



Alton Tennis Club Padel Court Plan

V4 March 2024

Background

Ambition

Alton Tennis Club is friendly community tennis club with a growing membership. We have a thriving junior section and keen senior section that puts out 7 teams to represent the club in a variety of LTA leagues across East Hampshire and Surrey.

Alton tennis club grew out of the Bass Sport club and 2024 marks the 30th Anniversary of the club arriving on it's current site with a generous lease from Alton Town Council. It has grown consistently through that period and now has a healthy membership (240 in 2023-24) and would like to continue that growth with the addition of a Padel doubles court.

The club has always been a stalwart of the LTA East Hants and Aldershot leagues, though rarely challenging for top honours and a place with the elite clubs providing county standard players. This leaves the club often playing much smaller village clubs such as Medstead or Fernhurst. A town the size of Alton provides a much larger catchment than these villages and the new housing in the town, with the influx of new resident, provides an opportunity to:

- Attract new members, new players to play against for club members;
- Attract new players and returners to the sport; provide more facilities next to the Sports Centre - ATC supports Pay and Play;
- Grow the base of the club to a level that we can support the development of elite players at the top;
- Provide another welcoming community facility to new Altonians and help them feel active, healthy, at home, involved and happy in Alton.

Rationale for a Padel Court

The club is doing well, but court pressure does not require an additional full tennis court at this time.

Padel is an interesting new form of Tennis that can complement the Tennis already played at the club.



The Padel bat is shorter than a tennis racket and unstrung. This means it has significantly less power than a tennis racket, which overcomes the problems beginners, especially children, have controlling the ball when they start to develop hand/eye coordination. In addition the walls constrain the game; meaning wayward shots are less likely to lead to a point ending or a lost ball that needs retrieving.

The walls help beginners, but also veterans. The constrained space makes fast movement less important than positioning, something that older, more experienced tennis players excel at. Combined with a playing surface that is friendly to ageing knees and hips, Padel is expected to extend playing opportunities for the veterans in the club also.

Finally, Padel has the benefit that the game is currently growing fast. It has been adopted by the LTA as a good complement to tennis and the club would love to tap into some of this growth and use it as a feeder into the full tennis game.

Longer term ambitions

After the addition of a Padel court and the additional revenue/membership that will support, the vision for the club is

MEDIUM TERM

- Possible addition of a tennis practice wall - an oft requested improvement.
- Enhance Tennis participation by providing high performance surfaces for 2 of the 4 courts.
 - This could be by resurfacing the show courts 1&2 with high performance artificial grass.
- Additional support to develop higher performance tennis players:
 - Expanded subsidy for junior coaching to high performance.
 - Expanded subsidy for coaching senior teams and performance enhancement.
- Improved access for wheelchairs.

LONG TERM

- Enhance the clubhouse to grow the social/community aspects of the clubhouse:
 - Development of the outdoor facilities into a structured Patio /covered seating area.

- Provision of Coffee bar / Licensed Bar to attract participation at sessions.
- Addition of entertainment facilities such as a television, pool tables, table tennis.
- Small gym for elite fitness / broader membership.

Court Placement

Ideally the Padel court would be placed on the land between ATC and the Guides Hawkins HQ. But this land has been allocated to the Guides by Alton Town council. Discussions have started with Guides and Alton Town Council have conclude and they will not release any land.

The plan therefore is to fit it into existing land allocated by ATC to ATC. This entails significant extra expense for groundworks to level the land and has dependency on support from Alton Town Council and the Watercress Line landowner.

