



## PROJECT SMASH (PHASE 1)

### RETRACTABLE FLOODLIGHTS & CLUBHOUSE/SECURE STORAGE

#### SECTION 1 - PROJECT OVERVIEW

Bramford Tennis club is a small, grassroots sports club with three good quality tennis courts (2 of the courts are currently floodlit). The club is in the village of Bramford in Suffolk (Postcode IP8 4HU) on land owned by Bramford Parish Council (BPC). The club has an open lease from the Parish Council for as long as we wish to use it and this project plan has been fully discussed and approved by Bramford Parish Council<sup>1</sup> e a

With the ongoing substantial residential developments in Bramford (Hopkins Homes, Bellway Homes etc) and the accompanying rising population aligned to the LTA Mission of [“Tennis opened up”](#) which encourages people from disadvantaged communities and from under-represented groups to take part in the sport of tennis, we are seeking funding to help us extend the sporting and recreational facilities that we can offer at Bramford Tennis Club. We want to be able to appeal to the people in Bramford itself but also to those from surrounding village communities and to people from disadvantaged areas on the West Side of Ipswich.



Tennis is a sport which can be played by all generations and can be adapted to all abilities. It has a wide array of proven physical and mental health benefits and according to a recent study, playing racket sports regularly could help you live longer<sup>2</sup>. Tennis was one of the very first sports deemed to be safe to resume following on from the COVID pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A details Bramford Parish Councils support for this project

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B for details

## 1.1 Project Smash – Phase one

Project Smash defines a phased approach to the upgrade of Bramford Tennis Club facilities over time. The main focus of Phase one (active phase right now) is the addition of retractable floodlighting to court 1 (planning permission has already been obtained for this purpose). The addition of floodlights to this court will allow us to extend playing time, especially over the winter months, allowing us to run additional adult and junior coaching (available to members and non-members), social club-nights and tennis taster sessions all year round which in turn helps people to stay healthy through an active lifestyle.

In addition to the floodlights Phase 1 also focuses on the following key areas:

**Sport development initiatives<sup>3</sup>** – to help us to “open tennis up” to everyone

1. **Tennis for Free initiative** – we will take advantage of the additional court capacity offered over the winter months through the introduction of floodlights to Court 1 through the provision of a weekly one hour “Tennis For Free” coach led session. This session will be prioritised towards those from disadvantaged and under-represented groups e.g. those from local areas such as IP1 & IP2 who fall into the IMD 1-3 category plus women, girls and the over 60’s which are all groups that are currently under represented within the tennis community both locally and nationwide.
2. **Prime Video Girls Tennis programme** – a programme sponsored by Prime Video to encourage more girls (a key under represented group) into the sport of tennis. In the short term, the PV Girls Programme is encouraging girls to pursue more active lifestyles but the programme also has longer term aims to encourage more girls to get involved in coaching and become role models for future generations of girls.
3. **Walking tennis initiative** – introduction of short forms of tennis that allows older generations or people with mobility issues (two further under-represented groups) to get involved with tennis and improve their health and wellbeing

**Additional Facilities development initiatives<sup>4</sup>** – to act as key enablers to our Sport Development initiatives.

1. Fence strengthening work, to support the floodlighting solution.
2. New secure clubhouse/ container style storage unit (for safe storage of tennis equipment e.g. ball machine(s), rackets, balls etc. This facility will also act as a “social hub” encouraging people to stay after play and socialise together.
3. Signage to better advertise the Club and its facilities.

The infrastructure elements, described in more detail below, are **key enablers** to our Sport Development Plan which defines the ways in which we will “open up” tennis at Bramford Tennis Club to an even wider audience through the increase in court capacity and the social hub opportunities these improvements help to deliver.

## 1.2 Phase One Infrastructure – Retractable Floodlights

As already stated, the main infrastructure priority for Phase 1 is the installation of a retractable flood lighting solution for Court 1. Currently only two of the three courts are floodlit and hence over the Winter we lose 1/3 of our capacity as soon as darkness falls

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<sup>3</sup> See Sport Development Plan for more details

<sup>4</sup> See Facilities Development Plan for more details

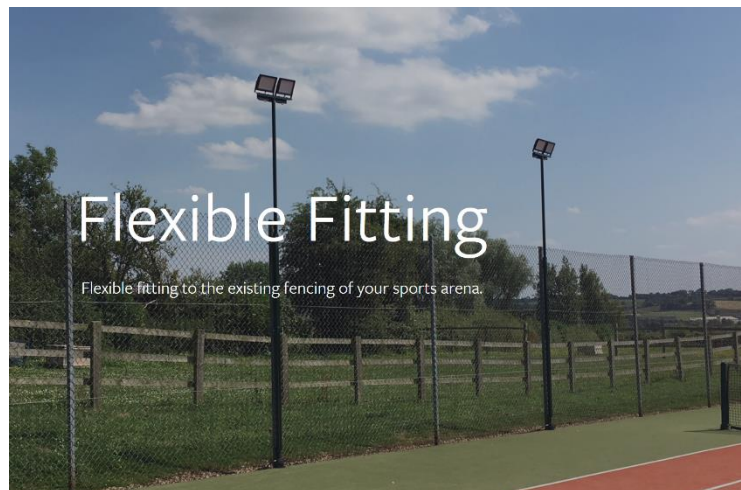
which can be as early as 4.15pm. Junior, after school, squads are often the first to suffer from this reduction in court capacity meaning that some children may become less active for up to six months of the year.

