



Why your membership is vital now and for the future

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Despite the uncertainty about when indoor sports can return to play as the coronavirus lockdown is eased, Table Tennis England is continuing to plan for the 2020/21 season.

We are doing this so that across the sport, everyone is in the best position to restart once the restrictions are lifted.

It has never been more important for everyone in the sport to pull together to ensure that we recover from the effects of the pandemic and safeguard the sport for current and future generations.

That is why we are asking our members to please rejoin the Table Tennis England family as early as possible after 2020/21 memberships reopen on Monday July 20. [Click here to find out more about our membership categories.](#)

Your affiliation fees help fund an incredible amount of important work at grass roots level – most of which has been continuing during the pandemic and which will help the sport to bounce back when it is safe to restart playing. [You can read more about this work by clicking here.](#)

Below, our Chairman Sandra Deaton explains why showing your support and becoming a member of Table Tennis England goes beyond the payment of affiliation fees and makes you a part of the fabric of the sport in England.

“What do I get for my membership fees from Table Tennis England?” It’s a question we hear a lot – and it’s not a new question either. Only recently we found an ETTA leaflet from the 1980s attempting to answer it.

There are the obvious things: it’s your passport to play table tennis safely, whatever level you choose to play at; it’s your peace of mind insurance cover; the member discounts and offers to help you save money; access to our digital systems like TT Memberships and TT Leagues – all of which are backed up by a skilled workforce, who

are on hand to offer all the support you need.

Some will say 'Well I only pay because I need to so I can play', but others will see that when they purchase a membership, they purchase more than just a number of tangible benefits for themselves – they make a significant contribution towards this great game we all love and help safeguard the sport for the next generation.

For me, when you as an individual join Table Tennis England, you become part of something much bigger.

For those who are new to the sport, you are able to join us with the knowledge that you are becoming part of a well-run organisation which creates opportunities and supports you at each step of your journey, whether that is as a player, official, coach, parent or supporter and whether that journey takes you to a local, regional, national or international stage.

If you have been with us for longer, you confirm your place as part of the fabric of the sport you care about so passionately. You are helping us to shape your sport right now and to safeguard it for future generations to enjoy as you have done.

However, regardless of whether you are new or not, every membership fee – and remember, the majority of our members pay less than £2 a month – is an investment into keeping the sport in a healthy condition for everyone, an essential building block in the structure through which we nurture the sport, broaden its appeal and deliver our programmes for anyone and everyone who wants to play table tennis, ensuring the sport remains in existence.

Some of you may simply say that the sport has existed for well over a century, and can continue far into the future without the need for Table Tennis England. I would disagree. A few decades ago, table tennis was played by millions of people at work, in social clubs and youth clubs. Nowadays, there are so many leisure and sports options available to us in our spare time that the chances of a young person picking up a table tennis bat are much smaller. If table tennis is to remain part of the nation's sporting landscape, then it needs to appeal to a broader cross-section of people. And that is where we come in, because increasing engagement and participation to safeguard the future of our sport – in other words, nurturing the sport – is a key part of what we do.

During the 2019/20 season we launched TT Kidz – an initiative that can be delivered in clubs and schools – to address the declining number of young people in the sport.

It's been brilliant to watch these youngsters – some of who were known for shying away from sports – become enthused and excited over table tennis and filter into our club system.

Don't take my word for it though. Here's some of the feedback we've had from clubs and parents:

"Congratulations on a terrific initiative Table Tennis England – the training, information flow and marketing resources are first rate." – Archway Peterborough TTC

"One mum said it's the first time her daughter has really connected with sport and was already, from school experience, in danger of being a child who had pigeonholed herself as not being sporty. So as parents they're delighted with this breakthrough and hope it will lead to her trying other sports with more confidence."

