

OUTDOOR TABLE TENNIS



ADVICE, GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATIONS

PINGINTHECOMMUNITY.CO.UK



This guide is for any group or organisation looking to install outdoor table tennis tables into a public or private space. It aims to provide you with all the information you will need and answers any frequently asked questions. If there's any further information you require though, please don't hesitate to contact us at ping@tabletennisengland.co.uk

WHY INTRODUCE OUTDOOR TABLE TENNIS?

Table tennis is one of very few activities where normal divisions such as gender, disability and age are removed, and so can be truly inclusive for diverse communities. There are many benefits to the game too:



PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Being physically active lowers the risk of major illness, develops motor skills and promotes physical literacy



MENTAL BENEFITS

Research shows that just 10 minutes of table tennis is good for your mental health, helping reduce the risk and symptoms of depression, stress and anxiety, and improving self-esteem



SOCIAL BENEFITS

Ping pong is a great social activity which aids the development of social skills, forms friendships and creates a sense of community

TABLE TENNIS CAN ALSO HELP YOU TO:

- Reduce anti-social behaviour in public spaces by giving people a more meaningful activity to engage with
- Revive and enhance unused or 'dead' space
- Add value other outdoor facilities (such as playgrounds) and provide activities for older children and adults
- Provide a family friendly activity that increases visit times
- Potentially increase custom in cafes and shops close to tables



HOW TO MAKE YOUR TABLES A SUCCESS

Consider these top tips before planning your table tennis project...

