

H A N D B O O K



This handbook is designed to give you information about the Club. Please read it in conjunction with our website, our emails and notices posted in the Clubhouse.

Here at **Welwyn Tennis Club** we have great tennis facilities open to all standards of playing members. Our pleasant clubhouse offers a fully-stocked bar, a well equipped kitchen, an office for our coaches, changing rooms with showers, a TV lounge and a table tennis table. Free parking is available on-site.

There are eight floodlit **artificial grass** courts and one **carpeted** court. **There is also a separate four-court Kid's Zone.** Two of the artificial grass courts are covered by a **'bubble' in winter**, so there is no excuse to stop playing during those cold, wet winter months. Our floodlights are free to members but a very reasonable charge is made for use of the bubble courts, booked online via our website or an app.

Our **qualified coaches** are available for individual and group coaching all year round with a range of lessons to suit all standards.

We arrange many **tournaments** throughout the year, including the senior and junior club championships, matchplay days, mini tennis tournaments, club singles leagues and social doubles tournaments and leagues.

We have around fifty **league teams** competing with other clubs throughout the year suitable for players of all standards. Most league teams play men's, ladies' or mixed doubles.

Juniors - We place special emphasis on catering for the needs of our junior members, ensuring they are given a good percentage of court time.

AND for those of you keen to play for fun and to meet like-minded individuals, come to our popular **club sessions** that are arranged at regular times throughout the week. Volunteer members organise each club session, so mixed doubles of all standards play a balanced game throughout the session.

We have plenty of **social events** during the year at the clubhouse and other venues including quizzes and regular Club 'n' Grub evening usually on the first Friday of every month. We hope you will enjoy all of the facilities and if you have ideas for improvements or are willing to help in any way to run the club, please do let any Committee member know.

Our club is run with close liaison and much support from the Lawn Tennis Association, both at local and national level. This gives us links with our County Development and County Performance Officers and ensures that we are aligned with initiatives to help improve the playing standard of tennis in our club and therefore, Great Britain.

We are an LTA accredited club, approved by Sport England to ensure a duty of care and safe playing environment for children and young people.

WELWYN TENNIS CLUB

The Playing Fields Ottway Walk Welwyn Herts AL6 9AT

Coaches Office Tel: 07941 158153

www.welwyn-tennis.co.uk

Club Activities & Facilities

Our club year starts on 1st April and ends on 31st March. Important dates during the year, such as tournaments, league fixtures, social events etc. are published at the start of the club year and are on the website and clubhouse notice boards. Up-to-the-minute information is also published via email to club members.

At regular times every week some of the courts are allocated for **Club Sessions** which are open to all senior members and are especially good for new members to become involved in the club's activities and to meet other members. Balls are generally supplied by the club for these sessions. Currently, there are adult club sessions on Wednesday and Friday evenings from 7:30pm and on Tuesday mornings at 10am. Just turn up and play.

As mentioned, on the first Friday of each month we run a **Club 'n' Grub**, a normal social club session but with food available from around 8pm.

It's your club, so make use of the facilities by arranging social games. Don't wait to be asked - take the initiative and arrange a game.

Coaching is available for senior and junior members at all levels, either individual or in groups. Squad training is available all year. Check on the coaching section on the *Forms* page on our website for an Application Form. This lists all the opportunities.

The club has a thriving **junior section** with its own Friday club night in term times. We run boys and girls teams, 17, 15, 13 and 11-under, in National Club League; 15-under teams in summer and winter county league and many Mini Tennis teams throughout the year. Junior Club Night is on every Friday. 6-7:30pm (not holidays). Juniors have **EQUAL** priority with adults on court use.

Courts, Floodlighting and Bubble

Six astroturf courts are always open but the two bubble courts are locked during the 'covered' season when not in use.

All courts must be booked on the website or 'Booker' app prior to play. Some, you will find, are reserved at certain times for matches, club sessions, or coaching. This varies throughout the year, but you can book in advance via the online bubble booking system.

The switches for the floodlights are in the foyer. The single switch operates the lights for the 2-court block. The switches for the upper and lower 3-court blocks are next to it. Please only turn on as many as required - they are very expensive to run!

