

Townsend New Member's Guide

As a new member to Townsend, you may never have belonged to a traditional tennis club before, or you may have played in clubs in other areas. Either way, this guide sets out to ensure that you know all you need to know to make the most of your membership.

Above all, we want you to enjoy being a member of Townsend, and if you have any ideas for improvements or would like to get involved in any way to help run the club, please let one of the Committee members know.

Our website also includes lots of useful information, details of upcoming events and tournaments, contact details, a court calendar, floodlight booking and clothing sales. Take a look at <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/TownsendLawnTennisClub>.

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Our Facilities – the courts and the clubhouse

The courts

- Townsend has eight all weather courts which can be played on year round – three astroturf courts which pretty much take care of themselves, three Artificial Clay and two Porous Acrylic which need to be swept after play to keep them in tip-top condition. Sweepers and line brushes are available on all these courts.
- Five of our courts are floodlit and can be played on until 10pm.
- Appropriate tennis footwear should be worn to protect the courts and stop you slipping over.

Clubhouse and Bar

- The clubhouse and its facilities are open and available to members at most times of the day and evening, with entry via a Pin-coded keypad entry system.
- Members can use the kitchen at most times to make drinks, although the club does not provide these.
- The cooking facilities are for matches, club functions and groups which hire the function rooms. If you use the kitchen, please leave it as you find it and wash up any items used.
- Animals are not allowed in the clubhouse, with the exception of guide dogs
- Members may book the clubhouse for parties at reasonable rates
- The bar is fully staffed every evening and at Sunday lunchtimes, and is a great place to relax with a drink after a hard game of tennis or, alternatively, to come for a pleasant drink with friends and relatives.
- There is also a large, flat-screen TV for making the most of big sporting events – from football to Wimbledon.

Parking

- The club car park is small, and is shared with the Bowls club and other building users (eg Pilates classes, bridge club, Verulam Cycle club meetings). Therefore, if you park in the car park, please observe the marked up spaces (including the double parking spaces, where you may expect to be called if the person behind you needs to go home!)
- On-street parking is restricted to residents between 10.30am and 12.30pm Monday to Friday, but free at other times.

How the Club is Run – our committee

- Townsend is a traditional members' club, which is run by a volunteer committee who give up their time to make sure that the club runs smoothly and for the benefit of all members.
- The committee meets regularly to plan events, organise improvements and ensure that things are running smoothly

- Committee positions are elected yearly at the AGM, which is open to all club members. The roles include Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Men's captain, Ladies' captain, Grounds, Tournaments, Publicity, Fixtures, Social, Junior Liaison and Coaching.
- If you need to contact us, or you have a particular issue you would like addressed, details of who to contact are listed on our website.

Club Communications - finding out what's happening

It's important to us that everyone knows what is happening at the club so they can get the most out of their membership. We communicate with our members as follows:

- Our website - <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/TownsendLawnTennisClub> – includes a wide range of information about what's taking place at the club, a handy court calendar, a floodlight booking facility and contact information for committee members.
- Emails – we send regular emails out to our members to remind them about upcoming events, so that no-one misses out. Remember to let us know if your email address changes.
- Posters – look out for posters in the Snug Bar in addition to emails and website information.
- Facebook – we have an active FB page, which you can also use for information and chat.

Year Round Tennis

We play tennis all year round at Townsend, but things work slightly differently in the summer season (April – October) than in the Winter Season (October – April). The main difference is that in summer, we run Ladies, Mens and Mixed social sessions during weekday evenings, which are replaced in the winter season with bookable floodlight tennis in privately arranged groups (more on this below).

Social Tennis and how the courts are used

In the Summer:

The summer season starts soon after our Open Day, which is usually held in April, and runs through until late September. At the start of the season important dates, such as the Wimbledon draw, date of the Club tournament entries and finals, team matches and other events, will be publicised to all members.

Regular club mix-in sessions take place during the summer season at the times below: the sessions are open to all adult members and offer a great way for new members to get involved and find partners for tournaments or for general social play.

- Ladies night – Tuesday evening, 7pm – 10pm
- Mens night – Wednesday evening, 7pm – 10pm
- Mixed social night – Friday evening, 7pm – 10pm
- Sunday morning social – 10am – 12pm

All sessions are based around friendly and competitive doubles play. In the case of Ladies' and Mens' night, play is organised by the Club coach, which helps to ensure everyone gets an evenly balanced game, and that new members get to play with a wide variety of existing members. Our Friday night mixed social session is more relaxed, with members organising themselves into doubles fours, and then retiring to the bar afterwards, often with a supper cooked by a volunteer. On Sunday mornings too, there is friendly mix-in social play alongside member-organised doubles or singles play - courts permitting.

On other evenings or at other times, members are welcome to turn up and play if there is court space available, but these are not organised sessions and there may also be some courts taken by coaching groups or by matches.

Please check the Court Calendar on the website to get an idea of when courts are likely to be free.

