

Resurfacing Tennis Courts

This is an issue that faces all Club committees at some time. This note sets out advice and guidance on the issues you may face, some places to go to for further help, some examples in Yorkshire and some of the pitfalls to watch out for.

The two main issues

The two main issues you are likely to face, will be members wanting a change of surface and finding the funding you need. So, let's start with the money first. Currently, neither the governing body for our sport, The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), nor the main Government Agency for sport, Sport England, will look favourably on requests for financial support for a straight resurfacing project. They both regard resurfacing as a natural cost of running a Tennis Club that should be provided for by having a sinking fund for court replacement. For those not familiar with the term "sinking fund" this is a pot of money set aside every month by clubs over the course of many years to build up to the point when resurfacing will be needed. Well run clubs will have one of these in place. Not so well-run clubs will not.

So that's your first headache. If all you plan on doing is resurfacing your existing courts, you will need to raise the money yourselves. For ideas on how to do that go to our note on fundraising which can be found at <https://www.yorkshiretennis.org.uk/funding/>



Any exceptions?

Now there are some exceptions to this brick wall on funding. If your project involves changing a surface, (for example to an all-weather surface) installing floodlights, or other developments which will extend or enhance access to or use of your facilities by your local community, you may be able to build a case which the LTA or Sport England might find attractive. Even then you will need to have raised substantial funds yourselves and should only expect partial funding for your project. And let's be clear, it is most likely that what you will be offered will be a loan rather than a grant, so be prepared to face the prospect of budgeting for loan repayments as well as your sinking fund going forward after your project is complete.

Examples of Yorkshire Clubs raising funds?

Northowram

This start up near Halifax are seeking to get two Council owned courts back into use. They are still working at it, but in the course of 12 months raised £12,000 from local charity called Scarecrow, a local commercial sponsor, the postcode lottery, a local reclamation scheme and through fundraising activities like a race night at a local pub.

Queens Tennis Club Halifax

This club raised £60,000 for a resurfacing project by offering a £1,000 bond to 60 members. The club holds a regular draw and one of the bond holders gets their £1,000 back.

Heaton Tennis and Squash Club

This Club needed £10,000 to finish an access project which was grant funded by Sport England. Called "buy a star" members were asked to put in typi-cally £50 each and all contributors were named within a star on the wall of the new facility.

Barnsley

Barnsley Case Study 2020

Last funding thoughts

So there you have it. It can be done but you will need to work at it. The more people from your club that you can get involved the easier it becomes. Remember it is your club. Don't expect others to do it for you. It's up to you.



What Surface?

Ok so here is your second headache. Most of us have members who are getting older! No seriously, the days of playing on poor surfaces should be behind us. If you want your club to thrive, attract young members, keep your older ageing members, then you will want modern quality surfaces to play on. And you will want to use them for as much of the year as you can.

LTA standard surface

For many years now the LTA have championed porous tarmacadam courts as the ideal all-weather surface for clubs. This is a surface that allows rain to drain through it and crucially through the base surface as well. It obviates the need for building drains and allows a wet surface to dry quicker. It gives a steady even bounce if well maintained and requires little actual maintenance other than keeping it free from moss and tree debris and re-painting every 3-5 years depending on use and weather wear. Many of us will be familiar with this surface and will probably play on it more than any surface in Yorkshire. Though it is not universally liked, it can be seen as un-sympathetic to old joints, features a higher bounce than some other surfaces, and tends to be slower than some other surfaces.

What else is available?

In recent years the technology of court surfaces has moved on. There are now many other options, from artificial grass, all-weather multi-sport surfaces often seen in MUGAs (multi use games areas) at schools, clay of different colours, artificial clay, carpets etc. Members will often champion one or more

of these surfaces having experienced them on holiday in glorious sunshine, in some exotic sun kissed location, enhanced with the joys of life and in an otherwise relaxed state of mind. Beware these temptations. You will need to bear in mind that we live in the north of a rainy wind-swept island, and that most of the year, deciding which direction to receive serve from is not dependent on a bright light in your eye.

You will need to consider whether your members will be prepared to help to maintain, or pay to have maintained, surfaces that need sweeping before and after use, re-sanding, careful watering etc, depending on what type of surface you settle on. But that is not to say you shouldn't consider an alternative to tarmac. It is just a note of caution about the realities of life in Yorkshire.

