

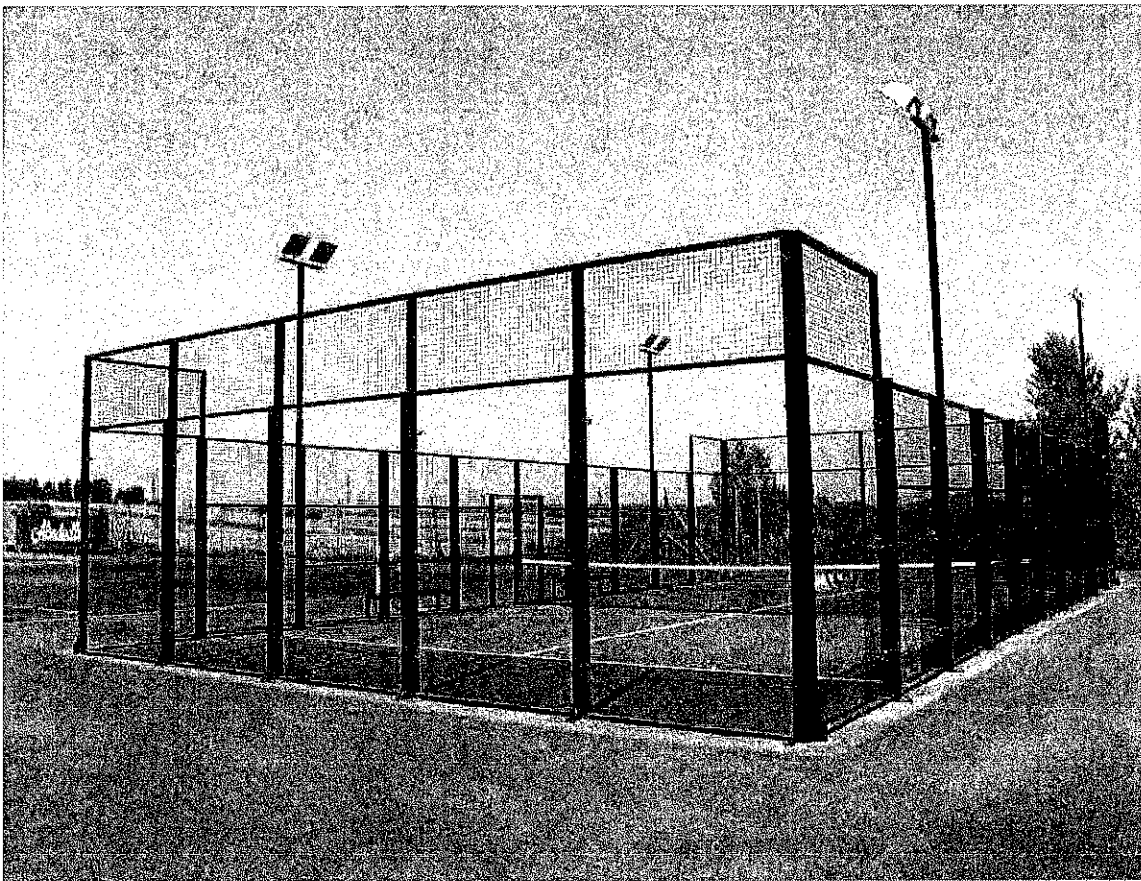
## **Proposal for Padel Facilities in West Mersea**

Dear Council Members,

My name is [REDACTED] and after discussion with other residents of the Island, I am writing to propose the introduction of padel facilities within our village.

### **What is padel?**

Padel is one of the fastest-growing sports in the world. It is played on a smaller, enclosed court (roughly a third of the size of a tennis court) with solid rackets and a lower-compression tennis ball. Matches are usually doubles, making it a highly social sport. The rules are similar to tennis but with the addition of using the glass walls, which makes it easier for beginners to rally and enjoy from the very first game.



### **About me**

I have been playing padel for over six years, run an online padel shop from West Mersea, organise padel leagues in the Colchester and Ipswich areas, coach in Colchester, and run social match sessions for players of all ages and abilities. Through this involvement, I have seen first-hand the benefits padel brings to communities and the ever-increasing demand for the sport.

### **Growth of padel in the UK**

- The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) has recognised padel as the fastest-growing sport in the UK.
- There are now over 1,000 courts nationwide, up from fewer than 100 just five years ago.
- Growth is projected to continue at pace, with demand outstripping supply in many areas.
- The sport is targeted to become an Olympic sport by 2032

### Who plays padel?

Padel attracts a broad demographic:

- It appeals to both men and women equally, unlike some sports where participation is skewed.
- It is popular among juniors, adults, and older players alike, thanks to its accessibility and low physical impact compared with tennis or squash.
- It is particularly effective at engaging people new to sport, as players can have fun and rally almost immediately, with some adults taking it up as their very first sporting passion.

### Benefits for the community

- **Social:** Padel is always played in doubles, encouraging teamwork, inclusivity, and friendships across generations.
- **Fitness:** It provides a full-body workout, improving cardiovascular health, agility, and coordination without the intensity of high-impact sports.
- **Accessibility:** Easy to pick up, so it lowers the barrier to entry for those who may not usually take part in sport.

### Facility options

There are several flexible routes the council could consider:

1. **Conversion of existing tennis courts** - Tennis courts can be converted or adapted to create padel courts, often at lower cost than building new. Padel is proven to exist and thrive alongside tennis courts, as seen at Eudo Road in Colchester.
2. **New build courts** - Either unmanned (self-service booking and access, minimising operating costs) or manned (with a club-style set-up, social events, and coaching).
3. **Temporary pop-up courts** - Courts can be leased and installed as a trial or “proof of concept”, giving the village a chance to measure demand before investing in permanent facilities.
4. **Developing new areas** - courts can be build on concrete slab bases via groundworks on green areas. This could be on areas such as the Glebe or the transferred land from Mersea Homes off Dawes Lane.

### Funding models

The council could fund and operate courts directly as a community facility, or alternatively lease the land/property to a private company to build and manage the courts, or a collaboration between both.

**Why Mersea?**

Padel has the potential to add significant value to our village by:

- Diversifying local sports provision.
- Offering a sport that is family-friendly and intergenerational.
- Retaining racket sports players within Mersea, who are currently leaving the area to play in Colchester, Feering, and Earls Colne.
- Attracting people from surrounding areas, which can also benefit local businesses.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and explore how padel could be introduced into West Mersea, whether through use of green field space or by adapting existing spaces.

Thank you very much for considering this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature and name of the sender.