Paddle Courts at Six Acres

The Parish Council has been approached by LandKite with respect to a proposal to develop the existing Outdoor Bowling Green at Six Acres to 2 Paddle Courts, attached as **Appendix A**. In Summary:

1. LandKite (Landkite Ltd) finds and secures sites for specialist padel operators and manages the planning for them. They act as the single point of contact for the Council, arrange the lease, the planning application and the build, and bring in an experienced operator to run the courts day
2. The two courts could sit on the existing bowling green, beside the tennis court. This could reuse an established, level and enclosed sports area
3. Proposed Benefits:
    a. A new income for the Council from rent on a long lease
    b. No cost or risk to the Council: planning, construction, insurance and running costs are
    all covered by Landkite.
    c. A new sport on the doorstep for all ages. Padel is quick to learn, sociable and popular
    with families, older players and former tennis players.
    d. More use of the rec ground and hall, bringing people into the village throughout the year.
    e. Opportunities for young people through coaching and links with the primary school next door.
4. Risks
    a. Noise: because Padel is played with hard raquets against a hard surface, there could be noise nuisance to neighbouring residential properties (it may be possible to mitigate this risk with acoustic fencing)
    b. Light pollution if courts open after dark
    c. Insufficient revenue resulting in third party operator exiting agreement and leaving parish council to maintain more expensive asset and with higher insurance costs.
    d. This appears to be a new model for Landkite with to date no existing completed schemes with parish councils

The committee is asked whether this is something which it considers would be worth further exploration, which would have a time implication for the clerk.

Hilary Workman
Clerk & RFO
October 2026

Padel at Wickhambrook Recreation Ground

A proposal for Wickhambrook Parish Council · Oct 28, 2026 · @Max

Summary

LandKite proposes two open-air padel courts on the Wickhambrook Recreation Ground, on the existing bowling green, next to the tennis court. They would be built and run by an established padel operator at no cost to the Parish Council. The Council would receive an annual rent on a long lease, helping to fund the upkeep of the rec ground and village facilities.

Padel is the fastest-growing sport in the UK. It is easy to learn, sociable and played by all ages. Wickhambrook already has tennis, bowls and a play area on the rec, so padel adds to an established sports ground rather than changing its character.

About LandKite

LandKite (Landkite Ltd) finds and secures sites for specialist padel operators and manages the planning for them. We are based locally, near Buckingham, and work with parish and town councils, sports clubs and landowners across England.

We act as the single point of contact for the Council. We arrange the lease, the planning application and the build, and we bring in an experienced operator to run the courts day to day.

The site

The two courts would sit on the existing bowling green, beside the tennis court. This reuses an established, level and enclosed sports area, and keeps the open playing field free for general use.

