



Riding Mill Tennis Club



As outlined at the parish council meeting of November 11, Riding Mill Tennis Club held a consultation meeting in the parish hall on the evening of December 11. Notice of the meeting was given via correspondence with neighbouring properties, publication of an item in the Parish News, Parish Notice Boards and publication of an item in the Hexham Courant. The meeting was well attended, by more than 60 parish residents from both surrounding properties and from further afield across the village.

An illustrative presentation was given at the meeting outlining, for consideration, preliminary proposals to find a club sponsor; to erect a screening net around the double courts; to create a covered social area adjacent to the clubhouse; to erect a sign at the entrance to the double courts on Millfield Road; to replace the pathway surface before the bridge leading to the double courts; and to install floodlighting to the double courts.

Following the presentation, feedback forms were distributed to those present at the meeting. Forms were either filled in and handed in after the meeting, or handed in subsequently. Many residents took the opportunity afforded to discuss aspects of the outlined proposals with members of the RMTC committee who were present.

Further to the consultation meeting, the RMTC committee met on January 13. It was agreed, subject to consultation with, and agreement of, the parish council, to:

1. Secure a sponsor for the club at the earliest possible opportunity.
2. Finalise confirmation of a club logo and the printing of the logo on RMTC shirts.
3. Install screening, bearing the club logo and sponsorship information, around the double courts.
4. Subject to agreement with the parish council to erect a club sign on an area of ground adjacent to the path at the entrance to the double courts.
5. Subject to a satisfactory estimate being received and agreement on materials etc, to replace the pathway surface before the bridge leading to the double courts.
6. When finances become available and satisfactory planning criteria met, to create a covered social area adjacent to the clubhouse to enhance comfort and facilities for members, spectators and visiting teams during matches.

The committee's assessment of the consultation meeting of December 11 was that the above proposals were not contentious.

In view of representations made in person at the December 11 presentation, in feedback forms, and in further discussions and correspondence, it is the judgement of the committee that further evaluations of the proposed installation of floodlighting will be required. These evaluations will examine in further detail all feedback which is still being received and will encompass the estimated cost of floodlighting; the availability of grants and other financial support; the cost of maintenance and repairs; times of operation; the environmental impact; and the impact on neighbouring properties and residents.

It is anticipated these evaluations will be detailed and complex, and will take significant time to undertake. Once they are completed, the RMTC committee and membership will assess the feasibility of the floodlighting proposal before consulting further with neighbouring residents, the wider population of the village and the parish council.

RMTC wishes to thank the parish council and parish residents for their input as the club determines its strategy for the next phase of its development.

A decade ago, the club was on the brink of closure. Today, it has a thriving and growing membership of junior and adult players, two-thirds of whom live in the parish. The club provides well-run and easily accessible facilities contributing greatly to the health, well-being and vitality of the local community. It is proud to have been chosen as Club of the Year by the Northumberland Lawn Tennis Association.

It is the sincere desire of the club to continue to develop and improve its facilities over the coming decade, with the ongoing support of its members, neighbouring residents and the parish as a whole.