

Planning Statement. February 2024.

Following two recent visits to Martin Dene Tennis Club by David Bloom, Planning Manager, Bexley Council a requirement for a submission for planning permission was identified. This planning statement is submitted alongside the planning application and drawings and provide background to the submission.

Background:

Martin Dene Lawn Tennis Club opened in 1935 and has provided tennis and tennis coaching to the residents of Bexleyheath continuously since then.

The three courts, viewing areas and clubhouse have remained in the current layout since 1935.

Apart from a clubhouse rebuild around 30 years ago, the only other change to the site was the addition of a community air raid shelter, built during WWII.

The Tennis Club has a focus on junior coaching and has been recognised twice in the last four years for its exceptional safeguarding practice - achieving runner up status as the Lawn Tennis Associations Small Tennis Club of the Year. The Clubs Head Coach, Sophia Thomas is the current Lawn Tennis Association Coach of the Year. As a result, the club attracts large numbers of junior tennis players accompanied by parents/guardians wishing to observe coaching in practice.

Why is a planning application is required:

The areas around the courts (where parents/guardians stand to watch junior coaching) were mostly laid to grass, requiring regular and expensive maintenance. A brick BBQ in the middle of the area was identified as a safeguarding risk and required to be removed and replaced. Additionally heavy rainfall in 2019 and again in late Autumn/Winter 2020 had caused a small retaining wall and grass bank behind one of the courts to collapse over an access path (with the associated risk of future landslides).

Work undertaken was therefore needed to:

- 1) change a grassed area partly to a patio (to safely host a re-sited outdoor BBQ) and the remainder to an astroturf surface (significantly reducing future maintenance costs) and,
- 2) to address the future landslide risk and to clear the access path, there was a need to re-build the retaining wall and grassed bank, changing the surface to a rockery (preventing the re-built area being used as a platform with views into neighbouring gardens and enabling a low cost future maintenance solution).