



New club is set to be a real Smasher!

Author: Paul Stimpson

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Corby Smash Table Tennis Club is almost ready for lift-off!

The club has been created in a disused warehouse, financed in part by a £31,500 Table Tennis England facility grant – part of a [total of more than £60,000 awarded to projects around the country](#) thanks to funding from Sport England.

What was once a rubbish-strewn empty shell has been transformed into a state-of-the-art club which features the actual wooden sprung floor used at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and 1200-1500 lux lighting – good enough to host a World Championship final!

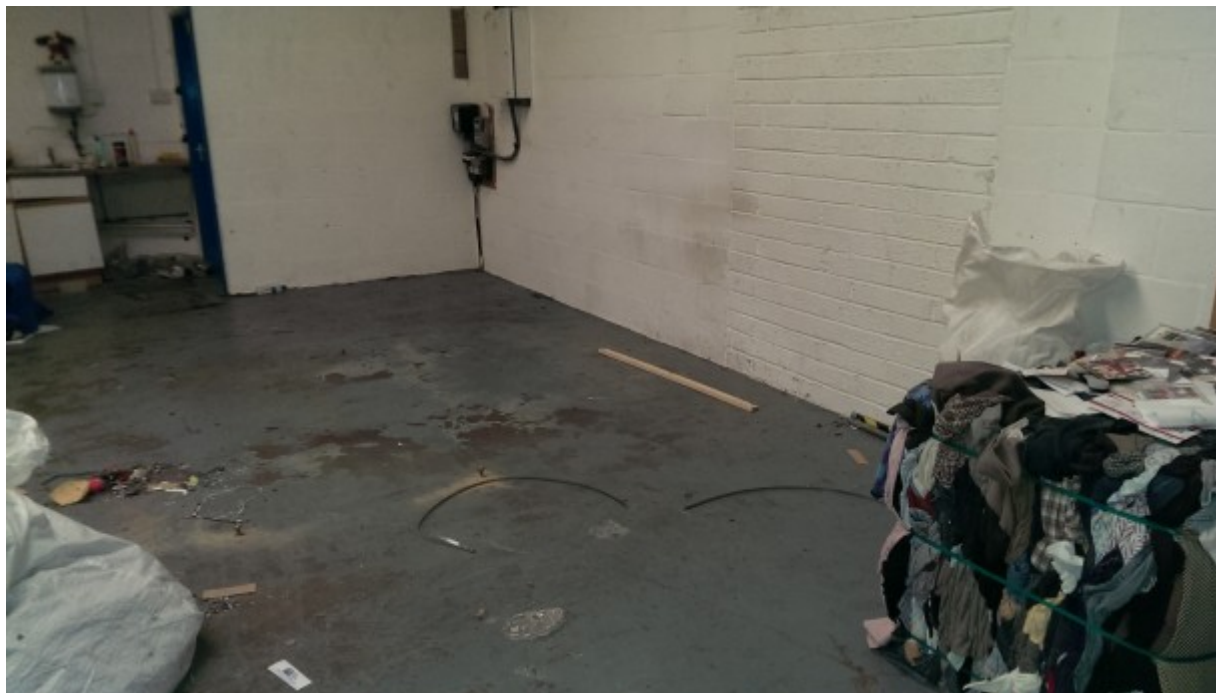
The club has planning permission to run from 6am to midnight seven days a week and has eight tables for 2* competition and 15 for basic coaching.

The driving force behind the scheme is club chairman Colin Wilson, whose idea is to demonstrate that it is possible to run a privately-owned full-time table tennis facility on a commercial basis using commercial property and paying commercial rents, in the way a gym would do.

It has exchanged contracts this month on an initial 10-year lease and, if successful, it can provide a model for similar schemes around the country.

Apart from the Table Tennis England funding and £2,500 from Corby Enterprise, the club has funded the £150,000 refurbishment and kitting-out costs itself from savings and loans.

The centre is set to hold a 'test event' on Friday ahead of an official opening on Monday February 8.



The disused warehouse before the project got under way

And Colin has some big plans for attracting players of all ages and abilities to the club, working with the existing Corby Town TTC on the other side of town.

“Corby is lucky to already have a good club in the town, run by the redoubtable Tom Cardwell, Henry Arthur and Chris Haynes, it has 4-6 tables and is open on two evenings per week.

“We will multiply this availability of provision and we are committed to working together with Corby Town TTC to make both clubs successful – one in the south-west and one in the north-east of town, and to get a lot more young and old players playing at either venue, plus at more informal venues around the town.

“We will target the whole community including 50+, women-only sessions, disabled groups, local mental health groups, local youth and school pupils and aspiring performers. There will be free play, pay-and-play, large and small group coaching and one-to-one specialist coaching, as well as lots of fun local events and informal competitions.”

Colin said the facilities grant from Table Tennis England was instrumental in bringing the project to fruition.

“Without the financial and intangible support of Table Tennis England once we were turned down for part of the required funding by one of the major banks, we would never have been able to take the step to make Corby Smash Table Tennis Centre a reality,” he said.

“We are delighted and relieved to finally have the keys and to try to make Corby Smash TTC one of the best table tennis venues around. We have a number of innovations in store, while needing to gain plenty of paying customers fairly quickly to maintain our cash balance.

“We will do our best to make it a success and we are both excited and scared right now in equal measure!”

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