The airhall, or 'bubble' as it is more commonly known, is in place over Courts 1 & 2 from mid October to mid April. Bookings are again made on our club website and will be priced accordingly.

Bubble and other Court Booking Rules

- All courts are bookable on a first come, first served basis by booking online at <https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/WelwynTennisClub> or via the 'Booker' app (search for ClubSpark Booker on your app store).
- You must first register on the website and your registration request will be emailed to the membership department for verification. Once you have received a verification email, you will be free to go online, set up a payment account and then book the bubble.
- You can book up to 16 days in advance.
- Indoor bubble courts cost £4 per half hour, or £8 per half hour at peak time (weekday evenings). Outdoor courts are free.
- Payment is by credit card online.
- If you want to cancel a booking, there is a full refund if cancelling 24 hours before the booking, otherwise there is no refund.
- Under no circumstances are you permitted to play in the bubble without first booking and paying online. There are no exceptions to this rule.
- The key to the bubble is kept in the reception area on a hook (it has a 'tennis ball' keyring). After you have finished playing in the bubble, if there is no one else actually on court please lock it when you leave and hang the key up.
- If you need a key to the clubhouse for access, contact Sally Walker on **01438 811372** who can give you one on payment of a deposit.
- You are permitted to play a 'reasonable period' of about 5 minutes either before or after your booking period if the courts are empty (or with the consent of the next group of players) - for example, to finish a game.

For more information on the booking system or to report a problem please contact:

Robert Crisp at fairfolds@gmail.com.

The Clubhouse and Bar

Members over 18 years of age may obtain a clubhouse key from Sally Walker 01438 811372 on payment of a deposit. Do take advantage of this privilege of key holding - have you thought how much trouble you would have to go to if you are the last one to leave and you don't have a key? Please see Bye-Law 5.

The bar is open at busy times but is run by volunteers, so please be understanding if opening times are sometimes a little "flexible".

Table Tennis

The club has a thriving table tennis membership and we have teams playing in the SHAW (St Albans, Hatfield and Welwyn) league and there are matches every week in the playing season. If you would like to play, contact Alan Walker on 01438 811372. There are also a couple of social sessions during the weekdays.

Safety and Security

If you are the last to leave the clubhouse and courts, please check that everything is locked and secure and that lights and electrical appliances are turned off. A list of items to check is in the Bye-Laws at the back of this Handbook, but please also use "common sense". If you have any doubts, please contact a Committee member. We hope that everyone will enjoy their tennis and not suffer injury, but members do use the club facilities at their own risk. If you notice anything about the facilities that you consider is unsafe, or if someone is behaving in an unsafe or inappropriate manner, please speak to a committee member or see our **Safeguarding Policy** under 'Forms' on the club website

There is a maintenance book in the clubhouse where you can note down any observations. There is also a basic first aid kit in the foyer (cupboard unit beneath worktop).

Wimbledon Tickets

Each year, the LTA run an Advantage ballot for members of tennis clubs and you will be asked to 'opt in' by the LTA if you want to be part of the ballot.

Social Membership

Social membership offers certain privileges that include eligibility for inclusion in the Wimbledon Advantage ballot. Also, social members can obtain a clubhouse key on payment of a deposit and have full use of the clubhouse and table tennis facility. They can also 'knock-up' with their children playing Mini-Red or Orange on the Kid's Zone and on the single court behind the Kind's Zone.

Visitors

Members are welcome to bring non-members to play at the club. There is a charge of £10 for adult players, £2 for juniors, and you will find a QR code on the entrance door to facilitate payment.

Internal Tournaments & Leagues

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Format:* Knockout tournament played over a period of about 2-3 months, with plate competitions for first round or first match losers. Players enter with a partner for all doubles competitions, or request "partner wanted".
- Events:* Men's Singles, Ladies Singles, Men's Doubles, Ladies Doubles and Mixed Doubles.
- Eligibility:* Open to any club-playing member.
- Standard:* All levels but typically those members who play League teams.
- When:* May-July.