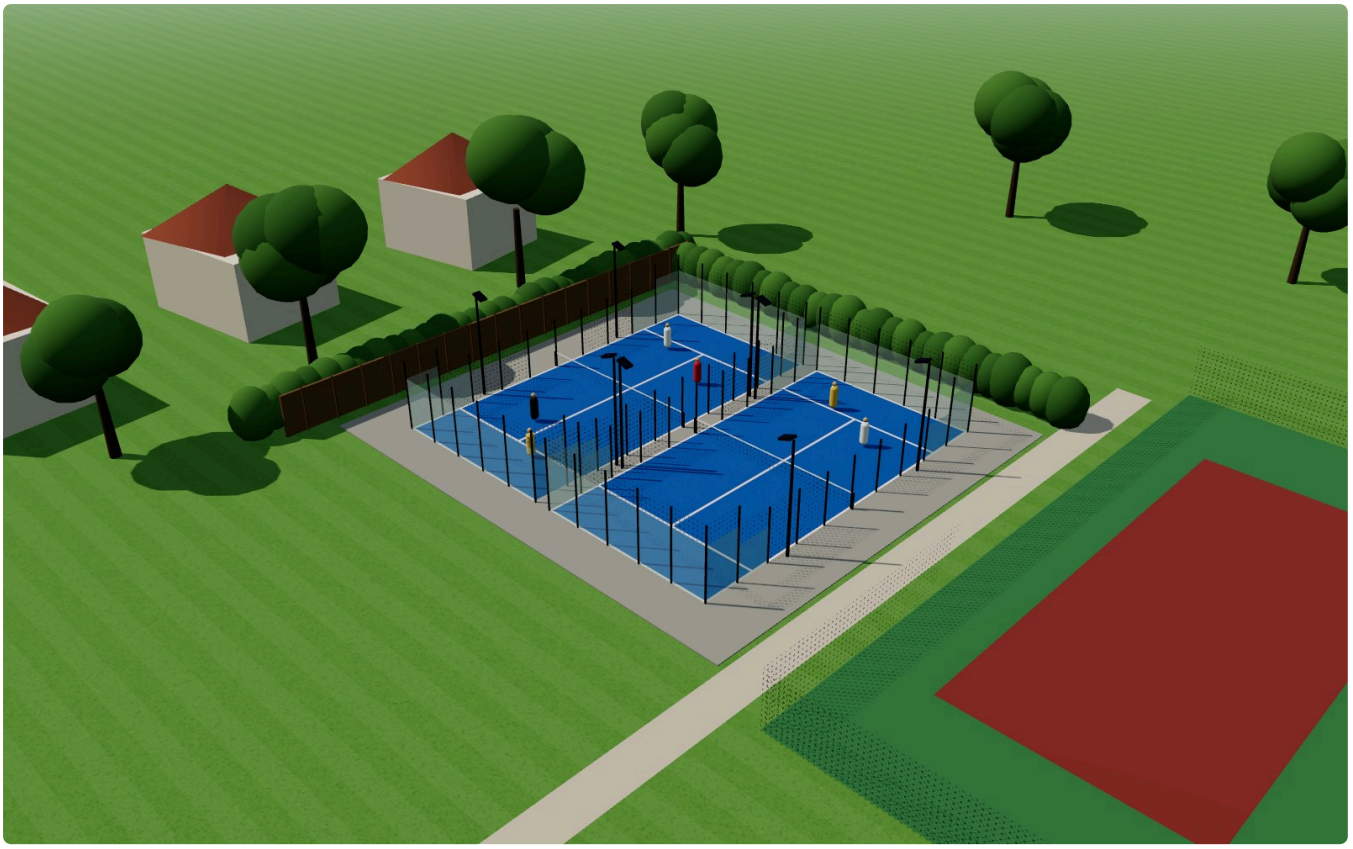


- **Footprint:** about 21m × 20m for two courts, which fits within the bowling green and uses no new open space.
- **Existing sports use:** the ground already has tennis, a bowling green, a play area and the village hall, so the courts sit with like uses.
- **Few planning constraints:** no Green Belt, flood zone or AONB. The neighbourhood plan protects the rec ground as open space, and outdoor sport is consistent with that.
- **Neighbours:** the courts would be designed around the neighbouring Thorns Close gardens, with acoustic fencing and planting on that side.

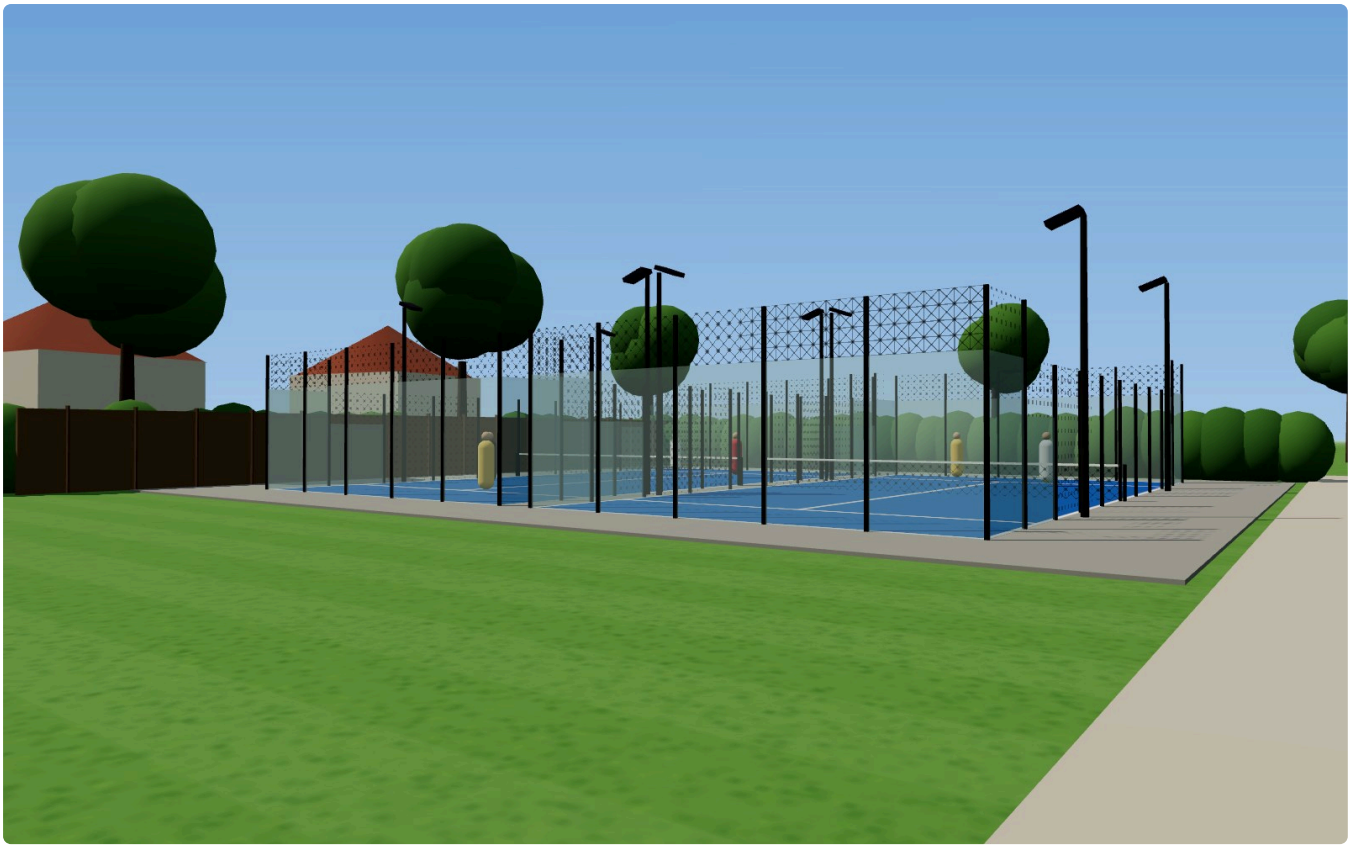
The position shown is indicative and would be fixed with the Council before any application.

