

# DUMFRIES SPORTS CLUB

**50 Nunholm Road, DG1 1JW, Dumfries. Clubhouse: 01387 252527**

Dumfries Sports Club  
50 Nunholm Road  
DG1 1JW  
29 Sep 2020

**To:** Oliver Mundell MSP, Finlay Carson MSP, Colin Smyth MSP, Brian Whittle MSP, Michelle Ballantyne MSP, Emma Harper MSP, Joan McAlpine MSP, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, Claudia Beamish MSP, David Mundell MP, Alister Jack MP.

**From:** John Glendinning, Chairperson Dumfries Sports Club

**Subject:** Dumfries Sports Club (29 Sep 2020)

Dear Mr Mundell,

I am contacting you in my capacity as Chairman of Dumfries Sports Club.

We are a multi-sports complex with squash, cricket and tennis as our on-site sports and we are also the home of ladies and gents hockey clubs and also Dumfries Running Club. We also have a Fitness suite in our main clubhouse.

Like many sports clubs we have been significantly affected by the coronavirus pandemic but as our main sport and revenue stream is squash we have fared much worse than others. You may be aware of the present situation in regard to squash in Scotland but I will endeavour to summarise this for you.

In common with other sports we had to cease playing squash in March and as other sports started to open up again, for us tennis and cricket, squash continued to be unavailable to our members. We are affiliated to Scottish Squash and adhere to the guidance they give and they in turn have generally followed the guidance given by English Squash although around three weeks behind introducing their guidance to squash clubs.

English Squash commenced "solo" squash and "sides" with full squash only allowed for people from the same household during July. The Scottish Government lifted restrictions in Scotland on 1 September but only for "solo" squash and for those in the same household. English Squash continued to lift restrictions during August and now in September are back playing full squash while we in Scotland are still restricted to "solo" and same household squash.

Scottish Squash had given us an indication that some form of restriction may be lifted on 5 October but last week confirmed this will not be the case.

We are a club of around 400 members. The vast majority are squash players and as we move into the peak squash playing seasons of Autumn and Winter we find our current booked sessions at around 2% which normally would be 70% to 80% at peak times.

We have been in regular contact with Garry McKay (Head of Scottish Squash) and although sympathetic he offers little positive news on further progress and states that together with Sport Scotland they make a case to the Scottish Government but to no avail.

Squash clubs throughout Scotland are deeply frustrated and some have gone and opened up for full squash regardless. Scottish Squash have confirmed to us the David Lloyd Centres throughout Scotland opened up to full squash last month and say they have introduced their own strict guidance for play.

Scottish Squash admit that they can do nothing as they are not breaking any law. Another squash club in Dumfries is also allowing full squash and we have anecdotal evidence of an increasing number of other squash clubs in Scotland doing likewise. The present situation is ridiculous.

Our club while strictly adhering to national guidelines are losing members to other clubs both local and in Carlisle. We have recently taken cleaning staff off furlough to clean four virtually empty squash courts at a significant weekly cost.

We are concerned not only for our financial viability but also for our squash playing members who are now approaching 7 months without a game and with many in their 60's, 70's and even 80's with squash their only physical and social outlet their mental health is a major issue.

I may be biased but squash is a fantastic sport offering a short (around 45 minutes), sharp intensive physical workout and the opportunity to relieve the stresses of the day during an enjoyable game, these benefits appear to have been ignored. The sport of squash is clearly well down the priority list of the Scottish Government. All squash clubs in England are virtually back to normal and English Squash confirm that there have been no issues.

Increasingly Scottish squash clubs ignore current guidance and are doing their own thing while ensuring strict health and safety measures. I would simply and respectfully ask that each of you give whatever support you can to canvass the Scottish Government on behalf of our Club and the many others throughout Scotland who find themselves in a similar position.

If there is no change to current guidance in Scotland we will see very quickly an increasing number of squash clubs opening to full squash with a variety of health and safety measures and also, I fear, a number simply closing their doors for good.

Regards

**John Glendinning,**  
**Chairman, Dumfries Sports Club**