



OUR PICKLEBALL JOURNEY: FROM LAUNCH TO A THRIVING PICKLEBALL COMMUNITY

BACKGROUND

Tunbridge Wells Lawn Tennis Club introduced Pickleball in March 2024, adding pickle lines to existing hard tennis courts and purchasing paddles, balls and portable nets.

They attracted attention and quickly positioned Pickleball as a fresh, exciting complement to their established tennis programme.

TWLTC have from day one provided structured and accessible coach-led sessions throughout the week to fill gaps on the tennis courts, tailored for all skill levels. The club used [Pickleball England's club locator](#) and advertised to the local area through Facebook.

From October, the club moved to indoor sessions at Bennett Memorial Diocesan School on weekday evenings and Saturdays, offering year-round playing opportunities. For the first year, the club had a smart, competitive pricing model with introductory offers to attract new players. Sessions are now priced at just £6–8 for members and £8–10 for non-members.



Identifying a gap in court usage, our new Head Coach Adam Swan and I explored introducing Pickleball.

Darryl Curcher, a member at the time, expressed interest in coaching and qualified as a Level 1 Pickleball England Coach. He has been instrumental in launching and growing the programme. Darryl is now working towards his Level 2 qualification to expand our offer to intermediate players and beyond.

Irene Clark, Club Manager

From my perspective as Head Coach, introducing Pickleball into our programme was a straightforward and strategic decision. It opened the door to a more diverse audience, including those who may not have had access to tennis or who could no longer play it.

Adam Swan, Head Coach



MEMBERSHIP INNOVATION

After the first year, TWLTC integrated Pickleball into its existing tennis membership at no extra cost, while also introducing a Pickleball Only membership, priced at £85/year, with the following benefits:

- Free court bookings up to 5 days ahead
- £2 discount per group session
- Access to private lessons
- Entry into club tournaments and leagues
- Members-only WhatsApp group for social games
- Attendance at club social events throughout the year

Equipment rental (paddles for £3, balls sold at the bar) makes drop-in play easy and removes barriers to entry.

Key Lessons and Takeaways

Leverage existing courts

- saves cost and accelerates your launch

Coach-led and inclusive sessions – balance of development and fun

Membership and Pay & Play options – caters for diverse needs and budgets

Social Engagement – build a community and aids retention



CLUB CULTURE & COMMUNITY

TWLTC developed inclusive social events, a members-only WhatsApp group, and integrated leagues to encourage camaraderie and regular play.

Pickleball courts now complement tennis courts seamlessly, maintaining dual-use without disrupting tennis schedules.

Through these measures, TWLTC has cultivated an energetic, cross-generational Pickleball community that supports both recreational and competitive play.

500

PLAYERS
THROUGH THE
PROGRAMME
IN THE FIRST
YEAR

THE FUTURE

TWLTC will continue to actively promote their entry-level Pickleball sessions to engage the local community, while simultaneously supporting the development of existing players.

By nurturing skills and encouraging progression through social play, competition, and tournaments, the club aims to create a sustainable Pickleball environment that balances welcoming new participants, retaining current members, and fostering long-term player development.

To follow Tunbridge Well's Pickleball journey, you can follow their pages here:

PICKLEBALL | TUNBRIDGE WELLS LAWN TENNIS CLUB

LTA SUPPORT

The LTA is committed to securing a lasting future for tennis in Britain.

As part of this, a range of resources and support have been developed for tennis venues, which are available through our **Venue Support Toolkit**.

For more information related to the principles of court utilisation and programming visit the LTA venue support toolkit **here**.



Pickleball can be taught and played within two hours, and you're set up to play with more experienced players. It's open to all ages and abilities.

We hope to encourage more younger players in the future by introducing Pickleball sessions into a local school's programme.

Darryl Curcher

**Director, Kent Pickleball
Coaching**

