

YORKSHIRE TENNIS LIMITED (YTL) ANNUAL PLAN FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2023

INTRODUCTION

In December 2022 Yorkshire Lawn Tennis Association (YLTA) was dissolved and replaced by a new Company called Yorkshire Tennis Limited (YTL). This important change meant that we no longer have elected Councillors running the organisation but instead have a Board of Directors who are the ultimate decision-making body. This change is in line with the County Governance Framework supported by the LTA and Sport England.

This year the LTA have implemented a new funding model which removes the direct link between County Funding and Club Registration Fees. The new Funding Model provides Counties with an LTA Grant in return for the delivery of specified Core Activities which include Volunteering, Participation, Performance and Competition. A budget has been allocated against each of these activities for which we are accountable and need to deliver and report.

As a new organisation we are taking the opportunity to review our structures and roles to ensure that they best meet the Counties ongoing needs. These structures will be built around our Core Activities and will involve new sub committees, roles, and personnel. Whilst we are delighted to have retained many of our volunteers there are gaps, and we are therefore recruiting new volunteers including those with specific skills to strengthen our team.

In line with the LTA plan, we aim to demonstrate and promote diversity and inclusion so that our sport is both welcoming and free from discrimination. To this end we have established an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Working Group to tackle these important issues and to identify and recommend actions which will make a real difference. On these and other issues we will work closely with the LTA and the North Regional team to support and promote the LTAs vision of 'opening up tennis' and will focus our resources in delivering the core activities which this plan is built around.

MISSION STATEMENT

We will support Clubs through the provision of advice and guidance and will continue to promote the game of tennis including Padel by stimulating new people to play the game. We will encourage competition within Yorkshire and will provide a platform for player development through our performance pathway. We will provide access for players of all abilities and will encourage diversity and inclusion in line with the LTAs vision of opening up tennis.

KEY AIMS OF THE PLAN

Our key aims are:

- supporting the increase in tennis participation in the County
- promoting competitive play for all players of all standards
- positively contributing to the health of sustainable tennis facilities in the County
- building on the very significant achievement of being crowned National County Cup Champions by selecting County Teams with the aim of being in the top 3 nationally as measured by the LTA County Cup Leaderboard

FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS

The introduction of a new funding model means that we now receive from the LTA an annual grant of around £90k which is part of a three-year funding agreement. Whilst this represents a small increase in funding it brings with it additional commitments and therefore, we are assuming a neutral effect in real terms. We welcome the certainty this agreement will bring but are mindful that the amount of grant received from the LTA represents less than half of our planned expenditure and therefore, we will continue to rely on income from sponsorship to fill this gap. The good news is that last year we raised a record amount of Partnership Funding and this year we have raised a similar amount. It is of note however that a small number of major partners account for around two thirds of our income and the loss of any one of them would have a significant impact on our financial planning.

This year we will build the foundations to broaden the sponsorship route to co-funding the programmes that Yorkshire Tennis needs and to have a more resilient income stream.

We are committed to ensuring a smooth organisational transition and with this in mind we have this year set a small deficit budget. We recognise that this approach is not sustainable and are planning to balance our budget with targeted cost efficiencies to complement increased sponsorship revenue.

Overall, our financial reserves remain healthy, and it is against this background that we are planning to reintroduce a scheme to support Registered Clubs with interest free loans of up to up £25k. A limited amount of grant funding may also be available to support important County wide initiatives and projects.

We will comply with our statutory obligations as a Limited Company and the Audit and Finance Committee will continue to audit and monitor our financial position and procedures and will advise the Board as appropriate.

ACTIONS

Our four Core Activity Areas are Volunteering, Participation, Performance and Competition and under each Core Activity are Sub Activities along with planned actions as follows:

1) VOLUNTEERING

Governance and Management

We will review our management structures, sub committees and roles to ensure that we are best able to deliver our core activities. It is also our intention to ensure that YTL reflects our desire to open up the game to all parts of society, both as regards the Board and Sub Committees, and also over time to the Clubs which we support. Role profiles and Committee terms of reference will be drafted as appropriate.

Progress: Most Committees have agreed TORs and are operational. We have yet to agree TORs for the following Committees - Audit and Finance, Community Engagement, Club Engagement, Padel. We are about to carry out a self-assessment exercise against the County Governance Framework and we will also conduct an initial skills and gap assessment across our Board and Sub Committees.

Partnership Funding

We will continue to secure and manage Partnerships in line with Partnership Agreements and will explore ways of attracting new Partners to increase Initiative income.

Progress: Income from Partnerships matched that of last year which was a good outcome. Work is ongoing to find new Partners.

We will explore income from sponsorship, and naming rights opportunities.

Progress: We already have a Partnership with Babolat and have appointed a lead who will explore sponsorship opportunities for our 2024 County Closed Tournament.

We will relaunch our Life Patrons Scheme to connect with supporters of Yorkshire Tennis and to raise funds.

Progress: Our Life Patrons Scheme has been relaunched and is advertised on our website.

