

Public comments re item 45.4b

I play every week tennis at the courts in Normanston Park. Indeed we play throughout the year just about every week as the weather allows this and the surface is conducive also. We understand that surplus money from the Lawn Tennis Association is being made available only on the basis that these same courts are ripped up and replaced by some other surfaces and also a smaller number of courts. If you were to ask the vast majority of people who currently use these courts then you would find that to a man and woman we are more than happy with the courts at they are and they undoubtedly present us all with tennis all year round. This is heaven sent particularly to someone like me who is retired and loves playing tennis as an enthusiastic park player. Please use the L.T.A money on some other project which I am sure there is need for. Are you able to confirm that our wishes are being considered in a meaningful way.

Hi

I understand you have plans to change the courts surface at normanston park Lowestoft. I and friends use these courts at least twice a week.

The present surface is playable all year even with frost, and in my opinion is in reasonable condition.

Tarmac would be unplayable with frost and will need cleaning at least twice a year because of the tree's.

Lowestoft and beccles area desperately need indoor tennis facilities. If LTA have a pot of money I would suggest they invest it at the oval with 2 or 3 court's enclosed

Please one further point, the idea of the LTA is to increase tennis play, with this current proposal there would be less play due to wet and frosty courts.

We are still able to use the astro courts in these conditions

I understand that the council are considering replacing the current all weather courts at Normanston Park with hard courts. We have been playing on these courts for at least 20 years, 4 days a week, 52 weeks a year. The courts are still in excellent condition and do not need replacing. What they need is some proper wind protection as they are very much in the open. Further, in winter months the courts nearest the gate do not dry out and are normally unplayable due to rotten leaves, mud and slime. That could be addressed too. What is not required is their replacement with hard courts. Such courts would not be all weather and would hold the dirt and slime from leaves etc much worse. This would mean that we could no longer play tennis 52 weeks a year. It seems a retrograde step to consider such action for no other reason than ' the money has to be used up. A new changing area on the site of the old burnt down one would also seem a better way of using these resources.

Though I suspect that the apparent absence of any repair/ maintenance fund following the bizarre decision to make all courts free of charge, and the offer of LTA funding makes this a fait accompli, I would indeed like my comments shared with Councillors involved in the decision making.

I run the outdoor tennis section of Waveney 50+ Club. We have played on the all-weather courts at Normanston Park for over 25 years seeing several changes including the renewal of the all weather surface in 2008. Although we are the 50+ club the majority of players are over 65, some into their 70's. You would find that all of the groups who play regularly i.e. every week and throughout the year are of this age. We play here because the surface is more forgiving on the joints and much less

impact than playing on tarmac. So to hear that you are perhaps thinking of changing these courts is really disappointing. It would certainly mean that some people would be unable to continue to play which would be detrimental to their health and wellbeing.

Also please consider the leaf drop from the nearby trees which would render tarmac courts unplayable at certain times of the year which happens at Kensington Gardens at present.

I would ask that you take the above points into consideration when making any future decisions concerning these courts.

I have heard that these courts may be re-surfaced in the near future.

As a regular player I think that the surface is in a very good condition, playable all year round.

A big concern is that the replacement surface will not be of the same material as at present but tarmac. Where the courts are situated with trees close by on one side, tarmac will become unsafe through a combination of leaf fall and bird excrement.

The courts at The Denes and in Kensington Gardens are tarmac. These are safe to use throughout the summer months but are frequently too slippery to use in the winter.

Many of my non tennis playing friends are really surprised to hear that the courts are busy even on the coldest winter days. The Waveney 50 plus tennis group have more regulars playing then than in the summer months, because they can play elsewhere in the better weather but now that they can turn up in almost all weathers and can be assured of playing.

I've heard that the tennis courts at Normanston park may be resurfaced with tarmac replacing the current astro like turf. Although, the gesture is gratefully received tarmac cannot be used in the winter months, as it is too dangerous as at Kensington gardens, because of wet leaves, algae growth, and lying water. Problems. Which do not in the main affect the current astro turf at Normanston. There are over 50 individuals who use the courts at Normanston Park all year round, including children being coached and over 50s groups. Tarmac is also susceptible to being lifted by close tree roots, as at Kensington gardens. The trees are very close at one end of the Normanston Park courts. Please pass this on to whoever is making the decision.

I was saddened to read the proposed plans for these all weather courts.

I wish for the following observations to be forwarded to the councillors:

1. I believe that the LTA will have higher standards of court conditions than those of us regular users of this excellent facility. Other players, to whom I have spoken, feel that the courts are in a suitable condition for our needs and will last quite a while longer.
2. The courts at Kensington Gardens are not in a good condition, perhaps they could be re-surfaced.
3. The courts at Normanston, as they are now, can be used all year round. The surface is safe to play on in almost all weathers. Only immediately after heavy rainfall or snow are they not playable. Whereas the courts at The Denes and at Kensington Gardens, being hard surfaces, are not fit to be used for much of the winter, early spring and late autumn. They become very slippery after rain and in damp overhead conditions. Those at Kensington Gardens are overlooked by trees adding to the

slippery nature of these courts. Sadly those at Normanston Park, if they too were a hard surface, would also be seriously affected in this way.

4. The proposal of just two all weather courts would not be enough to cater for the current number of users. In the winter months nearly all the courts are used at any one time as there is no opportunity for evening play.

5. I would think that the majority of players are retired and elderly. The all weather surface is so much kinder to knee and ankle joints, prolonging our active lives!

6. The Normanston courts are used for coaching sessions. At the moment these sessions can be arranged over a number of weeks confident in the knowledge that only heavy rain will cause cancellations.

I am proud that Lowestoft can boast of having this excellent facility. There is not another set of courts like these anywhere locally nor further afield. I do hope that at some time in the future the Council would replace 'like for like'.

As a member of the Over 50's tennis club, playing tennis at Normanston Park every Friday, I was concerned at the suggestion the surface may be changed to tarmac rather than as an all-weather surface (Astro-turf) as at present. I would like to add my comments to those of Lynn Meades in that a considerable number of our older members (who obviously make up the vast majority of players) do not like playing on tarmac which they find is not "joint friendly". All other courts in the Lowestoft/Oulton Broad area are tarmac with Normanston being the only other option available.

The other reason why it would be a retrograde step is that the surface at Normanston is what it says on the tin: all weather. Therefore the club – and other members of the public – can play on these courts all year round (obviously not in snow and ice) without fear of slipping, as is the case with tarmac surfaces. This is evidenced by the pretty poor condition of courts at Kensington and Nicholas Everitt Park after a bad winter. I think I can safely say that the Over 50's tennis Club – which is a vital part in keeping older people fit and healthy – would probably fold if there was any concern about slipping over when the weather has not been kind – probably six months of the year!

My comments relate to agenda items 45.4a and 45.4b of the council meeting due on 28/6/22.

I am a regular all year round player at Normanston Park having previously played at Kensington Gardens and Nicholas Everitt Park.

I hope my observations will be considered as part of the decision making process on the agenda items.

1) I am surprised that the Normanston courts need resurfacing as they seem fit for purpose for recreational play - a tournament player may beg to differ. They are in my opinion far superior in terms of year round use and safety to the other 2 sites I have used being largely affected by moss and surface water.

2) An allocation of £18,000 budget appears unrealistic given that an average resurface cost for a single court on the internet is around £17,000.

3) The council risks reducing the availability of an all year round facility with its impact on the health of its electorate. This appears to contradict the health and fitness message of the O-go-go scheme which got me playing again.