



# A new spin on competition with Ping Aspire

Themes: competition, Ping

After identifying a gap for a social competitive opportunity, the *Ping Aspire* series was created and piloted in 4 locations across the South East. The pilot has proven a hit with players and clubs alike, with plans to grow the offer across the country now in place.

## Background

South East Local Organising Group (LOG) members Neil Hurford and Russell Bates identified a gap in opportunity for players who wanted a competitive experience but felt Table Tennis England's current regulated events were too serious or structured for them.

After working through plans with South East Area Manager Alan Lane, the *Ping Aspire* series was created, designed as a welcoming first step into competition for social and returning players.



## The Project

The project was aimed at anyone that doesn't currently hold a national ranking or had not held one for at least 2 years – allowing the social introduction to table tennis to come through.

Several clubs in the area were approached to gather interest in delivering a *Ping Aspire* pilot, with a minimum requirement of having four tables to host the event.

Four pilot locations were chosen due to their location around the South East, existing connections with the club and the club being able to meet minimum requirements.

- Milton Keynes – September 2025
- Hastings – October 2025
- Thanet – November 2025
- Kintbury – December 2025

## The Impact

The pilot was successful in attracting a range of participants from different demographic and playing backgrounds;

- 70 players across the four pilot events (Milton Keynes 19, Hastings 13, Thanet 21, Kintbury 17)
- 22 new memberships created
- 36% were non-members
- 21% of players were women and girls
- 10% of players had a disability or long-term health condition

This demonstrates the appeal of *Ping Aspire* to a wide range of audiences and its inclusive nature. One player in Milton Keynes has Parkinson's disease, who usually plays at a Parkinson's table tennis group but was thrilled to join in the event;

*"I've only been playing a year, and mostly socially, but I wanted to see how my game stood up against people without Parkinson's. I won a couple, lost a few, and made it through to the second round... it's been good fun and quite inspiring – makes you want to whoop!"*

*Ping Aspire Milton Keynes participant*



Feedback from players was strong, with overall satisfaction being rated at 4.6 out of 5. Praise was given to the friendly atmosphere, competitive balance and opportunity to play multiple matches. Pilot clubs have also praised the project, with Thanet and Hastings showing interest to host another *Ping Aspire* event in the future to continue offering social players an avenue into informal competition.



## What's Next?

With interest to deliver future *Ping Aspire* events from both pilot and wider locations, the programme will be improved according to pilot insight and rolled out across the country.

*"Ping Aspire is a flexible, participant centred approach, whilst giving them the competitive opportunity they are looking for. We're excited to see this project continue to grow and engage people in our sport".*

*Alan Lane  
Area Manager (South East) at Table  
Tennis England*