Safeguarding

We will continue to treat Safeguarding as a priority so that Yorkshire is seen as a safe place to enjoy tennis.

Progress: We have appointed a second County Safeguarding Officer (Helen Longstaff) to work alongside our existing CSO Rosie Nicholl.

We will review our Safeguarding structures and roles to ensure that we are County compliant, and we will continue to support Clubs in the discharging of their responsibilities.

Progress: In appointing a second CSO we are looking at demarcation of responsibilities and are likely to dedicate a lead CSO to Clubs and the other lead CSO to County work.

LTA Awards and Volunteers Week

We will promote and encourage nominations for the Annual LTA Awards and will organise an Awards Evening to celebrate their achievements.

Progress: An Awards evening was held at Thorpe Park and was viewed a success.

We will be proactive in supporting 'Volunteers Week' by identifying and thanking volunteers for their contributions.

Progress: Individuals were thanked for their contributions.

We will introduce a new "President's Award" aimed at an individual/s or group who have achieved something exceptional, innovative, or inspiring. Our inaugural award/s will be made at our 2023 Awards Evening.

Progress: A new President's Award was introduced, and an award made to two worthy individuals at our Awards Evening.

We will mark the success of our winning the 2022 County Cup Race by holding a celebration event at Ilkley.

Progress: A celebration event took place at Ilkley to mark our success as County Cup Champions. Feedback confirmed the success of the event.

2) PARTICIPATION

Customer enquiries and Complaint handling

We will deal with customer enquiries and complaints promptly and professionally.

Progress: We did apologise in one instance for a late reply, but now have systems in place to ensure enquires and complaints are dealt with promptly and professionally.

Communications and Marketing

We will develop a marketing and communications strategy to promote Yorkshire Tennis and attract Partners

Progress: Strategy to be developed.

We will review and refresh our website to ensure it meets our needs and the needs of our stakeholders.

Progress: There has been a focus on ensuring that the information on our website is accurate and up to date. Work is still needed to review and refresh our website going forward.

We will review our approach to Social Media including postings on our website.

Progress: Strategy to be developed.

We will consider the introduction of Club coffee morning webinars aimed at topics of interest whilst face to face communication with Clubs will continue in a more targeted way.

Progress: To be considered by the Club Engagement Coordinator.

Clubs

We will appoint a Club Engagement Coordinator to oversee club engagement.

Progress: We have appointed a Club Engagement Coordinator (Chris French) who has established a team of Community Engagement Leads. Work is ongoing to develop the team and to engage with Clubs.

We will engage with Clubs to understand their issues and provide advice, guidance, and support as appropriate. In doing so we recognise that the needs of small medium and large Clubs differ, and we will therefore target our resources where we believe we can make the greatest impact.

Progress: Club Engagement Champions have yet to engage with Clubs.

We will consider the subject frequency and approach of Club Forums led by the Club Engagement Coordinator and informed by subjects of interest of the Clubs.

Progress: Club Engagement Coordinator is to consider with Club Engagement Leads.

We will support Clubs through the introduction of a new scheme aimed at providing Clubs with interest free loans of up to £25k.

Progress: A new Advantage Yorkshire Scheme was launched in August.

Coaches

We will appoint a Coach Engagement Lead to work with Coach Development Centres and the LTA to support Coaches locally.

Progress: We have appointed a Coach Engagement Lead – Angela Crossley.

We will organise Coach Networking Events aimed at Coach Development and to also help motivate the workforce.

Progress: Coach Networking is taking place against the background of unrest among some Coaches. This will be a key role for the Director of Tennis and will involve regular meetings with Coaches.

We will carry out a pilot project to explore ways in which we can achieve a representative workforce.

Progress: A pilot project is in place.

Schools

We will appoint a Schools Engagement Lead and will support the continued rollout of the Youth Programme to primary and secondary Schools.

Progress: A Schools Engagement Lead has been appointed (Angela Crossley) and is supporting the rollout of the Youth Programme into Schools.

We will use the information available from Schools to signpost children wishing to continue to play tennis into local Clubs who have coaching programmes.

Progress: Information still to be accessed and used to convert children into Club Members.

Disability

We will appoint a Disability Lead to work closely with the LTA in promoting the Open Court Programme and will encourage Clubs to complete the monitoring and evaluation framework.

Progress: Disability Lead appointed - Louise Assioun.

Communities

We will appoint a Communities Lead to grow the game particularly in more deprived areas and will work closely with the LTA in promoting the Serves programme.

Progress: Communities Lead appointed (Nat Wright) and is developing our strategy.

We will introduce a pilot scheme aimed at transitioning Parks players into Clubs. This initiative recognises that increased LTA and Local Authority investment will increase the number of Parks courts available and will provide an important steppingstone from Parks play to Club membership.

Progress: Pilot Scheme has yet to be established.

Padel

We will develop a strategy for Padel in Yorkshire which will address participation and also County competition and teams.

