PROPOSAL TO LEASE FOUNTAIN COURT, MARKET HARBOROUGH

Philip House, Trustee | 12 July 2026 | For the trustee meeting of Tuesday 14 July

1. This proposal

This is a new proposal. It replaces everything I have previously written on Fountain Court and stands entirely on its own. Every figure in it has been traced to its source — attendance records, written quotes, the agent's written confirmations of 9 July, or a stated estimate, as set out in Addendum A. It reflects the improved terms secured from the landlord, the discussion at the members' meeting on 6 July, and the points raised by trustees; the figures circulated at the meeting are reconciled with the ones in this document in Addendum B.

The trustees are asked to decide on Tuesday whether the club takes a lease of the ground floor at Fountain Court. My recommendation is that we should, and this document sets out why — and answers, I hope, every question that has been raised. The actual proposal is itemised in Section 9.

2. The premises and the confirmed terms

Fountain Court is ground-floor space in the town centre: 96.6 m², currently five offices, which the landlord has agreed can be opened into a single room. He has confirmed that restoration at the end of the lease is not applicable. It takes 12 tables with our existing equipment and 14 with purpose-made card tables; New Horizons Hall takes 10. It is fully accessible — no stairs, no lift to fail. Parking beside it is cheaper than at NHH. No VAT is charged on the rent and, with a rateable value of £12,000, small business rates relief applies in full: business rates are nil.

The terms below were confirmed in writing by the landlord's agent on 9 July. Rent: £16,500 in Year 1, rising by £500 each year to £18,500 in Year 5. Three months rent-free at the start, so cash rent actually payable to the landlord in Year 1 is £12,375, with the first payment falling due in month four. Rent is payable monthly in advance. Deposit: £4,125 (three months' rent), returnable at the end of the tenancy. The lease will permit us to let others use the room under a hire arrangement. (For simplicity and prudence, the profit and loss projections in this document charge ten months' rent in Year 1

The break clause deserves to be stated in full, because it has been misunderstood: the club — and only the club — may end the lease at any point after two years, on six months' written notice. Our minimum commitment is therefore two and a half years, and the maximum rent we could be committed to before an exit is approximately £38,000 — which compares with the roughly £38,800 that we and the Wednesday group together would pay in hire charges over the same period (and under the lease the Wednesday group's hire becomes income to the club). The landlord is committed for the full seven years. Whatever happens, we are never more than six months from release once two years have passed. We will ask the solicitor to secure the break clause and the room-hire provision exactly as agreed, and security of tenure under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 if it is available.

3. What our own premises make possible

The case is not only financial. All our activities — duplicate sessions, improvers, learners, supervised play, dealing, meetings — come under one roof for the first time. Tables, cloths and bidding boxes stay permanently set: no more erecting and dismantling every session. The dealing machine gets one home, instead of the dealing being spread across three locations, two of them members' houses. This is a very serious issue. Everything depends on having dealt cards. The current arrangement is very fragile. Scoring equipment stays in place, making sessions more stable and directors' lives easier. Members with mobility difficulties can attend every session — no lift dependency, and our own parking next to the premises. The Friday afternoon session, which would lose money at NHH's hire rates, becomes profitable from day one at Fountain Court.

And the premises give us what a hired hall never can: room to grow and achieve our objectives. Initially we use only six time slots a week out of a possible twenty-one; every unused slot is capacity already paid for — for daytime sessions, directors' courses (EBED has confirmed it would run one here), schools bridge, and hire income. Stamford Bridge Club — in a town of 20,700 people against Market Harborough's 24,800 — has over 700 members and runs morning, afternoon and evening sessions every weekday in its own clubhouse; clubs that run daytime sessions show daytime attendance exceeding evenings. Nobody is suggesting we become Stamford: our central projections assume no new sessions at all beyond the established Friday, and even the favourable case adds cautiously just one new session a year from Year 2.

Rutland Bridge Club moved to its own premises sixteen months ago: membership has grown from about 65 to 152, weekly tables from under 10 to over 27. The telling detail is that their original sessions stayed flat — all the growth came from new sessions their premises made possible.

