

## LTA CLUB OF THE YEAR 2022 - CLUB SUCCESS STORY

# MORE THAN JUST A TENNIS CLUB

How Grantham's innovative management team and diverse volunteers are truly opening up tennis for all

Grantham Tennis Club



Grantham TC is a town club with 1272 members and 243 non members. Notorious for its welcoming, accessible and inclusive environment, the club overcame the challenges posed by Covid-19 to provide exciting opportunities for members and the community. Emerging from pandemic restrictions in 2021, the management team and volunteers worked rigorously to reinstate a varied social and competitive programme, gaining coveted recognition along the way. Resilient, fearless and forward-thinking, Grantham TC won LTA Club of the Year 2022 – and here's why.







## KEY PROJECTS AND INNOVATIONS

Over the last year, Grantham TC has constantly diversified its social tennis and coaching sessions in line with LTA advice and government guidance, communicating regularly with members to engage and motivate them to play. The club met a wide range of user interests and needs, including new adult beginner classes, beginner socials, walking tennis, singles box leagues and technique coaching. Saturday morning junior coaching sessions were also made accessible and enjoyable for children using wheelchairs.

The club has gained national recognition for their disability programme. LTA President David Rawlinson visited the club to present the 2020 Regional Disability Award, experiencing one of Grantham's inclusive and fun social tennis afternoons when participants of mixed ability play together. Disability coach and double amputee Paul Singleton was filmed for the LTA "Tennis Opened Up" promotion, and selected members and coaches featured in the LTA's National Inclusivity content online.

The club continues to engage with the community and local schools, providing coaching and working with teachers delivering the LTA Youth programme. It offers free annual Tennis Leaders training to teenagers and volunteer opportunities for young adults embarking on DofE awards. A new community group was established in 2021 with NHS support, helping nearly 30 (mostly older) people to get active, make new friends and improve mental health. An hour-long session on Wednesday mornings, Feeling Good Project, continues to thrive, often taking up seven courts! The club has used the LTA's new Youth programme within its coaching schedule and coaches have been encouraged to use new online courses for CPD and collaborate regularly to share ideas and expertise.

# 1200 MEMBERS AND OVER 200 NON-MEMBERS



Grantham Tennis Club is a very special place and we are delighted to to be recognised for striving to do the best for a very diverse range of players and their families. The team work tirelessly (and often voluntarily) to improve the programme, facilities and tennis experience for members and visitors, leveraging support available from the LTA. Receiving the coveted Queen's Award is testament to our innovative management team as well as our stellar volunteers."

**Sarah Patton,**  
Club Manager, Grantham Tennis Club





## TOP ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2021

1. Increasing membership by 44% to over 1200 members and over 200 non-members receiving coaching
2. Winning the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (equivalent of MBE), the highest life-long award given to local voluntary groups across the UK
3. £10k funding sourced for 26 weeks of free coaching, refreshments and social tennis for the Feeling Good Again project promoting mental health and wellbeing
4. Establishing fun group tennis sessions and expanding the walking tennis programme, involving Grantham Autistic Information Network, Sleaford Latthletics Disability group and W.I group
5. Re-starting an on-going programme to help disadvantaged young people or those with disabilities obtain work experience at the club and cafe with a view to finding employment
6. A live-streamed coaches vs teens ultimate doubles challenge, showcasing Grantham's junior talent and nurturing positivity
7. Establishing new competitive opportunities for all ages through box leagues and a Sunday night team mixed doubles league, which have proved very popular
8. Facility improvements including installation of sustainable LED lighting indoor and out, and mini court repainting through local sponsorship
9. The club's dynamic safeguarding officer, James Pitcher, accepted the volunteer role of working with the Lincs LTA as Assistant Safeguarding Officer due to his knowledge and passion
10. Working jointly with the local council, an LTA-funded parks project will be rolled out in 2022.



## THE FUTURE

The club has maintained its strong financial position despite Covid-related challenges and is committed to opening up tennis to all, cost-effectively.

Grantham plans to continue expanding its coaching provision to suit player needs and preferences. Always listening, one of their latest initiatives is to offer all new adult members a free 30-minute hit with a staff member or coach to discover what they want from the club in order to shape an optimised programme of social groups and coaching.



**Our incredible volunteers truly are the lifeblood of Grantham Tennis Club. A massive thank you to the wealth of people who give their time for our community, our players, our teams and day-to-day tasks. Each and every one of these people form the culture of our club, maintain its spirit and help make us more than just a tennis club."**

**Lianne Firth,**  
Chair, Grantham Tennis Club

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