



Royal seal of approval for Greenhouse Centre

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Prince William and Prince Harry made the opening of the new Greenhouse Centre a royal occasion last night.

The princes cut the ribbon and enjoyed a game of table tennis at the eye-catching venue in London, refurbished with the aid of a £100,000 grant from Table Tennis England.



The princes at last night's opening

The Greenhouse Centre is the new home of Greenhouse Sports, a London-based charity that uses sport to engage young people and improve their life chances. Table tennis tables have replaced wooden pews but the stained-glass windows and columns remain at Christ Church Cosway Street, a Grade II* listed deconsecrated church in north-west London.

As well as local organisations delivering programming in partnership with Greenhouse Sports, the centre will also be home to a [Table Tennis England Centre for Excellence](#).



Matthew Syed and Darius Knight play an exhibition match at last night's opening

The Greenhouse Centre builds on the model the charity has delivered across schools since 2002, providing high quality sports coaching and mentoring to engage over 40,000 young people from deprived areas of London to raise their aspirations while improving physical and mental wellbeing.

Coaches, including former national and international table tennis players, will deliver an intensive sports programme partnering with local primary and secondary schools, as well as providing drop-in sessions for the local community, including physical activity sessions for women, visually impaired members of the community and older residents.

Table Tennis England Chief Executive Sara Sutcliffe said:

It's exciting to see the project come together, providing an inspirational and different environment for the Greenhouse programmes and their outreach into the local community.

We look forward to working closely with Greenhouse and really making an impact across all areas of their work through table tennis.



The building in Cosway Street

Greenhouse Sports acquired the listed, deconsecrated church in 2014 and worked painstakingly with architects and contractors over two years to create a state-of-the-art, accessible sports centre with all the latest technology.

Conservation guidelines were rigorously followed and sports flooring, offices, and a reception area have replaced the vestry, organ pipes and altar, while the crypt has been transformed into homework rooms, changing rooms and meeting rooms.

John Herriman, Chief Executive of Greenhouse Sports said:

From day one, our vision for this building was to create a unique space where young people and members of the local community could access high quality sport provision and have the opportunity to work with our experienced coaches to develop life skills and reach their full potential.

Participants in Greenhouse Sports school programmes attend on average eight more days of school than their peers. We look forward to building on the outcomes we've had in schools by closely collaborating with the local organisations to turn the centre into an inclusive and thriving community hub.



A session at the centre

The building was acquired with the help of long-time supporter Michael Sherwood, former Co-Chief Executive at Goldman Sachs. As well as Table Tennis England, support for the refurbishment also came from a range of donors including Sport England Lottery Funding, London Marathon Charitable Trust and players of the People's Postcode Lottery.

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