

# Ards & North Down Tennis Clubs – Strategy Document 2016 - 2021

## Executive summary

### **Context**

- Five tennis clubs from Ards and North Down have formed a partnership to work with Ards & North Down Borough Council to support the development of tennis over the next 5 years. The shared vision for tennis is aimed at:
- Increasing regular participation in tennis from all sectors of the community by developing a varied club based programme to attract and retain members:
- Increasing junior participation by outreach to schools and developing further junior tennis activities, including junior performance groups:
- Promoting tennis as a participation sport for all, not limited by age, gender or ability, contributing to promoting healthy lifestyles across the Council area; specifically, to develop tennis opportunities and coaching for disadvantaged and target groups, such as the mentally disabled, wheelchair users, girls aged 15-18 and women.

### **Targets:**

- To grow membership across the 5 clubs by 20% by 2021 (from 436 to 570):
- To develop a collaborative coaching programme with at least 1 shared junior performance group by 2018:
- To develop a junior competitive play tournament programme for under 10s to under 18s for all abilities by 2018:
- To provide at least 1000 Primary School children aged up to 8 years to have their first introduction to tennis every year and to achieve this by 2020:
- To provide at least 500 Primary School Children with at least 6 hours of group tennis coaching every year by 2020:
- To have full flood lighting at all 5 clubs to allow evening all year round play by 2021:
- To implement design changes to all 5 clubs (where practical) to ensure wheelchair access and the capacity for wheelchair tennis by 2022:
- To have access to at least 8 indoor or covered tennis courts to provide guaranteed tennis in winter months by 2022.

### **Support required**

In order to achieve these aims and targets, the clubs require the following commitment and action from Ards and North Down Council to improve facilities:

- Ensure that all courts and pavilions are safe and fit for purpose: currently Helens Bay courts are urgently in need of resurfacing
- Support and implement full disabled access and the capacity for wheelchair tennis at all 5 clubs where practical
- Promote and support development of full floodlighting at all 5 clubs
- Work together with the 5 clubs and the AGP Junior Performance Academy to develop recreational and competitive tennis across the Council area
- Develop indoor tennis provision at the new Dairy Hall complex and assist Clubs to obtain grant funding to install domes at 2 of the 5 clubs where feasible, and in the short term to ensure better access to the existing Comber done during winter months.

The Clubs will commit to working together to:

- Set up joint coaching arrangements, coordinate junior tournaments and facilitate the development of elite junior coaching squads; and
- Develop adult interclub play and tournaments and set up coaching and tennis opportunities for disadvantaged people and target groups as facilities development allows.

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This document has been put together by representatives of 5 Tennis Clubs in Ards and North Down who came together in 2015 to form a partnership to promote the playing and development of Tennis throughout the Borough. These Clubs are all affiliated to Ulster Branch Tennis Ireland. The clubs are (in alphabetical order):
- 1.2. Bangor Lawn Tennis Club; Cloughey & District Tennis Club; Donaghadee Tennis club; Helen's Bay Tennis Club; and St Patrick's Racquets Club (Newtownards)
- 1.3. While each are members of the Ulster Branch of Tennis Ireland (UBTI), there are different constitutional arrangements, demographics, infrastructure, and relationships with the Borough Council. Attached to this document are the summary baseline positions for the five Clubs (see Appendix 2)
- 1.4. This 5 year strategy, 2018 to 2022, outlines our vision for the development of tennis. We wish to work in partnership with the Council, both generally in taking forward the Sports Facilities consultancy report, and directly for the three Clubs which play on Council-owned courts (ie Cloughey, Donaghadee, and Helen's Bay).

## **2. Our Values**

- 2.1. Our clubs are open and inclusive and welcome new members from all sections of the community, and all age groups;
- 2.2. We recognise that tennis is a universal sport for life that can be played and enjoyed at all levels of ability from beginner and recreational to highly competitive;
- 2.3. In particular, in our clubs we endorse the physical and mental health promoting aspects of tennis;
- 2.4. We support the modern 'play & stay' mini-tennis approach for juniors aged up to 10 with the use of slow balls, small rackets, and mini-nets. Our coaches are encouraged to adopt the games-based approach to coaching beginners of all ages;
- 2.5. Clubs can provide good value access to all-year-round tennis, and club members tend to play more than casual players. Accordingly, expansion of club membership is key to increasing the numbers playing tennis.

