automated (online) journey to booking a court, using a PIN for secure entry
- the launch of refurbished courts by local active partnership **Wesport**, managing the courts under Tennis @ the Park brand
- **270 households** have bought a **£40 annual pass** since early autumn 2021
- over **2500 bookings** have been made across the 12 courts currently in play
- a **sinking fund** has been set up to sustain the courts long into the future.

THE FUTURE

The remaining two courts at **Sydney Gardens** are due to be finished and bookable in 2022. A coaching programme across the three parks will launch in the spring.

A community project to open up tennis to different groups will be established to meet the aims and objectives of the council, the LTA and Wesport. The LTA/LA partnership is investigating locations for new courts where they are needed most (close to new housing or in areas of the city lacking local tennis provision, for example).

ROI can be benchmarked once a complete year's worth of booking data is available. Importantly, other local authorities will be able to share in the knowledge and experience from the project process.

The tennis courts are now in keeping with their beautiful green settings: Alice Park, Bath (top), Sydney Gardens, Bath (middle), Keynsham Park, Keynsham (bottom).



Previously, public tennis courts owned by Bath & North East Somerset Council were in poor condition, generating little or no income and requiring strategic investment.

Working closely with the LTA, the council secured funding and appointed a contractor to refurbish the tennis courts in Keynsham Memorial Park, Alice Park and Sydney Gardens which included an online booking system and access gates. The project has created a network of community tennis facilities that we hope will encourage more people to take up tennis and become active.

The newly appointed tennis operator, Wesport, will also facilitate wider use for local schools, colleges, community groups and disability groups, offering 'pay & play' opportunities, membership packages and free tennis with coaching programmes."

Martin Pellow, Project Manager,
Leisure and Public Health,
Bath & North East Somerset Council

FOLLOW US FOR MORE

LTA, The National Tennis Centre
100 Priory Lane, Roehampton
London SW15 5JQ

T: 020 8487 7000
E: info@lta.org.uk
www.lta.org.uk



@the_LTA



LTA



@LTA



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