



BARCLAYS FREE PARK TENNIS SUCCESS STORIES:

WINDMILL GARDENS – GRAVESEND, GROWING NUMBERS OF ATTENDEES

BACKGROUND

Barclays Free Park Tennis Activator Russ Gula, certainly has a passion for tennis: he has been playing since the age of 12, volunteered at his local tennis club, his son even has a part time coaching role in a nearby programme.

Through his work at Barclays Bank, Russ was made aware of the opportunity to volunteer as an Activator delivering Barclays Free Park Tennis, and wanted to help others to benefit from the experiences and benefits that tennis has offered him. Russ recruited a friend to help him deliver sessions – local LTA Tennis Coach Rachel Giffard. Since November 2024 they have been delivering weekly organised activity, increasing the number of players that attended from 4, to now reaching the point where additional sessions need to be put on to cater for demand!





HOW PARTICIPATION WAS INCREASED

To increase the number of players attending their Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions, Russ and Rachel worked in collaboration with Gravesham Borough Council to:

- Set up a WhatsApp group, and invited players to join, enabling great communication
- Build a Facebook page to share pictures, news and attract new players, as well as retain existing ones
- Gravesham Borough Council complete the ClubSpark admin, and set up
- Deliver sessions consistently each week, even throughout winter months, or when sign ups have been slightly lower
- Display Barclays Free Park Tennis banners on the court fencing
- Linked to Active Gravesham's social media sites to make their followers aware of the opportunity
- Market to existing lists of people who play sport, or to existing community groups
- Run social media campaigns
- Promote word of mouth – consistent & quality sessions breed interest
- Involved family members and friends to build a family friendly, supportive group



It's a really nice feeling to see people benefiting from these sessions and enjoying tennis – many players may need or want to play in other formats of tennis soon due to the improvement in their game!

Russ Gula, Barclays Free Park Tennis Activator



SUCCESSSES & OUTCOMES

The Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions have attracted nearly 100 new players to tennis, making c.300 bookings in just the first 5 months since launching. Such is the success of this session, that new Activators are being recruited, to deliver sessions at nearby Woodlands Park to help provide this opportunity to more players.

Gravesham Borough Council have been supportive of the Activators, helping them to further their knowledge and experience to deliver great Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions. This evidences the benefits of taking a truly collaborative approach between the Local Authority, coaching operators and Activators.

Find out more about setting up a Barclays Free Park Tennis Session, and becoming an Activator [here](#).

View our support guidance for Operators or Local Authorities, including how to set up Barclays Free Park Tennis [here](#).

