

FACILITIES REPORT
FOR RAMSBURY TENNIS CLUB AGM
28TH FEBRUARY 2021

Although 2020 was a most unusual year, it was very much business as usual in relation to Facilities.

Before I deal with the individual matters, I would like to thank Roger for all his efforts in making sure that we were as Covid safe as possible last year with the provision of paper towel dispensers, sanitizer in the Pavilion and on the Courts, all the relevant notices and advice to members etc etc!

Court Surfaces

We resurfaced Courts 1 and 2 with artificial red clay at a cost of approximately £48,000 including new equipment needed for routine maintenance. And so we became the first Club in Wiltshire to have artificial Clay courts. The surface has proved to be very popular indeed and is every bit as good as was promised in that it is playable in most weather conditions, even light frosts when tarmac is unplayable. It is much kinder to the limbs unlike tarmac. And, apart from regular dragging and some annual maintenance the surface should not require resurfacing for around 15 years. It has also been a big draw to new members.

Courts 3 and 4 which were resurfaced in 2019 played well enough but the paint has worn very quickly and so I referred this back to the contractors and as a result they are to be repainted shortly at no cost to us. This means that the next major court works should be the repainting of those courts, not in 2023/4 as I said last year but now in 2025. They will probably require resurfacing in about 2029. Courts 1, 2 and 5 should need no major work during this time.

At the same time, we put in a low-level gate between courts 2 and 3 to stop people inadvertently taking the clay from Court 2 onto the tarmac

on court 3. There is also now a similar gate at the entrance to court 1 and an extension of the low level fence across the viewing area.

Court Fencing

We continue to monitor the fencing to the South and East of Courts 3 and 4, as that is the last remaining piece of fencing which is original. However, part of this at the rear of Court 3 has had to be repaired recently as three of the straining wires gave way. The work was done a couple of weeks ago. But that section of fencing looks old and lets the side down rather and so its replacement continues to form part of our 5 year maintenance plan.

Lights

The floodlights were completely overhauled in 2016 when all the bulbs on courts 1 to 4 were replaced. That gave an improvement in the quality of lighting, and it effectively bought us about 5 years to carry out further investigations into LED lighting. I said last year that I was going to propose that this became our next capital venture. Indeed, it would have been so had it not been for the necessity of two more courts – see later.

Pavilion and surrounds

The Pavilion is a Recreation Centre building and is used by both the Tennis Club and the Cricket Club. Generally the building is the responsibility of the Recreation Centre but the internal condition is the responsibility of the Clubs.

A couple of points.

Our new Cleaner is very reliable and seems to be doing a good job. Please help her by keeping the Pavilion clean and tidy. Please leave it in the condition in which you would like to find it. All litter and recycling

should be put in the bins and if you do get the table tennis table out to play table tennis, please put it away afterwards.

Similarly, please do not leave water bottles or empty ball containers on court! Either take them away or at the very least put them in the large bins at each end of the courts. Virtually every time I go to the Courts I pick up two or three water bottles – except during Lockdown of course! Please also make sure you take all your kit home with you, and make sure as best you can that your children do so too. The amount of lost property generated is astonishing.

The paving slabs and viewing area

These areas are badly in need of pointing and I hope that is now to be done very soon. I am just waiting for the contractor to confirm a start date.

The Track

The Recreation Centre had contractors tarmac the track last year and it is a vast improvement.

It is useful to remind members that they should park in the car parks and walk down to the courts and not drive down the track to the courts, even when dropping and collecting juniors who are having coaching. We need to keep the traffic on the track to an absolute minimum especially when there is coaching. This is a Health and Safety issue with so many children about.

New Courts

It is now well known that we are proposing to build two new floodlit courts. They are to be sited to the West of the Bowling Club as there is no land nearer to the other courts which is available.

This is phase 1 of a possible two phase project. In four or five years' time **if** we can raise the money we would be looking to cover the courts

with an Air hall or double skin bubble and that could cost as much as another £200,000 and so some very serious fund raising would have to take place for that to happen.

Phase 1 is a major project – the largest in our history. For a number of reasons it is being run through the Recreation Centre but with very substantial financial input from the Tennis Club. At the time of preparing this report the best estimate of the cost is £130,000 and so we have some fund raising to do! The cost is high because much soil has to be dug out and removed from site and that is expensive. We have now applied for Planning Permission and it is anticipated that we shall have that within 8 -12 weeks which could be mid to end of May.

We shall be using as much of our own funds as we can spare and are hoping to apply for a loan from the LTA of £40,000. That will leave us around £45,000 short. I am very hopeful that I can raise at least £20,000 of that from some contacts in the Village who are outside the Club membership. That will leave £25,000 still to be raised. Of course, we cannot run any fund raising events at the moment and so I am afraid that I will be asking Club members for modest donations. If enough people donate, we should reach our target.

This part is very important. After all, the courts are for the membership and it is not unreasonable for other generous members of the Village to expect that the Club members will be making some contribution to this project!

The intention is that once we have Planning we can get the money together as soon as possible and start work as soon as contractors are able.

If anyone has any questions on the new courts, please ask me or Roger or our Chair, Chris Wilson and we will be pleased to help.

And so, to conclude, if any issues arise, whether on the Courts, lights, Pavilion or surrounds please report them to me (details below) or to any other Committee member so they can tell me and I shall see what can be done.

We have the most wonderful facilities and our aim is to maintain those at the highest possible level. If anything is wrong, we need to know so that it can be addressed.

Finally, my thanks to everyone for their input and help over the last year particularly Roger who has helped a huge amount this year with all the above.

Ian Smith – 28th February 2021.

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