

This briefly summarises the reasons why your committee is recommending further development of the club

Why change?

We want to expand all-year court capacity to increase participation for members and our wider community

Our club exists...

- to provide tennis, social and other activities and generally to encourage and facilitate the playing of the Game
- **to promote increases in participation at all levels...** (BLTC Rules 2016 objects of the Club)

We support the LTAs aims to reverse the drop in participation. Research has found...

-

- the number of sport/exercise alternatives has doubled in 10 years
- tennis can be elitist, intimidating, costly and hard to access
- tennis seen as traditional, old fashioned and reserved

+

- amazing benefits and appeal of our game
- ageless, sociable and fantastic for physical and mental well-being
- the whole family can play
- a great game for people with disabilities
- hugely rewarding

The LTA mission is to grow tennis by making it more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable

RELEVANT - To succeed it needs to be seen as modern, fresh and exciting

ACCESSIBLE - needs to be an easy sport for people to engage with

WELCOMING - whatever their age, ability or social background

ENJOYABLE - social side, different formats and the exhilaration of playing

INNOVATIVE

- formats that make tennis more fun, flexible and easier to play
- enjoyable competition formats for all abilities, genders and age
- joined up junior pathway to get more kids playing and staying in tennis
- Junior Tennis Leaders volunteer program and pathways for high performing juniors
- **ensure tennis is enjoyed and relevant, year-round**

(LTA Vision 2019-23)

We've been successful in turning BLTC around

2016

- membership reducing (238 adults, 288 juniors)
 - 5 worn-out astro courts
 - no permanent floodlights
 - making a loss and costs increasing
 - selling the car-park and losing 2 courts to fund further club development (resurface courts 5-10, convert 12-13 to new car park)
- seen as exclusive and not welcoming "Bowdon Posh"**

2020

- membership doubled (approx. 500 adults, 500 juniors)
 - 9 new all-weather courts, 6 fully-floodlit
 - Robust income streams and finances (£180k in the bank), reducing debts and enabling further developments
 - Using the Boys and Girls Grammar facilities to support junior tennis
- Seen as a friendly, inclusive club where it's easier to get to know and play with others**

We have increased opportunities for all ages, genders and abilities

- From 2 men's and 2 ladies teams to 5 men's, 5 ladies + 7 winter league teams
 - From 2 to 3 social sessions
 - From 2 to 10 regular group sessions such as Men's Friday mornings
 - "Wintraclubs" added to intraclubs
 - More 1 day tournaments
 - Regional tournaments run for members to play in and watch
 - Outstanding junior provision for beginners through to county standard
 - A wider variety of coaching provision for individual and group sessions at all levels
-

Areas where we need to improve

Such massive changes have brought tensions with them and your volunteer committee try their best to sort them as they arise

Court allocation – there has been criticism re' excessive allocation to coaching and juniors. We have set up a sub-team to agree policies and re-balance allocation

3 hr booking limit Brought in to cope with the massive increase in demand during Covid. We are looking at when we can increase this. Additional all-weather courts will definitely allow us to increase this

Miss-understanding There are perceptions circulating that the club is...

- being run for the coaches
 - becoming a performance club
- These are not true and your committee tries hard to balance the needs of all members

Communication BLTC WhatsApp groups have been used successfully to keep members informed + help organise 4s etc. However, they have not been used wisely recently so we are reviewing how to improve club to member and member to member communication

External changes that are impacting on our club

- **People want more opportunities to exercise – ALL YEAR**
 - Bowdon, Hale and Altrincham are growing – with more families and young professionals attracted to the area
 - **Our climate is getting wetter, hotter and more extreme**
 - More people are working from home on flexible hours – forecast to increase to over 30% of workforce in UK
-

The benefits and limitations of grass vs all-weather

Keeping 4 grass

+

- A unique surface that other local clubs don't have (other than Dunham)
- Plays well in good weather and when well-maintained
- Striking visual appearance – The BLTC "look"
- Retains the heritage and history of the club
- Some members join specifically to be able to play on grass

-

- High risk of court cancellation if poor weather makes them unplayable
- Short playing day due to damp in morning/evening 11 or 12am to 8 or 9pm
- Short season May-September
- The loss of approx. 40% of court capacity in October has created more problems every year over recent years
- High usage in good weather causes more wear and need to take out of service to recover (during the playing season)
- Tournaments and matches at increased risk of postponement/cancellation

- Expensive to maintain
- Large amount of equipment is costly, expensive to maintain and needs a large store
- Any rain-covering system would reduce the visual appeal, need drainage to take-off surplus water. May be too bulky for members to operate

Installing 4 all-weather and a flexible space for 4 or 5 mini courts

+

- Increases court booking availability by over 11,000 hrs per year
- All-year availability
- More court capacity at peak times
- Low risk of court cancellation due to weather – better for general booking, social tennis, matches & tournaments
- Plays well in damp conditions and light rain due to excellent drainage. - dries out quickly
- Repositioned Courts 1 & 2 will be show-courts with better viewing from upgraded patio areas.
- Acrylic surface doesn't need a retaining barrier like courts 5-8
- Revised layout created a flexible space for up to 4 or 5 mini tennis courts reducing demand on full-size courts and positioned at far end of club for safety and less disruption for adult play
- Easier to maintain, much lower cost and less equipment needed

-

- Visual appearance of courts will not be the same as grass – it will be green to retain as much of the BLTC "look" as possible
- The porous acrylic surface does "give" but will feel significantly different to grass
- Not playable in heavy rain
- A modern surface that doesn't retain the heritage and history of the club – (once the grass is gone, it's gone!)

Preserving the best of Bowdon LTC

What makes our club special is the people and the things we do at the club, not the court surface!

The friends we make, the groups we are part of, the activities that go on, and the ways we behave and treat others are key to what make BLTC such a great place to be

- Club afternoons and evenings – mixing in, playing mixed doubles, welcoming new members
- Friday Junior club nights, pizza & fizzy drinks for kids, gin and prosecco for mums and dads
- Adult Intraclubs and Wintraclubs
- Summer league matches and supper in our great clubhouse
- Adult and junior annual tournament with suppers, great finals days and BBQs
- Well-organised junior camps
- Increasing numbers of member-organised groups regularly playing at weekends and during the week

Why change now?

We have a great team in place to manage the work required and if we can build in spring of 2021 we get...

- **an extra 11,000 court hours available for booking per year**
- **more courts available for general booking**
- **much lower risk of booking being cancelled due to poor weather**
- **less congestion at peak times**
- **a new flexible surface for mini tennis**
- **reduced maintenance costs**