So where can you find out more?

We suggest you go to the LTA website, lta.org.uk and then to the 2019 Facilities toolkit. This will give a good general guide to the types of surface that exist with their respective strengths and weaknesses, maintenance costs, and installing costs as well. Then you might find these recent case studies interesting.

St Peters – Saltaire, [St Peters Case Study 2020](#)

....more to follow

How do I find a contractor?

Having got all your money together your next task is to find someone to do the work for you. Given all the time and effort you have put in to get-ting the money, you probably don't want to let just anyone loose on your project. But how do you know who to use.

Your first port of call is the Sapca list. Go to SAPCA.org.uk and you will find the association that covers sports facility suppliers. You can then re-fine that by looking at Tennis court suppliers. Probably the three most commonly used in Yorkshire are Platt Construction Ltd; Fosse Contracts; DoE Sport North. But as you will see there are others. As with most things, personal recommendations are always worth thinking about. Although there is no equivalent of Trip Advisor for Tennis court contractors, you might want to think about talking to clubs that have recently had their courts resurfaced and ask them about their experience. And you will need to get more than one quote. So be prepared to go out to three or more companies and invite them to tender for your job. Don't worry, they are used to this. Some even quote now based on a google maps survey and won't even visit, but they may add caveats. By initiating a tender process and by getting a few quotes it could save you a lot of money.

Some of the clubs that we have helped to resurface and the contractor they used:

Barnsley – Platt Construction

Doncaster – Platt Construction

St Peter's – Platt Construction

Hallam Grange – DoE Sport North

Malton – Fosse Contracts

South Cave – Doe Sport North

What do I need to think about?

Some of the key things to think about, are planning permission. You may have been asked about this at the fundraising stage, but you will certainly need to think about it before you commit to work or a contractor. You may not need it for a straightforward resurfacing but things like fencing have regulations about height attached to them. Then there are issues like project management; health and safety; timing; and access.

Project management.

Who is going to manage your relationship with the contractor once you have chosen them. Do you have a competent person to read and sign the contract for example? You may have someone within your club who does this sort of thing for a living, or is a lawyer or a member of a relevant profession that could oversee things for you. If not, you need to hire someone to do that for you. Does the contractor have relevant insurance in place for the work or is this something you need to get for yourselves? Who is going to liaise with the contractor during the work over access to the site, issues that arise during the work? Who is going to sign off the work for you?

Health and safety

This may be wrapped up in project management but is always worth flagging as a separate issue. There may be requirements on the club to appoint a CDM who as part of their role may need to produce method statements. Again, something to check out.

Timing

You will want to think about the timing of your project, ideally this will be in the off season, but that also tends to be the worst weather. So, you will need to consider a margin for delay, and build time for the surface to cure, before it can be painted and lined. All this will need to be explained to members to ensure that no one damages your new surface by trying to play on it too soon. Your courts will be out of action for at least two to three weeks, so you need to plan carefully for that.

Access

Equally you will probably want to ensure that your neighbours know what is going on and when so that you can warn them and apologise in advance for any disruption to them caused by site traffic, noise, dust, smell etc. Some sites have difficult access for plant and materials. Again, this needs to be thought about carefully if you are avoid disruption for your neighbours and the local community.

Opportunity

Because the work will cause unusual activity at your courts, you can also turn this in to an opportunity. People are naturally curious. They will want to know what's going on. So, here's your chance to grab their attention, tell them all about your club, and invite them to an opening day once the work is finished. There is nothing like new smart courts to attract new players to your club.



Aftercare

Now you have your newly resurfaced courts, you have inspired your existing players to brush off the cobwebs and get back on court, and hope-fully attracted some new players with your grand opening. So, what now? Have you got a maintenance plan in place to care for them? Do your members know

what they need to do? Have you got a Rota for brushing them, cleaning them, re-sanding them etc, depending on what your new surface is? What about the footwear that can be used on them, or can anyone just stroll on with outdoor shoes?

Do you have your sinking fund in place. You now know how much work is involved in getting the money together, agreeing a surface finding a contractor, getting the work done and getting back up and running again. So now is the time to start planning for your next resurface. It might not be you in charge, so to whoever it will be a big favour and write up your experience for them, posterity, and please, for us. We would love to hear your experience so that we can help others.

Send us your story to marketing@yorkshiretennis.org.uk