Existing Court 3 & 4 layout:

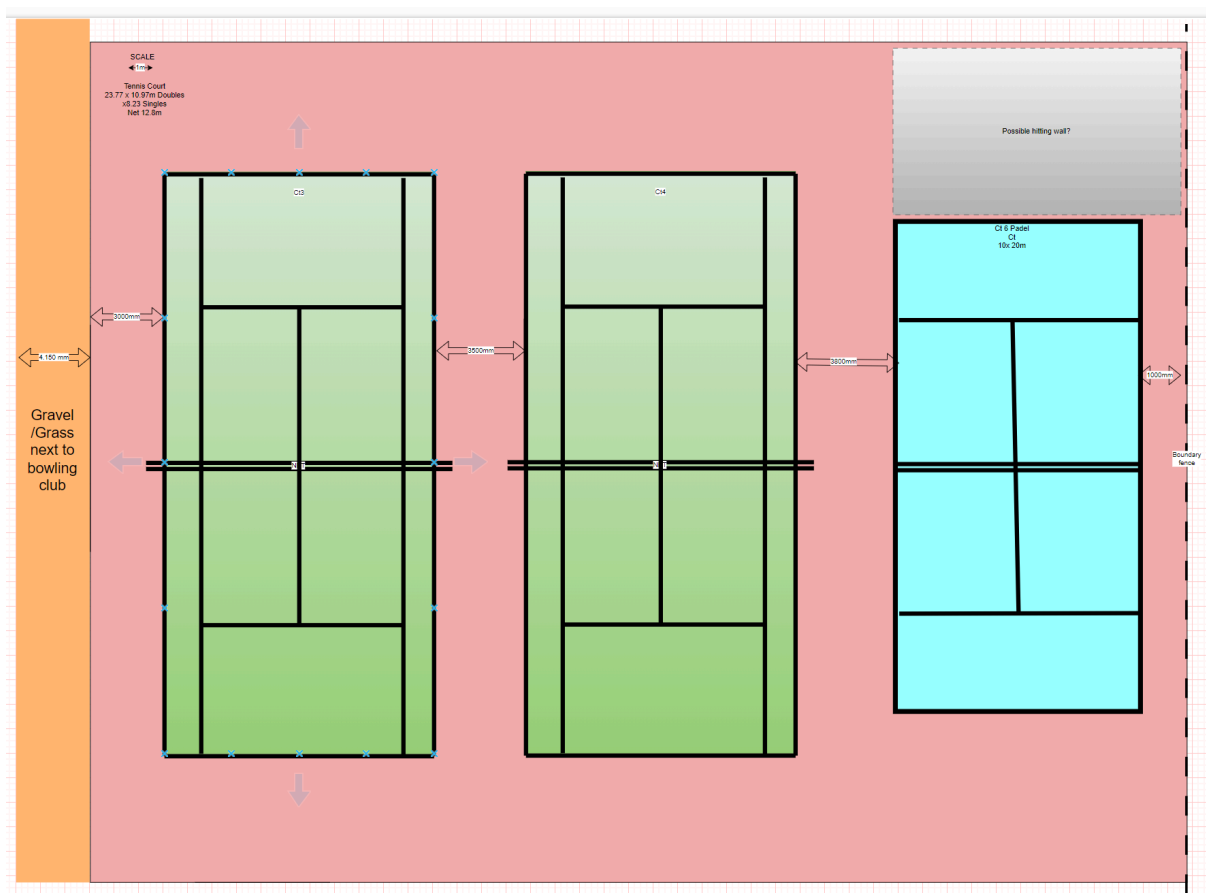
This is a plan view of the existing courts, with the Bowls club to the left and the Watercress Line to the right.



Proposed court layout

The proposed court layout for the Padel court requires the playing surface to be extended out to the boundary of the clubs leased land and courts 3 & 4 to shuffle left slightly, losing some of the excess margin between 3 & 4 and the fence. The reduced margin will comply within LTA guidelines (margin on 3 & 4 is currently very comfortable and greater than on 1 & 2).

The main problem with this is the land drops away by about 1.5 m at the boundary. So significant groundworks will be required to bring the land up to the level of the existing courts. It will also require a repaint of the courts before it is due, a slight increase in “sinking” costs.