4. The financial case

I have revisited every income and cost line; Addendum A shows the detail and every source. The central projection uses the moving average of the last fifty sessions: 7.5 tables for Monday (the average is 7.3 and the trend is upward) and 6.5 for Thursday (almost exactly the fifty-session average); two and a half years of attendance records stand behind these figures. Friday starts at 5 tables and rises to 7.5 in Year 2, when table money moves to £5 (the current £4 compensates for NHH's expensive parking, which does not apply at Fountain Court). Several of the Wednesday group have told me they would be pleased to move to dedicated premises; I have not approached them with a proposed rate, but I understand they currently pay £75 per session and I have included a fee of £60. Heating, electricity and water appear as a single fixed cost of £1,200 a year, built on a professional heat-loss assessment by a club member with expertise in the field (Addendum A6).

Annual surplus/(deficit)	Year 1	Year 2
Figures circulated in June (at the superseded rent)	+£888	+£888
Pessimistic case (6.5 tables; Friday stuck at 4.0 and £4; Wednesday £50; no growth in anything, ever)	+£2,393	(£2,256)
Central case (as this section)	+£4,489	+£5,445
Favourable case (7.5 tables; Friday at £5 from the move; longer improvers season; one new session a year)	+£6,362	+£9,130

Year 1 rent is charged as ten months at £1,375 — one of the three free months is used up with the works; if anyone believes the works will take two months, the adjustment is simply one more month at £1,375. Operating costs rise 5% a year throughout. The five-year table for all three scenarios is in Addendum A7: on the central case the club is in surplus in every one of the five years. On the pessimistic case the club runs a surplus in Year 1 and deficits of £2,300–£4,700 a year thereafter. I regard this case as remote — it assumes no remedial action of any kind, by anyone, for five years — but it is shown in full, and even on these figures the exposure is covered by reserves, pledges and the break clause. Addendum B reconciles the circulated figure of £888 with this pessimistic case.

To put the rent in context: the club currently pays £11,829 a year in room hire; against that, the rent payable in Year 1 is £12,375 — and if you include the £75 a session the Wednesday group pays at their current venue, the combined current hire cost of about £15,500 a year comfortably exceeds the £12,375 actually payable in Year 1, and comes within £1,000 of the headline rent itself. The lease buys every slot of every day for £16,500: not much more than the price of the slots already rented, with fifteen unused slots of capacity included.

5. Capital costs and funding

Getting into Fountain Court requires one-off spending of £17,680, every line re-examined this week:

Item	Cost	Source
Building works (Obelisk Construction)	£5,640	Written quote 10 Mar, reconfirmed by the builder 11 July; 4 weeks' notice to start
Acoustic-backed carpet, supplied and laid	£4,400	Researched, named products; upgraded deliberately — the carpet is the foundation of the acoustic answer
Solicitor	£2,000	Quote from local solicitor

Building notices	£200	Architect's figure
Refreshment servery in playing room	£1,300	Treasurer's heater figure; plumber's estimate; IKEA unit prices (Addendum E)
50 chairs	£1,000	Basic cost retained; the £1,000 upgrade to new padded banqueting chairs moved to the fundraising wish-list
Scorer's desk (2 m desktop, drawer pedestals, board cubbies)	£500	IKEA prices (Addendum E)
Open shelving beside lower door, for laying out dealing boards	£300	IKEA/shelving prices
WiFi installation	£100	BT connection fee plus router
Basic AV: 65" screen plus hardware	£1,000	Screen £700 at market price plus £300 connection hardware; the club's existing laptops run scoring and teaching
Agent's lease application fee	£240	Paid
Contingency	£1,000	
Total Category 1	£17,680	
Returnable deposit	£4,125	Held as an asset; returned at end of tenancy
Total initial requirement	£21,805	

Importantly, the club can meet this from its own funds. Di's statement prepared for the meeting of 14 July shows £24,318 held; with net income of about £400 a month through to opening, the club will hold about £25,500, having already paid the agent's fee. After all capital spending and the deposit, roughly £3,950 remains in cash — and members have already pledged £4,000 in donations — worth about £5,000 with Gift Aid — and £1,200 in loans, from just seven members, before any formal appeal. Free cash plus existing pledges comfortably exceed the three-month operating reserve of about £4,800. The Year 1 surplus will rebuild the reserve toward the six-month level during the first year as will any further donations.

