



St Ivo Racquets Club
One Leisure Outdoor Centre
California Road
St. Ives



www.stivo-squash.co.uk

Date 31 March 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

I wish to bring to your attention a decision recently taken by the council to close the squash courts at One Leisure St. Ives Outdoor Centre on 19th May. This will have a devastating effect on the participation in Squash in the St. Ives area, for both our club as well as casual players.

One Leisure intend to start work on replacing the courts with a 'CrossFit style' gym facility. Neither our club, representing the largest single group of players, nor individual users have been afforded an opportunity to present a case to the council to continue supporting squash facilities in St. Ives.

Squash has a long and proud distinction in St. Ives, our squash club itself was formed in 1975. The courts in St Ives provide children and adults with immediate access to affordable facilities for a rewarding sport. Squash is universally accepted as a fantastic fitness work out, and its appeal stretches across the ages from the youngest just old enough to hold a racket to those in their seventies and beyond. When it is raining and parents and children are looking for an indoor sports activity, another gym is not going to help.

Are 'CrossFit style' gyms just the latest fad? Will they still be around in 20 years. If the courts are replaced, I suspect that in a few years St Ives Outdoor Centre will be left with an empty expensive shed and taxpayers will be financially worse off. We note that there is already a One Leisure gym in St. Ives, the result of a multi-million-pound investment. That project involved the demolition of squash courts at that location too.

One Leisure advised in a communication to its members that the reason for the closure of the courts is that usage is falling and they are unwilling to spend money on refurbishing the courts in St Ives. This is a circular argument. The main reason for the declining use of the courts was undoubtedly the poor conditions of the courts. With investment, community squash can be run successfully and give taxpayers a return on their money. I note the newly developed St. Neots One Leisure squash courts are in good condition and adequately heated; as a result they are well utilised.

Unfortunately we are running out of time. The date work commences on the destruction of the squash courts is 20th May. Please do anything you can to help in any way to prevent this terrible blow for sport in the community.

Yours sincerely

John Dewis
Chairman, St Ivo Racquets Club
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