



CLUB SUCCESS STORY

HOW A BRIGHTON PARK VENUE FORMED A CIC AND CREATED A THRIVING COMMUNITY TENNIS HUB

Queens Park Tennis Club, Brighton

Queens Park Tennis Club (QPTC), central Brighton, is located in the conservation area of Queens Park with six courts, pavilion, clubhouse, play area and kiosk.

Welcoming members, juniors and visitors, QPTC offers club sessions, team competitions, tennis coaching and private lessons. Club teams compete in the Brighton & Hove Parks League.

BACKGROUND

In 2017, QPTC decided to form a Community Interest Company (CIC) and submit a bid to lease the six courts and tennis pavilion from the council. The full council meeting voted unanimously to approve the bid. Since then, the CIC has very successfully managed the community facility, driving affordable club membership, increasing casual usage and developing a community coaching programme.





INITIATIVES

The CIC invested its own funds to upgrade the courts and pavilion, along with some support from the council and the LTA. Two courts were resurfaced (funded by the local authority) and the CIC further financed the remaining four courts to be repaired, cleaned and painted.

Using ClubSpark and LTA Rally, the CIC promoted public use of the courts on a Pay & Play basis without the need for club membership. The LTA funded Gate Access Technology, improving the customer experience, and a loan to install floodlights.

Freshly renovated, the pavilion is now a warm and extremely pleasant space. As part of the CIC commitment to the local community, it is offered to local groups and organisations at an attractive rate (or free of charge in some cases). The clubhouse has become a popular social hub with a fully equipped bar, following the CIC's successful application for an alcohol licence.



SUCCESSES

The CIC is extremely proud of its successes so far:

- There have been over **1,200 Pay & Play court hours booked in 2021**, generating over £10k for the CIC. Public bookings increased by over 400% between 2019 and 2020.
- Prior to 2017, there were only adult players, the venue did not offer tennis coaching and membership was below 100. **The CIC engaged an LTA Accredited Coach who helped launch the tennis programme for both adults and juniors** - nearly a dozen QPTC adult and junior members have gone on to obtain LTA coaching qualifications in the last 12 months, which is helpful for maintaining the quality and consistency of our the junior coaching programme. The CIC is now an LTA venue and membership is open to all age groups. **As a result, the numbers have grown in all categories, with 374 members currently.**
- Previously non-existent, junior membership has grown to 90, **with a further 53 attending the coaching courses thanks to LTA Youth Start** (Tennis for Kids courses), attracting families to the venue.
- The CIC is in partnership with the charity Amaze as part of the LTA Open Court Programme, **delivering coaching to young people with special educational needs.**
- **A wide range of organisations hire the venue**, including the NHS, Women's Institute, Mother and Baby Club, Friends of Queens Park, St Luke's School, Yoga groups and even the Brighton Youth Orchestra. It also attracts function bookings such as christenings, children's tennis parties, wedding receptions and family celebrations.

Improving facilities, developing a welcoming social space and creating a community hub has opened up tennis locally whilst hugely benefiting the CIC. Strong membership growth and increased court usage has enabled further development plans, including floodlights for year-round play. The LTA loan and planning permission have been approved, and lights should be operational this winter.



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