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**NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**TOWN HALL**  
**WINDMILL LANE**  
**NORTHAM**  
**DEVON**  
**EX39 1BY**

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To: All Members of the Westward Ho! Park Committee  
Cc: All Northam Town Councillors

Town Clerk: Mrs Jane Mills MILCM  
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**You are hereby summoned to attend a SPECIAL meeting of the Westward Ho! Park Committee on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at 5.15pm** in the Committee Room, The Town Hall, Windmill Lane Northam.

The agenda for the meeting is set out below.

*M J Mills*

Mrs Jane Mills BA(Hons) PSLCC, MILCM.  
Town Clerk

Date of issue 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023

The following are elected Members of the Westward Ho! Park Committee: Councillors Mrs Hodson, Mrs Whittaker, Bach, Bruins, and the Mayor (ex-officio with full voting rights) but all Members of the Council are entitled to attend.

Non-councillor members, Mrs C Hutchins, and Mr S Makeig-Jones.

### **AGENDA**

- 1 Election of Chairman**
- 2 Election of Vice-Chairman**
- 3 Apologies**
- 4 Chairman's Announcements**
- 5 Declarations of interest:**  
Members are reminded that all interests should be declared prior to the item being discussed.
- 6 To agree the agenda as published**
- 7 Public Participation**  
Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 4 minutes. A question shall not receive a response at the meeting nor start a debate on the question. The chair of the meeting may direct that a written or oral response be given. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed 20 minutes.
- 8 To receive an update on and consider a report into the provision of tennis courts at Westward Ho! Park (herewith)**

# Northam Town Council



## ***Westward Ho! Park*** ***22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023***

Report author: *Guy Langton – Deputy Town Clerk*

## ***Works at Westward Ho! Park Tennis Courts***

### **Introduction**

1. The Council agreed to, in principle, enter discussions with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to provide a set of tennis courts at Westward Ho! Park.
2. In the summer of 2022, the committee surveyed the community, seeking feedback on the future of the tennis courts and pavilion. The expressed wish of the community was that a facility be provided that combined tennis and other recreational play/sports.
  - a. Concentrating on the tennis courts:
    - i. 90% expressed a wish to see them refurbished, though only 53% would use them regularly.
    - ii. 86% wanted them used for activities other than tennis.
    - iii. 97% wished to see two tennis courts and the remaining area as a hard surface for informal sports, e.g. basketball, netball and football (note: the community was not asked about a three court and hard play area option).
    - iv. 67% agreed that a prepaid booking system would be appropriate for the tennis courts.
3. The remainder of this report is to be read with these responses in mind.
4. The tennis courts were last refurbished, the officer has been told, around 30 years ago.

## Financial Implications

6. The community had indicated a desire for two tennis courts and a hard play area. The LTA were clear that in order to meet their requirements, a block of three courts had to be provided at Westward Ho!, so would not fund a project that provided fewer than three courts.
7. Therefore, should the Council pursue a two-court and hard play area, it would be liable for the full cost of the project. Current prices are not known but in July 2022, the Council received an estimate of £117,000 to provide such a facility. This price would have increased, though a current figure is not known. To compare, the cost to provide a three-court and hard surface play area facility is currently quoted at £168,685.
8. Given an agreement to fund a facility in Westward Ho!, albeit not one that the community's views were sought on, the decision was made to explore the working with the LTA to provide a facility in Westward Ho!
9. The most recent communication from the LTA has advised the Council that the bid to fund three courts at Westward Ho! has been approved as part of Stage 2 of the LTA process. The funding agreement has not yet been received, so the figures are not confirmed but we have been advised that:

*"The funding panel have approved £80,000 investment proposal for the courts in Westward Ho! Following the discussions we have had, this amounts to a request from the town council to match fund a shortfall of £15,810 against the tennis courts renovation (three courts) that has been quoted at £95,810.10. Please note that this shortfall is court work specific and does not include £2,400 for the gate access system.*

***"This increases the request to the council for renovating the tennis courts and setting them up to be operated by gates and booking to £18,210.***

*"The gate cost is on the working assumption that a battery powered access control unit will be fitted to a new gate that the contractor installs with the fencing. There is room to change the specification of the gate at this stage (i.e. upgrade to a powered gate) but this will be at additional cost to the town council to do so should that be agreed as the final scope."*

10. The officer reminds members that the formal funding agreement had not, at the time of writing date, been received.
11. The LTA's remit is to provide the courts and fencing. The Council needs to fund:
  - a. A suitable gate (to allow data on court use to be gathered), which must be one approved by the LTA, this is included in the £18,210 presented in bold on the

previous page.