How it would look

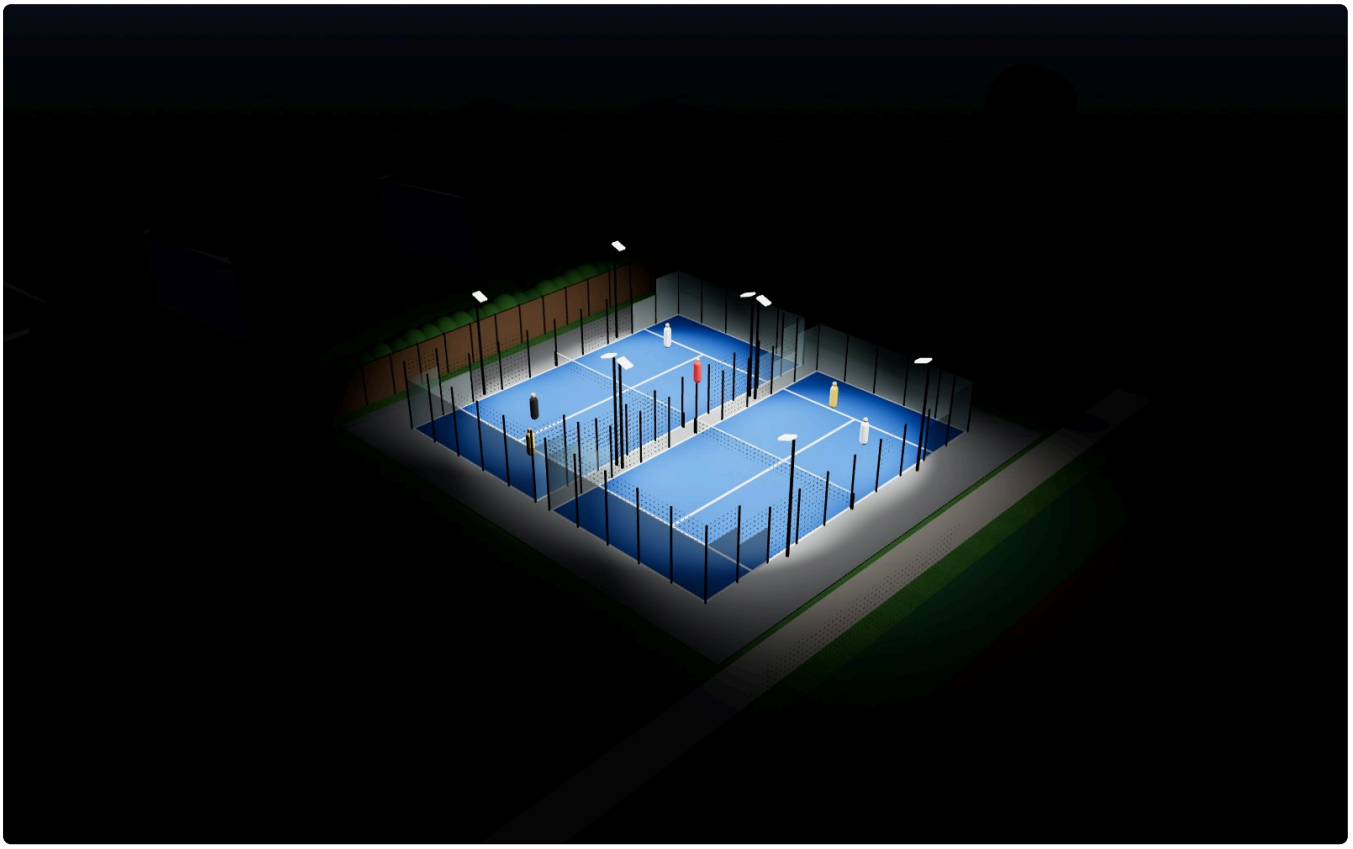
These illustrative visuals show two courts on the bowling green, with glass back walls, mesh sides, an acoustic timber fence and planting on the Thorns Close side, and low-level LED floodlights.