Progress: A Padel Lead has been appointed (Peter Vann) and is advising and updating the Board on Competition and Padel initiatives. A Padel Committee is being established and Terms of Reference are being drafted.

3) COMPETITION

County and District Leagues

We will promote and support the Babolat Yorkshire Doubles League which will have its own separate committee. This committee will review and amend leagues rules in line with governance changes and will consult with Clubs and explore ways in which we can make the competition more attractive so that more teams are entered.

Progress: A Committee has been established (Chair Trevor Stent) to administer the Babolat Yorkshire League. League Rules have been reviewed and amended. Liaison with Clubs is taking place with a view to making the competition more attractive.

We will encourage District Leagues to ensure that all Clubs who participate are LTA Registered.

Progress: District Leagues are subject to LTA Accreditation which requires that all competing Clubs are LTA Registered. Club Engagement Leads will remind all Clubs that competing against non-Registered Clubs may put their own players at risk.

County Cup

We will select and manage County Cup Teams to represent Yorkshire with the aim of finishing in the top 3 nationally as measured by the County Cup Leaderboard.

Progress: County Cup Teams are competing and as at September 2023 Yorkshire are in 3rd place in the County Cup Race.

County Championships

We will promote, organise, and run the County Closed Championships which this year will take place at John Charles Tennis Centre in Leeds. The Seniors event will be held separately and will be hosted by Huddersfield Tennis Club. A separate County Closed Committee has been established (Chair Christine Klee) to organise the events and with the aim of ensuring the success of both competitions.

Progress: Both events have been held and a review of the events is underway. Report detailing what went well and what didnt go well is to be produced for consideration at a future (October/November) Board meeting.

Other competitions

We will appoint a Competitions Coordinator to oversee Competitions within Yorkshire.

Progress: A Competitions Coordinator has been appointed – Stephen Plant.

We will appoint Competition Leads for events such as Play Your Way to Wimbledon, National Leagues (youth, seniors, and adult) and Schools events.

Progress: Competition Leads for PYWTW (Georgina Jackson), National Leagues (Georgina Jackson) have been appointed. We have a Schools Coordinator (Angela Crossley) who is looking to appoint 7 organisers for Schools Competition.

We will carry out a review of LTA Graded Events to ensure that we have sufficient competitions within Yorkshire that are of the right level and in the right location.

Progress: Review to be carried out.

International Competition

The Ilkley Trophy represents the most significant International tennis tournament, both in Yorkshire and the North of England. It presents an important opportunity to inspire both up and coming performance players in Yorkshire and also encourage more people to take up the game. We will support the sustainability and further development of the event as appropriate and develop links to build on the County Cup Celebration this year.

Progress: We have developed links with Ilkley and have supported the Ilkley Trophy event by contributing to the Ilkley outreach programme and by holding our County Cup Celebration Event at Ilkley.

4) PERFORMANCE

County Training

We will review our Performance structure to ensure that we have the right roles and individuals to lead and manage Performance in Yorkshire.

Progress: The Performance Committee continues to manage County Performance though future structures are being considered. The role of Director of Tennis is being reviewed.

We will quality assure County Training Programmes and will set up and deliver County Fun Days as an entry point to County Training.

Progress: To be carried out by the Director of Tennis – Richard Crabtree.

We will select and manage coaches to deliver County Training and manage County Cup Teams via an open and transparent process.

Progress: County Coaches have been appointed for 2023

We will review the logistics around court and coach bookings so that we achieve value for money.

Progress: A review of County Training is to be carried out to ensure VFM.

We will ensure that our County Coaches carry out player/venue visits and attend competitions to ensure they have a full and clear understanding of the player base from ages 5 to 9 across the County.

Progress: To be actioned by the Director of Tennis.

LTA Regional Camps and Development Centre

We will identify and nominate players for Regional Performance Camps.

Progress: To be actioned by the Director of Tennis.

We will support the Regional Player Development Centre so that we have a high performing Regional Centre in Yorkshire.

Progress: The RPDC Contract ended in August and a review is underway so that we implement a RPDC model which provides the best fit for Yorkshire Tennis. Work is ongoing with stakeholders including the LTA, CV8, Leeds Beckett to find the best solution.

10U Performance Programme

We will fund a 10 and under Coach to lead our 10 and under Performance Network. This will involve supporting and developing a network of Clubs and Coaches that are aspiring to implement 10 and under Performance Programmes.

Progress: A 10 and under Coach has been appointed (Sam Salt) to lead our 10 and under Performance Network.

We will support the LTA in the organisation of local events so that our knowledge of 10 and under players is high and that talent is identified.

Progress: To be actioned by the Director of Tennis and Under 10 Coach.

Aspiring Players

We will provide a fund aimed at supporting high performing players on their player journey.

Progress: Fund in place

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

YTL Board will monitor and evaluate the success, validity and progress of this plan and will hold performance meetings with LTA North Regional Team to discuss and review progress in line with our funding model agreement.

Reviewed – July Board Meeting

Reviewed – September Board Meeting

Board of Yorkshire Tennis Limited