## **3. Our Vision**

- 3.1. Our vision for tennis in Ards & North Down:
- 3.2. To get more people playing tennis on a regular basis;
- 3.3. The development of our Tennis Clubs to ensure increased participation in tennis in Ards & North Down;
- 3.4. Clubs and other sport-related bodies cooperating to promote tennis as a participation sport for all age groups;
- 3.5. Investment in improving facilities to provide all-year-round, all-weather, flood-lit courts;
- 3.6. Five 'fit for purpose', progressive and inclusive tennis clubs (Bangor, Cloughey & District, Donaghadee, Helen's Bay, St Patrick's) with healthy vibrant programmes to retain members, with a collaborative core for further development of tennis in the Borough.

#### **4. Our Aims**

- 4.1. Our aims for tennis in Ards & North Down:
- 4.2. To increase Club membership by at least 20% by 2022;
- 4.3. **Establish sustained outreach programmes** to promote tennis and achieve a wider participation. Tennis is a sport that is not limited by age, sex or ability. It can be played by the very old or the very young, by able bodied or disabled, regardless of gender, ability or social background. Its natural inclusiveness should be used to the full to ensure maximum health benefit in the District. Tennis is a healthy sport for life for all ages, abilities, and social backgrounds;
- 4.4. **Funding and finance – Greater investment in funding and finance.** To work with the Council and other funding bodies to obtain grants to improve the existing tennis facilities and to enable tennis in all weathers, all year round, day and night, and to achieve long-term sustainability for tennis in the Borough.
- 4.5. **All year round capacity** – to have additional indoor facilities available for tennis.
- 4.6. **Governance** - Clubs to achieve and maintain standards of governance recommended by Tennis Ireland and Sport NI.

#### **5. Specific Objectives**

- 5.1. Our specific objectives for tennis in Ards & North Down include the following:
- 5.2. By 2021 to have grown the number of UBTI registered club members from 402 (for all 5 clubs) to 483 (20%) by developing a varied club programme to attract and retain members; This will involve creating a play and stay culture at each of the five clubs, including adopting a 1 page Club Development Plan and agreeing key actions;
- 5.3. To have a Collaborative coaching programme in place by 2018 with at least one shared junior performance group as part of the UBTI Talent identification and player pathway programme;
- 5.4. By 2019 all clubs to be Clubmark Accredited;
- 5.5. To have in place by 2018 a junior competitive play tournament programme, including leagues, friendlies and tournaments for all ages and abilities from under 10s to under 18s;
- 5.6. Extend the outreach programme to additional primary schools. By 2020 1000 children in the Borough to experience at least 1 hour of tennis by the age of 8 and 500 children aged 9-11yrs to have at least 6 hours of group coaching in a year.
- 5.7. By 2021 to have 5 clubs with full flood-lighting to allow evening play all year round;
- 5.8. By 2022 to have access to at least 8 indoor or covered tennis courts (seasonal or permanent domes, bubbles or larger structures) in the District to provide guaranteed tennis in winter months;
- 5.9. Implement design changes to all five clubs (where practical) to ensure full disabled access and the capacity for wheel-chair tennis.

## **6. Action Plan**

This section sets out the specific actions, under specific headings, which the 5 clubs will either take themselves or take in partnership with the Council. It includes building on work already in hand.

### **Facilities Improvement Programme:**

#### **Resurfacing:**

- 6.1. A decent surface is the most important item, not least to ensure health and safety criteria are met:
- 6.2. Cloughey is now being completed with additional court with new surfaces and floodlights.
- 6.3. Bangor have recently resurfaced their main courts and upgraded their other 3 courts, and are planning to add floodlights to those;
- 6.4. Helen's Bay resurfacing is the number one priority, as it was last done in 2000, and at times the courts currently pose health and safety issues. It should be done by 2019 at the latest. The club wish to work now with the Council to secure the funding.

#### **Access:**

- 6.5. Implement improvements to facilities at all five clubs (if practical) to ensure full disabled access and the capacity for wheelchair tennis.

