



## Facilities for Table Tennis Clubs within Be TT

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I have been a Table Tennis England development officer for nearly 15 years now and one of the key issues that often faces a lot of our clubs year on year, is not having the control of their own facilities, to be able to set their own weekly programmes, to be able to open up when they want, to have some control into knowing what their yearly or long term costs will be and one of the biggest issues is equipment, in terms of damage, storage and the huge hassle faced by clubs in having to keep taking the equipment up and down when renting out spaces within leisure centres, schools and community places.

Table Tennis England's strategy is all based around PEOPLE, PLACES and PARTICIPATION. Their new development programme Better Experience Table Tennis (Be TT) is about our clubs and leagues offering the right experience, at the right time, within an appropriate environment, to each individual so that they enjoy their experience of playing table tennis and most importantly they keep coming back for more.

Within the last few weeks, I have visited two mills which have now taken up residency by two table tennis clubs.

One of the clubs is Deighton TTC who combined resources with the Huddersfield League and set up their new 16 table centre on the 3rd Floor of a mill near Huddersfield town centre. Deighton TTC and Huddersfield League had been supported by Table Tennis England through the Be TT programme before they moved to their new facility as they operated from 2 or 3 facilities delivering a variety of Table Tennis sessions to the local Community around Huddersfield.

When I visited their new facility, I was really impressed and can see the huge potential they now have in driving participation throughout the player pathways and for increasing participation within the local community and schools. The club now have the PLACE and the PEOPLE to continue to grow PARTICIPATION and will be supported by Table Tennis England through their Be TT programme.

I published an article on this a couple of weeks back, so in case you missed it, here it is again

<https://tabletennisengland.co.uk/news/featured-news/new-multi-table-facility-opens-in-huddersfield/>

The other facility I visited was Leigh St George Community Table Tennis Club who opened up their new table tennis facility on the second floor of Leigh Spinners Mill in October 2018. The club have not been part of Table Tennis England's Be TT Programme within the first couple of years, as they didn't have the facility to deliver a variety of sessions for different groups.

Now that they have a new multi-table venue, then the club will be in a strong position now to apply for Year 3 of Be TT funding to support the delivery of more table tennis activity. The two key volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes at finding the facility and making it fit for purpose for sports and community clubs, were Peter Rowlinson who is the chair of the Mill and who informed me " There are roughly 20 derelict mills like this across Greater Manchester that could be utilised by local Community Sports Clubs. Through help from local sponsors, Sport England's Community Asset Fund and Wigan Council, we were able to raise the funds to convert the second floor of the mill into five new sports facilities for clubs."

I was really impressed with the different units being used for a judo club, an archery club that has the best lighting in the country, a cheerleading and dance club and two indoor bowling greens.

It was really good that these sporting activities had been given an opportunity to deliver their sports and not have to face the constant battle within our leisure centre and schools of facilities being hired out for football! There is still work to do on the TT unit, painting, purchasing more equipment, sorting out the ceiling, lighting and marketing the new facility to the local community and schools.

The other key volunteer behind the new mill facility for table tennis is Chris Garfin. I had met Chris some years back now and helped him to set up Leigh St George Community TT Club at the Leigh miners club. Through Chris's hard work, dedication, DIY skills, commitment and passion for Table Tennis he has been awarded Table Tennis England's Volunteer of the Year. The club have really developed over the past few years and are now in a great position to work alongside Table Tennis England through their Be TT program to continue to grow and develop, year on year.

Below are some of the photos I took on my 1st visit but when I go next time the walls will be green so I have been informed. The main playing area which can have 8-10 tables.





A social area that be used for having a chat, meetings, tea/coffee which is ideal for Community Groups.





Training area for service, robot machine.



1 of the 2 match room areas ideal for your local league matches.

Peter has informed me that he would be willing to talk to anybody on how he has gone about converting an old derelict mill into a facility now being used by a variety of local sports clubs and groups. He has excellent knowledge on obtaining the funding and working with your local authority. He can be contacted on 07443 496911 or [info@leighspinnersmill.co.uk](mailto:info@leighspinnersmill.co.uk)

For me this is the way forward for our Table Tennis Clubs! I hope you have enjoyed the read and it has inspired our clubs that want to develop, to look for any opportunities there may be locally within some derelict mills, as these 2 clubs have shown that it can be done when the opportunity arises. The contact for Deighton and Huddersfield TT Centre is Paul Simpson 07879 248635 or [pesimp@talk21.com](mailto:pesimp@talk21.com) Again, if you want to ask Paul any questions I am sure Paul will provide you with some sound information, help and support.

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