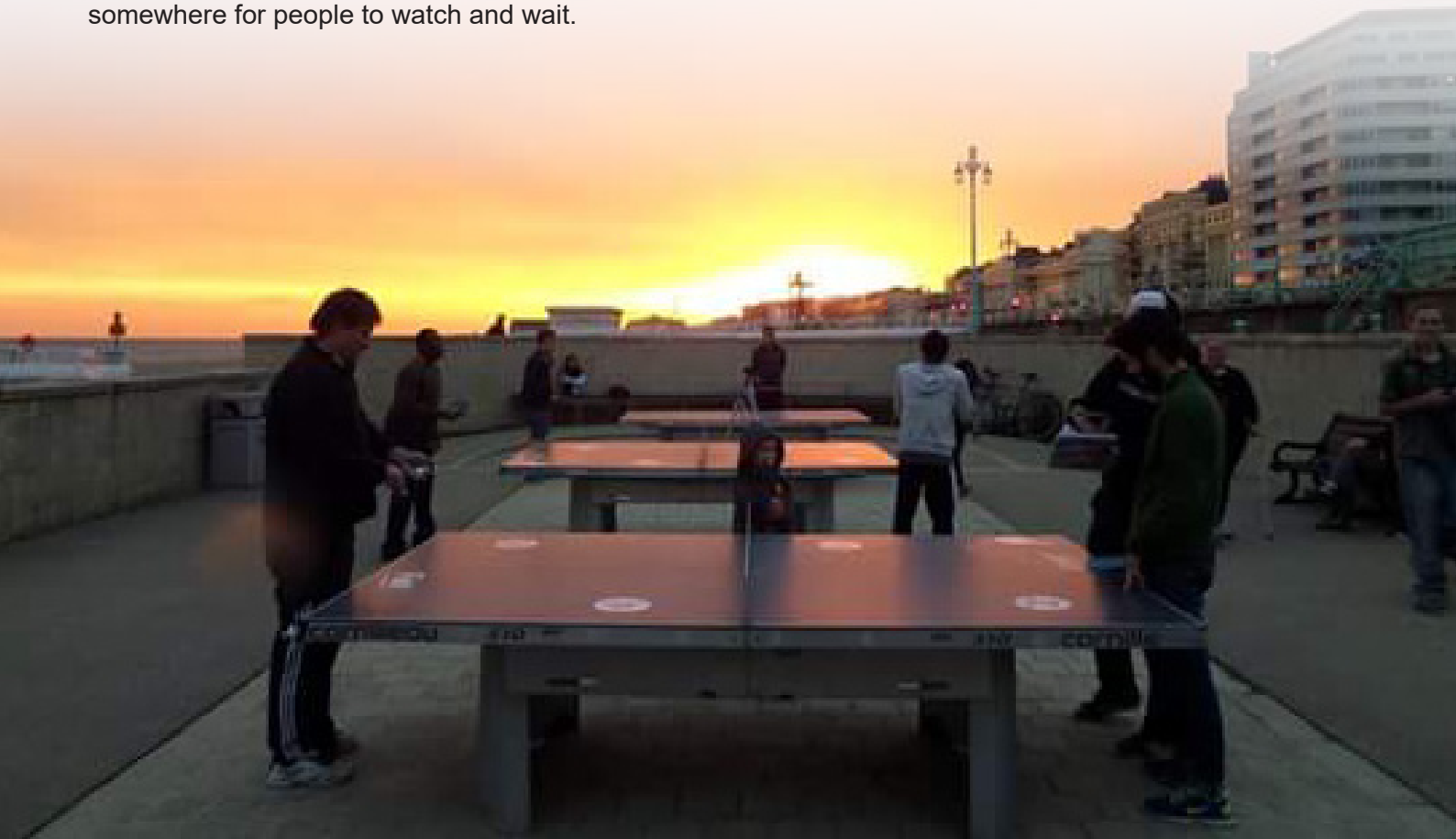
1. TABLE LOCATION

Putting your tables in the right location is extremely important to the success and popularity of them. When you're choosing the location for your tables, keep these key things in mind;

- Tables placed in visible, prominent areas with plenty of footfall will be more popular than somewhere hidden away and will be less likely to experience acts of vandalism
- Consider the elements; a very windy location won't work very well!
- Is there seating nearby? People enjoy watching ping pong as well as playing and seating offers somewhere for people to watch and wait for a table to become available.
- Think about the location at night. Is the area well-lit and will people be able to continue to play in the evenings?
- Is there enough space? We recommend a total playing area of 8m x 4m, with a clear height of at least 3m above the table which allows plenty of space for passers-by, spectators and players alike. Smaller spaces can be used, providing there are no dangers nearby, such as roads, lakes or walls.
- Is the ground suitable and will groundworks be needed? See the Installation and Groundworks section below for more information

2. CREATING A SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Our research shows that having two or more tables in a location encourages more people to play and can create a more vibrant scene. If there isn't already some seating, consider adding some in to create a nice 'arena' for the activity and somewhere for people to watch and wait.



3. BATS AND BALLS PROVISION

You may like to consider how people will have access to bats and balls to play on the tables. Of course, people can bring their own, but to maximise usage you may wish to try and locate the tables close to a facility that could loan or hire equipment out to people, maybe arrange with a local shop for them to sell bats and balls, or just leave the bats and balls on the table. If you opt for the latter, it is advisable to plan and budget to keep a stock of these somewhere as they will get damaged and occasionally 'go missing' too so will need regular replacement. This is undoubtedly the best option for getting the greatest number people to play however!



OUR EQUIPMENT PACKAGES

Our [Ping in the Community](#) packages are designed to help introduce and activate table tennis tables in your community. All of our packages have everything you need to kick-start and embed table tennis into your community, including outdoor bats, balls and printed resources to help advertise and activate your project. We have different outdoor options available depending on your requirements.

OUTDOOR ROLLAWAY TABLE

Locking wheels and a 7mm resin laminate weatherproof playing surface. Can be folded and moved around easily.

This table is best used for one-off events or in managed spaces where they can be well looked after as they do not offer the option of securing them to the ground.



OUTDOOR STATIC TABLE

Sturdy steel legs and a fixed steel net and a 7mm resin laminate weatherproof playing surface.

Can be fixed to the ground using large metal 'U' pins in grass or bolts in concrete.



All our tables are provided with fixings for you to secure the table to the ground if necessary. We recommend checking that the fixings are suitable for the surface your table is placed on. All of our tables are wheelchair friendly.

GUARANTEES AND MAINTENANCE

The Outdoor Static has a 10-year guarantee on all parts and the Outdoor Rollaway Table has a 10-year guarantee on all non-wearing parts (this excludes the wheels, net and posts).

Although maintenance costs after the initial purchase are very low, it's important to regularly check the tables for any damage, to ensure that they are still safe for people to use. You could also place a sticker on the table asking people to report any damage to you.

If your table does become damaged, seek to repair the table or order replacement parts from the supplying company, to ensure the health and safety of participants and people's enjoyment isn't compromised.

All the tables we offer are supplied by UK Table Tennis, so if you'd like further information on this, please contact them directly:

www.uktabletennis.co.uk - sales@uktabletennis.co.uk - 01403 865094

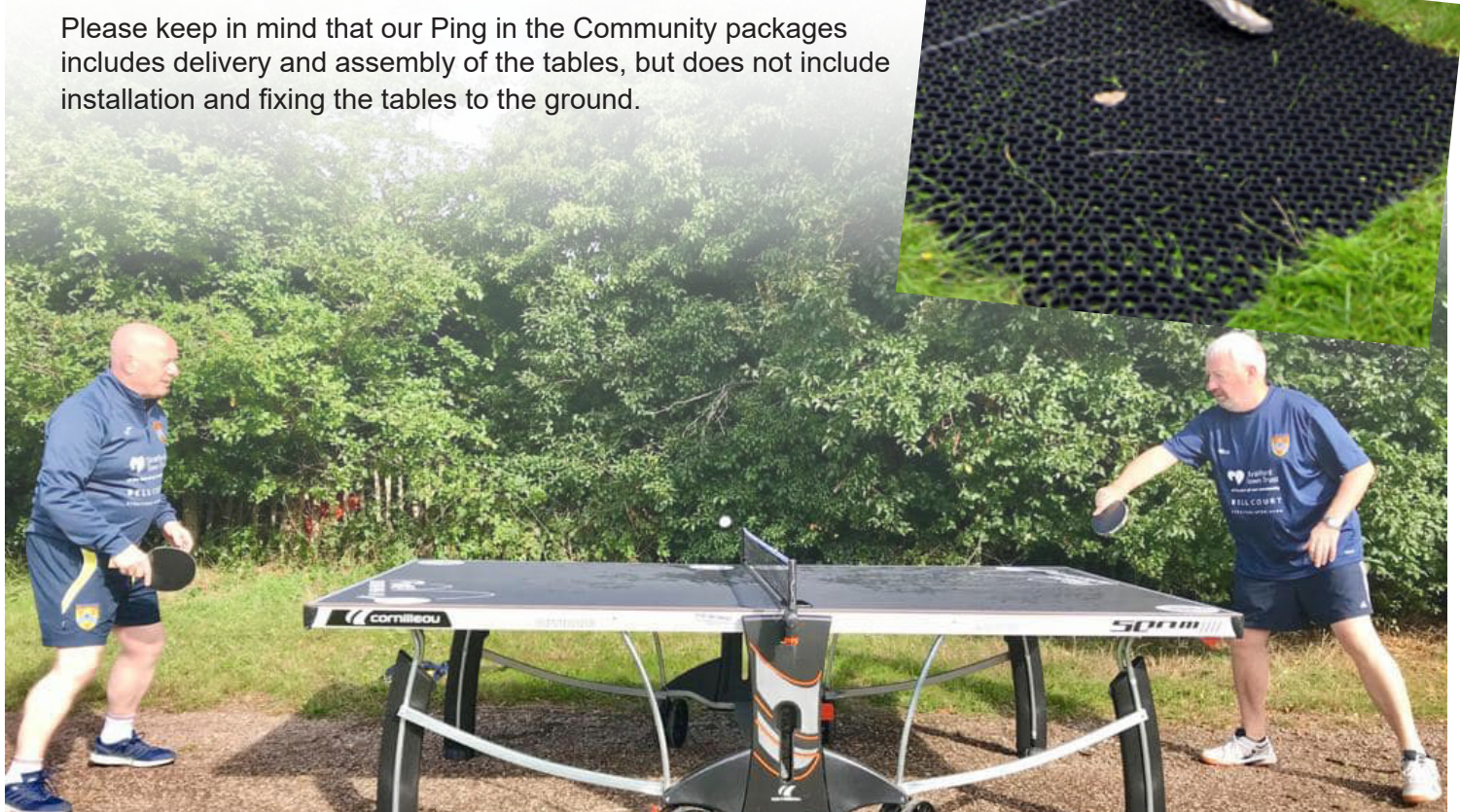
INSTALLATION AND GROUNDWORKS

Tables can be placed onto most surfaces, but some may require some preparation to ensure the tables are secure and that the area is safe for people to play. It's important to think about this in the early stages of your project, as you'll need to account for the extra expense if groundworks are required and time added before the tables are ready to use.

Once you've chosen your location, you need to make sure you have the necessary permissions from the land owner/trustees to put the tables there. If you're not sure who to contact, your Local Authority or Parish Council is a good place to start – make sure you take the time to explain who you hope to attract and what you want to achieve from the project.

If you plan to place your tables on grass, you may want to consider laying rubber grass matting. This will prevent excessive wear and tear and reduce risks of slipping or tripping due to wet or muddy playing surfaces. Alternatively, you may wish to lay concrete at each end of the table, or underneath the whole thing. We recommend a 2-metre overhang at each end and a 1-metre overhang each side of the table if you choose this option.

Please keep in mind that our Ping in the Community packages includes delivery and assembly of the tables, but does not include installation and fixing the tables to the ground.



INSURANCE

It's important that you have the necessary Public Liability Insurance policies in place, in the event that an incident happens at the tables. You may need to update your Public Liability Insurers to include this activity, the cost for this is normally minimal. To reduce the risk of an incident happening, we recommend conducting regular risk assessments and regularly checking the equipment for any damage, [click here for our Potential Risks and Hazards Document](#).

FUNDING

The initial set up costs for outdoor table tennis can mount if there are groundworks needed. The cost of a concrete surface measuring 4m x 8m between £1,500 and £3,000 for example. Some organisations have been able to reduce this cost by approaching local builders and asking them to put down the surface at cost or as a charitable act, in return for some positive PR (and perhaps the first game when it's all set up!).