We have recently gained planning approval for the installation of a **retractable floodlighting** system for court 1 that will complement the existing permanent floodlighting solution available on courts 2 & 3. The main advantage of the retractable floodlight solution is that the lights can be lowered to fence height when not in use and hence:

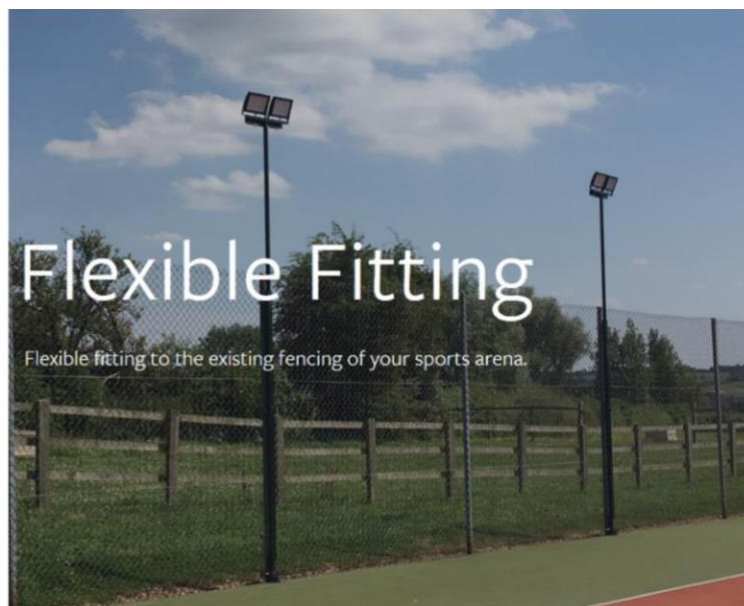
- lighting is unobtrusive and LED based so environment friendly
- based on low masts (lights can be raised when in use, lowered when not in use)
- can be mounted to existing fence posts
- increases court capacity and hence playing opportunities in winter
- helping to encourage more people to stay active year round
- supporting healthy lifestyles and social links in the local community

The floodlights, which will sit on telescopic poles are waterproof (IP65 specification) and would reach a maximum height when extended of approx. 4.25m. Several specialist suppliers have been approached for costings and a number offer what we believe to be a very cost effective solution with water-proof IP65 connection boxes prewired and included at the top and bottom of the flexible floodlight post. A

qualified electrician will be employed to run cabling and connect the lights and the lighting system to the existing RCD protected electrical supply to the latest electrical safety regulations.



- Low impact
- No planning permission
- Raise only when needed
- Cost effective solution to increase court capacity in winter





### 1.3 Phase One Infrastructure – Clubhouse/Secure Store

As the floodlights are retractable, they can be removed when not in use i.e. during summer months when floodlighting is typically not required. This in turn will help to minimise risk of accidental damage or vandalism. The light heads are however quite fragile and hence we have also secured planning approval to replace our existing lightweight metal storage shed



with a more secure container style unit.

This new unit will also act as a small “**social hub**”, encouraging people to stay behind and socialise after play has finished.

We believe this will be very popular with older generations in particular who are less likely to have to rush away after a tennis session to get back to work or for school pickups and childcare.

### 1.4 Phase One Infrastructure – Signage

Bramford Tennis Club is situated at the Acton Road playing field site in Bramford. The courts are located to the rear of a Pavilion building and hence are not immediately obvious to passers-by, in fact we know from local feedback that many people, even those who live in the village, don’t know that there are tennis courts available to them.

Although we advertise and promote the club and its associated activities on local social media pages and in local free press outlets, we still believe that new and more prominent signage located in high footfall traffic areas close to the club would be helpful in raising local awareness about the club.

Consequently, a small amount of the funding will be allocated to this purpose. An example sign has already been designed (see image).



### 1.5 Phase One – Sport development plan enablement

Whilst the floodlight installation and clubhouse/store are key to Phase one of the project, it is only because they act as **key enablers** to our ability to offer a range of new services that will allow us to appeal to an even wider audience.

Whilst there is no doubt that the improved facilities will benefit existing members and existing casual users and may also help us to attract some additional members, they will also allow us to **offer new opportunities** to those living in close by adjacent disadvantaged areas such as IP1 & IP2 (1-3 mile radius) to the club and to some of the more isolated rural areas on the westside of Ipswich where sporting facilities are often poor.

We will also use the additional capacity (floodlights) and social capability (clubhouse) to encourage those from under-represented groups such as women, girls and over 60's to give tennis a try through our Tennis for Free, Prime Video GIRLS and Walking Tennis initiatives<sup>5</sup>



### 1.6 Phase One – Funding

As a small community club, the majority of funds that come in to the club (membership fees, pay & play fees) are directed towards basic operational maintenance of the current facilities. Consequently, the club will only be able to make a small contribution to the project and will ultimately be looking to raise most of the funds from one or more grant providers and other fund raising options.

The overall project, known as Project Smash, will be split into a number of phases, with the first phase concentrating on the installation of retractable floodlights and replacement of the existing shed with a new dual-purpose clubhouse and secure storage unit. Outline costs for Phase one is currently estimated to be in the region of £53K<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Section 3 of this document plus Sport Development Plan for further details

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix E for a breakdown of costs and funds raised so far associated with Phase 1

## SECTION 2 - BENEFITTING THE COMMUNITY

As a grassroots club and an LTA Registered Venue we want to help grow tennis by making it relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable. Tennis is an amazing sport. Anyone can play; whatever their motivation or ability or age, from all communities and backgrounds.

