



Cllr. Mary Penfold opens new artificial clay tennis courts at Dorchester Tennis & Squash Club

At a ceremony held on Saturday 19th January 2019, Councillor Mary Penfold, West Dorset District Council's Lead Councillor for Sports & Community Projects, has officially opened the new artificial clay tennis courts at Dorchester Tennis & Squash Club (DTSC) in Sawmills Lane.

The ceremony, which was attended by over 65 dignitaries, guests and members, saw speeches by Michael Clarke, President of DTSC, Keith Mason, Tennis Chairman of DTSC and Cllr. Penfold who then cut the official opening ribbon to facilitate an exhibition match between Alex White and Joggan Austin, followed by several junior matches. During the exhibition match, members and guests enjoyed a sparkling afternoon tea thanks to Sarah Baker and Jill Maple, who obviously thought they were competing in the Great Dorset Bake Off with the amazing selection of scones and cakes they produced.

The project represents a significant investment in the regeneration of DTSC's tennis facilities and has been financed through the Club's own reserve funds with supporting grants from Sport England's Community Asset Fund, WDDC's Leisure Development Fund, Dorset LTA, Tesco's 'Bags of Help' initiative and Pengillys Solicitors & Mediators. Additionally, loan funding has been provided by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), with Dorchester Town Council providing invaluable access to the town's Borough Gardens tennis courts to enable Club play to continue while work was in progress.

"We have been playing-in the new artificial clays courts for a few weeks now to iron out any wrinkles and the feedback from players, from juniors to seniors, has been extremely positive," said Keith Mason, Chair of DTSC's Tennis Committee. "We are extremely grateful to all our donors and supporters without whom it would have been difficult to bring the new tennis courts' project to fruition. Together, we have been able to create a tennis venue with the only state-of-the-art artificial clay courts within a 15-mile radius of Dorchester."

The ceremony brings to completion an 18-month project to replace DTSC's three, worn-out tarmac tennis courts with the latest, British-made Advantage Clay artificial clay courts which were manufactured by Tiger Turf and installed on-time and on-budget by Chiltern Sports Contractors. Representatives of both companies were at the club to help us celebrate this momentous occasion.

DTSC expects the new artificial clay courts to make the Club the tennis venue of choice in the Dorchester area. Already, the expected benefits of improved court accessibility and usability during wet and frosty weather are paying dividends with both early morning junior coaching sessions and evening play continuing unabated in conditions that would previously have prevented them.



Michael Clarke, DTSC Club President opens proceedings with a history of the Club's Tennis Courts at Sawmills Lane. **Cllr Mary Penfold** (right) looks on.



Official line up for the opening speeches as Keith Mason thanks all of our donors. From left to right: **John Williams**, Manager of Dorchester Tesco, **Michael Clarke**, DTSC Club President, **Keith Mason**, DTSC Tennis Chairman and **Cllr Mary Penfold**, WDDC Lead Councillor for Sports and Community Projects.



Cllr Mary Penfold cuts the ribbon to officially declare the new courts open.



Official Opening Photo - from left to right **Simon Clare**, Tiger Turf, **Alex White**, **Greg Charles**, **Joe Sanders**, **Kevin Dixon**, Chiltern Sports Contractors, **Herbie Andrews**, **Maria Dixon**, **Michael Clarke**, DTSC President, **Cllr Mary Penfold**, **Natalie Hall**, Tesco Dorchester Community Champion, **John Williams**, Manager of Dorchester Tesco, **Ben Sanders**, **Keith Mason**, DTSC Tennis Chairman, **Eddie Keegan**, **Joe Chambers** and **Joggan Austin**.



Guests and Club Members enjoyed a sparkling cream tea whilst the exhibition match was played.