

PICKLEBALL GROUP Jan 2024 Report by Ruth Lapworth

Pickleball which originated in the the US in 1965 has finally arrived in Teesdale! The game combines features of tennis, table tennis and badminton and is played on a badminton - sized court using racquets called paddles and a plastic ball with holes in. It is reported to be one of the fastest growing sports in the UK and is increasingly popular in the u3a. Thanks to the persistent work of the Teesdale u3a committee, particularly Peter Singer and the u3a Pickleball Subject Advisor, David Pechey, we are now the first group to start playing in a Durham Leisure Centre.

In January we had 2 introductory/taster sessions with 20 individuals attending each one with a final one on 5 February. These sessions were designed to let as many people as possible have a go ie. trying to hit the ball over the net using one of the paddles from the pickleball set purchased by u3a to get the group started. The hope is that having got a feel for the game individuals can decide whether they want to continue and, if so, will invest in their own paddle. Members can then start to play games of doubles and get to grips with the rules and scoring which are unique to pickleball.

We have been fortunate to find an alternative location to continue playing during the temporary closure of Teesdale Leisure Centre for refurbishment. From 19 February the group will be playing at Shildon Sunnydale Leisure centre on the first and third Mondays of each month (excluding bank holidays) from 2 -4pm.

If you would like to join our group to learn the game, please contact the group convenor, Ruth Lapworth (ruth.lapworth@hotmail.co.uk 07787978696). All are welcome, but please note a reasonable level of fitness is required as the game ,although not as demanding as tennis, does involve physical movement, good hand - eye coordination and ball skills.