



Senior's Tennis Programme 2018

Venue Experience and Impact of the programme on Participation



Steve Luck(Perran Tennis)

Senior's Tennis Programme Report November 2018

Introduction

This year Seniors Tennis GB in partnership with the LTA financially supported over 100 venues from 26 Counties, Wales and Scotland in organising a 'Senior's Tennis Programme', an increase from 71 venues last year. The programme, now in its fourth year, is aimed at 35+ year olds in order to drive participation. Venues are able to apply for a grant for which they develop a plan that focuses on encouraging take-up of tennis by adults over the age of 35.



Richard Whichello (Sundridge Park LTC)



Helen Mitchell (Sussex County Lawn Tennis Club - SCLTC)

Venue Experience

Below is a list of the venues that took part and responded to the survey, 91 (up from 71 last year):

Venues shown in **Green took part in 2017

- Banbury West End TC
- Barry Athletic LTC and Windsor LTC
- Baseline tennis centre
- Bethersden Tennis Club
- Biddestone Tennis Club
- Brackley Tennis Club
- Bradninch
- Brentham LTC
- Bridgwater LTC
- Bromley LTC
- Burnley Tennis Club
- Byfield Tennis Club
- Carlisle Park, Hampton
- Chapel Allerton Lawn Tennis and Squash Club
- **Chard Tennis Club**
- Cheslyn Hay Tennis
- Chorleywood Lawn Tennis Club
- Chulmleigh Tennis Club
- Clarkston Bowling & Tennis Club
- **Copmanthorpe Tennis Club**
- Cooper Park in Elgin.
- Cottingham LTC
- Craiglockhart tennis centre
- Danby Tennis Club
- Dean Tennis Club
- Duston United Tennis Club
- Eaton Bray tennis club
- Eldon Grove Tennis Club
- **Goodrich Tennis Club**
- Grantown Tennis Club, Nairn Sports Club
- Hale Gardens LTC
- Hemingford LTC
- Hereford Squash Tennis and Racketball Centre
- Hoddesdon Lawn Tennis Club
- Hovingham Tennis Club
- **Huntingdon Tennis Club**
- Knutsford Sports Club - Tennis Section
- Lancaster Tennis Club
- Linslade tennis club
- Loughborough Greenfields Tennis Club
- Loughborough Lawn Tennis club
- Luton & Vauxhall TC
- Lymm LT&CC
- Marshfield Tennis Club and s Club
- Nairn Sports Centre
- Newman Collard Tennis Club

- North Scarle Tennis Club
- Northern Aces
- Old Wilsonians' Lawn Tennis Club
- **Ormskirk Tennis Club**
- Oxford Sports Tennis Club
- Paddington Rec
- Parkwood Tennis Club
- Penketh Tennis club
- Penzance Tennis Club
- **Perran Tennis**
- Pershore Tennis Centre
- **Plympton Lawn Tennis Club**
- Queensmead Sports Centre
- Ramsbury
- Ripon Tennis Centre
- Riverside Tennis Club
- Romsey and Abbey Tennis Club
- Shooters Hill Lawn Tennis Club
- **Shotley&Benfieldside Tennis Club**
- Shrewsbury Lawn Tennis Club
- Sleaford Tennis Club
- South Hill Woods Tennis club
- St James Tennis Club
- St Mary's Tennis Club
- St Pauls Walden Tennis Club
- Sussex County Lawn Tennis Club
- Sutton United Tennis Club
- Tadcaster Tennis club
- Tarka Tennis
- The Avenue Tennis Club
- **The City of Peterborough Tennis Club**
- The Deanes LTC
- The Holbrook Sports Club
- Thongsbridge Tennis Club
- Udney Tennis Club
- Upton Victory Hall Lawn Tennis Club
- Welland Park Tennis Club
- Welwyn Tennis Club
- Wetherby Tennis Club
- Whitstable Lawn Tennis Club
- Wood Vale LTC
- Woore Tennis Club

How venues heard about the Senior's Tennis initiative

32 venues have ran a seniors' tennis programme previously with 23 taking place last year, 25 of total courses ran which have been ran previously were funded and 8 were not.