#### **Clubhouse/pavilions:**

- 6.6. The pavilion at Helen's Bay (which is owned by the Council) has not been updated since completion over 50 years ago. It is also used as a community nursery school during weekday mornings;
- 6.7. Bangor & St Patrick's pavilions are satisfactory;
- 6.8. Donaghadee pavilion is adequate (rented from Council) but Club wishes to improve the program of regular maintenance of the courts by Council.
- 6.9. Cloughey – the existing pavilion is shared with bowlers and community, with no exclusive area for tennis club. There is a proposal to extend the pavilion to provide more facilities for the public using the beach and more flexibility to improve sharing by the organisations. – a sheltered viewing area or small courtside building would help the social development of the tennis club.

#### **Floodlighting**

- 6.10. Install new floodlighting at Helen's Bay
- 6.11. Extend the floodlighting at St. Patrick's to further two courts;
- 6.12. Extend the floodlighting at Bangor to the 3 rear courts.
- 6.13. Review suitability of existing floodlights at Donaghadee

## **7. Other public tennis facilities**

- 7.1. The Council already provides additional tennis facilities with astroturf courts (2 floodlit) at Ward Park, Bangor (11), Comber Leisure Centre (4), & Portaferry Leisure Centre (1), and older basic tarmac courts at Ballyholme (4), Seahill Holywood (4), Ballywalter (2), Greyabbey (2), and Groomsport (2).
- 7.2. The Council facilitates the privately-operated AGP Junior Performance Academy which uses the Ward Park and Comber Courts on a regular basis. We intend to develop links with the Council and the Academy to develop recreational and competitive tennis in the Borough. We consider that there is potential for our Clubs and UBTI (including Parks Tennis) to work with the Council to run an outreach programme to encourage more tennis and usage of Council courts.

## **8. Indoor tennis facilities.**

- 8.1. Indoor tennis provision in the Borough is extremely limited with just 2 covered courts in the Borough. This is restricting tennis development and 2 courts are simply not enough to deal with the demand from competitive players and club coaching groups at peak periods (evenings and weekends).
- 8.2. The new Leisure Centre at Dairy Hall, Newtownards should have 3 tennis courts marked out in the outdoor dome shared with other sports.
- 8.3. Liaise with the Council over the refurbishment of the courts at Ward Park, which might include floodlighting 6 courts and winter cover for at least 4 courts for public and club use.
  
- 8.4. Obtain grant funding to provide (temporary) winter domes at two of the five clubs by 2021
- 8.5. Work with the Council to ensure better access to the existing Comber dome for all year round tennis. (Availability in evenings and weekends for external tennis clubs and players is very limited, due to current booking arrangements.) Implementation of the above action points would help to relieve existing pressure on the Comber dome.

## **9. Collaborative Coaching:**

- 9.1. Set up a collaborative group (Ards and North Down Tennis) to coordinate a junior tournament programme for the winter months. This has been done on a test basis over the winter 2015/2016. The lessons learnt from this pilot will be used to improve the programme for subsequent years.
- 9.2. Develop trust and mutual cooperation between clubs and club coaches by meeting regularly and developing shared coaching programmes and developing a culture of helping one another. Coaches at different clubs can provide cover for each other.
- 9.3. Develop a programme of elite junior coaching squads at each of the clubs which other clubs can support with their junior members: an elite Boys squad at St. Pats on a Monday late evening; an Elite mixed squad at Donaghadee early Friday evening; (These have been currently chosen for geographical and facility reasons eg Helen's Bay has no floodlights.) Establish one joint performance academy in the district as part of the UBTI Talent ID & Player pathway programme.
- 9.4. Increase the number of coaches and coaching assistants linked to the Clubs. Encourage and subsidise volunteers to qualify as Coaching Assistants. Encourage and subsidise Coaching Assistants to become qualified coaches

10. **Competitive Play & Tournament Programmes:**

- 10.1. The clubs are working together to develop an annual programme for juniors of all ages from the under 10s to under 18 including internal leagues and friendlies;
- 10.2. The clubs have already begun an annual programme of inter-club adult friendly matches;
- 10.3. When a club temporarily cannot be used eg during resurfacing, its members will be welcomed at the other clubs;
- 10.4. Organise regular junior tournaments (open to club juniors) for all age groups (U8s, U9s, U10s U12s U14s U18s);
- 10.5. Provide coaching and tennis opportunities for disadvantaged groups (mentally handicapped, wheelchair users);
- 10.6. Establish regular sessions for target groups - Women, over 55s, Girls aged 15-18 years;
- 10.7. Coordinate marketing to attract new members to clubs, with similar starter packages for beginners at the clubs;
- 10.8. Introduce Cardio tennis sessions, novelty tournaments, and International Tennis Number (ITN) numbers for all players;
- 10.9. Organise joint squads for better juniors and produce more ranked players.

