Dollar Park Open to All

Main Image: Distinctive green and purple courts at Dollar Park
Inset: Aerial view of the courts

Timeline:

- **1920** Arnotdale Estate bought by Robert Dollar
- **1921** Gifted to Falkirk as Dollar Park
- **1922** Tennis courts constructed
- **2010** Courts derelict
- **2011** Blaes courts re-open
- **2012** Strong tennis programme
- **2013** Upgrade planned
- **2014** Active Places funding secured
- **July 2016** Work begins
- **Oct 2016** Courts complete
- **Sep 2016** Access system installed
- **Oct 2016** Official Opening
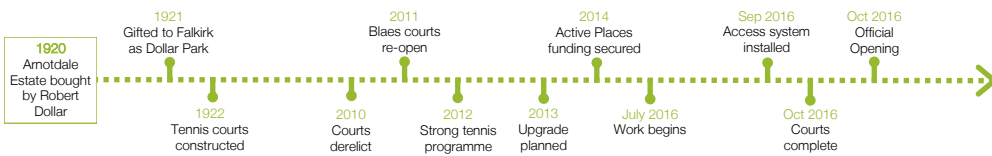
Dollar Park

Dollar Park was gifted to the people of Falkirk in 1920 by Robert Dollar. A former resident of the town, Dollar moved to the USA and made a fortune from lumber and trading. He went on to establish one of the largest shipping companies in the world and supported his birth town in various ways. The park became a focal point for local families to relax and enjoy leisure activities for many years.

Revival

By 2011 the courts in Dollar Park were in a poor state of repair and little used. However Falkirk Community Trust (FCT) were delivering indoor mini tennis in leisure centres and were keen to revive both Dollar Park and Zetland Park to offer full size tennis facilities and coaching programmes.

Although Dollar Park was identified as their main tennis priority opportunities arose in 2014 to secure funding for upgrading the courts at Zetland Park and this project was successfully completed. In the meantime FCT spent a small amount on improving and maintaining the existing surface at Dollar Park, put on a popular summer programme and offered low cost pay and play tennis.

This proved a great success with hundreds of players enjoying tennis in Dollar Park in the summers of 2013 and 2014. Meanwhile FCT extended their schools programme with help from Tennis Scotland and ran the largest primary schools tennis programme and competition in Scotland. Finals were held on the old courts at Dollar Park and the increased level of interest in tennis encouraged a renewed effort to secure funding.

FCT successfully applied to the Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund and with other partners recognising the potential for tennis at Dollar Park, full funding for the project was secured.

Venue Management

However the ongoing management of the courts was still an issue in terms of managing bookings and payments. Unlike Zetland Park where FCT had a manned kiosk there was no such facility at Dollar. At this point the LTA and Tennis Scotland had been offering affiliated venues a software package that allowed facilities to manage membership and court bookings and to run coaching programmes and events with bookings and payments being managed online.

At an opportune moment for Dollar Park, the LTA and their consultants, Sportlabs Technology, came up with a solution that linked the booking software and website to a gate access system offering secure pin code or fob access linked to online bookings.

With support and funding from Tennis Scotland this access system was then included in the project brief for Dollar Park to upgrade the existing blaes courts to floodlit painted porous macadam and became one of two Tennis Scotland pilot projects to test the new technology in Scotland.