At any age and for a whole lifetime, tennis provides physical, social and mental rewards both on and off the court. Ultimately we want tennis to be open to as many people as possible, across the community that we are part of in Mid Suffolk and we aim to achieve this by concentrating on the following areas of Sport Development.

### 2.1 Providing a positive experience for children and young adults

Bramford Tennis Club has worked hard over recent years to establish itself as a centre of excellence for grassroots junior tennis. The LTA (tennis governing body) have recently confirmed the club to be one of **only six** venues nationwide to achieve the prestigious **LTA Youth Recognised Venue status**. Scott Lloyd, Chief Executive Officer of the LTA stated:

*"LTA Youth Recognised Venues are committed to delivering an excellent junior programme that offers both high quality coaching and regular competitive opportunities for young players. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to introducing more children to tennis and keeping them in our sport. With your support we are continuing to open tennis up to everyone"*



The club has also won awards over the last few years for Development Coach of the Year and Young person of the year.

These awards, recognise the extensive efforts at this small village club, primarily through the new coaching programme, to grow participation levels amongst juniors and young adults in the local community and we

will continue to build on this important work going forward. In particular, the installation of floodlights on court 1 will allow us to maintain and extend our junior coaching programme over the winter period.

### 2.2 Connecting with Health and Wellbeing

Bramford Tennis Club (IP8 4HU) sits on land that is owned by Bramford Parish Council (BPC) and managed by a Playing Field Management committee (PFMC) whose key objective is to strengthen connections between sport, physical activity, health and well-being such that more people benefit from and participate in an active lifestyle. The focus on putting sport and physical activity at the heart of what we do, means that we need to adjust our offerings to be able to actively respond to the changing demographics, trends in health and the things that can make it even harder for people with poorer health to get active.



We are responding to these changes by looking to introduce additional forms of tennis that fall under the broad umbrella term of "Walking Tennis". These new forms of the game are played on smaller courts, using slower balls, smaller rackets, double bounces etc. These changes and adaptations allow for people who have mobility issues or those recovering from illness etc to give tennis a go and to get active, which in turn helps improve their own health and wellbeing and that of the wider community.



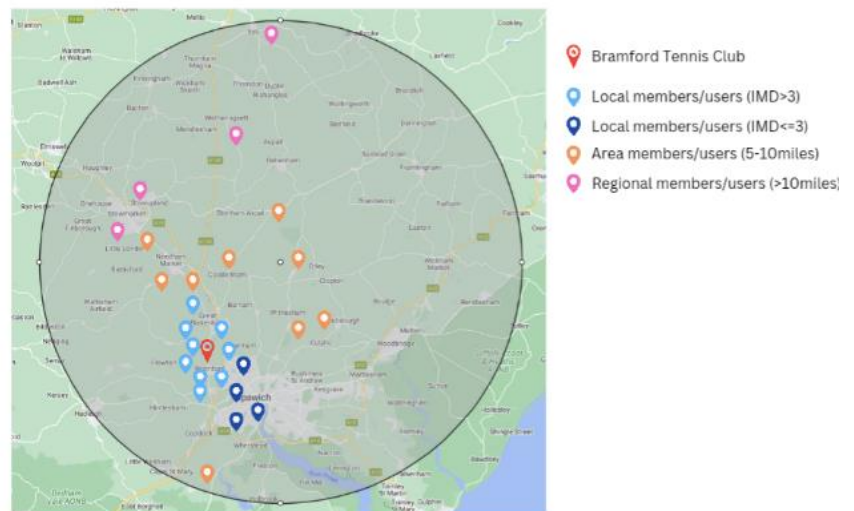
### 2.3 Connecting communities, creating active environments

Sport and physical activity are key to helping to bring people together and help make communities much nicer places to live. The population in the local area is increasing with several new housing developments (Bellway, Hopkins Homes) recently built and more on the way. These new developments bring new families including adults, children and retired people into the community, but the sports and recreation facilities are often slow to improve with the result that people seek leisure and recreation activities from the better funded, often commercial facilities outside of their local community.

We would like to reverse this trend by developing our tennis club in line with the expansion of the Bramford population so that it becomes a beating heart of the local community for adults (young adults and senior adults), juniors and families.

The club has also established a strong reputation over the last few years and consequently we have seen new members and casual players come from surrounding areas from up to 12 miles away. Facilities in these more rural communities are often even more limited so places like Bramford provide an important opportunity for even more people to stay engaged, keep active and avoid becoming isolated.

**Bramford Tennis Club - IP8 4HU**  
members/users - 12 mile radius



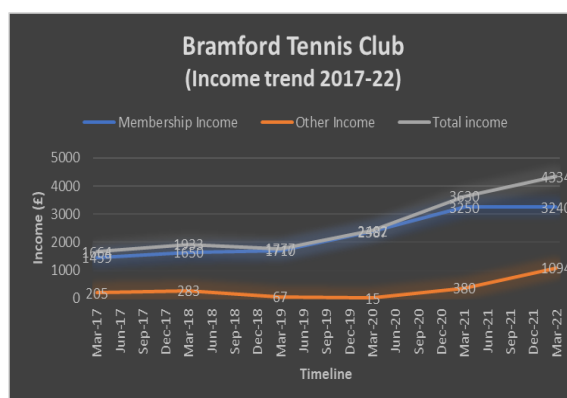
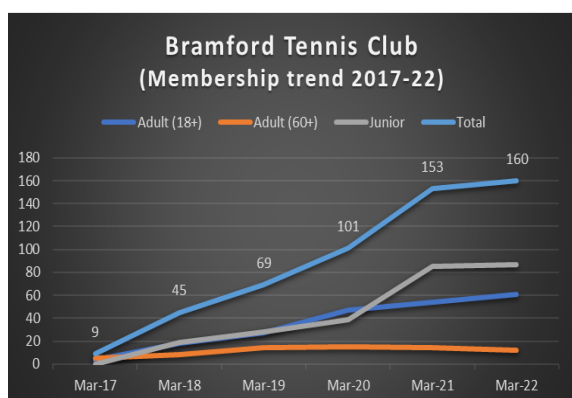
## 2.4 Recover and Reinvent

The club has shown sustained membership growth since a new coaching provider, Carl Douglas Tennis Coaching, was brought in to develop a new coaching approach in 2017. At that time there were just 9 members remaining and the club was in danger of closing. Since then, membership has risen year on year, peaking at 150+ in 2022 when tennis was one of the first sports to re-open post COVID-19.