In the Winter:

During the winter season, from mid-September until the Open Day in April, the club does not organise evening Club Sessions, mainly because it is too cold to stand around and wait to mix-in. Winter evening play is based on groups of members getting together and booking the floodlit courts for doubles play. The courts are available at least four evenings a week (Tuesday to Friday) in two sessions – 7-8.30pm and 8.30-10pm. Courts are booked via our website, and there is an £8 charge per 90 minute floodlight session to cover the cost of the lights. (On Monday evenings our Adult Coaching Squads occupy the floodlit courts – these are run by our Club Coach and his team and are very popular, particularly for new members looking to improve their game before committing to more competitive play.)

Daytime Play:

In both summer and winter seasons, members can also play during the day, subject to courts being available. There are a couple of Adult coaching groups which take place during the day, plus Junior Coaching squads after school, so it's worth checking the Court Calendar on the website to identify times to avoid. Generally, though, the courts are pretty free during the day.

Townsend Play Priority Guidelines

The rules about play priorities on our courts are as follows:

- 1) Sessions organised by the committee have ultimate priority on court. These include coaching, inter-club matches, club social nights and mornings, box league evenings, one day tournaments and team practice nights.
- 2) Member organised play has priority as follows:
 - a) Individual Club Tournament or Box League matches (outside of organised club nights)
 - b) General play, where doubles has precedence over singles and both Adults and Juniors have equal precedence.
 - c) Members should wait until a set has finished before going on court and, where players are waiting, members should play a short set only (ie first to 6 games).

Team tennis

Townsend is one of the top Hertfordshire clubs and offers a wide range of teams across several different league formats and playing standards. These are as follows:

Herts league: 7 Men's teams, 3 Ladies' teams - Summer weekends

Herts league: 3 Ladies' and 1 Mens' Hot Racket teams - Summer weekends

Herts league: 4 Men's and 6 Ladies' Veterans teams - Winter weekends

Watford & District league: 2 Mixed teams - Summer evenings

Datchworth league: 2 Mixed teams - Autumn weekends

East Herts League

Singles Leagues

For more information on any of our teams, take a look at the Team pages on our website. If you would like to be considered for team selection, or would like further information, please speak to the Ladies' or Men's captain who can arrange for you to be introduced to the appropriate team captain.

Tournaments

The club runs a number of tournaments throughout the year, including our popular social, or American, tournaments, Pre-season warm-up events, our Autumn Mixed Tournament, annual Vets tournament and our main Club Championships that culminates in our Finals Day in July.

Club Championships

- Format: Knockout tournament played over two months with plate competitions for first round or first match losers.
- Players enter with their own partner for doubles events.
- Those entering should ensure that they are available for finals day!
- Events: Men's singles and doubles, Ladies' singles and doubles, Mixed doubles
- When: Mid May to Mid-July

Junior Club Championships

- Format: Knockout tournament
- Events: Boys and Girls Singles and Doubles, various age groups
- When: September

Autumn Mixed Tournament

- Format: One day tournament with lunch included for small charge.
- Players enter with a partner or partner can be found
- Round robin format, followed by semi-finals and finals.
- Events: Mixed doubles
- When: September

Veteran's Tournament

- Format: One day tournament with lunch included for small charge
- Round robin format, followed by semi-finals and finals
- Events: Men's doubles and Ladies' doubles
- When: May

Pre-season Tournament

- Format: One day tournament with lunch included for small charge
- Round robin format, followed by semi-finals and finals
- Events: Men's doubles and Ladies' doubles
- When: March

Social (American) Tournament

- Format: Friendly social, half day tournaments where players play with multiple partners.
- Events: Mixed doubles
- When: Typically Sundays and on occasional Bank Holidays

Social events

Townsend is a very sociable and friendly club. The bar is open most evenings and on Sunday lunchtimes for a drink after a game of tennis, and there is also a large screen TV in the clubhouse showing big sporting events.

In addition, the club tries to organise a good spread of social events to suit all tastes. These include the Wimbledon Draw and supper, the Christmas Dinner, annual Barbeque, Finals Day, Quizzes, Wine Tasting Evenings, Ladies' and Mens' section suppers. Information about these events is posted on our website and, in addition, we send out regular emails to members about forthcoming events.

Social events are coordinated by the Social Secretary on the Club committee but please remember that this is a voluntary role and we really welcome offers from members who would like to get involved in organising an event, either individually or in groups. This way,

the burden of organising every event doesn't fall on just one person and the club benefits from a wide range of ideas and suggestions. So, if you have an idea for an event, and wouldn't mind helping to organise it, please speak to the Social Secretary, whose details can be found on the website under the Committee section.

Coaching

Coaching is available for senior and junior members at all levels, either as individuals or in groups. The Townsend club coach is Matt Foster, one of the most highly qualified coaches working in Hertfordshire, and who started his tennis career as a junior at Townsend. He has attained the Performance Coach Award (level 5) and also works with a committed team of junior coaches to develop the coaching section at Townsend.

Adult coaching at Townsend can be booked on an individual basis directly with Matt, or there are four group coaching sessions on a Monday (two in the day and two in the evening) for beginners and intermediate players which are very popular with newcomers and existing members alike.