- b. A DDA-compliant entrance ramp to the courts. The cost of this work is quoted by the contractor appointed by the LTA at £6,098.00. This does not include any portion of the contractor's *Local Authority Works Fixed Overheads & Profit* (see appendix 1).

12. Additionally, and as part of the project, the committee requested that the contractors appointed by the LTA prepare a cost for the refurbishment of the remaining space, that taken by the 4<sup>th</sup> court currently, as a hard surface play area., This was to be suitable for use (for example) as an informal basketball or netball court, or kick-about area. The costing table is presented in appendix 1, though it is also presented here for clarity.

Prepare and line-paint the asphalt surface (lines 1.1.1 to 1.1.4 at appx 1)	£19,829
Install MUGA-quality fencing, with chicane entrance gate (line 1.1.5 at appx 1) <sup>1</sup>	£28,089
Install DDA-compliant access route from the existing path (line 1.1.7 at appx 1)	£2,614
Supply and install a single basketball hoop and backboard (line 1.1.8 at appx 1)	£2,292
Hire of toilet and welfare unit (2 weeks) (line 2.1.1 & 2.1.3 at appx 1)	£630
Hire of HERAs- type fencing additional to that required for tennis courts (6 weeks) (line 2.1.2 at appx 1)	£426
Subtotal	£53,880
Overheads, profit and design fees (18% of £59,978, the total costs out of LTA scope)	£10,797
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>£64,677</b>

13. The cost to complete the project as quoted is therefore:

Facility	Cost	LTA funding	Cost to NTC
3 tennis courts	£98,210	£80,000	<b>£18,210</b>
DDA-compliant access ramp to tennis courts	£6,098	n/a	<b>£6,098</b>
Hard surface play area (inc. overheads)	£64,677	n/a	<b>£64,677</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£168,685</b>	<b>£80,000</b>	<b>£88,685</b>

14. The Council has reserved £37,000 to undertake work at Westward Ho! park. Should the committee resolve to provide only the tennis facility, then it could cover the cost at £24,308 plus fence and 'overheads etc'. (£18,210 + £6,098 + cost of MUGA quality fence to the western side + 'overheads etc').

15. The whole project would cost the Town Council £88,685. There are insufficient funds in the Park's budget to cover this cost. The budget available is £37,000. Given the need to hold some funds in case of other works to undertake, £28,685 has been allocated towards the cost of the whole project, leaving £60,000 to fund. There are various options available to meet this shortfall.

<sup>1</sup> See appendix 2 for an image of the 868 Twin-Bar fencing used around a MUGA/hard play area.

- a. Seek the money from the remainder of the Council's budget. The Council has budgeted for £36,000 to cover unspecified projects in the 2023-24 year. This is not sufficient to meet the shortfall and using the whole fund would mean the Council could not undertake other project work in the year.
- b. Apply to the Northam Burrows Charity for a grant. The mechanism for such grant funding has yet to be agreed and the value of the grant fund to be defined.
- c. Seek a grant from external bodies. At the time of writing, the officer has identified one: Sport England currently have a small grant fund (£300 to £15,000). Given the likely timescale for construction, the Council would have some time to identify and apply for loans. This could be investigated, though it must be assumed that a grant application could be unsuccessful.
- d. Given the longevity of tennis courts, the cost could be considered to be repaid in a multi-generational manner. Given the anticipated life of the works to the courts being up to 20 years (see paragraph 16 below), a loan of over 20 years could be seen as paying for a facility for longer than its working life. Public Works Loan Board loans are available to smaller authorities to enable them to fund large projects such as this. Examples of the repayments for such a loan of £60,000 are below, for a comparison, the repayments for £90,000 (representing the full cost of the LTA-funded project to the Town Council) are also presented (overleaf). The figures were obtained 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and are rounded up to the next pound in all cases.
  - i. For either loan amount, the lowest interest rate is paid when the PWLB loan is to be repaid over a 15 year period (5.24%), highlighted in yellow on the table overleaf. This figure will be used for the purposes of the remainder of this report.