JUNIOR CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Format:* Junior equivalent of the senior club championships, with different age groups but no plate events.
- Events:* U10, U14 and U18 Boys and Girls Singles. U18 Boys and Girls Doubles.
- Eligibility:* Open to any junior member within the respective age group.
- Standard:* All levels.
- When:* May-July (U14 events may start and finish sooner).

CLUB VETERANS AND SUPERVETS CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Format:* Equivalent of the Club Championships but for 'mature' members. Main draw and plate events.
- Events:* Men's Singles, Ladies Singles, Men's Doubles, Ladies Doubles and Mixed Doubles.
- Eligibility:* Playing members aged 45+ for the men and 40+ for the ladies. Supervets 60+
- Standard:* All levels.
- When:* September-December.

TRANS-AMERICAN TEAM TOURNAMENT

- Format:* Extremely popular mixed doubles round-robin team event. Players are grouped into four levels then partners drawn and allocated different teams. Each pair will play the corresponding level pair in the other teams. At the end of the tournament the top two teams play-off in the final.
- Events:* Mixed doubles.
- Eligibility:* Open to any club-playing member.
- Standard:* All levels.
- When:* December-March.

MAC'S TOURNAMENTS

- Format:* Progressive "American style" friendly tournament in aid of a selected charity nominated by a club member.
- Events:* Mixed doubles.
- Eligibility:* Open to any club-playing member.
- Standard:* All levels.
- When:* August Bank holiday or early autumn.

To all Tournament Players: As a courtesy to your fellow players, please adhere to deadlines and concede at match point if you are unable to complete the next round.

LEAGUE TEAMS

There is plenty of opportunity for members to play competitive tennis against other clubs. During a typical year we enter around 50 teams into various leagues that cater for a wide spectrum of playing standard. If you would like to play in any of them, or would like further information, please check the website or notice boards for a contact name and keep a lookout for emails.

HERTS COUNTY LEAGUES

- Format:* Traditional summer county leagues with teams comprising three doubles pairs who each play the three pairs in the opposing team. Matches are best three sets with a championship tie-break for the third set.
- Teams:* We currently run seven men's teams and five ladies teams, with representation at most levels in the county divisions.
- Eligibility:* Team squads are allocated according to approximate standard, but we try to accommodate anybody who would like to play.
- Standard:* All players capable of three competitive matches in an afternoon.
- When:* Saturday or Sunday afternoons during April-September.

ORCHARD LADIES FRIENDLY LEAGUE

- Format:* Local league for ladies that wish to play some doubles matches, but with a little less competitive pressure than in other leagues.
- Teams:* Teams consist of two ladies pairs.
- Eligibility:* Ladies who do not normally play in the Herts Summer League teams.
- Standard:* Friendly competition.
- When:* Usually played on weekdays during the summer.

DATCHWORTH SUMMER LEAGUE

- Format:* Teams comprise two men and one lady, who combine to play one men's doubles and two mixed doubles, i.e. each person gets two matches and sits out for one match. Each match consists of thirteen games regardless of the score.
- Teams:* We normally run six or seven teams in this league.
- Eligibility:* Open to playing members who do not represent the club in the higher divisions of the Herts County League.
- Standard:* Lower county league level and we encourage players that may not get an opportunity to play in the Herts County League teams.
- When:* May-July.

DATCHWORTH AUTUMN LEAGUE

- Format:* Teams comprise two men and two ladies who combine to play one men's and one ladies doubles, plus two mixed doubles. Each match consists of thirteen games regardless of the score.
- Teams:* We normally run six or seven teams in this league.
- Eligibility:* Open to all playing members.
- Standard:* Normally played at a slightly higher competitive level than the Datchworth Summer League.
- When:* September-November.