Covid lockdowns caused major problems for small sporting venues as all membership income had to be suspended. We also had to get very creative to keep people active during lockdown, this included creating a series of "free" Tennis at Home video resources and of course we had to get even more creative once some "limited" opportunities arose during lockdown easements to encourage people back on to court.

Fortunately, tennis was one of the first sports to be deemed to be safe to play again and hence the vital nature of keeping facilities such as local outdoor tennis clubs operating were clear to see as without sports such as tennis, it would have taken a considerably longer period to get people active again.

Finally, as can be seen in the charts below, despite the challenges thrown up by COVID-19, we have continued to grow the club and this upward trend in membership has resulted in a corresponding improvement in club revenue levels, putting the club in a much healthier financial position.



In addition to membership number improvements, we also have some regular non-members who use the club facilities via "pay and play" options or through participation in coaching squads where non-members are still allowed to take part though they pay a slightly higher fee than club members. This approach allows us to open the club up to as many people as possible and, although the membership for the last year stood at around 150 people, we actually had more than 300 people use the club facilities over the last twelve months.



## SECTION 3 - DISADVANTAGED AND UNDER REPRESENTED GROUPS

As has already been stated, we want to use the additional capacity and capability that this project will bring to spearhead a campaign to open tennis us to as many people as possible, across the community that we are part of in Mid Suffolk. Completion of the floodlights and clubhouse will allow us to address the following areas.

### 3.1 Tennis opened up – disadvantaged communities

Our coach has built relationships with local schools and scout/beaver groups (including some from disadvantaged areas), running several FREE tennis activity days and after school tennis clubs with follow on offers designed to encourage school children to come and experience tennis at our club. We have launched a **“Pay and Play”** initiative for off-peak court usage so that people can book a court and use the facilities for a small fee without the need to become a club member.

In early 2024 we are aiming to establish a weekly **“Tennis for FREE”** session which will be prioritised to those from surrounding disadvantaged areas (IP1 & IP2) who fall into the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 1-3) category. All equipment will be provided and a fully qualified LTA coach will deliver the sessions. Priority will also be given to those from under-represented groups. A small amount of funding will be used to pay for the coaching time for this activity but the sessions themselves will be free of charge to those taking part.

Postcode	LSOA Name	IMD Rank	IMD Decile
IP1 4BF	Ipswich 006E	7922	3
IP2 8NB	Ipswich 012B	6378	2
IP6 0GE	Mid Suffolk 011B	24405	8
IP8 4HU	Mid Suffolk 012B	19193	6



Our aim will be to encourage people to give tennis a go, and then provide a wide range of year-round fun activities, squads, competition, and social events that will encourage them to stay involved for the long term.

### 3.2 Tennis opened up - addressing inequalities

We also want to address inequalities by encouraging participation from under-represented groups such as women and girls, older people and those with mobility issues. We will do this through a range of initiatives including:

**Prime Video GIRLS tennis** - a junior tennis coaching programme designed to inspire thousands of girls across the country to pick up a racket and try tennis for the first time. Funded by the reinvestment of Prime Video's US Open broadcast fees from Emma Raducanu's historic 2021 final - the programme focuses on creating an environment that motivates girls to enjoy and stay in tennis by giving them the chance to play with friends in a pressure free setting.



**Walking tennis** - You can play tennis at any age and Walking Tennis offers an easy way (shorter courts, slower balls, double bounces) for older people and those with mobility issues to keep their body and mind active – while also enjoying the social side of being part of a tennis community. Such activities help in terms of physical health, mental well-being and are a great way for people to socialise with others and avoid loneliness.

### 3.3 Tennis opened up – FREE Tennis Tasters

We would look continue to build on all the good work mentioned in this proposal through advertising via local magazines, club website, social media channels, flyer drops, and word of mouth. We will also continue to run several **FREE club open day “taster”** sessions at club each season so that people get to experience the club and all it has to offer.



We have already run a number of successful and popular sessions with local guides, brownies and scouts groups and intend to deliver more of these sessions in 2024. The addition of floodlights on Court 1 would allow us to offer such activities year-round whereas at present they are limited to the summer months only.

## **SECTION 4 - FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **4.1 How would any sponsor/grant provider benefit?**

In today's world where obesity is a growing concern, and we are still recovering from the after effects of a major pandemic (COVID-19) there is a growing need to help current and future generations become much more active and to live a healthier lifestyle. Sports such as tennis are a fantastic way for people to become active in a friendly social setting with a sport that can be played for life.

Any sponsor or grant provider interested in promoting healthier lifestyles within local communities would benefit from the publicity associated with the project. Bramford Tennis Club has a regular (monthly) article that features in the local "In Touch" magazine thus providing one channel where the project would be highlighted. We have also produced news articles in the past for local daily newspapers. The club also has a [website](#) and active social media channels which again would be used to raise the profile of the project and any flyers that are produced to advertise future events could include the sponsors logo. There would also be the opportunity to erect a banner/signage on the club fencing.