16. Part of the agreement with the LTA is to have a gated access system. This enables the LTA to use the data gathered to report on the effect of the invested funds on tennis court use across the country. It also enables the Council to charge for access to the tennis courts, allowing it to build up a 'sinking fund' to pay for the ongoing maintenance of the courts.
- a. Tennis courts are normally re-painted every 8-10 years, with the surface re-laid every 15-20.
  - b. The LTA has advised that the courts would need to generate an income at least £4,100 annually for this 'sinking fund', including gate maintenance costs.

Amount borrowed	Cost to repay/year   % interest																			
	5yrs		10yrs		15yrs		20yrs		25yrs		30yrs		35yrs		40yrs		45yrs		50yrs	
£60,000	£13,940	5.64	£7,826	5.35	£5,826	5.24	£5,096	5.33	£4,424	5.45	£4,122	5.53	£3,906	5.55	£3,746	5.54	£3,620	5.51	£3,520	5.47
<b>Total repaid</b>	<b>£69,694</b>		<b>£78,255</b>		<b>£87,382</b>		<b>£98,283</b>		<b>£110,582</b>		<b>£123,601</b>		<b>£136,666</b>		<b>£149,794</b>		<b>£162,883</b>		<b>£175,945</b>	
£90,000	£20,910	5.64	£11,740	5.35	£8,740	5.24	£7,372	5.33	£7,277	5.45	£6,812	5.53	£5,856	5.55	£5,618	5.54	£5,430	5.51	£5,280	5.47
<b>Total repaid</b>	<b>£104,541</b>		<b>£117,383</b>		<b>£131,073</b>		<b>£147,424</b>		<b>£165,874</b>		<b>£185,402</b>		<b>£204,999</b>		<b>£224,692</b>		<b>£244,324</b>		<b>£263,917</b>	

17. To be of no cost to the wider council budget, the courts would have to generate both the 'sinking fund' and the cost of annual repayments. Using the 15-year figure (for a £60,000 loan) plus an amount for 'sinking fund', the annual cost to the council budget would be approx. £10,000. This could be fully or partially funded by court users (pay per play or membership model), for example:

a. Pay per play:

- i. Should the Council charge £3.50 per 1-hour session,<sup>2</sup> for example, it would need to sell 2,858 sessions in a year to cover the cost of sinking fund and loan.
- ii. 2,858 sessions in one year equates to 953 per court (with three courts).
- iii. If the most popular playing year is 6 months (April to September) – 26 weeks, then 37 hours would need to be sold per court per week over that period to cover the costs, at £3.50 per hour.

b. Membership:

- i. Other community park tennis facilities operate different charges for 'friends' and for casual/visiting users.<sup>3</sup> For example, residents of Northam Parish could become 'Friends of Westward Ho! Tennis Courts', which could incur a fee. This access could enable 'Friends' to book sessions at the courts for a nominal fee, which could be zero but could be higher at busier times.
- ii. Casual / visiting users would then be charged a higher rate per booking, e.g. £5.

<sup>2</sup> ARC tennis centre in Bideford charges £7 per hour to a casual user.

<sup>3</sup> For example Kingsbridge Park Community Tennis.

## **Benefits**

18. The local community is in favour of keeping the courts and having a hard surfaced play area.

## **Risk Implications**

19. The courts may not generate sufficient income to replay the investment, the outstanding amount would need to be funded from the council's general budget through the precept. As a council facility, it could be considered that, as with other facilities, such as parks and play areas, these are funded by the community for community use.
20. The anticipation is that the facility would last, with planned and expected maintenance to the surface (as outlined in para 16) for 15-20 years before significant cost is incurred. After 20 years, it is possible that the courts would need significant investment to their surface to return it to ideal condition again. If a loan is still being repaid for the initial work after its usable life, this may not be considered by the community as a prudent use of funds.
21. The courts would need to be identified in the council's insurance policy and asset register. This could have an effect on the council's insurance premiums.

