



Llannon Community Council
Proposal – Cross Hands Park Tennis Courts Upgrade



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Clerk to the Council & Responsible Financial Officer
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Introduction

“The Carmarthenshire We Want” - Llannon Community Council has a duty to support the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board Well-being Objectives.

In considering this proposal, we can support Objective 2 - Improving well-being and reducing health inequalities:

“Building on the vision within the Director of Public Health Annual Report for 2018/19, our shared vision is a county where individuals, communities and the environment they live, play and work in are adaptive, connected and mutually supportive. This means people are resilient and resourceful and enabled to live joyful, healthy and purposeful lives with a strong sense of belonging”.

Llannon Community Council (LICC) is responsible for the maintenance and repairs of all facilities at Cross Hands Park and currently hold a licence for the park under community asset transfer from Carmarthenshire County Council. The long-term transfer of the lease of Cross Hands Park will be completed in 2024.

I have applied for funding through the Sustainable Communities Fund with the view to commissioning a feasibility study and masterplan to provide improved community, sport and recreation facilities at Cross Hands Park.

Preliminary considerations include providing new changing rooms and shower facilities to service the natural turf playing pitches, improvement of the drainage of the existing pitches, public toilets and providing a new community space.

Additional provision will also be explored including a ‘Cruyff Court’ multi use games area, cricket square/outfield. The grant requested will be used to appoint a professional team to work with LICC to develop the feasibility including:

- A project coordinator to develop a masterplan for the site with stakeholders, business plan, identify funding and submit grant applications on behalf of LICC.
- A sports pitch consultant to oversee the natural turf improvements in line with planning/SAB requirements.
- An architectural firm to design the new build based on the brief provided by the project coordinator and obtain the relevant surveys/approvals for a planning application.

In 2021, the Government and Lawn Tennis Association announced a £30 million package to refurbish more than 4,500 public tennis courts in the most deprived parts of the UK and support a new generation of players to get into the sport.

The funding is designed to open up the sport to people of all backgrounds, support the Government’s commitment to levelling up sports provision across the nation, and provide greater opportunities for everyone to follow the Chief Medical Officer’s guidance on physical activity. The guidance makes clear that children should aim to carry out 60 minutes of physical activity a day, and adults 2.5 hours a week.

It follows unprecedented success for British tennis at the US Open Tennis Championships, led by Emma Raducanu becoming the first British woman to win a Grand Slam singles title since Virginia Wade in 1977, and the first qualifier to win the tournament. The final was watched by a peak audience of 9.2 million viewers on Channel 4 as well as being shown on rights holder Amazon Prime.

Gordon Reid and Alfie Hewett also became the first all-British pairing to complete the Grand Slam by winning the men's wheelchair doubles final, and Joe Salisbury delivered 'double doubles' wins in both the men's and mixed events.

During the Summer of 2023, I became aware that Tennis Wales were working with another local council to provide funding to upgrade their tennis courts. I contacted Tennis Wales to establish whether they could incorporate the tennis courts at Cross Hands Park in to this scheme. As they were already over-subscribed, they agreed to put LICC on a reserve list.

I'm delighted to announce that Tennis Wales contacted me last week with an offer to support Llannon Community Council with the upgrade of the tennis courts at Cross Hands Park. This would protect, secure and create a safe place to play tennis for the long term.

This model would assist LICC in creating a sustainable model which promotes, protects and prepares the tennis courts for the future generations of Llannon Ward. Using the latest insight and technology to improve the customer journey and grow tennis participation LICC could create a safe place to play tennis by reducing vandalism and misuse.

The courts will generate income through a low-cost pay to play structure (reduced further for residents of Llannon Ward), which will generate finances to reinvest into the courts supporting long term sustainability and reducing capital investment from LICC in future years.

I have connected with a local resident, Mr John Smith. Mr Smith is the former Chair of Chester Tennis Club and is willing to assist LICC in developing a tennis community. Mr Smith will join us at Wednesday night's meeting to talk more about his experience and enthusiasm to work with LICC on this project.

Here is some more information for Members to consider the proposal:

Project: The renovation of Cross Hands Park tennis courts and provision of gate access system.

Context: Park tennis venues are vital in providing accessible and affordable opportunities for communities to pick up a racket and get active, no matter their age, gender, background, ability, or disability. Tennis Wales's insight shows that park venues are particularly important in driving improved female participation and access to tennis for those from lower socio-economic groups.

However, around 45% of all park tennis venues need some form of investment or renovation work, to ensure that courts are at a standard that can provide

opportunities to sustainably grow participation. Insight also shows that one of the biggest barriers to participation is finding, booking and accessing a court, group activity, or finding someone to play with.

Park tennis courts are a superb environment for people to play. Data shows that most people playing tennis in a park tend to walk or cycle to participate.

Across Wales, there are over 100 public parks with 300+ tennis courts. The aim is to invest into public park tennis courts to ensure they are available for local people to enjoy for the years ahead. During 2020 and 2021, more than 130,000 adults played tennis at least once in Wales, with 40% of these participants playing in a public park.

Tennis Wales are proposing to support LICC to maximise usage at the tennis courts by:

- Introducing online bookings software so local people can find a court, book and pay online.
- Installing gate access technology to facilitate people playing and remotely manage courts across the country, creating a safe space to play, potentially reducing vandalism and misuse.
- Investing financially into the long-term security of park tennis courts, resurfacing, repainting and repairing existing facilities for local people to enjoy.
- Creating local opportunities to get involved in tennis through affordable and free tennis products, programmes and activities run by local coaches, promoting general play to open tennis up in Llannon Ward.