EAST HERTS MIXED LEAGUE

- Format:** Teams comprise two mixed pairs who play both the opposing team pairs in a match consisting of the best of three tie-break sets.
- Teams:** We currently run ten teams in this league.
- Eligibility:** Team squads are allocated according to approximate standard, but we try to accommodate anybody who would like to play.
- Standard:** All levels but typically those members who play in Herts Summer League teams.
- When:** October-March

HOT RACKETS LEAGUE

- Format:** Teams comprise two pairs of ladies or men who play both the opposing team pairs in a match consisting of the best of three tie-break sets.
- Teams:** We currently run two men's and two ladies teams in this league.
- Eligibility:** Team squads are allocated according to approximate standard
- Standard:** Typically those members who play in Herts Summer League teams.
- When:** April- September

HERTS SINGLES LEAGUE

- Format:** Teams of three players with each player playing one match against the opposing team player of the same level. Players are ranked according to ability.
- Teams:** One men's team and one ladies team.
- Eligibility:** Any playing member, but anybody who would like to play singles will be encouraged.
- Standard:** Matches tend to be of varying standard.
- When:** October-February.

HERTS VETERANS LEAGUES

- Format:** Two doubles pairs who play both pairs of the opposing team in a best of three set match.
- Teams:** We run a variety of teams at 45+, 50+ and 55+ for men, and 40+, 45+ and 50+ for ladies.
- Eligibility:** Playing members who have reached the requisite age.
- Standard:** All levels but the first team at age group are fairly competitive.
- When:** October-March

Court Etiquette

The following basic rules of etiquette are mostly common courtesy and should be followed whether you are playing an important match or just social tennis.

On-Court Behaviour



Show respect and courtesy

To your opponents, your partner, and others on or near the courts. Keep your voice down and confined to your court as much as possible so as not to disrupt players on adjacent courts. If you get into a loud dispute with your opponent, take it off the court and away from other players. Please do not use language that might offend others.

Do not walk on to another court during a game.

Wait for the players to finish playing a point, before walking on to or behind their court. It is very distracting to have someone disrupt a game in progress.

Retrieving your ball from an adjacent court.

As with the above, it is common courtesy not to disrupt players on court during a match. If your ball rolls on to an adjacent court, wait for them to finish the point and kindly ask for "a little help" to get their attention. Do not run over on to their court in the middle of a point to retrieve the ball yourself.

Always wear proper tennis shoes.

Black-soled shoes should not be worn on hard court surfaces as they leave marks on the courts that are difficult to get off. Make sure you wear proper tennis shoes on court. They give your feet the necessary lateral support when running down balls, and making abrupt changes in direction.

Close the gate behind you.

Whether you're coming on or off the courts, please wait for play to cease on adjacent courts and close the gate behind you. Having left the court, please also avoid walking across the back or down the side of the courts while play is in progress.

Pick up after yourself.

Don't leave empty cans, banana skins or old tennis balls out on the court when you leave. Dispose of any rubbish you have in the appropriate recycling bin on the deck or in the clubhouse.

Monitor children on the courts at all times.

Everyone who plays tennis wants to encourage juniors to play the game as well, but juniors must also follow these rules. Since children can easily get distracted, it's up to the adults with them to assist. Stray balls, running around and yelling are actions that need to be managed.

Ball Clearance

During a game, clear all balls that are loose in the area of play. These are not only dangerous but will also distract players on both sides of the net. Do this quickly so as to cause minimum disruption to the game.

If your doubles partner serves into the net, retrieve the ball quickly and put the ball in your pocket or to the side of the net. Do not just flick it back to the end of the court as it will remain a hazard, waste time and distract the server.

Have fun.

The objective of playing tennis, aside from being good aerobic exercise, is to have fun. You can follow these rules of etiquette and still have a good time on the courts – the players on adjacent courts will appreciate it.



Calling the Shots

1. Always give your opponent the benefit of the doubt on close line calls. If you are not absolutely sure of the call, then you should play the ball as good. If you're not sure whether your opponent's shot is in or out, it's in! This includes serves.
2. If a ball or player from an adjacent court comes on to your court in the middle of play, you should immediately call a "let", no matter which side the ball lands on. This situation can be dangerous and stepping on or tripping over a stray ball can seriously hurt a player.
3. Tennis rules state that a shot is considered good unless it is called "out." It may seem to you that a ball has landed well past the baseline, but it might not be obvious to your opponent, who may be standing up to 90 feet away or have an obstructed view. Call "out" balls unless they hit the fence!
4. The point is your opponent's if the ball touches you or your racket before the first bounce, even if you are standing outside the court. So let it bounce. If you catch an "out" ball in the air, it is considered your opponent's point. This includes serves.
5. The receiver must be ready before the server starts the point. If a ball rolls onto your court between serves, causing an interruption, you should call a "let" and allow the server to take two serves.