### **4.2 How would we measure the success of the project?**

Measures will include:

- Participation levels
- Repeat participation
- Participant Feedback
- Recommendations
- Court utilisation

### **4.3 Next steps**

Planning permission has already been granted and suppliers already identified for all aspects of our Phase one plan (erection of 8 retractable poles plus the siting of a new clubhouse/secure storage unit) so once funds are available, we are in a good position to make progress. Organisations willing to help should contact either of the following:

- Carl Douglas (Head Coach) – [carl.douglas@talk21.com](mailto:carl.douglas@talk21.com)
- Ali Sparrow (Grants Officer) – [alisonpsparrow@gmail.com](mailto:alisonpsparrow@gmail.com)

## APPENDIX A – BRAMFORD PARISH COUNCIL SUPPORT

The image below is a copy of the confirmation from Bramford Parish Council of the land ownership, leasing arrangements and support for this project. The original copy of this letter can be made available upon request



**BRAMFORD**  
PARISH COUNCIL



Bramford Parish Council, The Parish Room, Ship Lane, Bramford, Suffolk, IP8 4AN  
Tel: 01473 852464 e-mail: [bramfordparishcouncil@btinternet.com](mailto:bramfordparishcouncil@btinternet.com) [www.bramford.suffolk.cloud](http://www.bramford.suffolk.cloud)

24<sup>th</sup> May 2023

To whom it may concern,

Bramford Parish Council is the owner of the land that Bramford Tennis Club uses. They have an open lease for as long as the club wishes to use it. We are therefore happy to support any grant application to improve their facilities, services and equipment.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lester Powell'.

*Cllr. Lester Powell* (Chair)



## APPENDIX B – HOW TENNIS CAN HELP YOU LIVE A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE

<https://www.lta.org.uk/news/why-tennis-can-help-you-live-longer/>

**According to a recent study, playing racket sports regularly could help you live longer, but other activities like football, rugby and running may not have as big an effect.**

We know that sport is beneficial to health, helping keep weight down, lowering blood pressure and improving heart and lung function, but research indicates regularly playing tennis and badminton could halve your chance of dying young. What better reason do you need to pick up your racket and play tennis more often!

A study by Oxford University, and researchers in Finland and Australia, followed more than 80,000 adults aged 30 and over in England and Scotland for an average of nine years to find out if certain sports protected them against early death. It found that people who played racket sports regularly were the least likely to die over the study period, reducing their individual risk by 47% compared with people who did no exercise. Yet running appeared to have no impact at all on dying early, and neither did playing football or rugby. When the team looked just at the risk of death from cardiovascular disease, they found that swimming reduced the risk by 41%, racquet sports by 56% and aerobics by 36%. Running, cycling and football showed no protective effect.

The research, which was published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, analysed information from 11 annual health surveys for England and Scotland, carried out between 1994 and 2008 in which people were asked how much physical activity they had done in the previous four weeks, and whether it had made them breathless or sweaty. As well as the benefits to overall mortality, the researchers found that playing racket sports was associated with a 56% lower risk from heart death.

*“We think racket sports not only offer the usual physiological benefits but also offer additional mental health and social benefits perhaps unique to these sports. We had a younger group of team sports players and runners and we may not have enough deaths to see a difference at this point in time, another five years and we will know with more precision. One theory might be the team players struggle to graduate to new sports or activities once they stop playing, so they lose the benefits of their active younger days.”* **Dr Charlie Foster, associate professor of Physical Activity and Population Health at Oxford**

The scientists say the difference may lie in the social aspect which goes alongside sports like tennis and squash, which often involve clubs and organised activities outside of the game. It means that people often have larger social networks and tend to keep up activities into later life, both of which are proven to be good for health.

There is so much evidence that physical activity, including sports participation and all kinds of exercises, are associated with a reduced risk of both non-communicable diseases and the risk of death, but the overriding message is that if you do sport, continue doing sport.

Ulf Ekelund, a physical activity epidemiologist at the University of Cambridge and professor in physical activity and health at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, in Oslo, said the

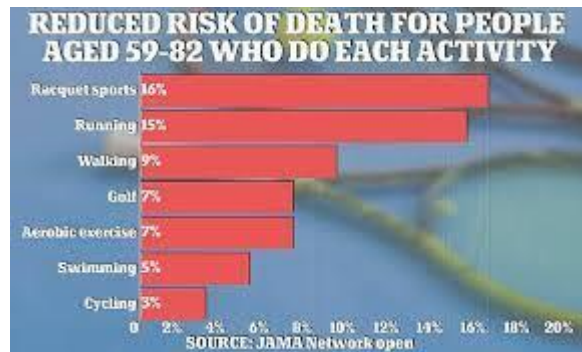
key message from the research was not that one activity was more likely to stave off death than another, but that sport in general is beneficial.

In addition to the BJSM report, a further study by the National Cancer Institute (NCI), a part of the National Institutes of Health in the US, found that regularly playing a sport like tennis for at least 2.5 hours each week between ages 59 and 82 could reduce a person's all-cause risk of death by 16 percent.

The NCI who published their findings at the JAMA Network Open, gathered data from 272,550 adults between the ages of 59 and 82 years old.

Each completed a survey on their weekly leisure time activities, whether it was partaking in exercise or something else.

