

BEECH HURST GARDENS TENNIS COURTS

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES
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Wards Affected: Lucastes and Bolnore
Key Decision: No
Report to: Beech Hurst Gardens Charity Trustees
Date of meeting: 28 February 2024

Purpose of Report

1. Gardens Charity Trustees to finance the resurfacing of three tennis courts and provide new sockets, posts, and nets. The purpose of the report is to seek up to £50,000 (excluding VAT) from Beech Hurst

Summary

2. Beech Hurst Gardens tennis courts, a valuable local sports facility available for hire, were last refurbished in 2003. In order for the tennis courts to remain safe and provide access to sport for the community, the courts require resurfacing and repainting.

Recommendations

3. **That the Beech Hurst Gardens Charity Trustees are recommended to:**
 - (i) **make available up to £50,000 (excluding VAT) to finance the renovation of all three tennis courts at Beech Hurst Gardens.**
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Background

4. Beech Hurst Gardens tennis courts are a very popular sports facility within the District providing a sporting pursuit that contributes to many individual's physical and mental health and wellbeing. The tennis courts were last resurfaced in 2003 and repainted in 2011.
5. Generally outdoor courts of this nature would be resurfaced every 10 to 15 years and repainted every seven to 10 years. The tennis courts at Beech Hurst Gardens have, therefore, proven to be exceptionally cost effective and the hire of the courts is a source of income for the Council.
6. If the courts are to remain suitable for use and the Council is to avoid them becoming unsafe, they need to be refurbished within the next 12 months.

Context

7. The Council have been developing a working partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to utilise their ClubSpark booking platform for payment for and access to courts and coaching opportunities across the district. It is a simple and flexible system with multiple modules and applications to help manage and grow tennis venues. The system has proven to reduce unauthorised access to courts and as a result, increase income.
8. ClubSpark compatible access gates were installed at Beech Hurst Gardens tennis courts during summer 2023.

9. To maintain the popularity of the courts (and support any potential increase associated with the introduction of the ClubSpark platform) and to ensure participant's safety the courts need to be resurfaced when the playing surface starts to crack, break up and become uneven. The courts in question have now reached the point at which such works are required.
10. The Trust comprises all Councillors in Mid Sussex District Council who consider any reports received. The Trustees look to ensure that all Trust Funds spent are done so in line with the Trust's objectives, including using funds to support recreational purposes within Beech Hurst Gardens. Funds are available to be used from both an Unrestricted Funds account and from Endowments received.

Policy Context

11. The future maintenance of Beech Hurst Gardens tennis courts will be incorporated within the Council's Green Spaces Strategic Investment Plan to ensure, as far as possible, that the condition of the courts is maintained to a good standard and regular maintenance is accounted for in the long-term.
12. The provision of facilities that support community Health and Wellbeing can also reduce the demand on other public services (such as the NHS) by promoting and facilitating access to a healthy lifestyle.

Other Options Considered

13. Given the current condition and the value for money provided by the last resurfacing (undertaken over 20 years ago) the Council should not consider patching or repainting the surface of the tennis courts. Patching and/ or repainting will not significantly prolong the life of the tennis courts.

Financial Implications

14. To undertake the works specified the current estimated cost is £46,617 (excluding VAT) based on prices secured in December 2023. A total of £50,000 has been requested to provide a small contingency should there be price increases or unforeseen costs during the renovation.
15. At the present time, the Trust holds Restricted Funds of £343,906 from which these works would be funded.
16. A total of £293,906 would remain after the required funding allocation is made.
17. The Courts generated approximately £4,500 income during the last financial year. Surplus income generated from the hire of Beech Hurst Gardens tennis courts (net maintenance expenditure) is returned to the Trust Fund and ringfenced.
18. It is likely that this investment, plus the recent introduction of the Club Spark booking platform, will increase the level of income generated from the hire of Beech Hurst Gardens tennis courts.

Risk Management Implications

19. If the Council do not undertake to resurface the tennis courts the surface will deteriorate further and it is possible that they may become unsafe. A deterioration in condition will also impact the Council's ability to generate income from this facility.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

20. The tennis courts will need to be closed during the refurbishment. The Council will ensure that all booking platforms are updated and, wherever possible, alternative facilities are suggested.

Other Material Implications

21. None.

Sustainability Implications

22. None.

Background Papers

None