



£60,000 grants will help improve facilities

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Table Tennis England has announced facility grants of more than £60,000 to improve table tennis facilities around the country, taking the total grants this financial year to more than £260,000.

Grants have been awarded as follows:

- Corby Smash Table Tennis Centre – £31,500
- Swerve TTC, Middlesbrough – £17,500
- Bishop Auckland TTC – £6,000
- Heacham Club Charity, King's Lynn – £6,000
- Age Concern Great Yarmouth – £2,426

The projects, funded by Sport England, vary from new premises in the case of Corby to new lighting and flooring plus general improvements.

These add to the [grant of £200,000 to Carlton le Willows Academy in Nottinghamshire](#), to create purpose-built, national standard facilities to further develop talent in the sport both within school and in the wider community, which was announced last year.

The project at the Heacham Club Charity in Norfolk will revolutionise life for Heacham Table Tennis Club, which for 50 years has operated from one table in an upstairs room at the Public Hall in the town.

Removal of an obsolete oil tank from a boiler room will free up storage space for four tables, which the club will be able to use in the main function room on the ground floor of the venue.

It gives the club the chance to organise taster sessions and coaching and means it is disability-friendly for the first time.

Club general secretary Malcolm Diggins said: "We've had one table and one table only, but we still run six teams from that, believe it or not.

"But we've been very limited on when we can use the table and we've been unable to offer anything to disabled people.

"Heacham Charity Club have been fantastic in helping us and we're hoping the main hall will be available on

most Saturday and Sunday mornings, which will be wonderful for young people and schools to start playing.

"We're very lucky to have England Youth Squad player Mollie Patterson at the club and hopefully that will also encourage the youngsters.

"This is very exciting and we're hoping for big things, but we know it's not going to be easy."

At Bishop Auckland TTC, the grant will help fund new flooring, acoustic panelling, curtains and redecoration at the club's base at Bishop Barrington School.

Club Chairman Matt Porter said: "It's fantastic news. For a club that's only three-and-a-half years old to be in a position where we can have an international-standard facility is unbelievable."

The project in Great Yarmouth involves new flooring at the town's Age Concern centre, which has recently moved into former shop premises in the town centre.

Age Concern's Older Peoples Development Worker Rachael Hardie said the centre caters for adults with varying needs, including older people, those with learning difficulties, lonely and vulnerable adults and those with severe mental health needs and memory problems.

She added: "We have always been fortunate enough to have a table tennis table at the group and it was always very popular.

"Table tennis will be a big part of our use of the floor and we intend to include a variety of activities all leading to improved health and wellbeing and a prolonged and more independent life for our local older people.

"There are no words to express our gratitude, happiness and excitement for our new flooring. We are just super happy!"

All the projects awarded grants applied for them from Table Tennis England's capital facilities fund.

Table Tennis England's Head of Operations Jonathan Bruck said: "The applications showed just what a huge variety of projects there are around the country involving table tennis. These grants will make a real difference to the projects in question and help them to get more people playing table tennis in better surroundings."

The facility grants process has closed for this financial year. Table Tennis England will reveal the application process for 2016/17 in due course.

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