Budget Costs

Costs estimates to install a Padel court at ATC.		
	Capital Items	Basic Estimate
	ESTIMATE 1 : Placed between Ct4 and railway.	
	Preparatory groundwork levelling the space next too Court 4	£25,000
	Padel Court Including all fixtures and fittings, Lights and installation.	£62,000
	New padlocked gate blocking access to behind courts.	£4,000
	Moving Cts 3 & 4, repainting and making good.	£10,000
	Moving ct 3 & 4 floodlights 4 off to new locations.	£4,000
	PIN Card entry System	£7000
	Total estimate 1	£112,000
	Expense Costs	
	Additional sink costs/year for 1 padel court	£1500
	References:	
	https://www.lta.org.uk/support-centre/venue-support/padel/we-are-a-tennis-venue-looking-to-add-padel-courts-what-do-we-need-to-know/	

Funding Sources

The funding for the development will come from the following sources.

Members

Members fees are very reasonable and have not been raised for 6 years, despite the significant increase in running costs. This enables the club to maximise participation of the local community. Following the paying off of the loan for development of the current facilities, the club currently has accumulated a surplus over the amount required to support “sinking costs” (provision for big expenses such as a court resurfacing) which will help with some of the funds.

Currently Padel is very popular with reports from the Bourne Club in Farnham they are over subscribed and players cannot get time on their single court. Worldham Golf Club has 2 Padel courts and seems to be doing well, despite charging £28/hour for court time.

The plan is that the extra membership and membership fees attracted by having a Padel court will pay for the Padel court and cross fund tennis to the extent we can keep tennis membership fees down. To support this, and be fair to members that do not play Padel, a 2 tier membership could be offered. Tennis only and full Tennis and Padel membership.

The club could also consider member loans and potential for selling multi-year memberships to boost funds if required, but it is hoped to avoid this option.

Together these measures should enable the club to avoid charging per play fees for Padel court usage, which along with free floodlight use and slinger use will provide a compelling value for money package to encourage maximum membership and participation. If the final bills and treasurers report requires, we will reserve the right to charge extra for Padel court usage.

LTA

The LTA will provide loans up to 60% and are encouraging Padel court installation:
<https://www.lta.org.uk/roles-and-venues/venues/tennis-padel-facility-funding-advice/quick-access-loan-scheme/>

Pay and Play

The LTA will only make loans for use of the court if it is open to pay and play. Other courts in the town are costing £28/hr. This means ATC could charge up to £20/hour for pay and play and recover significant income.

Alton Town Council

The club plans to apply for grant funding for this development from Alton Town Council. This would be applied for on the basis the plan supports the EHDC [Local Plan](#): “1) The Local plan will help look after our residents by enabling community facilities that promote healthy lifestyles.”

East Hants District Council

The club plans to apply for funding for this development from East Hampshire District Council. in order to minimise the amount of funding required from members. This would be applied for on the basis the plan supports the EHDC [Local Plan](#): “1) The Local plan will help look after our residents by enabling community facilities that promote healthy lifestyles.”

Committee Organisation

The development of this additional facility will place significant additional work on the committee. In order to avoid this becoming a burden for those unable to support the additional discussions, meetings and decision making, the committee will constitute a subcommittee to implement the plan.

The chair of the subcommittee will have the authority to co-opt members volunteering to assist with the build onto this committee as required. The subcommittee will manage the following tasks:

Chair subcommittee: Responsible for co-ordinating the activities and reporting to the main committee.

Funding manager: Responsible for obtaining the required funds by making grant and loan applications.

Procurement Manager: Responsible for identifying best contractor, negotiating and placing the contract to build the court.

Build supervisor: Responsible for managing the build process once contractor has started.

Club liaison: responsible for keeping members informed, agreeing court downtimes, co-ordinating member feedback etc.

All subcommittee members report to the Subcommittee Chair who in turn reports to the main committee.

Timescale

Target - Winter 2024-25.