Key Facts

- *Venue : Dollar Park, Falkirk*

- *Project: Three floodlit porous macadam courts with access system*

- *Main Project : £200,000*
- *Access System : £ 6,000*

- *Principal Funding Partners: Legacy 2014 Active Places Fund managed by **sport**scotland, Tennis Scotland Community Fund, FET, FCT*
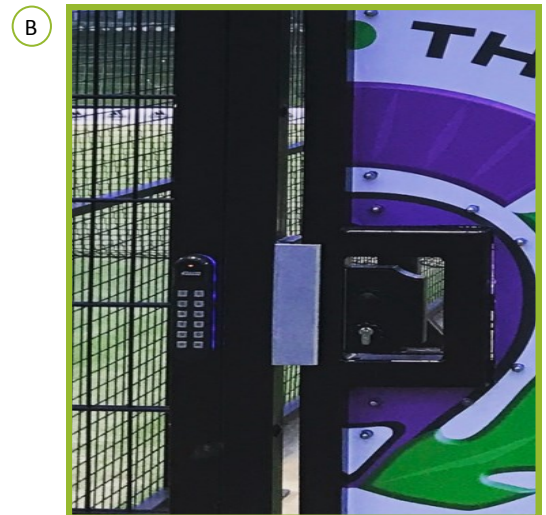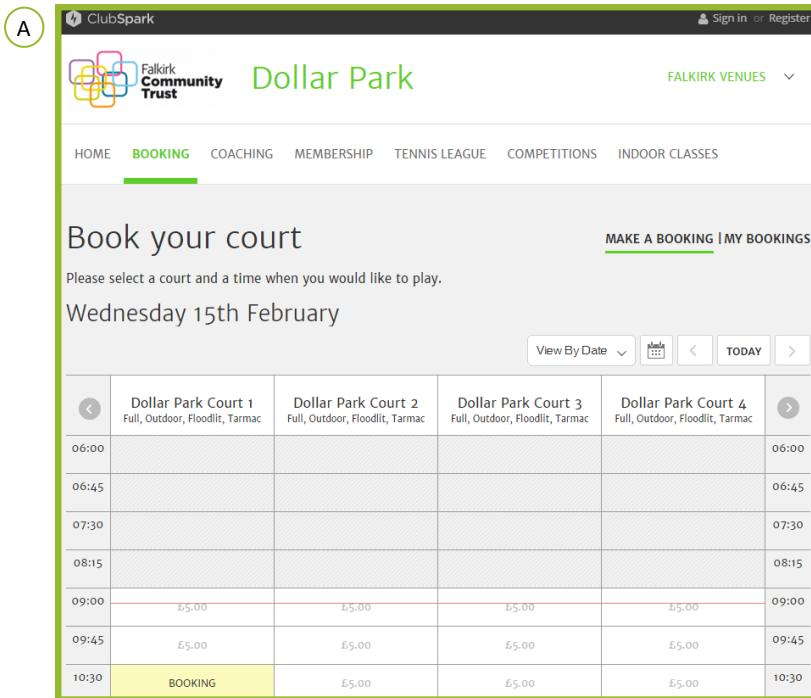
Image A: Typical Clubspark web based booking, payment and access system
Image B : Updated lock and pin access pad and gate

Access System

The access system, designed and installed by CIA Fire and Security, comprises;

- Secure access gate
- PIN/Fob access pad
- Gate controller
- 3G data connection
- Optional fobs
- Linked Clubspark platform

The access system operates using a 3G data connection to relay booking information from the Clubspark platform to the gate controller. The controller is mounted in an electrical cabinet close to the secure gate and when a valid PIN code or fob linked to a live booking is entered then the gate controller deactivates an electric lock allowing access. The access code continues to be valid for the booking period with a short run-on and then is no longer active.
A facility user logs onto the Clubspark platform or app on their phone, makes a booking, makes payment if required and receives an email with PIN access code. On arrival on site they enter the PIN code or use their fob to unlock the gate.
The system can also be used to control floodlights linked to booking times by the addition of relay switches. There is a small monthly charge for data connection and maintenance.

Clubspark

Clubspark is an online platform that has been developed for sports providers to manage and promote their activities. Initially developed in partnership with the LTA it is widely used by tennis clubs across the UK. The platform has been adopted by England Athletics, the ECB, Tennis Australia, Tennis New Zealand and recently by padel clubs in Scotland.

Key Platform Benefits

- Manage whole programme on one integrated platform
- Offer membership packages with secure payment
- Manage coaching programmes
- Promote events and Open days
- Communicate with all contacts
- Link facility booking to secure coded remote access system
- Use apps to manage bookings
- Low running costs of c.£600 per year—data connection/maintenance
- Minimal staff intervention but with facility to make manual bookings

sportscotland Support

- Expert design advice.
- Facilitating project development and viability.
- Funding advice and support.

Clubspark Platform Design

Sportlabs   http://www.sportlabs.com

Access System Design & Installation

CIA   http://ciafireandsecurity.co.uk

Partner Organisations

Compiled by Peter Gordon on behalf of **sport**scotland in 2017
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