To be direct about the money: of the £21,805 total, the deposit of £4,125 is returned at the end of the tenancy, and the chairs, AV equipment, scorer's desk, shelving and loose furniture — about £2,800-worth — would come with us or be sold. The rest, roughly £15,000 — the building works, the carpet, the servery, the connections and the professional fees — would not be recovered if the club left. That is the sum we are truly committing, and it should be judged against what it buys: a permanent home we fully expect to occupy for the seven years and beyond, with the landlord confirming that no restoration is required at the end of the term. Against that commitment stands the income it unlocks: on the central projections the club generates a cumulative surplus of over £21,000 across the first five years — the premises more than repays its own fit-out from trading alone, before any new session, any growth and any fundraising is counted.

6. The questions raised

Acoustics. The room has a 2.4 m ceiling and will be noisy if untreated. The answer is not one single spend. Category 1 buys an acoustic-backed carpet across the whole floor — several times the absorption of ordinary tiles — which should take the room to a playable level. Our appeal then asks for funds specifically for curtains and fabric wall hangings, each absorbing more sound and each an improvement in its own right. If, with all that, the room still disappoints, we would add acoustic wall panelling: easily fitted, nothing structural.

Chairs. The budget was queried at the members' meeting as too low. It has been re-researched: new padded banqueting chairs would come to £2,000 (£40 a chair at bulk rates), while the second-hand ex-hotel trade delivers the same comfort for roughly half. I have retained the basic cost of £1,000 in Category 1 and put the £1,000 upgrade on the wish-list, where it can be a specific object of the fundraising.

The kitchen. The kitchen is small — it was an office kitchenette — and it sits behind two fire doors. But its job is washing up and the fridge, not service. Refreshments are served from a purpose-built servery in the playing room itself, in the corner marked "coffee station" on the plan: water heater on a permanent feed, small sink, cupboards for mugs and biscuits (drawing in Addendum E; £1,300 in Category 1). A kitchen refit remains on the appeal list for those who want the kitchen nicer; it is not needed to operate.

Storage. The entrance wing has a built-in storage cupboard, and there is more storage in the kitchen. Tables stay permanently set, so cloths and bidding boxes live on them. Boards live at the scorer's desk; crockery in the servery; the dealing machine, spares and laid-out dealing boards on open shelving beside the lower door. None of it takes table space (see plan).

Capacity and the pillars. Ten tables would be set initially, leaving a third of the room open — the space easily converts to 12 tables with our existing equipment and 14 with 80 cm card tables. The attached plan is drawn at true scale, with all four pillars and both doors: the pillars stand in the aisles and cost no tables. New Horizons Hall holds 10 at an absolute maximum.

What happens at the end of seven years? Whether the club has a statutory right to renew at the end of the term depends on whether the lease is granted with security of tenure under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954; the solicitor will be instructed to seek this. If the lease is protected, year seven is a rent review, not an eviction. The landlord has confirmed no restoration is required at the end of the term,

Monthly or quarterly rent? Monthly, in advance — confirmed in writing by the agent on 9 July.

Volunteers. The concern is real. Rutland runs seven directed sessions a week with eight directors, two of them recent beginners trained up gradually — directing without the scoring system first. EBED has confirmed it will run a directors' course in Market Harborough when we have premises and four volunteers. **Volunteers grow with a club that has a home.**

Kettering. A club with its own premises that lost numbers. I think we should draw our guidance from Rutland and Stamford.