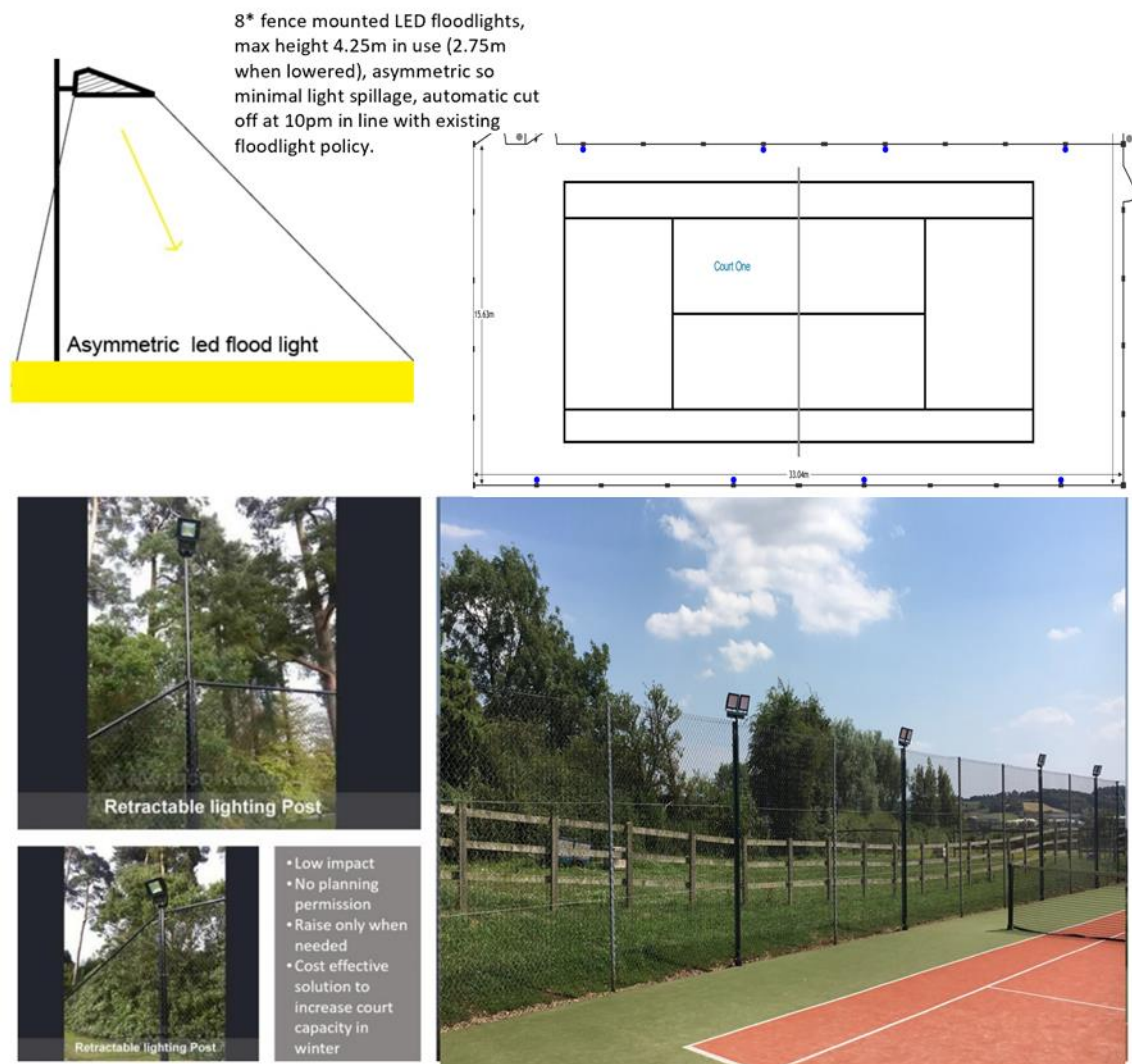
The NCI team put a focus on seven different leisure-time activities in particular, running, cycling, swimming, aerobic exercise, racket sports, golf and walking with racket sports (including tennis) coming out on top.



## APPENDIX C – SOLUTION SPECIFICATION

The proposed solution is for 8 \* fence mounted posts with two 100W LED floodlights on top of each post. Floodlights are unobtrusive and can be raised when in use to a max height of 4.25m, lowered when not in use to just 2.75m (fence height). Being LED, the lights have low environmental impact and will be wired into our existing floodlight circuitry such that they will be subject to the same automatic 10pm cut off. The lights are also asymmetric and direct their light onto the court, with minimal light spillage away from the playing area so will not impact any nearby neighbours (bowls club is nearest neighbour and their season ends in Sept so would not be impacted in any way by this solution as it would only be in use over Winter months).

**Fig 1 – Proposed solution**



Please note that the solution being proposed is environment friendly as the lighting units are all LED based

## Fig 2 – current situation

Courts 2 & 3 are covered by “tall mast” based floodlights which allow play all year round. **This work was approved under planning application 1522/03.** Unfortunately, due to additional costs involved no floodlights were installed to cover court 1 and hence the club loses 1/3 of its playing capacity in winter months. As membership numbers continue to grow year on year and as part of the drive post Covid-19 to get people back out exercising we would now like to rectify this situation.