What the grant money was spent on

In 2018, the grant money was used to fund a wide range of activation within clubs including a number of new things from previous years:

- Coaching Costs and expertise of high level coaching
- Court Hire at Venue
- Equipment (rackets and balls, touchtennis kits)
- Social Media Advertising (Facebook)
- Local Marketing and Advertising - Newspapers, leaflets, posters and flyers - artwork
- Subsidising courses for beginners such as Tennis Xpress and Cardio Tennis
- Setting up a U3A Tennis Group (New)
- Drinks reception for new members (New)
- Rackets for beginners (New)

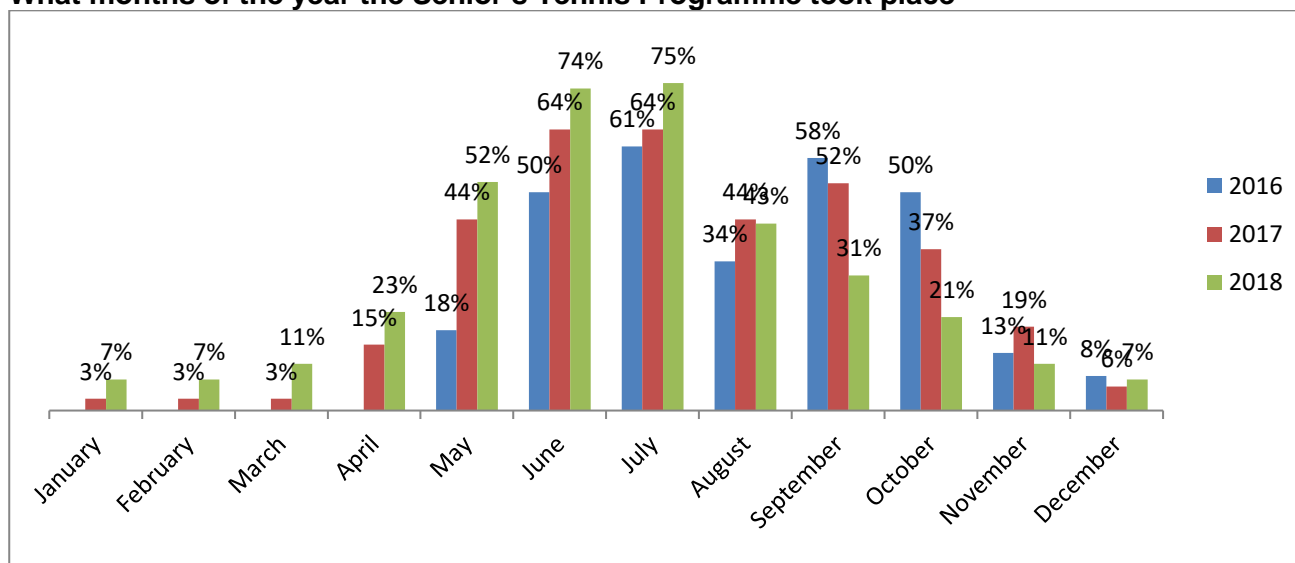
"The money was used to deliver coaching sessions to prospective new senior members to give them confidence to take up tennis and join the tennis club."

"We were able to use the funds on a number of activities. We produced targeting marketing material that we were able distribute during Salford and Manchester Pride. This advertised an American Doubles event that was held in August and subsidised for seniors and another event in September that was ultimately attended by 80 individuals."

"We used the money to provide 6 subsidised sessions - daytime - to 24 players. They were initially free and the second series of a further 6 sessions required some payment. The idea was to get people used to either paying for coaching or club membership."

"New adult rackets to loan to beginners and guest players to subsidise coaching for some basic beginners and refresher tennis."