## **Recommendation**

22. The committee consider the detail of the report and how much, if any, of the project is to be taken forward. The committee could decide that:
  - a. At this stage, there will be no refurbishment of the tennis courts.
  - b. It will pursue the refurbishment of the courts and provision of the hard surface play area with a contractor other than the LTA, putting the project out to tender, given it is likely to exceed the £25,000 that triggers this requirement.
  - c. It will pursue the refurbishment of the three tennis courts, part funded by the LTA. This would cost under £20,000. This is fundable from the committee's budget for 2023-24. The remaining hard surface play area would then be approached in the future as a separate project.
  - d. It will pursue the refurbishment of the three tennis courts, part funded by the LTA and the hard surface play area, at a cost of £88,865. The LTA and DCMS have already undergone the contractor approval process. It would have to be confirmed with the Council's internal auditor but this should mean no further procurement/tendering process is needed. This could be funded by various means, as outlined in paragraph 15. As the amount needed is outside the budget of the committee, the method of funding would need to be approved at Full Council.

## Appendix 1: Table of costs as presented by the LTA's appointed contractor.

### LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION PARKS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2022-2023 PRICING DOCUMENT



<b>Lot Number:</b>	2
<b>Location:</b>	South Wales and South West
<b>Contractor:</b>	Blakedown Sport and Play Ltd
<b>Facility Name:</b>	Westward Ho Park
<b>Postcode:</b>	EX39 1LH
<b>Local Authority:</b>	Torrige
<b>Date Prepared:</b>	02.05.2023
<b>Planned Start On Site Date:</b>	05.06.2023
<b>Project Duration (weeks):</b>	9

LA Works Cost Breakdown					
Re	Description	Quantity	Unit	Rate	Total
<b>1</b>	<b>Local Authority Works</b>				
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Local Authority Agreed Works</b>				
1.1.1	Apply double court markings in white water based acrylic paint to prepared asphalt surfaces	1	item	£482.00	£482.00
1.1.2	Power wash, apply moss treatment, pierce at 450m centres, fill pierced holes with pea shingle, vibration compact existing asphalt surface, application of bitumen emulsion 'tack' coat, installation of 25mm consolidated depth of 6mm asphalt surface course and application of two tone colour coating slip resistance of 60 wet or dry including raising existing pedestrian access gates	1	item	£14,027.00	£14,027.00
1.1.3	Break out and dispose off site existing perimeter kerbs and installation of new precast concrete kerbs 150mm x 50mm with associated insitu concrete bed and haunching	1	item	£3,892.00	£3,892.00
1.1.4	Break out and dispose off site existing net post sockets and associated insitu concrete foundation and install new set of sockets including insitu concrete foundations, centre net anchor, net posts, nets and centre band	1	item	£1,428.00	£1,428.00
1.1.5	Install MUGA fencing as 868 twin bar - 3m high standard twinbar fencing in green, with 1nr chicane entrance (no gates)	1	item	£28,089.00	£28,089.00
1.1.6	Access point A - DDA compliant access path into the tennis courts	1	item	£6,098.00	£6,098.00
1.1.7	Access point B - DDA compliant access path into the MUGA	1	item	£2,614.00	£2,614.00
1.1.8	Supply and install single basketball goal and backboard	1	item	£2,292.00	£2,292.00
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Contractor Items</b>				
1.2.1	*Insert if applicable*	0			£0.00
1.2.2	*Insert if applicable*	0			£0.00
1.2.3	*Insert if applicable*	0			£0.00
1.2.4	*Insert if applicable*	0			£0.00
1.2.5	*Insert if applicable*	0			£0.00
				<b>Sub-Total:</b>	<b>£58,922.00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Overheads, Profit and Design Fees</b>				
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Local Authority Works Variable Overheads</b>				
2.1.1	Additional hire of the toilet	2	weeks	£79.00	£158.00
2.1.2	Additional hire of the fencing	6	weeks	£71.00	£426.00
2.1.3	Additional hire of the welfare unit	2	weeks	£236.00	£472.00
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Local Authority Works Fixed Overheads &amp; Profit</b>				
2.2.1	Overheads, profit and design fees	18	%	£59,978.00	£10,796.04
				<b>Sub-Total:</b>	<b>£11,852.04</b>
				<b>Total:</b>	<b>£70,774.04</b>



**Appendix 2: Image of 868 Twin-Bar fencing (as intended for use around a 'MUGA')**