7. Risks

Every proposal of this kind carries risk; here are the ones that matter and what stands behind each. Attendance: if sessions declined and nothing were done, the pessimistic case shows deficits from Year 2 — but reserves and pledges would fund years of that, a club with twenty-one slots at its disposal has remedies long before it bites, and after two years the break clause ends the exposure on six months' notice. Costs: obviously there are estimates in here but I have put in a miscellaneous line of £100 per month. People: the training income depends on those who run the programme, and the pessimistic case holds it at Year 1 levels for exactly that reason. The room: noise, answered by the acoustic sequence.. Against all of these stands the same arithmetic: a maximum rent commitment of about £38,000 — less than we and the Wednesday group would pay in hire charges over the same period — of which only about £15,000 including fit-out is unreturnable, held against £24,318 in the bank, £4,000 pledged in donations (£5,000 with Gift Aid) plus £1,200 offered in loans, and a club trading in surplus today.

8. Funding the improvements

The appeal at the members' meeting was necessarily informal: there was no approved proposal to give to. If the trustees approve this proposal, the club will approach members properly: Gift Aid declaration forms with every request, adding 25p to each pound given by a taxpayer, and specific, named objects rather than a general fund — the curtains (£2,000), a wall hanging or tapestry, a light fitting (£150 each, eighteen wanted), the chair upgrade from second-hand to new (£20 a chair, fifty wanted), the AV system (£1,000 basic, £1,750 for the full layout), the kitchen refit (£2,000). People prefer to give to things, not deficits. A named-donor board in the new premises should record every gift. Members preferring to lend rather than give will be offered simple written terms agreed by the trustees. The £4,000 already pledged in donations will be converted first — with Gift Aid declarations where donors qualify, worth about £5,000 — and the £1,200 offered as loans documented on those written terms.

With an approved proposal and a lease in hand, the club can then approach external funders, which it cannot credibly do today: Harborough District Council's community grant schemes, the Bowden Trust, National Lottery Awards for All. Stamford Bridge Club's clubhouse extension was partly funded by grants. There were many comments at the meeting about approaching organisations; we would need a fundraising group, and I propose the trustees appoint one.

Target: at least £20,000, as stated at the members' meeting — against which £6,200 is already achieved — £5,000 of donations including Gift Aid, plus £1,200 of loans — by just seven members, before anyone has been properly asked, and before applications to other organisations.

9. Recommendation and resolution

The trustees are asked to resolve:

1. that the club takes a lease of the ground floor at Fountain Court on the confirmed terms: rent £16,500 rising by £500 a year to £18,500 in Year 5; three months rent-free; deposit £4,125; rent payable monthly in advance; break clause exercisable by the club at any point after two years on six months' written notice; room hire by others permitted;

2. to authorise capital expenditure of up to £17,680 plus the deposit;

3. to authorise the instruction to the solicitor to seek security of tenure under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, the room-hire provision, and the break clause exactly as agreed, and to execute the lease;

4. to appoint a fundraising group

5. to record in the minutes, as clause 24 of the constitution requires, the reasons:

- the central financial case shows a surplus in every year;
- the capital cost is met from reserves, with the cash buffer already restored by pledges made plus Gift Aid relief;
- the risk is limited by the break clause; and
- the premises materially advance the charity's objects of promoting and teaching bridge.

Philip House | Trustee, Market Harborough Bridge Club | 12 July 2026

ADDENDUM A — FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS AND CALCULATIONS

A1. Per-head income assumptions

Session	Money per head	Deductions	Net per head
Monday / Thursday duplicate	£5.00	EBU levy 45p; refreshments 30p	£4.25
Friday duplicate, Year 1	£4.00	EBU levy 45p; refreshments 30p	£3.25
Friday duplicate, Year 2 on	£5.00	EBU levy 45p; refreshments 30p	£4.25
Improvers	£5.00	refreshments 30p (no EBU levy)	£4.70
Supervised sessions	£5.00	refreshments 30p (no EBU levy)	£4.70
Learners	£60 per set of 10 lessons	refreshments (£3 per set)	£57 per set

Refreshments 30p per head from actual data. EBU levy 45p . Friday table money moves to £5 from Year 2: the £4 compensates for NHH's expensive afternoon parking, which does not apply at Fountain Court.