What months of the year the Senior's Tennis Programme took place



This year the senior's tennis programmes launched slightly earlier in the year in April with the bulk of sessions taking place during the months of May to September, peaking during the summer months of June and July.

Impact of the Senior's Tennis Programme (to November)

Venues who responded to the survey told us the exact numbers of people taking part in the sessions and also how many were already members. They told us how many signed up to further lessons, how many became members of the venue (where membership is offered) and also who became BTMs (although many were not aware if their new members were also BTMs):

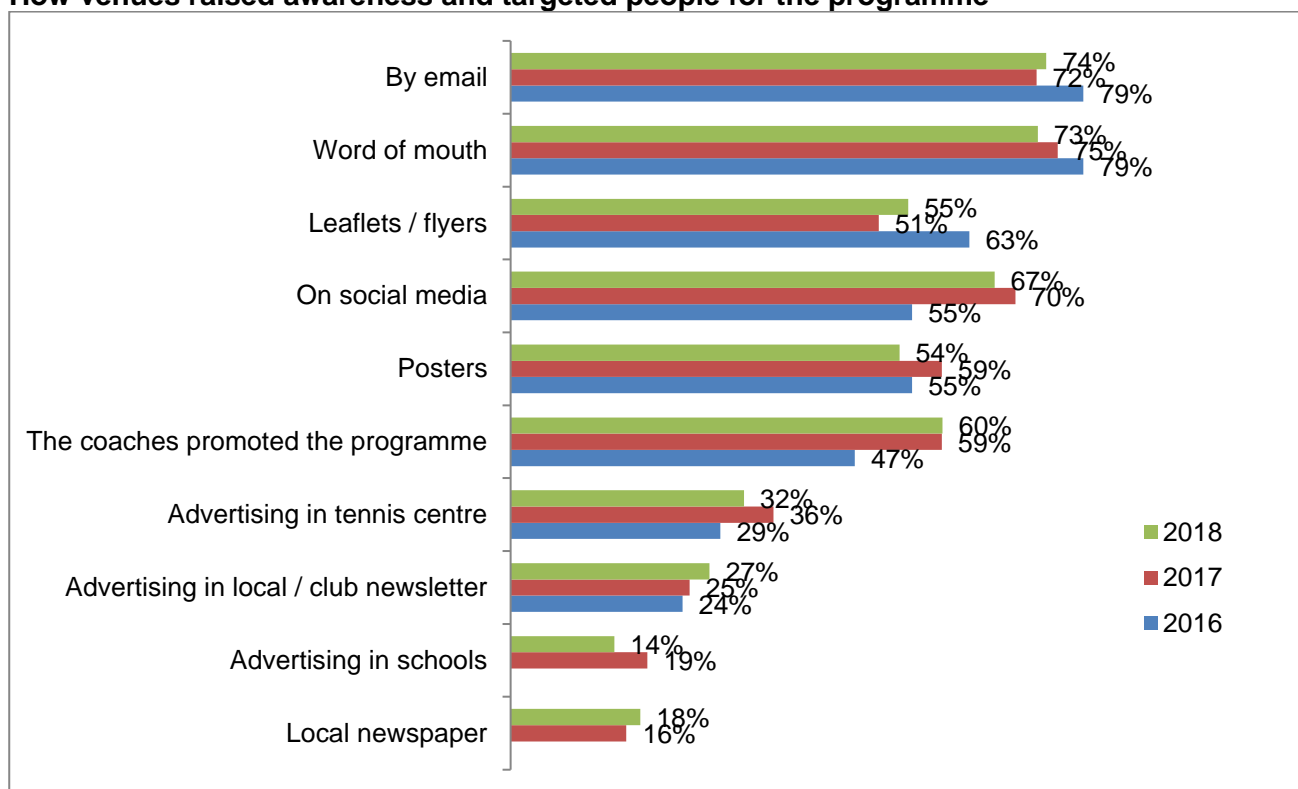
	How many people took part?	Average number of people per venue	How many were already members?	How many have signed up to lessons?	How many have become members?	How many have become BTM members?*
2018	1690	21	426	594	418	131
2017	1273	19	280	468	337	93
2016	836	17	198	232	214	70
2015	517	17	86	227	152	86

*A number of venues were unsure about the BTM status of course attendees.

