Central Swindon North Parish Council

Full Council at 1900 on Wednesday 25th March 2026

Agenda Item 11: St Marks Tennis Court Refurbishment Funding Shortfall

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1. To inform Council of the forecast funding shortfall in relation to the scheduled refurbishment of all tennis courts at St Marks Tennis centre and to seek Council support in principle to enable delivery of the works in FY27/28.

2. Background

2.1. Central Swindon North Parish Community Library & Leisure Trust (the Trust) are responsible for management of St Marks Tennis Centre on behalf of Central Swindon North Parish Council, including the management and appropriate distribution of a Sinking Fund for the purpose of scheduled tennis court maintenance.

2.2. Court maintenance follows a 10 to 12 year cycle entailing annual activities such as court cleaning and moss treatment, and cyclical activities such as court repainting and full court refurbishment. While routine maintenance has maintained the courts to an acceptable standard to date, it is now necessary to refurbish the courts as a priority.

2.3. Updated income and cost projections currently predict a financial shortfall of up to £104,000 against projected Sinking Fund reserves if works proceed as scheduled.

3. Reasons for the Shortfall

3.1. The primary factors contributing to the forecast shortfall in funding are:

3.1.1. Increased projected refurbishment costs for all courts compared to original estimates in the magnitude of £98,341, from £90,000, as originally projected, to £188,341 as projected to deliver scheduled refurbishment. Council should note that sums include VAT for which the Trust is liable.

3.1.2. Inflationary pressures in construction and materials.

3.2. Without intervention, the shortfall would fall in FY28/29.

4. Proposed Mitigation Measures

4.1. Trustees, in agreement with the service delivery contractor National Tennis Association (NTA), have agreed the following measures to reduce and manage the shortfall.

4.1.1. Bringing forward refurbishment to FY27/28 allowing for the Trust to benefit from lower projected costs.

4.1.2. A revised programme of court refurbishment to be delivered in FY27/28 to entail:

4.1.2.1. Refurbishment of courts 1-7; and
4.1.2.2. Repaint of courts 8-10

4.1.3. Increases in tennis pass and membership fees in FY26/27 to generate additional income for the Sinking Fund.

4.1.4. Exploration of fundraising opportunities including any potential grant funding to generate income to meet the costs of refurbishment.

4.1.5. The Trust and NTA will continue to explore options to minimise the shortfall.

4.2. The above measures are forecast to reduce the projected shortfall in funding to circa £40,000 in FY27/28 taking the Trust's VAT liability into account.

5. Support From Council

5.1. To enable delivery of court refurbishment works (courts 1-7) and repainting works (courts 8-10) in FY27/28, the Trust requests Council consideration of the following:

5.2. **Direct commissioning of works**: That the Council consider directly commissioning the refurbishment works, enabling VAT recovery and generating financial efficiencies for all parties. This is estimated to achieve a reduction in costs of circa £21,000.

5.3. **Loan Facility**: Provision of a loan from Council to the Trust, currently forecast at £40,000, to meet the projected shortfall, repayable over five years commencing FY28/29. Terms and conditions of any such loan to be agreed.

5.4. **Allocation of Car Parking Income**: Agreement in principle that that a proportion of income derived from the introduction of car parking fees at St Marks be allocated annually to the St Marks Sinking Fund managed by the Trust for the purpose of delivering scheduled maintenance to the tennis courts to ensure their sustainability.

6. Rationale for Council Support

7. Council support at this stage would ensure the protection of a key community leisure asset, prevent further cost escalation, safeguard the long-term sustainability of St Marks Tennis Centre, and ensure that works are delivered in the most cost effective manner.

8. Recommendations

8.1. Recommend to Full Council that the Parish directly commissions refurbishment works at St Marks on behalf of the Trust for courts 1-7 and repainting works for courts 8-10 to be delivered in FY27/28 to achieve cost efficiencies through the Council's eligibility for VAT recovery.

8.2. Recommend to Full Council that a proportion of any income derived from the proposed introduction of managed carparking at St Marks Recreation Ground be allocated annually to the Trust's St Marks Tennis Centre Sinking Fund.

8.3. Recommend that Full Council grant **an in-principle agreement** to provide a loan of up to **£40,000** to the Trust in **FY27/28**. This agreement is strictly subject to a final viability assessment, confirmation of the exact loan requirement, and a formal Council resolution. The funds to be earmarked exclusively for the refurbishment and repainting program as detailed in this report.

8.3.1. Loan repayments to be made over a 5-year term commencing in FY28/29.

8.3.2. Full loan terms and conditions and final amount to be agreed by Council subject to formal agreement reached between Council and the Trust during FY26/27 and final confirmation of the cost of scheduled works in FY27/28 following receipt of tenders for the works by the Trust.