

**From:** Karen Wallace  
**To:** [PublicOnlyCouncilEmail](#)  
**Subject:** West Hants Pickleball  
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Mayor Zabian and West Hants Council,

I am writing to you to share my thoughts about the future of pickleball in the West Hants area. Before I retired in 2021, learning to play pickleball was on my bucket list of retirement activities. I had family and friends that were already playing and were passionate about the game. Within a month of retirement, I attended a beginner workshop hosted by Renda Vandertoorn at the Windsor Community Centre. I believe there were 14 in the group. Twelve from that group have stayed together and play every Tuesday night. I then had the opportunity to join another group on Thursday mornings. Over the last four years, I have played in a number of the groups as a spare and have become acquainted with many of the players throughout West Hants and the Valley. Pickleball has become one of my passions and I enjoy the time playing, promoting, competing and organizing the sport.

Over the last four years that I have been involved, we have seen lots of growth in our area. We have created the **Avon River Pickleball Club** to try and bring the 18+ groups in West Hants together for communication, to host events and to have a common voice. In the last year we have created an email list with over 100 players, a facebook page with over 300 members, newsletters, and held two social events. Three years ago we offered 3 categories of pickleball as part of the West Hants Senior Games and last year 6 categories were offered. This year we will be offering 9 categories of pickleball in the month of May! During the West Hants Winter Carnival, we offered a pickleball tournament with 3 categories and not only had a full day of games, we raised over \$600 for the Inspire Fund. The plan is to expand this tournament to a two day event next year.

Another area of growth for our groups has been the awareness of regulating our sport and requiring players to become members of Pickleball Canada/Nova Scotia. Not only does this help promote our sport provincially, nationally and locally, it provides insurance coverage for the players and organizers. This has been and will continue to be a work in progress and a priority for our Club.

Our numbers continue to grow in the area. One of the frustrations is trying to find a group that is able to take new members. With only the three courts at WCC available, and a few spots in schools, courts are limited. Most groups carry 12-14 players to avoid having to sit very long between games. We use space at Avon View High School, and there is one group at Brooklyn District School.

Some benefits of pickleball:

- almost anyone can play; in particular those that have some experience playing table tennis, tennis, badminton, or any racquet sport.
- minimal equipment (sneakers, paddle)
- you only need 4 people to play

-rarely do you need officials (except in sanctioned events like provincial/nationals)  
-it is a sport where you may see players from 18 - 72 playing in the same group!

I have had the opportunity to play provincials at the ATC (Atlantic Tennis Centre) in Bedford, Senior Games Provincials in New Glasgow and Nationals for Senior Games at Laval University in Quebec.

Pickleball is growing in West Hants and we are hoping the West Hants Municipal Council will recognize the need to examine our facility needs. With a larger facility, we can possibly host Provincial Senior Games, and larger tournaments. This brings people to our area which results in an economic benefit. When the time is right for facility talks we would like to be involved, as well, I know the Gliders Club is anxious to see an accessible meeting space and space for three shuffleboard courts. I am not a member of the Gliders, however, I sit on the West Hants Senior Games Committee with many of them and it is an on-going discussion.

Pickleball is now being taught at Middle School and High School. Country wide, we are seeing growth in the 'middle-aged group' and more young people are coming out to play. We also have continuous growth with the senior population in our area and many are looking to take up the sport.

Please find below a few stats from Pickleball Canada's newsletter:

**When the survey was first conducted in 2022, it revealed that 1 million people were playing pickleball. The recent results indicate a 57% increase in participation over the past three years, with a modest year-over-year growth of 15% since 2024.**

**The largest increase in participation over the past year has been in the 35-54 age group, with households with higher income levels reflecting higher participation rates.**

**The number of Canadians with a Pickleball Canada membership also grew by 25% from the end of 2023 (68,102 members) to the end of 2024 (85,223 members). This increase can be attributed to the vibrant pickleball community, and the many benefits Pickleball Canada members enjoy, including access to sanctioned tournaments nationwide, a cutting-edge officiating program, coaching opportunities, and exciting local and provincial/territorial club initiatives.**

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. Please consider the pickleball community and senior community when having discussions around recreational development.

Sincerely,  
Karen Wallace