This year the number of attendees on the senior's tennis programme continues to rise over the past four years and introduced tennis to over 1,600 people above the age of 35 years old in 2018. This has led to nearly 600 people signing up to further lessons after the course, with over 400 signing up to club membership, similarly positive improvements year on year.

Newman Collard Tennis Club told us that their sessions had a direct impact on the number of members signing up to join their venue: *"We have had 20 new adults join this year. To put that in perspective we only had 60 adult members in total at the start of the year. At least 6 of these new members came directly as a result of the open days and coaching programme."*

How venues raised awareness and targeted people for the programme



Similar to previous years, venues used a wide variety of channels to promote their senior's tennis programme. Email and word of mouth were still the most popular form for raising awareness followed by Social Media which is becoming increasingly popular and important to promote events. Coaches still play a large role in the promotion as well as advertising through leaflets and posters.

A significant proportion of venues specifically targeted the parents of junior players who are currently on programmes at their club. This was done through a number of channels like parents attending coaching or collecting their child and sending them home with them.

One club said they targeted parents to align sessions with their child: *“We targeted parents of children on the programme and offered the coaching next to the child’s lesson.”*

Another approached parents and encouraged participation with their child: *“Yes. I called them all together at the end of coaching sessions and asked the parents how many would like to be able to be better hitters so they could warm their child up properly before tournaments.”*

Another club said they: *“Targeted junior and mini member’s parents who were not members themselves and ran a family picnic in the afternoon to encourage families to attend.”*

Email mail outs and Social Media advertising including Facebook were also used widely this year to target bespoke audiences and parents:

“Email campaign to past/present players, newspaper article and social media advertising.”

“Profiling on Facebook post boost, communication via existing members, clear statement of qualifying criteria”.

How much venues charged for their sessions

	2016	2017	2018
Did not charge	47%	59%	42%
£1 - £3	24%	23%	20%
£4 - £6	21%	14%	33%
£7 - £9	3%	1%	5%
£10+	5%	1%	0%
Don't know	0%	1%	0%

Interestingly, fewer venues ran their sessions this year for free, proving that as the programme expands, many are more willing to pay for the session and provision provided by venues. The remainder that did charge only charged a small amount (less than £6).

Are venues running follow up offers?

Positively, 76% of the venues we spoke to in 2018 said they are running discounts or offers for the participants of the senior’s tennis programme (increasing from 57% in 2017). Follow on offers included the reduction in costs off annual club membership and discounted prices on club coaching. Some also offered ‘1 month free’ of membership or incentives to sign up and book future sessions.

“We offered first coaching squad at half price and a % off our club full membership.”

“50% off membership and reduced class cost for one term.”

“First month free when joining club as a full member.”

“Half price membership for the first year. 1 coaching lesson free when you book a block of lessons”

How successful was the Senior's Tennis Programme?

	Very successful	Quite successful	Neither successful nor unsuccessful	Quite unsuccessful	Very unsuccessful
2018	51%	43%	4%	1%	0%
2017	45%	48%	6%	1%	0%
2016	63%	26%	5%	3%	3%

The senior's tennis programme was again hugely successful this year with 94% of venues who ran a programme saying it was successful (consistent improvements year on year, 93% in 2017). Only one club said it was unsuccessful due to the lack of members joining the club having attended the sessions they ran, although that is a very small venue.

Many venues considered their programme to be a success as a result of the popularity of the sessions and encouraging a new audience into the sport. Many were also successful in converting players into members of the club, promoting the game to the community.

"It was great to be able to attract new players to our open days and introduce them to Cardio Tennis. Some adults have since joined our weekly classes which is great."

"It engaged more parents of mini players to play with their children and although not many moved on to membership or coaching it is the start of getting them involved in the club."