A2. Duplicate session income

Session	Sessions/yr	Tables (central)	Year 1	Year 2
Monday	48	7.5	£6,120	£6,120
Thursday	49	6.5	£5,415	£5,415
Friday	50	5.0 → 7.5	£3,250	£6,375

Attendance evidence: Monday averages 6.38 (2024), 7.40 (2025), 7.21 (2026 to late June); Thursday 6.55, 6.42, 7.12; the last ten sessions of both run about 7.3. Central uses the fifty-session moving averages: Monday 7.3, rounded up to 7.5 on the upward trend; Thursday almost exactly 6.5, used unadjusted. The window includes January, when attendances were disturbed by a temporary move of premises. The 6.5 in the June tables was a rounding-down for a possible "Friday effect" which the data show no sign of. Friday launched 22 May 2026: recorded sessions 3.5, 4 and 4 tables, mid-summer, before any publicity.

A3. Training income

Line	Year 1	Year 2	Basis

Improvers (Tuesday)	£2,256	£2,256	16 × £4.70 × 30 sessions; organisers' consistent figure; core of 24 registered
Learners	£1,140	£3,420	20 × £57 per set; Year 1 one set (Sept); Year 2 three sets, same cohort pattern
Supervised sessions	£1,128	—	Year 1 only: this year's learners receive supervised play

A4. Other income

Line	Year 1	Year 2	Basis
Wednesday morning group hire	£2,940	£2,940	49 weeks × £60. Group confirmed they will move; rate not yet discussed — they pay £75 at their current venue and provide their own refreshments
Subscriptions	£1,400	£1,600	Year 1: 70 (63 members now, Friday regulars expected to join); Year 2: 80

A5. Total net income (central case)

	Year 1	Year 2
Total net income	£23,649	£28,126

A6. Annual costs

Line	Year 1	Year 2	Source
Rent (P&L basis: ten months in Year 1)	£13,750	£17,000	See A6A. Cash rent paid to the landlord in Year 1 is £12,375; the P&L charges ten months so that the works month carries a month's rent

Buildings insurance	£700	£735	Agent's figure (within service charge; shown separately as a large item)
Service charge (balance)	£600	£630	£50/month; agent's all-in estimate £110 pcm including the insurance; agent notes it is still evolving
Public liability insurance	£250	£263	Existing club cost
Cleaning	£1,040	£1,092	2 hours fortnightly × £20
WiFi	£420	£441	BT basic commercial entry package, £35/ month
Energy and water (incl. standing charges)	£1,200	£1,260	Professional heat-loss assessment by club member Ray Bray: gas £435/yr incl. standing charge and VAT for 17.5 hrs/week use; plus electricity and water allowances; deliberately rounded up
Other costs	£1,200	£1,260	£100/month: equipment, software licences, EBU/EBED affiliation, trophies, bank charges, consumables, minor repairs
Total	£19,160	£22,681	Non-rent operating costs inflated 5% a year

A6A. Full rent schedule (agreed terms)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Headline rent	£16,500	£17,000	£17,500	£18,000	£18,500
Cash payable	£12,375	£17,000	£17,500	£18,000	£18,500

Three months rent-free at the start; one of the three is consumed by the building works, so the club trades rent-free for two months (and the P&L therefore charges ten months in Year 1). Increases fixed at £500 a year. Break clause: club only, any point after two years, six months' written notice. Monthly payment in advance confirmed. Deposit £4,125, returnable.

A7. Net annual position — five years, three scenarios

Surplus/ (deficit)	**Y1**	**Y2**	**Y3**	**Y4**	**Y5**
Central	+£4,489	+£5,445	+£4,661	+£3,863	+£3,050
Pessimistic	+£2,393	(£2,256)	(£3,040)	(£3,838)	(£4,651)
Favourable	+£6,362	+£9,130	rising	rising	rising

Central: income flat from Year 2 — no new sessions, no growth; deliberately a minimum. Pessimistic: 6.5 tables Monday/Thursday, Friday stuck at 4.0 tables and £4 for ever, Wednesday at £50, subscriptions static, training held at Year 1 level — and no remedial action of any kind for five years. Favourable: 7.5 tables, £5 Friday from the move rising to 7.5 tables, improvers 40 weeks, one new session a year from Year 2 (candidates: daytime supervised play, daytime training, a second afternoon duplicate, gentle bridge, the EBED directors' course, Saturday schools teaching, further room hire). Cumulative central surplus over five years: about £21,500.

