Ewhurst Public Tennis Courts

Having just spent £7250 to refurbish these courts on the recreation field we need to decide on how they are run to secure their future. There are two main issues that have to be considered

1. These courts have never been locked and we have experienced incursions by non-tennis users for football, cycling and other uses which have and will damage the surfaces. This cannot be tolerated now the courts are in excellent condition again, and they must be secured for just for tennis play.
2. We have been able to undertake this work due to the presence of Cil [Community Infrastructure Levy] finance, which flows from new housebuilding in the parish, principally in Ewhurst, with the amount lifted because of the existence of the Neighbourhood Plan. However it is likely that the courts will require complete re-surfacing in under 10 years’ time, with an estimated cost of not less than £30,000 at today’s costs. This pot of money, or other sources, may not be available then. If the council were just to include this in a future annual budget and precept, this would represent a huge one off increase for our residents and probably not be feasible or acceptable. Therefore we need to consider some charging system that will, if hypothecated, accrue for future major work and also any maintenance required over this period, whilst remaining affordable for our residents. It is worth pointing out that there was a charge in the past, with an honesty box on the wall of the house in Broomers Lane of our late Chair.

Therefore we propose the following

1. The courts are secured with a combination lock so that only permitted tennis users can access them
2. We offer annual memberships to all parish households at a cost of £25 per annum – all subscribing households would be given the initial lock number following payment. It should be noted that local tennis clubs annual adult memberships start at a minimum of well in excess of £100pp.
3. We set up a members WhatsApp group so that regular changes of the locks numbers can be sent solely to subscribing households.
4. We ask for voluntary donations for non-members playing with members.
5. We ask that members play for a maximum of 2 hours, except with the permission of the council via the parish clerk.
6. We are investigating investing in an online booking system. Until we have this up and running members can post on the WhatsApp group site when they are “booking” the courts.
7. Membership will generally run from Jan 1 to 31 December. However memberships bought now will last till 31 Dec 2026.
8. We would like to still maintain a pay as you play facility, with the shop able to hand out the lock number. We propose a hire charge of £5 [max 2 hours play].