Bye-Laws of the Club

GENERAL

- 1) Members are responsible for the behaviour of their visitors, children and animals.
- 2) Members should use the access road with due consideration for others and respect the speed limits and other restrictions from time to time imposed by the Parish Council.
- 3) Car parking on-site is at the owners' risk. There is room in our two car parks for about 50 cars and overspill must use either the car park in School Lane (immediately below the tennis courts on the right) or the car park at the entry to the playing fields on Ottway Walk. Please do not park in the Bowls Club car park.
- 4) Members of the public have a right of access to the footpath alongside the hedge between our land and the bowls area. Whilst we were in favour of the peaceful use of our peripheral areas by responsible persons for walking, watching tennis etc., we will only avoid vandalism by regarding the area as we would our own gardens and making sure that others respect it as such. Members are urged to take a firm line in this respect by warning off mis-users.

CLUBHOUSE

- 5) Members may use the clubhouse at any time during the day, and keys are available for this purpose to all seniors (over 18). Any person leaving the clubhouse unoccupied must ensure that :
 - All windows are closed and catches secured (including both changing rooms)
 - Storeroom off reception area shut.
 - Both patio doors are closed and locked.
 - Fire Escape is fully closed (to left of kitchen).
 - Bar flap is closed and locked.
 - All internal lights are off.
 - In winter, bubble door is locked.
 - Finally, main door is locked (push handle up first).
 - Any break-ins should be reported to an officer of the club ASAP
 - Sun umbrellas on the terrace should be let down
- 6) Juniors shall not have unsupervised access to the clubhouse.
- 7) Members can use the kitchen to make tea and coffee (supplied) although milk is not supplied. A small charge is made which should be placed in the 'honesty' tin next to the tea/coffee. Cooking facilities are for matches, club functions and committee approved personnel only, they are not for making member's lunches! Please leave the kitchen as you find it and wash up any items used.
- 8) Animals are not allowed in the clubhouse.
- 9) Smoking is not permitted in the clubhouse.
- 10) Members may book the clubhouse for meetings, parties, etc. at the discretion of the Committee and on payment of a fee.

COURTS

- 11) Players must wear approved tennis clothing and/or track suits. Footwear must have no heels or pronounced ribbing on soles. The Committee will decide on the interpretation of the word "approved".
- 12) Players are not allowed to play singles when all the courts are in use and other members are waiting to play (unless it is for a tournament match). Players should offer to play doubles with the people waiting or come off court.
- 13) If members are waiting to play, players should play one short set (i.e. first to win 6 games).
- 14) Junior members have equal status for court use with senior members. There will of course, continue to be courts reserved (e.g. for clubnights and matches) but outside such reservations there shall be equality of treatment.
- 15) Rubbish is not to be left on court but is to be placed in the bins provided. If you notice a bin is full, please empty it.

16) The reservation of courts for particular purposes varies throughout the year as do booking arrangements (including those for airhall in winter). Check on the Court Booking page on our website.

17) Visitors should be signed in and paid for via the QR code at the entrance door before commencing play.

THE COMMITTEE

Our committee is democratically elected at the club's Annual General Meeting (usually the last Friday of November) and comprises up to 15 members, plus the head coach.

Meetings are held every couple of months and a number of sub-committees operate within this framework.

This includes Tennis, Social and Membership, Maintenance/Finance and Junior committees.

All main-committee and sub-committee members are unpaid volunteers and they rely on the support of all members to ensure the smooth running of the club.

PLEASE OBSERVE EMAILS AND WATCH THE NOTICE BOARD FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEASE INFORM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY IF YOUR DETAILS CHANGE

If you are not receiving emails, please send your email address to welwyntennisclub@gmail.com