



PARK / LOCAL AUTHORITY SUCCESS STORY

HOW MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED THE FIRST LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE CENTRE PADEL FACILITY

The Mid Sussex Leisure Contract encompasses three leisure centres: The Triangle in Burgess Hill, The Dolphin in Haywards Heath and Kings Centre in East Grinstead.

Owned by Mid Sussex District Council and managed by Places Leisure, the combined centres have over 14,000 members and attract 1.8 million visits per year. Activities on offer include leisure pools, competition pools, outdoor lido, health and fitness suites, ball games and racket sports, including tennis.

BACKGROUND

There has been a successful joint investment programme since the existing 15-year contract between the district council and Places Leisure commenced in 2014. The facilities and leisure offerings have been improved and expanded to increase participation levels year on year.

INITIATIVES

In early 2018, the council spotted the potential of padel tennis, one of Europe's fastest growing grassroots sports.

They swiftly invested in setting up a court at The Triangle, in a prime spot overlooked by the café and first floor viewing balcony.

To retain existing members and attract new ones, usage was free for centre members and moderately priced at £18 for 90 minutes for adult non-members and £12 for junior non-members. It quickly became popular with adults, children and families.

The project cost £105k and was entirely funded by Mid Sussex District Council, utilising Section 106 developer contributions specifically for formal sport provision in the Burgess Hill area.



HOW PADEL TENNIS WORKS AT THE TRIANGLE

Shortly after the court installation, four local tennis and squash coaches became qualified and a series of free one-hour introductory padel sessions were delivered to 200+ individuals over 10 weeks.

Box leagues were established, followed by a padel ladder, attracting 38 pairs. Teams and pairs have since been regularly competing in LTA tournaments. Members and non-members can book the court two weeks and one week in advance, respectively.

SUCCESSES

Adding this exciting sport to The Triangle has provided a great opportunity for people of all ages and abilities in Mid Sussex (and beyond) to enjoy a completely new activity.

The ease of play makes padel tennis unique in attracting families to play together, particularly as the ball remains live for longer and it's played on a slightly smaller court, so it's fantastic for individuals with less mobility.

Key successes to date:

- Over 200 players attended free padel tennis taster sessions
- Over 14,500 attendances in year 1
- Over 200 players engaged through social media
- Court usage exceeds 80% between 7am-10pm, seven days a week
- Tennis, squash, racketball and badminton players are taking up padel

STAY RELEVANT THROUGH PADEL

Visit lta.org.uk for information on adding padel tennis courts to your venue and for details of the LTA Quick Access Loan Scheme offering interest-free loan funding.

TOP TIPS for padel success

- Provide two or more courts, ideally covered
- Locate the court in a prime location, sheltered from wind and rain with spectator access
- Enlist qualified, enthusiastic coaches at an attractive rate to help players improve
- Ensure court fees are affordable for local participants
- Ensure you have a simple, effective online booking system for both members and non-members
- Source specialist padel coaches for competitive players keen to progress

Due to the popularity of the sport, Mid Sussex District Council is now investigating the possibility of developing additional padel tennis facilities in 2022.

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

