



Press Release

Embargoed until 00:01, 29th June 2017

LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION SPEARHEADS £250M TRANSFORMATION OF BRITAIN'S TENNIS COURTS

- **The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is launching the biggest investment initiative the sport has ever seen to transform grassroots tennis across Great Britain**
- **Initiative will focus on making courts easier to book and ensuring rain and darkness no longer stop play**
- **Local communities can now come together and register their interest to receive funding to transform their local tennis courts**

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) has today launched tennis' biggest ever investment initiative, called Transforming British Tennis Together, to make courts across the country more useable and accessible to everyone over the next ten years. The £250m transformation of Britain's tennis courts comes at a time of huge momentum in elite British tennis and unprecedented levels of interest and pride in the sport, which together have inspired many more people to pick up a racket.

The LTA has committed to investing £125 million to improve community tennis facilities across the country, and plans to unlock a further £125 million through match funding from community networks with a shared vision for growing the game. Now, the organisation is encouraging communities across the country to work together on strong, joined up bids which will enable them to bring tennis to a wider audience.

The funding will ensure that some of the key barriers to playing tennis are overcome. Currently, over a third of possible playing hours are lost due to rain as only 7% of Britain's 23,000 courts have covers. Furthermore, only 1 in 7 park courts have floodlights, and booking and gaining access to a court too often relies on old, analogue systems, making it difficult to organise a game.

Transforming British Tennis Together will see the LTA work in partnership with local government, local people and local businesses who come together to bid for funding in their community. Together, they will:

- Increase the number of covered and floodlit courts by 50% to boost available playing hours when it's raining and when the sun has gone down;
- Install online booking and entry systems so everyone can book a tennis court easily from their mobile phone, computer or tablet;
- Refurbish courts, clubhouses and other social spaces to ensure players have a great experience every time they visit;
- Support other innovative and creative ideas that meet local demand.

By working with communities across Britain with a real passion for tennis, the LTA aims to deliver 750 newly covered indoor courts, over 4,000 newly floodlit courts and nearly 3,000 court entry systems across the country over the next decade.

The LTA has tested and honed this community-led, partnership approach in 10 towns and cities, including Sheffield. Over the last three years, 24 courts in Sheffield have benefitted from a £1.5 million investment across six park venues, including Millhouses Park and two schools, leading to a

54% uplift in the number of people playing since 2015.

Jess Redfearn, Community Parks Tennis Manager for Parks Tennis CIC in Sheffield, said, “The impact that a £1.5 million investment has made to our tennis courts and clubs across the city has truly been incredible. The improved facilities mean I’ve seen more people playing and interested in taking lessons in our clubs, our parks, and at the University and College. After the hugely successful Tennis for Kids scheme launched last year, I’ve particularly loved seeing more kids asking to play - and not just in the summer! This funding can only build on the success we’ve already achieved, and encourage even more people to play one of our country’s favourite sports.”

Alongside continued investment in the quality of our nation’s coaches and tennis activities that make playing fun for all ages, this major transformation of grassroots tennis will move the LTA closer to delivering its two long term goals:

- To double the number of children playing tennis
- To encourage adults who already play, to play more often and all year round

Alastair Marks, Participation Director at the LTA said, “At a time when more and more people are enjoying the resurgence of British tennis, we’re focused on getting the next generation of players on court and having fun. Transforming British Tennis Together has been designed to tackle some of the most obvious challenges to doing that, and we’re excited about supporting communities across the country who we know are just as passionate about giving more people the chance to play tennis as we are. There’s never been a better time to invest in making our tennis courts the social hubs of their communities once again.”

Jennie Price, CEO of Sport England said, “More sport and physical activity of all kinds is Sport England’s ambition of ‘Towards an Active Nation’ so it’s great to hear the LTA is putting significant investment behind making tennis courts easier to use. With everyone looking forward to Wimbledon, there’s no better time to turn watching into playing. It would be great to think over the next few years, the new tennis courts will help us meet demand.”

As our country’s tennis infrastructure starts to transform, kids’ tennis programmes including Mini Tennis and Tennis for Kids will continue to play a key role in attracting more children into the sport. Tennis for Kids has already delivered free tennis courses and rackets to 35,000 children over the past two years, and Great British Tennis Weekends, now in their fifth year, have seen over 300,000 families take part in free local tennis with 16 per cent of them going on to play regularly afterwards. Inspiring and training Britain’s coaches will be crucial in maintaining this momentum, so coaching schemes such as She Rallies, which focuses on training female coaches, will help develop the future generation’s potential.

The LTA is now calling on tennis clubs, parks, local government, volunteers, coaches and businesses to come together and register their interest in bidding for the funds to transform their local tennis courts. For more information visit www.lta.org.uk/TBTT.

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Alastair Marks, Participation Director at the LTA is available for interview on Thursday 29th June. To arrange an interview, receive photography or for any additional information, please contact: Jessica Pearn on 07788100131, Michelle Holt on 07740 362397 or Katie Thomas on 07852961996 or email TBTT@teneobluerubicon.com

SHEFFIELD COMMUNITY CASE STUDY

Sheffield is just one of ten pilot towns and cities across Britain where this community-led, partnership approach to investment has been tested successfully. The development of tennis in Sheffield had historically focussed on the Community Indoor Tennis Centre (CITC) and the club network, while park tennis courts had fallen into a bad state of repair.

Early on in the programme, Sheffield City Council invested in court upgrades in two key parks, installing online court booking and gate entry systems. With over 8,000 bookings made during the summer of 2015, the Council were confident that a city wide approach to park tennis in Sheffield should be adopted.

Over the last three years, Sheffield has seen an investment of £350k in park tennis courts, refurbishing 24 courts and installing online booking and gate entry systems across six sites; a £815k investment to build 2 new indoor courts as part of the £16million redevelopment of Graves Health and Sports Centre; and three clubs have invested £300k to install floodlights and upgrade social facilities.

Alongside the park tennis programme, the LTA and Sport England worked with clubs to upgrade facilities, install floodlights, install new technologies including online court booking, offer summer membership deals and expand the tennis activities on offer. There was also significant investment in the Community Indoor Tennis Centre in Sheffield, with the LTA working in partnership with the new leisure operator to improve the programmes on offer and better promote tennis activities to reach a wider audience.

Sheffield's city wide approach to tennis was developed to appeal to all ages and standards of player. The online booking and gate entry systems installed in Sheffield's parks have been expanded to open courts at two secondary school sites to wider community use. Over 17,000 court bookings were taken in the parks in 2016, a 54 per cent increase since 2015.

NOTES TO EDITORS

ABOUT THE LTA:

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) is the National Governing Body for tennis in Great Britain, responsible for developing and promoting the sport, with a mission to get more people playing tennis more often. It does this under the consumer brand of **British Tennis**, by working with a broad range of partners and over 25,000 volunteers, to grow the game in communities, clubs and schools. The LTA represents the interests of over 590,000 British Tennis Members, men and women, girls and boys across the country, playing on more than 23,000 courts. The LTA runs and supports a network of 11,500 approved tournaments for players of all ages, the corner-stones of which are the premier grass court events leading up to Wimbledon, held in Nottingham, Birmingham, Queen's Club-London and Eastbourne, all title sponsored by Aegon. The LTA works with many delivery partners to grow the sport across the country. One of these is its charitable partner, the Tennis Foundation, who work with their priority groups of disabled people, young people in education and young people in urban and disadvantaged communities to transform lives through tennis. For further information about the LTA and British Tennis, and to review the British Tennis strategy for 2015 – 2018 visit www.lta.org.uk or follow us on Twitter @BritishTennis.