A8. One-off capital costs — Category 1

Set out in Section 5: total £17,680, plus the returnable deposit £4,125 — £21,805 in all. The chairs upgrade (£1,000), curtains, tapestries, lighting, desktop PC, AV upgrade, kitchen refit and acoustic panelling form the Category 2 wish-list, funded by the appeal (Section 8).

A9. Reserves and funding position

Treasurer's statement prepared for 14 July: £24,318 held (current account £5,049; Unity Trust instant access £19,269; £240 agent's fee already paid). Net income about £400 a month July–September. Planning assumptions: solicitors instructed 15 July; lease signed 1 September; works September (builder reconfirmed 11 July; four weeks' notice); opening 1 October. Deposit paid at signing; first rent cash leaves in December (rent holiday). Free cash at opening about £3,950, plus £4,000 pledged in donations (about £5,000 with Gift Aid) and £1,200 offered as loans, against a three-month operating reserve of about £4,800 — covered with margin before the appeal begins. Year 1 surplus rebuilds toward the six-month reserve.

A10. Scheduled use of premises

Monday evening (duplicate), Tuesday evening (improvers), Wednesday morning (group hire), Wednesday evening (learners), Thursday evening (duplicate), Friday afternoon (duplicate): six committed slots of twenty-one. All remaining capacity — daytime hours, Saturdays, Sundays — is available and uncosted in these projections.

A11. Current room hire compared with the proposed rent

The club pays £11,829 a year at New Horizons Hall and the Methodist church; the Wednesday group pays about £3,675 a year (£75 × 49) at their current venue. Combined, about £15,500 a year of hire charges — against a Year 1 cash rent of £12,375 and a headline rent of £16,500 for unlimited access. Over the minimum two-and-a-half-year commitment: hire charges about £38,800 against maximum committed rent of about £38,000.

A12. Fundraising wish-list — Category 2

Item	Estimate
Curtains (also acoustic)	£2,000
Tapestries / fabric wall coverings (also acoustic; ideal named gifts)	by donation
Chairs upgrade to new padded banqueting chairs	£1,000
Light fittings (18 × £150)	£2,700
Desktop PC	£1,000
AV upgrade to the full layout (£750 beyond the basic system)	£750
Kitchen refit	£2,000
Acoustic wall panelling (final rung, if needed)	up to £5,000

ADDENDUM B — RECONCILIATION WITH THE FIGURES CIRCULATED IN JUNE

The tables circulated in June pre-date the landlord's final offer: they use the earlier rent of £1,458 per month (£17,496 a year) and a £5,000 deposit. The confirmed terms are £16,500 with three months rent-free (cash rent £12,375 in Year 1; the P&L here charges ten months, £13,750) and a £4,125 deposit. The "minimum term cost" of £52,500 mentioned at the meeting was three years at the superseded rent; on confirmed terms the maximum committed rent is about £38,000, and the minimum commitment two and a half years, not three.

The June cash flow shows the club positive — closing cash rising £888 over the year — even on the old terms. The table below starts from that £888 and shows, item by item, how it becomes this proposal's pessimistic case. The first two rows correct the rent to the confirmed terms on the ten-month P&L basis; every following row makes an assumption harsher than the June figures used.

