

One for the ages: Tennis club celebrates new courts in town

The oldest and youngest members of Stonehaven Tennis Club came together at the weekend to mark the official opening of the club's new courts.

Three courts have been resurfaced with artificial clay, replacing the previous green top which had been down for more than 10 years.

The new surface – increasingly popular with many Scottish clubs – was imported from the Netherlands and is regarded as better for learning as the ball travels more slowly off the surface.

To mark the occasion, the club's senior members Ben and Diete Juffermans rallied with its youngest members Lily Metelski and Archie Dinnett, both aged eight.

Head coach Bruce McIver said: "Members can't wait to play on the new courts.

"The higher bounce means more balls being chased down, giving longer rallies and a lot of fun tennis.

"Stonehaven Tennis Club welcomes players of all ages and abilities. Visitors to the area can pay to play too – when restrictions lift – and we're confident this



SMASHING TIME: Ben and Diete Juffermans rally with junior members Archie Dinnett and Lily Metelski at Stonehaven. Picture by Chris Sumner.

new surface will be popular with everyone.

"We're looking forward to getting everyone back to playing matches and enjoying the game we all love."

Although the new surface isn't real clay, the playing characteristics are similar; the ball makes a mark and the court needs to be swept after playing.

To avoid landfill, the club offered the old surface free to local groups.

Husky Haven and Banchory Show were among the groups to reuse the surface.

The club has five floodlit courts in all, the others being a traditional hard court surface, closer to the seafront.

The club is also doing

structural work to its historic Victorian pavilion – which is listed – at the Recreation Ground after securing a heritage grant.

Singles tennis is currently permitted under Covid-19 lockdown rules with doubles possibly returning after March 15, subject to Scottish Government announcements.



The new artificial clay courts at Stonehaven Tennis Club seen from the air. Picture by Eaglize Aerial Photography.

Dons anthem provides the soundtrack for Fergie film

JAMES WYLLIE

An Aberdeen football anthem from decades ago – which is still wildly popular among fans today – has been picked to soundtrack a touching film about Sir Alex Ferguson.

European Song was penned by the late Harry Barry to celebrate the Dons lifting the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1983.

And copies of the initial 100,000 records were in such high demand from supporters it had to be reissued.

The piece is being featured in a new documentary, Sir Alex Ferguson: Never Give In, directed by the footballing great's son, Jason.

It premiered at the virtual Glasgow Film Festival on Saturday, and follows Sir Alex's recovery from a brain haemorrhage in 2018.

The film will be shown from May 29, with some cinema screenings also planned, depending on coronavirus restrictions.

Sir Alex said: "Losing my memory was my biggest fear when I suffered the haemorrhage.

"In the making of the film I was able to revisit the most important moments of my life, good and bad.

"Having Jason direct the film has ensured an honest and intimate account."

Having previously managed East Stirlingshire and St Mirren, Sir Alex took charge of Aberdeen in 1978. Under his leadership the side won the Scottish league multiple times and lifted the Scottish Cup.

Their greatest achievement was winning the European Cup Winners' Cup, securing victory in the final on May 11 1983 with a 2-1 win over Real Madrid.

When the squad returned to the Granite City, they worked with Harry Barry on recording European Song.

Players Jim Leighton, Gordon Strachan, Alex McLeish, Willie Miller and Mark McGhee as well as winning goal scorers Eric

Black and John Hewitt all featured on the track.

It was pressed as a seven-inch single in Aberdeen FC's trademark red and white colour scheme, and led to massive queues of customers at record stores.

Some distributors even drove to Wales to collect boxes of the record in person from the manufacturers to help meet demand even faster.

Harry also played drums and provided vocals for Ally's Tartan Army with the 1978 Scotland World Cup squad, and wrote "hundreds" of songs for TV and radio jingles.

He died suddenly in 2013, but his family says



Harry Barry's European Song is used in the documentary.

European Song's inclusion in the new documentary provides another avenue for securing his legacy.

Daughter Kate said: "We're delighted that dad's

memory lives on in his music and look forward to the film. He was a talented man."

Ferguson's memory loss fear, see TheScore