



A 'Grand' day out as Ping! launches in Nottingham

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A gloriously sunny day brought throngs of people to the centre of Nottingham on Saturday, with an estimated **one thousand** taking to the table tennis tables for the national launch of Ping! and even more stopping by to watch the fun.

The fact that a significant wedding was occurring at the same time didn't seem to have a negative impact on the event, but actually added to the party atmosphere, with hen parties and people wearing royal family masks playing on the tables which were suitably adorned with Union Jacks.



A hen party entering into the swing of things!

Framed by the impressive back drop of the Council House, Commonwealth medalist Maria Tsaptsinos and Grantham coach Gavin Evans, entertained the crowds with thrilling exhibition matches as well as 'mucking-in' and playing the passers-by.



Maria Tsaptsinos with her Commonwealth Bronze medal

Nottingham City Council hopes the event will kick-start another successful summer of table tennis in the city, Colin Eley, NGB & Partnership Development Officer, said

This will be the 5th year that Nottingham has hosted the project, and each year we grow in number of participants. It's massively popular so we're hoping for over 100,000 people picking up a bat and playing this summer



Lillian Greenwood, Labour MP for Nottingham South, takes on the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Liaqat Ali.

Among those playing on the tables were father and son Steve and Tom Bowhay. Steve said

The festival is a great idea. We normally just go around the shops but on a day like this we wanted to enjoy it so it's great to be able to have a game of 'whiff-whaff'

His son added

We were just in the the city so thought we'd stop and play. It's definitely a good idea to get people playing



Mrs Smith, passing through the square said

We're seeing youngsters integrating with seniors and everyone is able to participate. It's brilliant to see it happening in the square.

The event heralds the start of the 9th annual summer of Ping!, with other cities and areas launching their own projects in the coming weeks as follows:

- already launched – Liverpool
- 27th May – Oxford
- 1st June – Milton Keynes
- 2nd June – Portsmouth
- 2nd & 3rd June – Leicester
- 9th June – Barnsley
- 9th & 10th June – Bradford
- Mid-June – London
- 18th June – Brighton & Hove
- 1st July – Plymouth

The remaining cities are busy confirming plans so keep an eye on the [Ping! website](#) for further announcements. By bringing table tennis onto the streets and into the public's attention, it's hoped that many will get active and play table tennis this summer and continue to play socially or competitively on a regular basis.

For more images of the day visit the [Ping! England Facebook page](#)





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