# Residents clash with City of Norwich School over floodlit tennis courts noise and antisocial behaviour



# Controversy Erupts Over Upgraded Tennis Courts in Norwich

In a city known for its rich tennis heritage, being the home to champion Alfie Hewett, the recent uproar over the City of Norwich School’s upgraded tennis courts is disheartening for many. This ongoing dispute sharply highlights the friction between community facilities and local residents' peaceful enjoyment of their homes.

After an upgrade in 2021, funded in part by the National Tennis Association, the five all-weather courts at the City of Norwich School were intended to serve both students and the broader community. Equipped with floodlights, the courts also facilitate netball and basketball. However, these upgrades have instead become a source of distress for neighbouring residents, who describe the noise levels as “unbearable” and claim the floodlights intrude into their homes. The governing bodies of tennis in Norwich had positioned such facilities as a boon to community engagement, yet now it seems to have sparked a differing sentiment among local residents.

Several neighbours have come forward with allegations of antisocial behaviour linked to students using the courts. Reports include incidents where schoolboys have reportedly broken into private gardens to skip classes, raising concerns about security and privacy. One resident recounted how his shed was invaded, while another highlighted damage to hedges resulting from students attempting to hide or play near his property. Such scenarios pose questions about the management of the area surrounding the school’s facilities.

Community access to the courts is currently restricted to set hours—4.30pm to 7pm on weekdays and 9am to 1pm on weekends. However, plans to extend these hours to 8.30pm on weekdays, along with longer access times on Saturdays and Sundays, have exacerbated tensions. This proposed change was met with outrage from locals, particularly from those like Keith Philpott, who expressed frustration at the school’s reluctance to implement measures to mitigate noise and light disruption. Philpott argued that proper shields for the floodlights should have been installed to redirect glare away from homes.

Despite the complaints, the school administration maintains that they are taking residents' concerns seriously. A spokesperson noted the prompt adjustments made to the floodlight heights after a planning oversight and mentioned ongoing evaluations to potentially install an acoustic fence aimed at mitigating noise complaints.

Yet, residents like Shirley and Bob Hocking, who live in close proximity to the facilities, are apprehensive that these measures may be too little, too late. Shirley described the constant disruption, stating, “The language is appalling, the noise is constant, and the lights shine right into our kitchen” while her husband detailed the challenges faced by their damaged hedge due to students engaging in reckless behaviour.

In a reflection of how community projects can sometimes miss the mark, this situation echoes previous controversies in Norwich, notably the uproar following the replacement of grass tennis courts with all-weather surfaces in Heigham Park. That instance sparked a series of protests from local residents and environmental advocates who valued the green spaces being sacrificed for upgraded sporting facilities.

Similarly, the recent planning application concerning the City of Norwich School’s court use drew considerable public interest, with a total of 34 objectors weighing in against the proposal compared to just eight supporting it. While planning officers initially recommended its approval, further legal threats have prompted delays. This hesitance reflects an ongoing struggle in community governance where local needs sometimes clash with institutional decisions.

As residents call for transparency and communication from the school and its governing body, many like Philpott fear that their quality of life continues to be undermined. He remarked, “If the school doesn’t care about its reputation within the local community... then the wider people of Norwich deserve to know what is happening.”

While the tennis courts were envisioned as a community asset, the voices of dissent underline a critical need for dialogue and respect between institutions and the residents they are meant to serve. As the dispute rages on, the hope for a resolution remains uncertain, casting a shadow over the future of tennis in Norwich and the well-being of its communities alike.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/15/wildflower-meadow-on-tennis-courts-bulldozed-by-norwich-council)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
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* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14691705/Furious-neighbours-blast-school-unbearable-tennis-courts-used-students-launch-raids-gardens.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Residents near the City of Norwich School have raised concerns over the school's upgraded tennis courts, citing issues such as excessive noise, intrusive floodlights, and antisocial behavior. The courts, which are open to both students and the local community, have been reported to cause disturbances, including loud noises from sports activities and incidents of students entering private properties. The school has acknowledged the issues and is considering measures like installing an acoustic fence to mitigate noise. However, residents remain dissatisfied with the school's response and the ongoing disturbances.
3. <https://www.norwich.gov.uk/news/article/764/noise_nuisance_neighbours_brought_to_book_by_tireless_work_of_council_officers> - Norwich City Council successfully prosecuted two residents for persistent noise disturbances that severely impacted their neighbors' quality of life. Despite multiple warnings, the individuals continued to play loud music, leading to legal action. The court imposed fines and considered a Criminal Behaviour Order to prevent future disturbances. This case underscores the council's commitment to addressing noise complaints and ensuring residents' well-being.
4. <https://www.norwich.gov.uk/news/article/668/smashing_news_%E2%80%93_upgraded_norwich_tennis_courts_reopen> - Two refurbished tennis courts in Norwich have reopened to the public after a significant investment. The courts at Harford Park and Alderman Walker Park were part of a nationwide initiative to upgrade public tennis facilities. The refurbishment aims to provide accessible and well-maintained sports facilities for the community, with annual memberships available for residents.
5. <https://www.norwich.gov.uk/news/article/654/partnership_to_breathe_new_life_into_city_tennis_courts> - Norwich City Council and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) have partnered to refurbish tennis courts in three Norwich parks. This collaboration is part of a nationwide effort to improve public tennis facilities. The investment will enhance sports provision in the community, offering better facilities for residents and encouraging more people to engage in tennis activities.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/15/wildflower-meadow-on-tennis-courts-bulldozed-by-norwich-council> - A wildflower meadow that had developed on former grass tennis courts in Heigham Park, Norwich, was cleared by the city council to make way for new all-weather courts. The decision faced opposition from local residents and environmentalists who valued the natural habitat. The council's move highlights the ongoing debate between urban development and environmental conservation in city planning.
7. <https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/23269007.floodlights-heigham-park-tennis-courts-causing-huge-waste/> - Residents near Heigham Park in Norwich have raised concerns about floodlights at the park's tennis courts being left on unnecessarily, leading to energy waste and increased carbon emissions. The issue highlights the need for better management of public facilities to prevent environmental waste and address community concerns about energy consumption.