

Townsend Lawn Tennis Club

Members' Handbook

This booklet aims to give you information about the club to help you make the most of your membership. Please read it in conjunction with our website, notices posted in the clubhouse and also emails sent out to members from time to time.

Welcome to Townsend! We believe our tennis club is friendly and competitive, offering a good playing experience for all standards of players. We are also fortunate to have a fully stocked, professionally staffed bar, a great clubhouse, changing rooms with showers, a lift for disabled access and a recreation area for table tennis, darts, dancing and dining!

We have eight courts, offering acrylic, Astroturf and modern clay surfaces, three of which are floodlit to extend summer evenings and to offer evening play throughout the winter. There is also a separate practice wall and extensive space for spectators, with plenty of seating and sun umbrellas in a pleasant setting.

Our qualified coaches are available for both individual and group coaching all year round with a range of lessons and squads to suit all standards.

We arrange a good mixture of social mix-in tennis, tournaments throughout the year (including the main Club Championships) and we have a large number of teams competing in the Herts, Datchworth, Hot Rackets, Watford and District and Herts veterans leagues, offering both summer and winter inter-club matches.

We offer a wide range of coaching, play and activities for junior members and, through our LTA Clubmark status, are committed to developing the next generation of players.

If you are new to our club, we hope you will find our Club sessions a good way to meet other members and, perhaps, team up for some competitions. Club sessions take place at regular times each week, often organised by the Club coaching T

There are a good range of social activities based around our lovely clubhouse and bar, including our Wimbledon draw and supper evening, Ladies and Mens suppers, Xmas dinner, Club barbeque, Quizzes and Wine Tasting evenings.

We hope you will enjoy being a member of Townsend, and if you have any ideas for improvements or would like to get involved in any way to help run the club, please let one of the Committee members know.

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Court use and Playing times – summer and winter

Summer evenings

The summer season starts after our Open Day, which is usually held in April and runs through until mid September. At the start of the season important dates, such as the Wimbledon draw, date of the Club tournament entries and finals, team matches and other events, will be publicised to all members.

Regular club sessions take place during the summer season at the times below: the sessions are open to all adult members and offer a great way for new members to get involved and find partners for tournaments or for general social play.

- Ladies night – Tuesday evening, 7pm – 10pm
- Mens night – Wednesday evening, 7pm – 10pm
- Mixed social night – Friday evening, 7pm – 10pm
- Sunday morning social – 10am – 12pm

All sessions are based around friendly and competitive doubles play. In the case of Ladies' and Mens' night, play is organised by the Club coach, which helps to ensure everyone gets an evenly balanced game, and that new members get to play with a wide variety of existing members. Our Friday night mixed social session is more relaxed, with members organising themselves into doubles fours, and then retiring to the bar afterwards, often with a supper cooked by a volunteer. On Sunday mornings too, there is friendly mix-in social play alongside member-organised doubles or singles play - courts permitting

On other evenings members are welcome to turn up and play if there is court space available, but these are not organised sessions and there may also be some courts taken by coaching groups or by matches.

Please remember if you are playing a privately organised four, that if there are other members waiting, you must play a short set and then come off court to mix in again or wait until another court becomes free. Similarly doubles play always has priority over singles play and Adult members have priority over juniors except at organised Junior sessions (Monday evening).

Winter evenings

During the winter season, from mid September until the Open Day in April, the club does not organise evening Club Sessions, mainly because it is too cold to stand around and wait to mix-in. Consequently winter evening play is based on groups of members getting together and booking the three floodlit courts for doubles play. The courts are available at least four evenings a week (Tuesday to Friday) in two sessions – 7-8.30pm and 8.30-10pm. Courts are booked online and there is a small charge per 90 minute floodlight session to cover the cost of the lights. There is a good guide to booking floodlit courts on our website at

www.townsendsports.co.uk/tennis/floodlit-court-bookings/online-booking-system-instructions.asp

On Monday evenings our Adult Coaching Squads occupy the floodlit courts – these are run by our Club Coach and his team and are very popular, particularly for new members looking to improve their game before committing to more competitive play.

