

Meeting: Full Town Council

Date: 16th July

Author: Town Clerk

Item for Consideration:

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE KINGSWOOD PARK TENNIS COURTS

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This extraordinary meeting has been called as Kingswood Town Council (KTC) has been given a tight deadline to consider if it supports a proposal/request from South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) to financially support the future development of the tennis courts in Kingswood.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Kingswood Park Tennis Courts are managed by South Gloucestershire Council and regular maintenance includes leaf clearance, litter collection and moss clearance. In addition, the council will undertake general repairs, repainting of the court, resurfacing and repairs to the nets. However, there are limited funds in SGC's budget to do more than the basic maintenance and so SGC has been pursuing a grant from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA).

2.2 KTC discussed the tennis courts at a meeting in November 2023, where it was asked by SGC if it could make a financial contribution to match fund a potential LTA grant, towards the refurbishment of the courts. KTC at that time was very keen to ensure that tennis remains free to play for the residents in Kingswood and could not agree to the terms of the LTA grant of introducing chargeable tennis. There was a further discussion in April 2024 with the proposal of KTC offering to fund some of the works at the tennis courts, but no further action was taken.

3.0 Grant from the Lawn Tennis Association

3.1 SGC have reapplied for the LTA grant, and this has been successful and SGC has been offered a revised grant with revised terms and conditions:

- The LTA grant will cover the costs of the resurface of the courts, including new drainage, repainted lines, nets and posts and a painted surface. This grant is approximately £85,000 and will give the courts an extended life of at least another ten years.
- SGC must implement a booking system: to lock the courts and for users to gain access via an electronic gate with a key code which is obtained at the point of booking.
- SGC must run a programme of events and training sessions to encourage and give people opportunities to play or learn to play tennis.
- SGC must maintain the courts each year and create a sinking fund that funds renovations for a 10-year period.

4.0 Options

4.1 SGC has several options.

- a. To decline the offer from the LTA: therefore, no upgrade or improvement to the courts

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- b. To accept the offer and charge per hour or on an annual basis, to cover the contribution into the sinking fund. To generate the income of approximately £8,000 per year the council would sell family tickets at a cost of £36 or charge £6 per hour to players. Based on LTA's projections of use, this would generate the income needed for the sinking fund.
- c. To accept the grant from the LTA but to ask Kingswood Town Council to cover the annual costs into the sinking fund, approximately £8,000 per annum for a ten-year period. This would remove the need to generate funds from the paying public and tennis would be free to the end user. A booking system would still be used but the sessions would be free. SGC has found a not-for-profit organisation that manages other tennis court booking systems, who provide a phone number for those who are unable to book electronically and will give the code to those using a phone. The courts remain locked when not in use to ensure that the court surface is protected.
- d. There was a further proposal that the grant from the LTA be accepted by SGC and the courts are then transferred to the town council on a lease, for full repair and management, and meeting the criteria as set above. Due to the short time frame and KTC not being equipped to take on such an asset at this stage, this has not been given consideration. Councillors are asked to be mindful that it would cost KTC more to manage the courts than it currently costs SGC, due to not having the staff or expertise to maintain or manage the courts. There might be a time when KTC is able to take on an asset, and so a clause could be written into an agreement that states that if an asset transfer were to happen in the future, that the remains of the sinking fund are provided to KTC at that time.

5.0 Costs

SGC have provided the costs to run these courts on the conditions as laid above are below:

Costs to fund 2 tennis courts	Per annum	Over 10 years (but without any annual increases for RPI)
Repainting and Resurfacing	£2,400	Approx £24,000
Maintenance Costs	£500	£5,000
Operation Costs for the gate	£811	£8,110
Tennis activities	£4,200	£42,000
Total needed into an annual sinking fund	£7,911	£79,100

6.0 Opportunities with developer funding

6.1 KTC were keen to ensure that tennis remains free to play in Kingswood, and that all households, regardless of financial ability, can play tennis. Kingswood Town Council has been in receipt of developer funding, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and has accumulated £81,163.79 from previous developments. It has 5 years to spend these funds. It is likely that KTC will continue to be in receipt of developer funding on an annual basis, though predictions of what that might be are difficult to make. These funds must be spent on capital projects and KTC has expressed a desire to invest developer funding (both CIL and S106) in to outdoor sports facilities. Therefore, this money could be used in this project

and cover the ten-year period of contributing into the sinking fund, that covers repair, maintenance as well as offer a programme of coaching and tennis-based events.

7.0 Stakeholders and Promotion

7.1 There will be an opportunity to promote the contribution that KTC makes, by advertising the role that KTC has had in this project. The Kingswood Park is undergoing a full regeneration programme, and an extensive activities package is planned, starting imminently, to involve more people in the park on a regular basis: Yoga, walking, mindfulness, and a wider range of activities to come next year. The tennis courts, once upgraded, can become another activity for people to try, especially those who might not have tried it before. Therefore, there exists an opportunity to work with local groups to encourage participation, as well as offer tennis to the youth groups that the council will be supporting.

8.0 Timescale

8.1 Not known

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 Councillors are asked to consider the information contained in this report to make a decision on the following:

- a. Does the town council support the improvements to the tennis courts with the offer of the grant from the LTA to South Gloucestershire Council?
- b. Does the town council want to use CIL funds (approximately £8,000 per annum for a ten-year period) and contribute to the sinking fund that will ensure that tennis remains free for the residents of Kingswood?
- c. Are there any other options to consider?

10.0 Action

To delegate authority to the town clerk to communicate the wishes of the town council and to sign the necessary agreements to further this project.