Reconciliation, Year 1	**£**
June cash flow as circulated (rent at old £17,496)	+£888
Reduction in the annual rate (£17,496 → £16,500)	+£996
Rent-free months net of the works month (two months at £1,375)	+£2,750
Friday: June's ~6 tables at £5 reduced to 4 tables at £4	−£2,660
Learners: June's two-plus intakes reduced to one September set	−£1,000
Improvers: June's 37 weeks reduced to 30	−£560
Monday: 48 sessions counted, not 49 (AGM night)	−£130
Subscriptions: 63 members, not 64	−£20
Supervised sessions added (omitted in June)	+£1,200
Deductions and cost treatment differences, net	+£929
Pessimistic case, Year 1	+£2,393

The point of the reconciliation: the pessimistic case is deliberately darker than anything circulated — the June figures have Friday half as big again at higher table money, more learners and a longer improvers season. The bottom of the range in this proposal sits below the June model on like-for-like terms; the range has not been constructed to flatter.

On costs the two documents agree. Once energy and water are treated consistently and the costs the club already pays today are set aside, the June itemisation and this proposal's operating costs land within about £150 of each other; where the June figures were better sourced, this proposal adopts them (solicitor £2,000; £100 a month miscellaneous; agent's fee £240). The remaining difference is presentation: the June capital scenarios (£20,238 / £27,988 / £35,988, with "initial cash shortfalls" up to £22,721) bundle desirable improvements into the entry cost and measure the total against a six-month forward-expenses target. This proposal separates what is needed to open (£17,680, funded from reserves) from what is desirable afterwards (funded by the appeal and grants), and rebuilds the reserve buffer from pledges, surplus and Gift Aid. Same facts; the difference is whether the wish-list is treated as a precondition.

ADDENDUM C — THE RUTLAND AND STAMFORD EVIDENCE

Rutland Bridge Club (correspondence with their president on file). Moved to dedicated premises sixteen months ago. Bridgewebs membership 152 today against about 65 before; active members (playing at least monthly) roughly doubled to about 100. Before the move their two sessions totalled just under 10 tables a week; the total now averages 27.5 since the turn of the year, with 30 expected to be consistent this year. Their original two sessions stayed flat at 10–11 tables: all growth came from new sessions. They run seven directed sessions a week with eight directors, two of them recent beginners trained up without the scoring system first. A member survey twelve months after the move found approval "almost unanimous". Their president: "If the club had not moved it would either no longer exist or the clock would certainly be ticking."

Stamford Bridge Club. Over 700 members in a town of 20,700 (Market Harborough: 24,800). Second most popular club in England by player sessions for the third year running, in its own purpose-built clubhouse: three duplicates on a Monday alone (9.30 am, 1.30 pm, 7.00 pm), morning and evening supervised play through the week, beginners' courses each autumn. Stamford has just completed the purchase of its freehold and a building extension, funded in part by charitable grants from Grantscape and the Bernard Sunley Foundation — evidence for the grants route in Section 8.

ADDENDUM D — ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED (MARKET RE-CHECKED 10 JULY 2026)