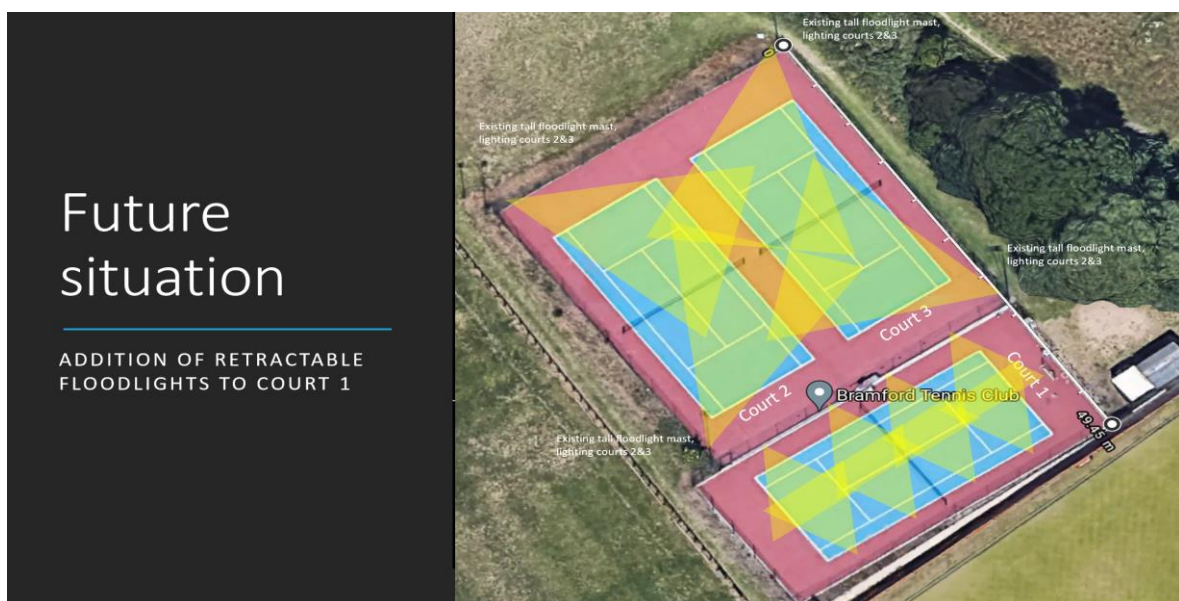


## Current situation

PERMANENT “TALL MAST” FLOODLIGHTS ALLOW FOR WINTER USE OF COURTS 2 & 3 ONLY

## Fig 3 – future “proposed” situation

Providing a floodlight solution to court 1 will allow people to play all year round, helping to maintain both physical and mental well-being in the local community. This is a low impact solution with the bowls club being the nearest neighbour (their playing season ends in Sept). Local houses can be assured of the asymmetric nature of the floodlights, the fact that the lights can be lowered when not in use and would be linked to an automatic shut off at 10pm (in line with existing floodlight policy)



