

**Committee: Full Council**

**Date: 21 March 2023**

**Title: Tennis Courts Refurbishment**

**Purpose of Report**

Members to confirm the funding agreement between the Lawn Tennis Association, South Somerset District Council (Somerset Council) and Ilminster Town Council.

**Recommendation:**

Members to Resolve for the Individual Grant Funding Agreement between the Lawn Tennis Association, South Somerset District Council (Somerset Council) and Ilminster Town Council presented to the meeting to be approved and signed in respect of the Tennis Courts on the Recreation Ground.

**Background:**

1. Ilminster Town Council currently leases the tennis courts from the IEF as part of an agreement. This is still intended to be the case once the new lease agreement with the IEF has been agreed by council and put into place.
2. Members have previously identified that the courts are in desperate need for refurbishment and have recently started to set aside Reserves so that this can be done at some point in the near future.
3. At the meeting on the 17 May 2022 Members were notified of a potential scheme being put into place in conjunction with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and South Somerset District Council that would see funds being made available for the full refurbishment of the tennis courts. It was agreed that once more information was available this should be brought to Open Spaces Committee for consideration.
4. A report was provided to the Open Spaces Committee on the 7 June 2022 and various points were discussed including bringing the item to a Full Council meeting once more details were known for all Members to consider.
5. At the meeting on the 27 September 2022, Town Council received a presentation from a representative of the LTA and discussed in some detail the merits and demerits of the proposal. The following resolution was passed:

**2022-0143-TC Ilminster Recreation Ground Tennis Courts Refurbishment**

Members **RESOLVED** by 8 votes for to 2 against to implement Option C as outlined in the report provided to the meeting and for a non-binding offer to be signed so that the project can move to the next stage

**Proposer** Cllr Taylor **Seconded** Cllr Hamilton

6. The option C that was adopted stated that: -

- There is no annual pass in place and each booking is assigned a nominal booking fee e.g., £1.00 per court per hour.
- It is likely that this will generate income to cover the maintenance fees and transaction fees – but not make any contribution to the sinking fund.
- The council would have to allocate from other funds/budgets for the £1,200 per court per annum to maintain and sustain the courts over a 10–12-year lifespan.

7. At the Full Council meeting on the 17 January 2023 Members passed the resolution below:

*Members **RESOLVED** by 6 votes for, 5 against 1 abstention to delegate officers to work with the Lawn Tennis Association and South Somerset District Council (SSDC) to resurface the Ilminster Tennis Courts using a combination of Government Funding allocated to the LTA and South Somerset District Council. The final contract to be brought to the Council for ratification and signing. To agree setting aside £10,000 per annum for the next five years in the Annual budget for any future tennis court refurbishments and maintenance.*

***Proposer** Cllr Taylor **Seconded** Cllr Hamilton*

8. At the 21 February Town Council meeting Members were given the following update:

*A tri-partite style agreement has been sent to SSDC's legal team for them to consider. However despite repeated requests for a copy to be provided to both us and Crewkerne Town Council this has not been forthcoming yet.*

*As reported to Members a site survey has taken place and the works for the court will be relatively straight forward. Officers have spoken with the family of the person who has a memorial bench in the courts and they would be happy for this to be located outside the courts thereby allowing for two of the recycled benches to be put inside the courts.*

*The back two courts require a full refurbishment whilst the front pair of courts only require a form of top dressing. This means that the level of the rearmost courts will be raised by several centimetres and as such will help to solve the height difference issue between the courts.*

*All of the site traffic will be able to access a compound alongside the courts directly from Canal Way. They anticipate that the works will take around 6-7 weeks during which time the courts will be out of commission for that period.*

**Report:**

9. The draft document as shown previously to the council has now been approved and signed off by SSDC and a copy of this is appended to this report in order that this matter can be considered in Public Session. A non-redacted copy is confidentially available for Members. Please contact the Town Clerk if one is required.

10. The reason for redaction is so that confidential information appertaining to both the contract and to other councils are not being revealed.
11. As can be seen the contract is signed by SSDC and the LTA. The LTA are acting on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) as the project is part of a twenty-two million pound investment by the government into tennis.
12. As expected there are a number of conditions that apply with the contract and to summarise these:
  - *Any change of use during the agreement period will need to be done in consultation with the DCMS and the LTA*
  - *A court maintenance schedule shall be implemented to ensure that the:-*
    - *Playing surface is kept clean to preserve its playing characteristics.*
    - *Free drainage of surface water is maintained throughout the life of the court.*
    - *Court looks attractive and well cared for at all times and achieves a reasonable life span.*
    - *Court is kept to a standard that tennis can be played at all times.*
    - *Signage is kept in good condition at all times.*
  - These objectives shall be achieved by measures including: -*
    - *Making repairs to (and replacing and/or renewing, as necessary) courts and nets as required to maintain the court playing characteristics at all times.*
    - *Regular sweeping or vacuuming leaves and other debris from the surface.*
    - *Periodic power washing of the surface.*
    - *Applying both moss and weed killer when required.*
  - *Ensure the Gate technology is maintained for a minimum of 5 years (this can be done through the maintenance contract)*
  - *Ensure listed as a Local Tennis League venue at all times on the LTA/LTL website*
  - *Offer coaching activities*
  - *Offer a weekly free tennis session*
  - *Deliver a promotional open day*
  - *Appoint a Safeguarding officer for the courts*
13. We had been given the details of a County Officer who might have been able to carry out the safeguarding duties however it is looking like it will be more suitable to appoint someone from within the council. This could in fact be a member of the council or an officer. They will need to undergo Enhanced DBS checks and also attend some LTA led Safeguarding training. Members might consider it appropriate to delegate this to both an officer and a member of the council to ensure continuity.
14. All of the other costs for the maintaining the courts can be covered by the annual funding that has been agreed by the council for the next five years.

## **AGENDA ITEM 20**

The clerk has already been made aware of a coach that would like to use the courts and I am sure that a collaborative approach with the Ilminster Tennis Club to organise a tennis day could be explored.

15. Members are asked to resolve to approve the agreement.

**Mark Tredwin**  
**Town Clerk**  
**March 2023**