There's also our longer-running schools programme – this is an area that does not receive any public funding. Meaning without your membership fees, and support from partners such as the Jack Petchey Foundation, we'd be unable to deliver this vital work. Together we provide subsidised table packages, foster school-club links and support teachers looking to add table tennis to the school curriculum. We also fund the schools competition pathway from local to international level, which over 10,000 young people participate in each year. It's one of the real pleasures and privileges of my role to attend many of these events and to see just what the young players get out of them in terms of personal and social development as well as sporting success.

What makes this work with young people even more important, is the research that show that when people start playing young, they are more likely to stay playing the sport permanently – they are the future of our sport.

Another reason to become or remain part of Table Tennis England is that, like insurance, you don't take out membership for a sunny day. The issue is what happens when, out of the blue, something goes wrong. Although our sport is deemed low risk, and many of you will never need insurance, the law of averages shows that a small number of you will, and that is when it becomes invaluable. While some people may discount this as a benefit, it's worth noting that our group insurance has protected members against allegations of injuries they have caused (and sometimes haven't caused at all but need legal help in defending) as well as compensation for serious accidents which have required emergency medical treatment and stopped them from being able to work.

None of those members ever thought they'd need us and their insurance, until the moment they did, and then their membership fee looked a small price to have paid. Especially when, by arranging the insurance in bulk for all our members, we take advantage of huge savings in premium costs on your behalf, whilst also saving you the time and effort of arranging suitable cover for yourselves.

Our safeguarding and integrity work – which is subsidised by membership revenue – also aims to protect people from situations no one expects. We work to protect children, young people and adults at risk from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings. When there are concerns or allegation of poor practice or abuse, we respond swiftly and appropriately to ensure that our sport remains safe and fun for all. Your membership fees help fund that.

There are many other areas that your fees help fund, including:

- Modern and accessible training for hundreds of tutors, coaches, officials, umpires and volunteers every year to make playing table tennis possible for thousands of people around the country. Furthermore, our coach licence programme puts the welfare of those thousands of people front and centre – when you work with a licensed coach, you can do so in the confidence that they are properly qualified and have been DBS-checked.
- Subsidising marketing and communications, helping us to put table tennis in the spotlight to raise its profile and visibility to get more people playing for longer – from getting coverage in both local and national media, to providing live footage of events to outlets like the BBC to ensure you can watch world-class table tennis wherever you are in the country.
- Support to our network of clubs and leagues, and developing programmes and products to help grass roots grow. Fees help bolster our BeTT programme, which over the past three years has seen our staff work across more than 180 projects which have reached more than 7,000 people.
- Additional funding towards the cost of competitions, in which members of all ages and abilities compete every season. Even if you do not partake in these competitions, they are a big part of the Governing Body's remit and are important for the future health and growth of the sport.
- Creating the top talent of the future – from the England junior performance pathway to the GB Olympic team – and without this investment and contribution from you, some of our recent medal winning performances on the world stage would not have been achieved. You also helped us send our elite players of all ages to represent their country at world and European championships and, as Great Britain, at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Now, there may be some of you who will say the above is all irrelevant to me and all I care about is what I get, but we believe the majority of our members buy in to the concept of being part of something bigger and of playing their role in taking the baton from previous generations and passing it on to future generations in as good, or better, condition.

Those who have been in the sport for some time will have a golden almanac of memories and

friendships made through table tennis and we're certain that is something we all want future generations to experience too.

I ask that you consider how together we can make table tennis bigger and better. We want more people to enjoy our sport, talk about it, watch it, play it, and in the process make memories that will add to the archive of centuries – and we hope you want that too. We also hope that for this to happen, you appreciate that there has to be a structure – to keep people safe, to make it fair, to make it work, and to allow people to go as far as they

choose to do – and that Table Tennis England, supported by all our members and partners, can achieve this.

So, to all of you, we say: Thank you. Without each and every one of you making this financial and emotional investment, we could not do what we do.

In return, our promise is to keep doing our utmost to keep the sport in a healthy place for you and future generations to enjoy. From the grassroots to the very top, we are here for you – whether obvious or in the background.

We look forward to working with and for you.

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