Insight shows that people often feel park tennis courts are poorly maintained and that they do not know how to book and pay for the courts. This model would create a safe, secure and accessible facility with online booking to make it easy for people to get on court.

LTA Investment and Funding criteria

The LTA engaged a Technical Services Consultant to conduct a site visit which has assessed the grant available for capital works at Cross Hands Park Tennis Courts.

Ensuring courts can be protected long term, through a sustainable model, is a key condition of funding. The LTA will support LICC to conduct income feasibility modelling based on introducing affordable court charging and or a commitment to maintain and resurface courts and the end of the agreements period.

Conditions of LTA funding are as follows:

- Procurement framework - commitment to utilise the LTA's own procurement framework to deliver the project.
- Online booking – LTA insight shows that a key barrier to play for park users is the lack of, or an unclear booking journey. To be eligible for investment, LICC must commit to utilising the online booking system ClubSpark, provided

through the LTA, to enable local residents to easily book courts and activities online.

- Establishing an operating model – In house or external providers to manage the site with an agreement in place with a local coach or coaching operator to provide coaching services.
- Free tennis – across the park network, LICC must commit to there being a free tennis offer. The purpose of this funding criteria is to ensure tennis remains accessible and affordable to all residents. This could be a weekly free tennis session. Tennis for Free, a charity that works closely with the LTA, provide a package of support (including coach costs and equipment) to deliver a free, weekly coach-led session.
- Recreational competition offers – sites receiving investment are required to run LTA Local Tennis Leagues which supports players to keep playing and connect with other local players. Tennis Wales will support LLCC with developing a model which caters for the local community.

Gate Access and online booking technology



ClubSpark is the online booking platform which connects to the gate access system. This allows LICC to secure the facilities creating a safe place to play which potentially reduces vandalism, allows the customer to book courts online and provides insight into usage and demographics of the players using the facility.

The ClubSpark website will provide LICC with an online platform to promote the courts and playing offer to the local community. Throughout the year there will be a calendar of free trial opportunities, open days and free coaching throughout the year.

An example of the pricing scheme the Council may wish to adopt is as follows:

Pass Type	Llannon Ward Resident Fee	Non-Resident Fee
Annual Family Pass	£10.00	£40.00
Annual Student Pass	£5.00	£20.00
Annual Over 65 Pass	£5.00	£20.00
Pay & Play	£2.50	£5.00

- Family Pass - Any family member in the household can book & play for 12 months, with as much tennis as they wish to play included in this fee.
- Student Pass - Any student can book & play for 12 months, with as much tennis as they wish to play included.
- Over 65 Pass – Anyone aged 65 or over can book & play for 12 months, with as much tennis as they wish to play included.
- Pay & Play – Fee per court, per hour - Simply book online, pay for the hour and give tennis a try.

Financial Sustainability and Forecasts

The courts at Cross Hands Park would require a sinking fund of £1,200 per court, per annum to cater for future refurbishment needs.

The Lite gate has an annual maintenance fee of £476 ex VAT. (Correct at time of writing).

Based on these sample figures the site could generate an annual surplus £1,436 after sinking funds, gate access fees, marketing and registration fees. After 5 years £24,000 would have been accrued towards the sinking fund with a plausible cash flow £5,482 - this would be based on sites charging and give an overview to an operator.

Site Specific Works: 2 Court Block

- Apply double court markings in white water based acrylic paint to prepared asphalt surfaces.
- Power wash, apply moss treatment, pierce at 450m centres, fill pierced holes with pea shingle, vibration compact existing asphalt surface, application of bitumen emulsion 'tack' coat, installation of 32mm consolidated depth of 6mm asphalt surface course and application of two-tone colour coating slip resistance of 60 wet or dry including raising existing pedestrian access gates.
- Break out and dispose off site existing perimeter kerbs and installation of new precast concrete kerbs 150mm x 50mm with associated insitu concrete bed and haunching.

- Break out and dispose off site existing net post sockets and associated insitu concrete foundation and install new set of sockets including insitu concrete foundations, centre net anchor, net posts, nets and centre band.
- 1nr - Installation of a 1.2m x 2m Pedestrian Gate with sliding latch.
- Removal of Existing single gate 2.4-3m wide
- Double handling due to access width being tight for a waggon to pass through.

Anticipated Start Date: April 2024

Anticipated Completion Date: May 2024

Costings

Total Project Cost:	£50,936.64
Grant Offered by Lawn Tennis Association:	£25,936.64
Match Fund required by Llannon Community Council:	£25,000.00

Conclusion

Cross Hands Park is an important asset to the local community. As part of the masterplan for the park, the upgrade of the courts would have to be considered.

This offer from Tennis Wales will support LICC with protecting, securing and creating a safe place to play tennis for the long term. This model would assist LICC in creating a local sustainable model which promotes, protects and prepares the tennis courts for the future generations of the Llannon Ward.

The support of Tennis Wales will also strengthen any future LICC applications for grant funding as the total match funding into the site would amount to £186,000:

- **Playground Investment**
£90,000 - Llannon Community Council
£45,000 - Section 106 Funding
- **Tennis Courts Investment**
£25,000 - Llannon Community Council
£25,936.64 - Lawn Tennis Association

LICC has a "Future Projects" budget of £50,000 for 2024-25, specifically for projects to develop the facilities of Llannon Ward. It is now for the Members to decide whether they wish to accept this proposal from the Lawn Tennis Association.