Junior coaching is very popular at Townsend, with Mini and Junior coaching running throughout the year.

Check our website, or contact Matt for more information about his coaching services, whether for juniors or adults, individually or in groups, at Total Tennis Coaching Ltd (07780 533337; ttcltd.tennis@gmail.com).

Junior tennis

The club has a thriving junior section with players from 4-16 of all abilities catered for, both at weekends and during the week. Lessons are available, either individually or in groups with Matt Foster, our club coach. We use the 'traffic light' system with the youngest players using softer, larger red balls on smaller courts, progressing through to orange balls and then to Mini Tennis using regular green balls on full size courts for 8-10 years olds.

The Tigers Academy provides both group and individual lessons for those juniors keen to improve fitness and ability. This offers flexibility where juniors can attend once, twice or three times per week and involves one to one sessions with both Matt (who holds Performance Coach Award Level 5) and the older teenage club members.

We also run a number of junior teams, organise squad training sessions for the teenagers and, last but not least, a wide variety of tennis camps are available in the school holidays. For further information, please contact Matt Foster on 07780 533337 or email ttcltd.tennis@gmail.com

As well as competitive tennis, we also run a Junior Club Night on Fridays between 4pm and 6pm from Easter until October Half term, where the junior members can just turn up and play a few sets with friends in a social environment and follow it up with a soft drink and a bag of crisps afterwards in the clubhouse. In addition, there are also various social events arranged for the Juniors, including film and pizza nights, Christmas disco, plus events with the adults such as the Generation Game and annual BBQ.

Clothing and Footwear

We ask that members wear appropriate tennis clothing and footwear, and also be aware that should they play for one of the Townsend teams, their standards of dress should reflect well on the club and comply with any dress codes imposed by other clubs for away matches. Please also regularly check tennis shoes for sole grip, particularly if you plan on playing in all weathers.

Balls

Balls are provided by the club for Ladies and Mens nights in summer (Tuesday and Wednesday) and for certain organised tournaments which take place at the weekend or on Bank Holidays. At other times, members are expected to provide their own balls and, hopefully, to take turns in doing so! Balls are for sale at most times where available behind the bar at a competitive price. Balls for matches are provided by the club but are paid for by match fees paid by the team players.

Court etiquette

Be considerate of members waiting to play: In general play, when other members are waiting to play, members should play a short set (ie first to 6 games). Please also check out the [Play Priorities](#) section on Page ?? for more detailed information.

Mix-in: Members should mix-in and encourage others to do so during general play sessions.

Entering and leaving the court: Wait for a break in play before walking across the back of a court where play is in progress.

Balls: If your ball goes onto another court, please wait for a break in play before attempting to retrieve it, as slinking along the back of a court while other members are playing is very off-putting. If your ball goes over the netting on to another court or pathway, wait until a break in play before retrieving it without interrupting other play that may be taking place

Line calls: Please give your opponents the benefit of the doubt when it comes to line calls. If you are not sure, then play your opponent's ball as good! Also remember to make line calls in a timely fashion so that your opponents can hear.

Lets: Always agree a let if a ball (or player) comes on court during a rally. It is also better to offer a let in situations where your opponents are not happy with, or dispute, your line calls.

Respect and courtesy: Noisy behaviour, shouting and bad language are not acceptable on or off court at Townsend. Always show your partner and your opponents respect and courtesy.

Mobile phones: If possible, please try to switch your mobile phone to silent whilst on court or in the clubhouse, to allow everyone to concentrate on their tennis!

Picking up rubbish: Please don't leave empty cans, water bottles, banana skins or old tennis balls on court or in the grounds or clubhouse.

Food and drink: No food or drinking glasses are allowed on court.

Sweeping the courts: Townsend does not have a full time Groundsman to clean up after everyone, so if you are the last player to use one of the acrylic or clay surfaces please take the trouble to drag/sweep the court and roll the lines with the equipment provided so that the next people using the courts can enjoy their game too.

Wimbledon ticket draw

Every year we receive an allocation of pairs of tickets for the Wimbledon Championships that is based on the number on the number of members in our club, provided they have signed up for British Tennis membership (free from the LTA) and have opted into the Wimbledon Ballot on the LTA website. Our Wimbledon tickets are allocated to eligible playing members at our annual Wimbledon draw evening which takes place in early/mid May. Since there are not enough tickets for everyone who wants one, it is also generally appreciated if anyone lucky enough to draw several pairs of tickets in the same family, feels able to put one or more tickets back into the general draw. The Wimbledon draw is also a popular social event with a full bar and a homecooked supper available at a very reasonable price.

First aid and safety

There is a basic first aid kit in the kitchen inside the clubhouse. We also have a defibrillator inside the clubhouse in the unlikely event of anyone stopping breathing while playing tennis or visiting the club. You do not need to have used a defibrillator before to use it, as it gives instructions during use, but there are also several club members, including our Coaching Team who have received special training in its use.