



CLUB SUCCESS STORY

HOW CROWDFUNDING UNITED A COMMUNITY

to optimise tennis facilities for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Get Set 4 Tennis

Get Set 4 Tennis (GS4) is an inclusive non-profit tennis club based at a park in Maple Cross, Hertfordshire, formed in 2018 by Jon and Lisa Wildman.

The club is dedicated to helping children with learning disabilities, mental health issues and sensory or physical impairments enjoy being active. Devising specially adapted tennis coaching, team building games, multi-sports and fitness activities, GS4 Tennis was proud to be named 2021 Education Provider and 2021 Disability Provider by Herts LTA.

Post-lockdown, crowdfunding played a pivotal role in sourcing a clubhouse that was essential for the needs of local children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).



BACKGROUND

When lockdown restrictions were lifted in June 2020, Three Rivers Council granted permission for GS4 Tennis to launch a range of free and pay and play lessons on two courts for the local community. There was a huge weekly uptake of children and adults, with a special focus on disability tennis as well as lessons for girls, key workers and families, plus holiday camps and child fitness sessions.

CROWDFUNDING CLUBHOUSE CAMPAIGN

However, despite their successes, the club faced a significant problem after lockdown – they no longer had facilities for indoor tennis provision. Exposure to unfavourable weather such as high temperatures, rain or lack of shade can cause many children with SEND to become distressed, anxious, restless or trigger epileptic fits and seizures. Likewise, cancelling activities due to weather also has a negative impact on their physical, social and mental wellbeing. Having a safe indoor place to play tennis and socialise would hugely benefit the entire community.

In summer 2021, GS4 Tennis initiated an online crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for the installation of two converted shipping containers to act as a clubhouse. People in the community were asked to pledge donations on Crowdfunder in return for tennis events and products, services and experiences donated by local businesses. The aim was to involve everyone whether they played tennis or not.

Impressively, **the campaign raised over £3k in 41 days**, which will be match funded by Sport England through their Active Together Scheme for an additional £1k. GS4 Tennis have also secured a National Lottery £10k grant and can now invest in the new clubhouse with power generator.

“Crowdfunder proved to be a really successful way to diversify funding streams for the club. We worked hard to communicate our worthy cause and encourage people and businesses to visit the webpage, donate and pledge. We set an achievable target and really felt that our whole community was behind us.”

Lisa Wildman, Founder, GS4 Tennis

Crowdfunder and Sport England have teamed up to make £2.5 million of match funding available to help the sport and physical activity sector through the ongoing coronavirus crisis and with the safe return to play.

Find out more: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/active-together>

FOLLOW US FOR MORE

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INITIATIVES AND SUCCESSES

- Engaging tennis lessons for the whole community including online provision.
- Outreach programmes in local primary, nursery and SEND schools, teaching almost 600 children and adults every week!
- Installment of community pathway for wheelchair users with full support from the local council.
- Investment in portable floodlights for year-round play.
- Positive feedback on inclusivity, the welcoming environment and opportunity to bring families and children closer together.
- Awarded 2021 Education Provider and 2021 Disability Provider by Herts LTA.



“GS4 Tennis is dedicated to providing regular escapism for children with SEND to be active, make friends and explore their own sporting potential in a safe environment. Parents tell us their children really look forward to the routine, spending a few hours a week enjoying the things many people take for granted.”

Lisa Wildman, Founder, GS4 Tennis