Making use of funding and grant opportunities is a great way to get your project off the ground. There are numerous funding opportunities available, some of which we've outlined for you. It's important to read the qualification criteria to make sure your organisation and project is eligible – for example laying a surface could be considered as a permanent structure and could limit what funding you can apply for.

- [Sport England's Community Asset Fund](#)
- [Awards for All](#)
- [My Community Locality](#)
- [Active Partnerships](#) or [Local Authorities](#)
- [Tesco Community Grants](#)
- [Reaching Communities](#)

To make the most of the funding you're applying for, think about if you can expand the funding application to include additional tables or other equipment;

- Further the reach of your project; consider adding the cost of an indoor table into the budget. Placing tables into surrounding community halls or youth centres can increase the reach of table tennis in your community
- Landscaping; some areas might benefit from some renovation or work to make them a safer playing environment
- Seating or canopies; seating near to tables helps create a social environment, whilst providing somewhere for on-lookers to watch from. Canopies can act as great wind barriers or shelter from the elements and mean your tables can be enjoyed year-round



PROMOTION

Once your tables are ready for action, it's important that people know that the opportunity for them to play is there! Here's some ideas of how you can promote the new exciting activity to the community;

- Local newspaper, magazine advertisement or press release
- Local television
- Posters in local shops
- Word of mouth
- Social media advertisement
- Leaflets through doors
- A launch party or event

Although you don't need to organise any events, a programme of organised activity – starting with a launch party – can help raise awareness of your project and the opportunity for people to play table tennis. Events can generate positive PR, support social cohesion and generate specific activities for people who are otherwise hard to engage. A launch event can be as big or as small as you want it to be, just decide what you want it to be like, who to invite and make sure it's well promoted!



TESTIMONIALS

“ After initial fears about how successful the project would be, it's been an overwhelming positive feedback from people ... ”

“ I've had so many great anecdotes from people, the maintenance guys who look after the public areas and from community members themselves. There's been great engagement with dads and their children playing table tennis together in a very active way and lots of groups of young people playing together. ”

“ It's great to have such an informal drop in facility in our town. It's fun, it's free, it's exercise.... ”

“ The table is left in a picnic area at Haldon Forest Park. The bats and balls are left on the table and the public is free to use the equipment for as long as they like. It gets really busy with a great mixture of individuals using it. It has been a lovely edition to the forest and we are thinking about getting another table for a separate picnic area. ”



FAQS

Q: I'm worried about vandalism, does this happen often?

A: We find that outdoor tables are very well respected, with people appreciating and enjoying their presence. South Norfolk District Council has said that "We've had so little vandalism, it's been amazing". If you're still worried, put the tables in a high footfall area with good lighting at night to deter any vandalism from occurring.

Q: Won't the tables be moved or ripped out of the ground?

A: The Outdoor Static weighs 77kg and can be fixed into the ground, making it very difficult for people to move or rip out of the ground. The Outdoor Rollaway Table is on wheels and is designed to be moved around with ease. If you're looking at getting this table think about where it will be kept at night, opting for a locked and secure location could be a good idea.

Q: Will people bump into the tables at night?

A: Placing tables in well-lit areas will reduce this risk, alternatively you could put glow in the dark stickers or paint around the table edge to let people know it's there but, the risks are low and this is no more probable than people bumping into bins or benches. Consider including this risk in any risk assessments you carry out so that you can minimise any risks.

Q: Will the tables attract antisocial behaviour?

A: We find that outdoor tables are well respected and have heard of cases where introducing table tennis has lowered levels of antisocial behaviour, rather than encouraged it. If you're still worried, put the tables in a high footfall area with good lighting at night to deter any antisocial behaviour from occurring.

Q: What about bird or animal faeces, won't this ruin tables?

A: All of the outdoor tables we offer can be cleaned with soapy water using milk washing up liquid. However, to remove stubborn marks the Magic Eraser Extra Power by Flash has proved most effective – it's also recommended by Cornilleau who manufacture the tables!

Q: How do we ensure people use the tables?

A: Before you introduce an outdoor table tennis project, speak to the local community to make sure it's something they want and will use. When your tables are on their way, make sure the upcoming playing opportunity is promoted far and wide – see our promotion section above for ideas.

Q: What about bats and balls?

A: You can locate the tables close to a facility that could loan or hire equipment out to people, ask if a local shop will sell bats and balls, just leave the bats and balls on the table or people can bring their own.

This guidance is intended to provide helpful data and advise and whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of the contents, Table Tennis England shall not at any time, in any circumstances, be held responsible or liable to any party in respect of any loss, damage or costs of any nature arising directly or indirectly from reliance placed on the guidance within it.