Daytime Play

For those members wishing to play during the day, the courts are generally free for play at most times, although there are Junior Coaching squads which take place after school throughout the year from 4pm onwards, and also at times during the school holidays.

There are also two Adult coaching groups which take place on a Monday and details of these can be obtained from the Club coaching team.

We are looking to set up one or two organised day sessions and these will be publicised on our website and in the clubhouse for those who are interested.

Balls

Balls are provided by the club for Ladies and Mens nights in summer (Tuesday and Wednesday) and for certain organised tournaments which take place at the weekend or on Bank Holidays. At other times, members are expected to provide their own balls and, hopefully, to take turns in doing so! Balls are for sale at most times where available behind the bar at a competitive price. Balls for matches are provided by the club but are paid for by match fees paid by the team players.

Coaching

Coaching is available for senior and junior members at all levels, either as individuals or in groups. The Townsend club coach is Matt Foster, one of the most highly qualified coaches working in Hertfordshire, and who started his tennis career as a junior at Townsend. He has attained the Performance Coach Award (level 5) and also works with a committed team of junior coaches to develop the coaching section at Townsend.

Adult coaching at Townsend can be booked on an individual basis directly with Matt, or there are four group coaching sessions on a Monday (two in the day and two in the evening) for beginners and intermediate players which are very popular with newcomers and existing members alike.

Junior coaching is very popular at Townsend, with Mini and Junior coaching running throughout the year.

Contact Matt for more information about his coaching services, whether for juniors or adults, individually or in groups, at Total Tennis Coaching Ltd (07780 533337; ttcltd.tennis@gmail.com).

Junior tennis

The club has a thriving junior section with players from 4-16 of all abilities catered for, both at weekends and during the week.

Lessons are available, either individually or in groups with Matt Foster, our club coach. We use the 'traffic light' system with the youngest players using softer, larger red balls on smaller courts, progressing through to orange balls and then to Mini Tennis using regular green balls on full size courts for 8-10 years olds.

The Tigers Academy provides both group and individual lessons for those juniors keen to improve fitness and ability. This offers flexibility where juniors can attend once, twice or three times per week and involves one to one sessions with both Matt (who holds Performance Coach Award Level 5) and the older teenage club members.

We also run a number of junior teams, organise squad training sessions for the teenagers and, last but not least, a wide variety of tennis camps are available in the school holidays.

For further information, please contact Matt Foster on 07780 533337 or email ttcltd@homecall.co.uk.

As well as competitive tennis, we also run a Junior Club Night on Mondays between 6pm and 7.30pm during term times where the junior members can just turn up and play a few sets with friends in a social environment and follow it up with a soft drink and a bag of crisps afterwards in the clubhouse.

In addition, there are also various social events arranged for the Juniors from rounders in the park, a visit to the Natural History Museum, film and pizza nights and the annual Christmas disco plus events with the adults such as the Generation Game and annual BBQ.

The courts

Townsend has eight all weather courts which can be played on throughout the year. The two courts nearest the clubhouse are all weather acrylic, the three floodlit middle courts are modern clay (Euroclay) and the lower three courts are Astroturf. With the exception of the Astroturf, the other courts do require brushing/sweeping at the end of a session of play if there are no other members coming on to play, and appropriate sweepers are provided for this on each court.

In order to keep the courts in good condition, players must wear appropriate tennis footwear with no heel or any pronounced ribbing on the soles.

All members are asked to remove any rubbish, including empty ball tins, from the courts.

What to wear

The all-whites rule is a thing of the past for most clubs, including Townsend. However, we would ask that members wear appropriate tennis clothing and footwear, and also be aware that should they play for one of the Townsend teams, their standards of dress should reflect well on the club and comply with any dress codes imposed by other clubs for away matches.

Wimbledon ticket draw

Every year we receive an allocation of pairs of tickets for the Wimbledon Championships that is based on the number on the number of members in our club, provided they have signed up for British Tennis membership. (British Tennis Membership, provided by the LTA, is currently free to all and offers a number of benefits in addition to being entitled to enter the Wimbledon ticket draw. There is a link to British Tennis membership on our website for those members wishing to sign up.)

