

Covid News

Just when you'd turned off the TV and thought you were safe!

With every likelihood that Covid measures are going to be in place nationally for a good while yet, we're counting our blessings that ours is the kind of sport at the type of venue where we can open safely and play with some freedom even now. Nevertheless, and despite the gradual projected easing of restrictions generally, to protect everyone in the club we must still be careful to follow the Government guidelines. They aren't many in number, and none of them are too onerous once in place, so we should be able to get on and have a great time on the courts this summer whatever!

- The main change to the old "normal" will be the use of access codes on the new gate, in response to the fact that, for test and trace reasons, we need to know exactly who has been in the club at any given time. As a serendipitous by-product of this, given that it has been a bone of much contention around the club in recent years, the usage of the courts can then be managed far more precisely, as everyone who actually plays will be required to book-in via the bookings tab on the website. The availability of the courts at any moment is determined by the Club Rules for prioritisation of users, which can be found in the Club Rules on the website. These then lead to different advance booking times for different parties. The system will work as follows:
 - Each private session individually booked will have its own gate access code according to who books the court: this person should add the names of the other players to the booking, so that each player then receives the access code to their club-registered email. Individual bookings may be made 10 days in advance. (For example: every time Joe Bloggs books a court, the gate access code will be the same - his personal gate access code. The code will only work to open the gate at the time of the booking, with 10 minutes grace-period either side).
 - When booking Club Social Sessions, players will be given a gate access code by email confirmation which applies to their particular session for the coming season. They should still, however, book into the individual sessions themselves, both for obvious test and trace reasons, but also to allow the committee to plan court bookings for the session. These sessions can be booked up to 4 weeks in advance. Each session has a designated co-ordinator from the committee, the name of whom can be found on the session web page: we hope this will help iron out any problems. (Note: please DO NOT block-book in advance if it is possible that you may not attend on any particular week, as only the administrators can cancel individual social session bookings: this may lead to too many courts being booked. Other members who might have wished to book a court at this time would then presume the courts were occupied and would be unnecessarily disappointed).
 - Players and parents attending coaching sessions will be given the gate code applicable to their block of coaching sessions when they book their coaching course with Newton Tennis.
 - Players attending matches will be given the League Match gate access code: this may be shared with the opposing teams.
 - Anyone not intending to play but needing to attend the club for other business will be given a "Clubhouse" code, on receipt of an e-mail to blaydontc@googlemail.com.
 - For special events held at the club there will either be an open gate or a specific event code distributed to the relevant parties.

- Though, as with any new system, there are bound to be some teething troubles, (and there will certainly be some obvious loopholes and shortcuts as well, for those who like a bit of sharp practice!) we would urge everyone to **stick carefully to the principle of always booking in when at the club**: that way, not only can we keep everyone safe, but also we can make sure everyone gets a fair shot at using our lovely facilities!
- Finally, could we ask that members remain patient and courteous, understanding that the committee who manage the club on your behalf, are unpaid volunteers who work very hard in their spare time to manage your memberships and ensure the long term viability of the club.
- There are a number of other light-touch COVID-related rules that we have had to implement to ensure that the club can remain open:
 - There is hand sanitiser on the wall of the clubhouse close to the main entrance: please encourage all to use it on arrival and departure.
 - Though, for social-distancing reasons, we are unable to put out the benches between the courts currently, we have a number of individual chairs that will be used in their place for the time being.
 - Unfortunately, temporarily balls cannot be provided by the club for social sessions due to the risk of covid transmission, so players should currently remember to bring their own.
 - Any groups of more than 12 people (i.e. requiring more than 3 courts) should sub-divide into two smaller groups for rotation purposes during a session, to minimise the number of contacts and therefore risk of infection.
 - Remember to observe the usual social distancing rules as much as possible, both when playing and when around the clubhouse. It is very easy to forget, as the club might appear to be running fairly normally most of the time now.
 - Any tissues, hand-towels and potentially infectious materials should be put carefully into the large bin in the outside toilet: this will be cleared on a regular basis by our cleaner/the committee – but do please remember to take things home with you if the bin happens at any time to be full.
 - Use of the clubhouse is currently still limited simply to the toilet facilities and the floodlights. The showers, changing areas, inside seating and kitchen facilities are all currently off limits. (NB 2 people for the toilets maximum in the clubhouse at any one time, please, and following the one way system).
 - With minors, only one parent/guardian per child is allowed for supervision currently, and no other spectators.

Do remember: you may have had both jabs and feel invincible, or you may have been back at school for a while, so you are used to being around people again, and don't give COVID a second thought – but, either way, you still might be an asymptomatic carrier without knowing it, which might make you a super-spreader. So, please: be aware, and take care, for the sake of all of us!

Trevor Walters

pp The Committee