

Summary of Results of Public Tennis Consultation

October 2021

1. Background:

- 1.1 The Council has undertaken a public consultation on the future management arrangements of the Council owned tennis courts within the District.
- 1.2 There are currently 21 courts within the District, located in four venues in Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth. The Council is developing proposals to introduce a new management model for the courts to ensure long term sustainability of the courts for residents.
- 1.3 The objective of the consultation was to seek views on: -
 - Proposals to appoint one or more tennis operators to manage the tennis venues within the District to run community tennis programmes, and
 - The principle of introducing charges for courts in Christchurch Gardens and Abbey Fields in order to increase income to fund the ongoing and future upkeep of courts
- 1.4 The public consultation consisted of an online survey in which members of the public were invited to answer a series of questions and give their opinions on the proposals. The consultation was publicised by a press release and social media posts. In addition, posters informing the public about the survey were displayed at each of the four venues. The consultation ran Tuesday 28th September to Sunday 24th October 2021. In total there were 224 members of the public who submitted the survey responses.
- 1.6 The proposals for consultation are part of a wider initiative to improve Council courts, which also includes plans to install a booking and gate system where users can book and pay (where necessary) for courts. This will mean that players will be guaranteed an allocated playing slot. Other improvements include court resurfacing at Victoria Park and Abbey Fields.
- 1.7. Separate to the public consultation, the Council also received a number of emails about the proposals. 11 VP Tennis members contacted Cllr Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Tourism and Culture to express their views on the proposals. A summary of their views is below:
 - VP Tennis should be allowed to operate until the end of their contract in 2026.
 - That the coaching available has had a positive effect on fitness and mental health during the recent pandemic and lockdowns.
 - That all courts should be available for use and kept in good condition.
 - Concerns over accessibility of clubhouse at Victoria Park for wheelchair users and those with restricted mobility.
- 1.8 In addition the Friends of Christchurch Gardens have also submitted their views to the proposal. A summary of views is detailed below:
 - Proposals will reduce the use of the courts.
 - Concerns that gate access system will negatively impact basketball players.
 - Concerns about whether access to free sessions would work effectively.
 - Storage for the free racquets and balls.
 - Suggestion that instead of charging for courts corporate sponsorship could be sought to generate income.

2. Summary of results

In total 224 people submitted survey responses.

Below is a summary of the results and feedback.

2.1. Question 1 asked the participants to indicate how often they use the WDC tennis courts within the District.

219 People answered this question, 5 skipped.

The results showed that in both summer and winter months the majority of respondents use the courts on a weekly basis, closely followed by monthly.

2.2. Question 2 asked respondents to indicate if they are a member of VP Tennis club.

This question was asked to understand what proportion of survey participants were general users or members of VP Tennis club.

219 People responded to this question, 5 skipped.

Are you a member of VP Tennis Club?	Response	Response %
Yes	56	25.57%
No	163	74.43%
TOTAL	219	

2.3. Question 3 asked participants to indicate any current barriers that restrict them from playing more tennis.

158 people responded to this question, 66 skipped.

There were a variety of responses which have been summarised below:

- None – keep the facilities as they currently are
- Fitness, injury, age and finding time during their daily lives
- Current court conditions are an issue, with the quality of playing surfaces and lack of floodlighting being a major factor.
- Lack of availability of affordable coaching and beginner programmes, particularly for adults who wish to learn.
- Not being able to arrive and play, waiting times for courts.
- VP Tennis feels off putting to members of the public who want to play casually and not take on a membership.
- Current court cost at St Nicks Park being overpriced.

2.4. Question 4 asked respondents for their thoughts on the proposal to appoint one or more operators for the tennis courts.

208 people answered this question, with 16 skipping it and not supplying an answer.

Below is a summary of the responses:

- A number of VP Tennis members stated that they were happy with the current way that VP Tennis is operated and would not like to see it changed.
- It makes sense to have a uniformed approach across all sites.
- More support requested in terms of coaching programmes and access for those on lower incomes.
- Just under half of respondents did not support the proposal to appoint operators.
- A small number of people commented that they would like to see the courts remain as they are with no booking.

2.5. Question 5 asked respondents about other activities requested from an operator.

150 people answered this question, 74 skipped.

Below is a summary of the responses:

- Programmes for adult beginners was the most requested
- Children and young player sessions
- Older player coaching
- 1-2-1 coaching services
- Leagues/ladders
- Other suggestions were for cardio tennis, social events, basketball and padel tennis.

2.6. Question 6 asked participants for their views on the principal of charging for a court booking at Christchurch Gardens and Abbey Fields.

208 people answered this question, with 16 skipping and not supplying an answer.

The responses reflect a range of views and the following is a summary of the responses:

- Just over half of the people appreciate there is a need to charge to keep the courts available and well maintained.
- Costs to be affordable to allow all to be able to take part.
- Charges should be the same across all sites and should not be too expensive (St Nicks was mentioned here at a cost of £12.50)
- Just under half of the responses disagreed and would like to see the courts remain as they are.

2.7. Question 7 asked participants for comments on any other issues, points or concerns relating to these options/proposals?

A summary of the responses follows:

- Keep charges low and affordable
- VP operate well and should remain in place
- WDC should keep to promises of improving the courts

- Install floodlighting for safe evening use.
- The courts should be kept free during the weekends.
- Kingsley School (who use Christchurch Gardens) should be charged for their usage, as should any other business.
- Questions on how those without access to technology will be able to place booking.

3. Demographic data of respondents.

3.1 Age

218 people answered this question, 6 skipped.

Age	Responses	Response %
Under 25	15	6.88%
25 - 34	24	11.01%
35-44	57	26.15%
45-54	53	24.31%
55-64	38	17.43%
65-74	20	9.17%
75-84	11	5.05%
85 or over	0	0.00%
TOTAL	218	

3.2 Gender

218 Respondents supplied an answer to this question, 6 skipped.

Gender	Responses	Response %
Male	107	49.08%
Female	104	47.71%
Other	0	0
Prefer not to say	7	3.21%
TOTAL	218	

3.3 Ethnic Group

217 people responded to this question and 1 skipped.

Ethnic Group	Responses	Responses %
White	186	85.71%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	8	3.69%
Asian or Asian British	9	4.15%
Black, African, Caribbean or Black British	1	0.46%
Prefer not to say	10	1.38%
Other	3	
TOTAL	217	

3.4 Disability

219 people answered this question, 5 skipped.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Response	Response %
Yes	8	3.65%
No	200	93.32%
Prefer not to say	11	5.02%
TOTAL	219	