Our Wimbledon tickets are sold to members at our annual Wimbledon draw evening which takes place in early/mid May. Those lucky enough to draw a pair of tickets must confirm their British Tennis membership number on the night and also have the means to pay the ticket price on the night by cheque or cash.

The draw is open to all full adult and junior members (9 and over). Since there are not enough tickets for everyone who wants one, it is also generally appreciated if anyone lucky enough to draw several pairs of tickets in the same family, feels able to put one or more tickets back into the general draw.

The Wimbledon draw is also a popular social event with a full bar and a home-cooked supper available at a very reasonable price.

Tournaments

The club runs a number of tournaments throughout the year, including our popular social, or American, tournaments, Pre-season warm-up events, our Autumn Mixed Tournament, annual Vets tournament and our main Club Championships that culminates in our Finals Day in July.

Club Championships

- Format: Knockout tournament played over two months with plate competitions for first round or first match losers. Players enter with their

own partner for doubles events. Those entering should ensure that they are available for finals day!

- Events: Men's singles and doubles, Ladies' singles and doubles, Mixed doubles
- When: Mid May to Mid July

Junior Club Championships

- Format: Knockout tournament
- Events: TBC
- When: Weekend of 28th and 29th September

Autumn Mixed Tournament

- Format: One day tournament with lunch included for small charge. Players enter with a partner. Round robin format, followed by semi finals and finals.
- Events: Mixed doubles
- When: September

Dai Rees Memorial Vets Tournament

- Format: One day tournament with lunch included for small charge. Round robin format, followed by semi finals and finals.
- Events: Men's doubles and Ladies' doubles
- When: To be confirmed

Pre-season Tournament

- Format: One day tournament with lunch included for small charge. Round robin format, followed by semi finals and finals.
- Events: Men's doubles and Ladies' doubles
- When: Spring

Social (American) Tournament

- Format: Friendly social, half day tournaments where players play with multiple partners.
- Events: Mixed doubles
- When: Typically Sundays and on occasional Bank Holidays

Team tennis

Townsend is one of the top Hertfordshire clubs and offers a wide range of teams across several different league formats and playing standards. These are as follows:

Herts league: 7 Men's teams, 5 Ladies' teams - Summer weekends

Herts league: 2 Ladies' and 1 Mens' Hot Racket teams - Summer weekends

Herts league: 4 Men's and 6 Ladies' Veterans teams - Winter weekends

Watford & District league: 1 Mixed team - Summer evenings

Datchworth league: 2 Mixed teams - Autumn weekends

For more information on any of our teams, take a look at the Team pages on our website. If you would like to be considered for team selection, or would like further information, please speak to the Ladies' or Mens' captain who can arrange for you to be introduced to the appropriate team captain.

Social events

Townsend is a very sociable and friendly club. The bar is open most evenings and on Sunday lunchtimes for a drink after a game of tennis, and there is also a large screen TV in the clubhouse showing big sporting events.

In addition, the club tries to organise a good spread of social events to suit all tastes. These include the Wimbledon Draw and supper, the Christmas Dinner, annual Barbeque, Finals Day, Quizzes, Wine Tasting Evenings, Ladies' and Mens' section suppers. Information about these events is posted on our website and, in addition, we send out regular emails to members about forthcoming events.

Social events are coordinated by the Social Secretary on the Club committee but please remember that this is a voluntary role and we really welcome offers from members who would like to get involved in organising an event, either individually or in groups. This way, the burden of organising every event doesn't fall on just one person and the club benefits from a wide range of ideas and suggestions. So, if you have an idea for an event, and wouldn't mind helping to organise it, please speak to the Social Secretary, whose details can be found on the website under the Committee section.

Clubhouse and Bar

- The clubhouse facilities at Townsend are available to members at most times of the day and evening and entry to the club is via a Pin-coded keypad entry system. Members can use the kitchen at most times to make drinks, although the club does not provide these.
- The cooking facilities are for matches, club functions and groups which hire the function rooms. Generally, please leave the kitchen as you find it and wash up any items used.
- Regretfully, animals are not allowed in the clubhouse, with the exception of guide dogs.
- Members may book the clubhouse for parties at reasonable rates.
- The bar is fully staffed every evening and at Sunday lunchtimes, and is a great place to relax with a drink after a hard game of tennis or, alternatively, to come for a pleasant drink with friends and relatives. We

also have a large, flat-screen TV for making the most of big sporting events – from football to Wimbledon.