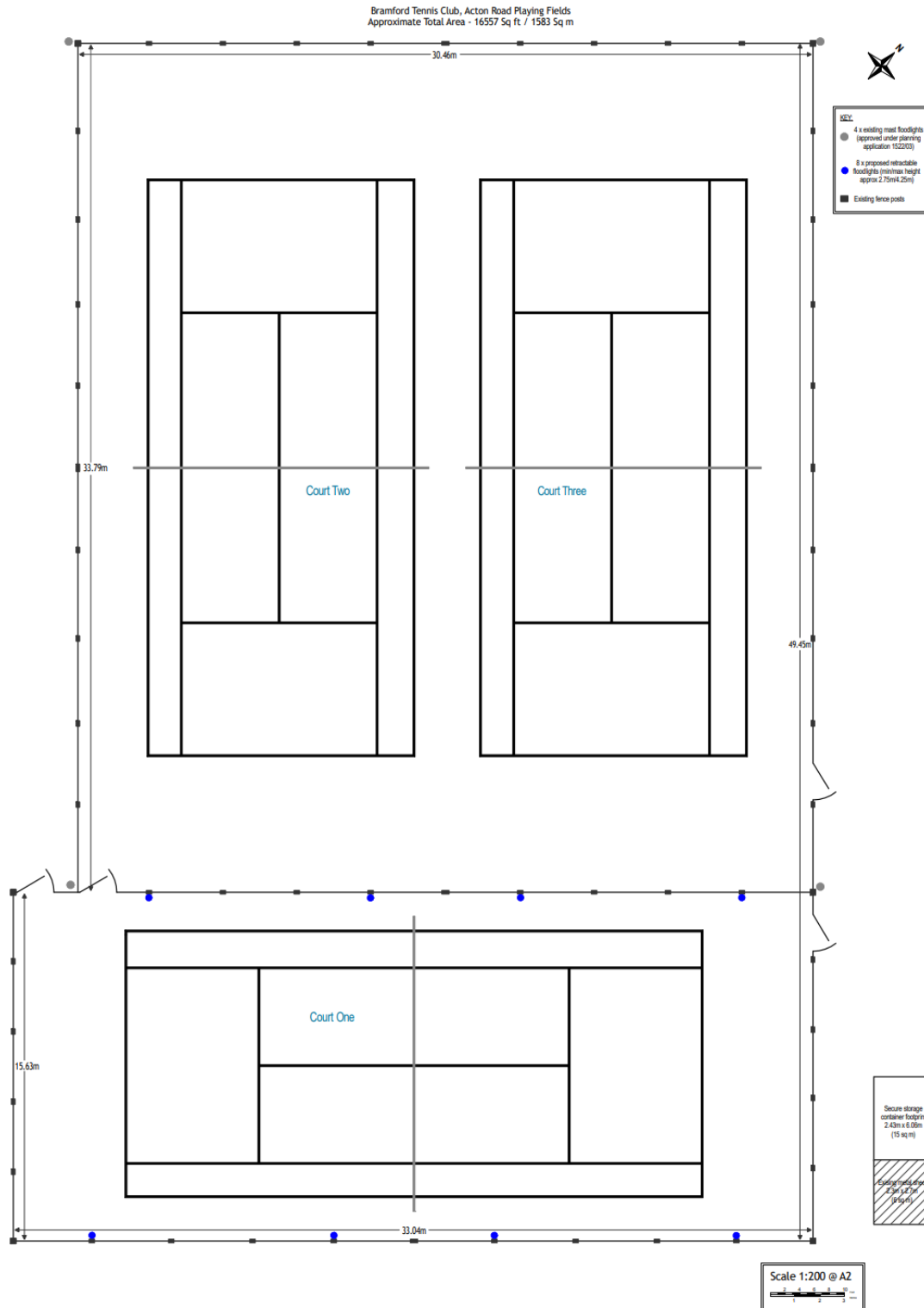
## Future situation

ADDITION OF RETRACTABLE FLOODLIGHTS TO COURT 1



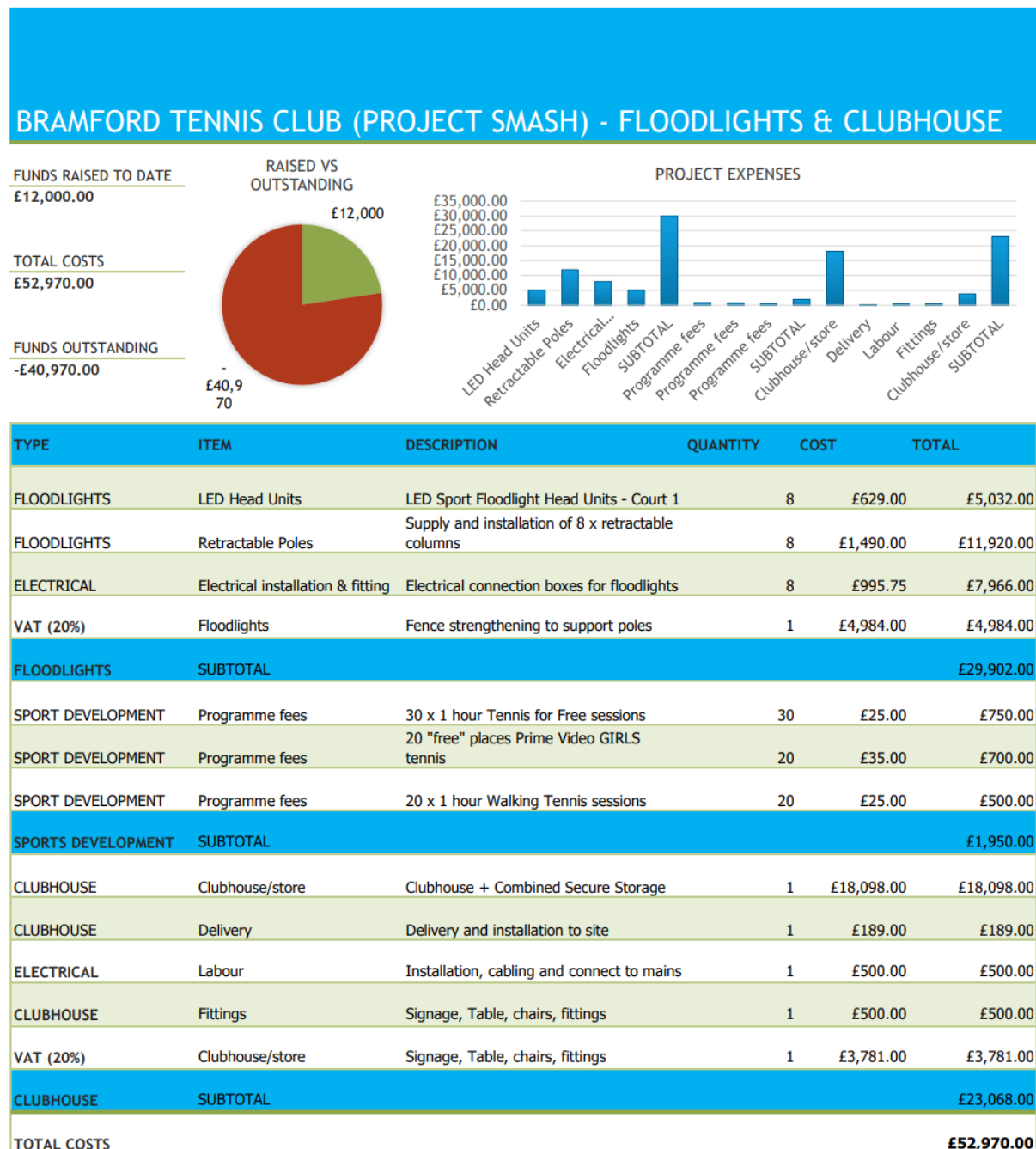
## APPENDIX D – SCALE DRAWING

The attached drawing shows all dimensions, position of existing (tall mast) floodlights and position of proposed retractable floodlights. A separate version of the scale drawing will also be supplied as this will be needed for the planning application. The location and dimensions of the replacement storage unit are also shown on the diagram.



## APPENDIX E – OUTLINE PROJECT COSTS (PHASE 1)

The table below shows the estimated costs to complete Phase 1 of this project (retractable floodlights for court 1 plus clubhouse/secure storage unit). Later phases will be subject to further cost analysis at the appropriate time. Initial proposals for Phases 2 & 3 can be found in the BTC Facilities Development Proposal<sup>7</sup>



<sup>7</sup> Available upon request