Aerial view from the tennis court side.



Eye-level view from the rec ground.



Evening view: downward-facing LED lights keep the light on the courts and off neighbouring gardens.

Visuals are indicative only. Final design, fencing and lighting would be set by the planning surveys.

What we propose

- **Two open-air padel courts** with glass and mesh enclosures and an all-weather artificial grass surface. No roof and no new building.
- **Low-level LED floodlights**, angled downwards, switched off by a set time each evening (for example 9:30pm).
- **Pay-and-play booking** through an app, open to everyone. No membership is needed.
- **Community access**, including discounted sessions for residents, junior and beginner coaching, and free sessions for the primary school.
- **Shared facilities:** players would use the existing parking and the village hall where the Council agrees, bringing extra users and income to the hall.
- **Maintenance at the operator's cost:** the operator looks after the courts, lighting and immediate surroundings throughout the lease.

Benefits for Wickhambrook

- **A new income for the Council** from rent on a long lease, which can go towards maintaining the rec ground, the play area and village facilities.
- **No cost or risk to the Council:** planning, construction, insurance and running costs are all covered on our side.
- **A new sport on the doorstep** for all ages. Padel is quick to learn, sociable and popular with families, older players and former tennis players.
- **More use of the rec ground and hall,** bringing people into the village throughout the year.
- **Opportunities for young people** through coaching and links with the primary school next door.

Looking after neighbours

- **Noise:** an independent acoustic survey would set the acoustic fencing on the Thorns Close side and the playing hours, and these would be fixed by planning conditions.
- **Lighting:** modern LED floodlights point down onto the courts with minimal spill, and are switched off by an agreed time. A lighting assessment would form part of the application.

- **Parking and traffic:** two courts mean at most eight players at a time. Existing parking would be used, with cycling and walking encouraged for local players.
- **Drainage:** the court surface is free-draining, with a simple drainage design to protect the surrounding grass.
- **Consultation:** we would hold a drop-in event for residents before submitting the planning application.

Proposed terms

1. **A long lease** of the bowling green area from the Parish Council to LandKite, for around 25 years, so the investment in the courts can be recovered.
2. **Rent to the Council** for the full term, with the level to be agreed. We are open to a fixed rent, a share of court income, or a mix of both.
3. **No cost to the Council:** LandKite and the operator meet all planning, construction, insurance, maintenance and running costs.
4. **Subject to planning:** the lease would only take effect once planning permission is granted.
5. **Landowner consent:** where the Council holds the rec ground on a lease, we would work with the Council to obtain the freeholder's consent.
6. **Community commitments** (resident discounts, school sessions, playing hours) written into the lease.

Planning and timeline

Courts could be open within about 9–12 months of the Council agreeing heads of terms. Planning permission from West Suffolk Council is needed for the courts, fencing and floodlights.

1. **Month 0–1:** Council agreement in principle and heads of terms.
2. **Month 1–3:** acoustic, lighting and drainage surveys, plus a drop-in event for residents.
3. **Month 3–5:** planning application submitted to West Suffolk Council.
4. **Month 5–7:** planning decision (typically eight weeks, sometimes longer) and lease completed.
5. **Month 7–10:** courts built (around six to eight weeks on site) and opened.

Next steps

We would welcome the chance to present this to the Parish Council and to walk the site with councillors.

- [ ] Council to consider the proposal in principle at its next meeting
- [ ] Site meeting with the Clerk and councillors
- [ ] Agree heads of terms for the lease

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