Table tennis

Townsend has recently formed a new table tennis section that currently provides competitive league table tennis for members of the club on a Tuesday evening. It has one team in the St Albans Hatfield and Welwyn Table Tennis league, playing from September through March.

For more information on table tennis at the club, please contact Mike Busby on 07916 311396 or mike@wsi-eweb.com.

First aid

There is a basic first aid kit in the kitchen inside the clubhouse.

We are also about to install a defibrillator for use in the unlikely event of anyone stopping breathing while playing tennis or visiting the club. We have offered free training to club members in its use, but can consider further requests for training on demand.

Court etiquette

Wear appropriate tennis gear: Please make sure you are wearing appropriate tennis clothing along with proper tennis shoes without ribbed soles on all courts. It is also helpful if you take the time to attach your membership tag to your shoes or tennis bag so that it is clear to other members that you are a club member.

Be considerate of members waiting to play: Remember that, when other members are waiting to play, doubles play takes precedence over singles and adults take precedence over juniors. The rule about juniors, however, does not apply on club nights to juniors who have been nominated to join in senior play by the club coach. Members should also play a short set (ie first to 6 games) if others are waiting to play.

Play priorities: the following types of play are listed in priority of court use when all the courts are full:

1. Senior and junior matches against other clubs
2. Club tournament matches
3. External tournament matches
4. Social tournaments
5. General play
6. Fixed set (ie a privately arranged game)

Mix-in: Members should mix-in and encourage others to do so during general play sessions.

Entering and leaving the court: Wait for a break in play before walking across the back of a court where play is in progress.

Balls: If your ball goes onto another court, please wait for a break in play before attempting to retrieve it, as slinking along the back of a court while other members are playing is very offputting. Also please keep the court clear of balls during play, as these are dangerous and can distract players on both sides of the net. Finally, if your ball goes over the netting on to another court or pathway, wait until a break in play before retrieving it without interrupting other play that may be taking place.

Line calls: Please give your opponents the benefit of the doubt when it comes to line calls. If you are not sure, then play your opponent's ball as good! Also remember to make line calls in a timely fashion so that your opponents can hear.

Lets: Always agree a let if a ball (or player) comes on court during a rally. It is also better to offer a let in situations where your opponents are not happy with, or dispute, your line calls.

Respect and courtesy: Noisy behaviour, shouting and bad language are not acceptable on or off court at Townsend. Always show your partner and your opponents respect and courtesy.

Mobile phones: If possible, please try to switch your mobile phone to silent whilst on court or in the clubhouse, to allow everyone to concentrate on their tennis!

Picking up rubbish: Please don't leave empty cans, water bottles, banana skins or old tennis balls on court or in the grounds or clubhouse. Dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

Food and drink: No food or drinking glasses are allowed on court.

Sweeping the courts: Townsend does not have a full time Groundsman to clean up after everyone, so if you are the last player to use one of the acrylic or clay surfaces please take the trouble to drag/sweep the court and roll the lines with the equipment provided so that the next people using the courts can enjoy their game too.

The tennis committee

The tennis committee meets regularly and is responsible for making sure that Townsend runs for the benefit of its members.

The Committee positions are elected yearly at the AGM, which is open to all club members. All full club senior members can put themselves forward for a committee post, provided they are nominated and seconded by other members. A nomination sheet is posted in the clubhouse prior to the AGM for this purpose. The roles are Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Mens' captain, Ladies' captain, Grounds, Tournaments, Publicity, Fixtures, Social, Junior Liaison and Coaching, plus a number of General posts.

If you need to contact a specific member, details are listed on the club website. Similarly, if you have a particular issue that you would like to be addressed at the next committee meeting, please either complete the Feedback form on the website or, alternatively, speak to or email one of the committee members who will be happy to raise your point for discussion.