

THE WEEKLY
REVIEW STONNINGTON LOCAL NEWS & VIEWS (<http://www.theweeklyreviewstonnington.com.au>)

Courting future success

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06:01:AM 23/08/2013



The Glendearg Tennis Club committee Len Pratt, Skye Burney, Glendearg Tennis Club, hidden in the backstreets of Malvern, is a shadow of its former glory.

Today however, after decades of falling membership numbers, the tiny club with just two courts has been assured a brighter future by the City of Stonnington.

Sixty years after the first ball was served from the baseline, the clubhouse and the courts are set to receive a \$330,000 makeover.

Stonnington councillors resolved to demolish and replace the existing clubhouse and resurface the courts after council officers described them as being in “disrepair”.

An upgraded car park, fencing and new bike racks are all on the list of additional works proposed for the site. Court lighting will also be considered subject to resident consultation.

But just who will be given the keys to the new and updated facility remains unknown with expressions of interest now open for Glendearg’s future tenancy.

The council's decision comes two months after existing tenants Glendearg Malvern Tennis Club merged with the 92-year-old All Saints Malvern Tennis Club on Darling Road, Malvern, after their site was sold to developers along with the All Saints Anglican Church earlier this year.

The newly formed Glendearg All Saints Malvern Tennis Club (GASMTC) committee has a combined total of 155 years operating in the community and counts previous Stonnington Citizen of the Year, Australian Open and Davis Cup umpire Len Pratt and Malvern Primary tennis coach Victor Eke among its membership.

Bolstered by support from Ardrie Park Tennis Club which runs children's tennis at Glendearg courts on weekends, Tennis Victoria and the East Malvern Community Bank, the GASMTC committee led by president John Richards hope to secure the upgraded facility's tenancy.

"We fully understand and are in favour of the council's EOI [expression of interest] process as being the only fair process to decide who has control of the courts in an ongoing situation," Mr Richards told *TWR*.

"Unless another club lines up against us, we are confident we can secure Glendearg's future.

"Glendearg Malvern Tennis Club had become unviable as an entity and was about to close up... The club shrank and shrank, from 120 members in the '90s to about 30 more recently.

"With the council planning to upgrade the clubhouse, courts and parking, the local community will have a state-of-the-art club to enjoy and nurture their young families."

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