"The ratio of those who took part and have since joined the club was very high. Those who haven't become members have continued with additional coaching courses and we have since gained more new players to the programme."

Some venues told us that the programme was successful at attracting high numbers and new members into the club. Since joining, many clubs have begun exploring ways to further cater for these groups of 'seniors' and include new sessions and programmes to enhance experience.

"We were delighted that we attracted mostly new people to the club. We are also really pleased that as a result of this initiative 2 new sessions have become viable".

Many venues commented that they would not have been able to run a senior's tennis programme without the support from this grant. *"By having the funding provided we were able to expand our messaging and reach to draw in people apart from the usual members. Your support is greatly appreciated. Thanks!"*

What venues are planning on doing in the future to retain players over the age of 35

In 2018 venues told us a number of new things they're looking to integrate to retain players over the age of 35:

- A number of venues mentioned that they're looking to integrate further programmes and initiatives in their club such as Rusty Rackets, Cardio Tennis and even a Tennis Xpress course for beginners over 35.
- Venues are also looking to try and offer further discounts and offers to incentivise senior players to join their club and sign up to further courses.
- Many are looking to improve the provision of competition at venues and join local leagues
- Also clubs are looking to host more 'socials' which are not just for team players.
- Two venues are looking to create brand new programmes to encourage greater participation from senior players such as 'Tea and Tennis' on a Sunday morning.
- Mentions also of a Whatsapp group to generate engagement and encourage participation.

What venues suggested could improve the senior's tennis programme in the future

A number of venues are delighted with the current programme and do not have any further suggestions on how it could be improved.

"We have been delighted with your support - I think most clubs just need a little financial backing to start these courses!"

A few venues however mentioned that they would like to see further support and possibly a national promotion of the programmes as has been seen with Tennis for Kids and Great British Tennis Weekend.

"A stronger marketing campaign from the LTA would be beneficial (similar to Tennis4Kids) and Back to Netball."

Interestingly one club mentioned they did not like how the programme was referred to as 'Seniors Tennis' when it is eligible for over 35's. In 2018 many venues have generated their own name for the programmes including "Slice Girls" and "Tennis For The Terrified" to encourage participation.

"We ran some 'Tennis For The Terrified' sessions which has resulted in around 80% of those that came, continuing to play.

We also hosted a themed summer doubles social, and a couple of adult tennis camps through the summer.

All very successful and thanks again."

"Don't call it seniors! Sounds like it is for retired people and puts a lot of people off."

A number of venues also mentioned that they would like to see further funding and schemes like this to help take their club to the next level and improve provision for members.

"Continue to offer small scale funding to help clubs, particularly small ones such as ours, to improve diversity of our membership and provide an alternative way of remaining active."

"We ran two really successful open days in earlier in the year. It wasn't planned at the time of our application but the first open day coincided with the day of the village fair which took place on the playing fields next to the tennis courts. We took the opportunity to then run a second open day the following weekend."

"Both open days were really successful and we used the opportunity of the village fair to spread the word and talk to village residents about the second open day the following week. We took contact details for 25 Adults at the village fair, most of whom turned up the next weekend. From the two open days we had 4 new families join the club the following week alone and several more have joined since then.

In terms of feedback to other clubs - if they are located on local playing fields and in villages that have village fairs - then organise two open days based around the date of the village fair. It was such a success that we know already that we will repeat the formula in following years and we can't believe we didn't think of it before.

Thank you so much for your grant this year - we have learnt a lot."

Overall, it was very positive to see that all venues apart from one, informed us that they are likely to run or plan to run a senior's tennis programme next year.

Photos of the Senior's Tennis Programme in action

Below are a number of photos from the 2018 Senior's Tennis Programme in action:



Janeen (Brentham LTC)



Richard Whichello (Sundridge Park LTC)



Ripon Tennis Centre



Helen Mitchell (Sussex County Lawn Tennis Club - SCLTC)



Jenny Edwards, Head Coach



John Ratcliffe (Shooters Hill)