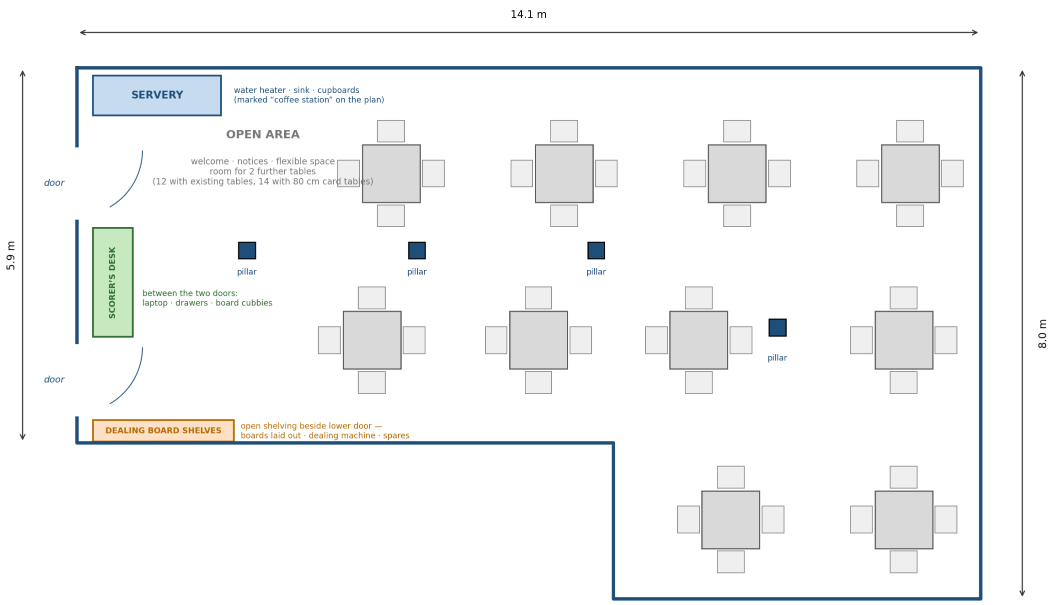
The club requires roughly 1,000+ sq ft of ground-floor space usable as a single room, town centre, accessible evenings and weekends, with parking. A full market review in June found two candidates and rejected both: Parker House, Leicester Road — new Grade A offices built for corporate occupiers, rent well above £20,000 for the size required, evening and weekend use doubtful, VAT likely; and 15 The Point Business Park, Rockingham Road — out of town with no pedestrian access, £20,000 a year plus probable VAT and business rates. The rest of the market was, and remains, overwhelmingly industrial and warehouse units on out-of-town estates. The market was re-checked on 10 July: the position is unchanged, with one addition.

Torch House, Torch Way (being viewed by trustees on 14 July). First-floor office suite of 1,211 sq ft at £16,000 a year, within the Torch Trust for the Blind's building, on the town's edge by the rugby club.

ADDENDUM E — THE ROOM: PLAN AND FITTINGS

Layout at true scale (90 cm tables at 2.7 m spacing), with all four pillars and both doors. Ten tables set permanently; the open area converts to 12 tables with existing equipment, 14 with 80 cm card tables (six columns fit at a 2.5 m pitch). The pillars stand in the aisles and cost no tables.

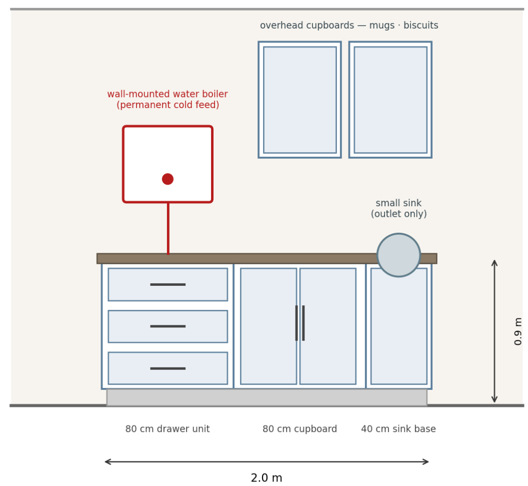
Fountain Court — proposed layout: 10 tables permanently set
(96.6 m² playing room; kitchen, WCs and lobby additional, in entrance wing)



Ten tables set permanently for ordinary sessions; busy evenings add tables in the open area. Four pillars and both doors as on the plan.
Drawn at true scale: 90 cm tables at 2.7 m spacing; middle-row tables offset slightly so every pillar stands clear of tables and chairs.

The servery (corner marked “coffee station” on the plan): water heater on a permanent feed from the adjoining toilet area, small sink as outlet, cupboards and drawers for mugs and biscuits, overhead storage. About £1,300 including plumbing.

Servery — corner of playing room (IKEA ENHET units)
water from adjoining toilet · waste back to toilet area · ~£1,300 incl. heater & plumbing



The scorer’s desk, on the wall between the two doors: 2 m desktop on two drawer pedestals, knee space for the director, board cubbies alongside. About £500. Open shelving for laying out the session’s dealing boards sits beside the lower door (about £300).

Scorer’s desk — office-style (IKEA LAGKAPTEN/ALEX + cubby unit)
laptop · director’s papers · session boards to hand · ~£500