

Real Tennis statement

Middlesex University has made the difficult decision to move ahead with the closure of the Real Tennis Club. This has been as a result of discussions that have taken place over several years and we have reviewed the merits of having the Club operating on our campus, the role it plays for individual students participating in the sport itself, and also the involvement of the Real Tennis community in supporting students more generally. The decision to close the Club has been made with the full support of the Middlesex University Students' Union.

Our purpose as a University is to facilitate excellent experiences for *all* our students – working together with students and our Students' Union as partners and co-leaders to develop a vibrant, global student community. Middlesex benefits from its diverse student population of over 40,000, with 20,000 students studying in the UK and we have equality, diversity and inclusion central to everything we do. Many of our students have overcome significant challenges, for example, the University recruits the second largest number of students who received free school meals in the UK. The University aims to provide an inclusive, supportive environment where all our students can thrive, be their best and prepare for professional life.

Middlesex University is an institution that works proactively to meet students' academic needs and wellbeing, and to make sure they all feel part of the Middlesex community. This includes the provision of sports facilities and opportunities to engage in a wide range of sporting activities both on and off campus. We try and ensure maximum flexibility and multi-purpose use of our spaces so that a wide range of sports can take place in studios and pitches, such as Badminton, Basketball, Cheerleading, Fencing, Futsal, Handball, Netball, Table tennis, Trampolining, Karate, Judo, and Taekwondo. We also hire external facilities for training and / or competition in sports such as Athletics, Football, Hockey and Rugby to ensure we are inclusive and that large number of students have access to a wide range of sporting opportunities.

Whilst we recognise that the Real Tennis Club has brought considerable enjoyment and benefits to a small number of our students, its impact upon the overall University student population is limited. The Club benefits approximately fifty student players a year out of a total of 20,000 of the UK student population. We acknowledge that the Club has supported students elsewhere within the University, especially the thirty students who Club members have supported as part of the MDX Advantage programme each year.

The Club occupies a multi-storey building and is twice the space that we currently make available for our Students' Union, prayer rooms and welfare services which collectively benefit thousands of students each week. By comparison the University is unable to provide students with a Sports Hall on campus which means that several hundred students engaging in indoor sports are required to train and play at locations off-campus. Repurposing the building gives the potential to add over 800 sqm. of space for the benefit of all of our students on campus. Since the campus merger some years ago, space at the Hendon campus is at a premium and we must ensure all our facilities are being fully utilised to provide opportunities for all students.

We appreciate the decision to close will be disappointing for Club members and we are committed to working together to ensure the two Pros at the Club are supported, along with staff and members during the four-year notice period. Once the notice period has been completed we will seek other uses for the space currently occupied.

Professor Nic Beech, Vice-Chancellor
Middlesex University

Ed Marsh, CEO
Middlesex University Students' Union