11. **Developing cohesiveness:**

- 11.1. Organise a coordinated 'Tennis Day' where all clubs hold an Open day on the same day.
- 11.2. Each Club to organise at least 1 social event each year and invite members from the other clubs.

END

[see appendices]

## Appendix 1

### Ards North Down District Audit of existing tennis facilities 2016

Location	Club name	Private Club or Council Owned	Current No of courts	Target no of courts	Current Floodlit courts	Target floodlit courts	Current covered courts	Target covered courts	open to public (current)	Court surface	comments
Bangor	Bangor Lawn Tennis Club	Private Club	6	6	3	6	0	2	0	Astroturf	Space for 1 more court
Newtownards	St Patricks Racquets club	Private Club	4	4	2	4	0	0	0	Astroturf	
Helens Bay	Helens Bay Tennis Club	Council/club + public	3	3	0	3	0	0	3	Painted Tarmac	
Donaghadee	Donaghadee Tennis Club	Council/club + public	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	Astroturf	
Cloughey	Cloughey & District TC	Council/club + public	3	3	3	3	0	0	3	Needlepunch Carpet	Delivered April 2017
Ward Park, Bangor	used by AGP junior squad	Council/public	11	6	2	6	0	4	11	Astroturf	In need of refurb
Comber Leisure	used by AGP junior squad	Council/public	4	4	4	4	2	0	4	Astroturf	In need of refurb
Portaferry Leisure	no club	Council/public	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	Acrylic	used mainly for soccer
Ballyholme Bangor	no club	Council/public	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	Painted Tarmac	mainly casual summer use
Seapark Hollywood	no club	Council/public	4	4	0	4	0	0	4	Painted Tarmac	Potential to establish club ?
Ballywalter	no club	Council/public	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	Tarmac	in poor condition
Greyabbey	no club	Council/public	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	Tarmac	in poor condition
Groomsport	no club	Council/public	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	Tarmac	in poor condition
Newtownards	Dairy Hall	Council/public	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	Multi-use indoor	due in 2018
		<b>Totals</b>	<b>49</b>		<b>18</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>37</b>		
		<b>2021 Target</b>		<b>47</b>		<b>37</b>		<b>9</b>			
		<b>Target change</b>	<b>decrease</b>	<b>-1</b>	<b>increase</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>increase</b>	<b>7</b>			





### Appendix 3

#### ANDTC target for membership by 2021

<b>Tennis Club</b>	<b>Actual Membership (UBTI) 2016</b>	<b>ANDTC suggested %age increase</b>	<b>actual increase</b>	<b>ANDTC new target</b>
Bangor	205	20%	41	246
Helen's Bay	56	20%	11	67
Donaghadee	53	20%	11	64
Cloughey & District	48	20%	10	58
St Patrick's	40	20%	8	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>483</b>

#### Notes

1. Targets in blue based on %ages of existing membership as registered by UBTI
2. There are some anomalies in M'ship figures as UBTI figures do not include some categories (eg temporary members, non-playing family members, U8s in some cases)
3. Strategy document will use the official UBTI figures as baseline for 2021 membership targets for each club and the total membership across all 5 clubs.
4. Targets can be reviewed annually in light of actual progress.

This document has been approved by the committees of the 5 clubs as follows:

Signed on behalf of the 5 Clubs by:

..... Robin Masefield Club Chairman, Helens Bay Tennis Club

..... Simon Chambers Club Chairman, Bangor Lawn Tennis Club

..... Trevor Octave Club Chairman, Donaghadee Tennis Club

..... Brian McDonald Club Chairman, St Patricks Racquets Club

..... Alistair Dunn Club Chairman, Cloughey & District Tennis Club

**This document has been endorsed by Ulster Branch Tennis Ireland**

Signed ..... **George Stephenson President UBTI**

**Dated 14 January 2018**