

Setting up a New Sports Club

There are three important things that need to be thought about before setting up a new sports club:

- Are there enough potential members?
- Are there enough volunteers to run the club?
- Is there another club in the local area that is already meeting the needs of the sport locally?

Once there is a general agreement to set up a club, a formal meeting will need to be called. During this meeting there will be a number of things that need to be decided and agreed on. It is often worth doing some preliminary work before the meeting, so that decisions can be made at the outset.

Below is a list of areas that will need to be thought about and agreed on in order to set up a new sports club.

Areas that will need to be covered in order to set up a club

A Club Name

This can be anything you decide. It is necessary in order to draw up formal documents and open a Bank / Building Society account. You might want to do a check to make sure that no other local club has the same name.

Club Constitution

A club constitution is a simple document that outlines the functions of the club, procedures for membership, meetings and committees. Having a club constitution will help to clarify how the club's procedures should work.

It is vital that the constitution is open and non discriminatory and that it reflects the sport's equity policy. A club constitution is often a pre-requisite for funding and applying for tax relief.

Your National Governing Body (NGB) may be able to provide you with a model constitution, which you should look to adapt. Before the initial meeting it is advisable that there is a draft constitution drawn up, so that the group can adapt and agree it at the earliest possible opportunity.

Club Officials

A club will need a number of officials to run the club on a formal basis. A Club Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer are the minimum required. These posts will need to be elected. Before the meeting it is advisable that there are willing people to take up these roles. The club needs at

least three elected members onto the committee. There can be other members on the committee as laid out in the clubs constitution.

Many clubs will have other roles that people in the club may volunteer to carry out outside of formal club positions.

Committees Meetings and AGM's

A club committee is a group of people who are formally responsible for managing the club. A club's success will be greatly down to the work of the committee. Establishing a committee with clearly identified roles helps to identify who does what in the club, helps to spread the workload and ensures that the club is not dependant on one or two people. It might be useful to establish basic role descriptions to ensure that everyone knows what is expected of them and others.

The committee should meet at least quarterly, some committees meet monthly. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be required as laid down in the club constitution so that all members can have an input into the running of the club. It is at the AGM that the committee is elected.

Finance - Income and Expenditure to Run the Club.

As a new club it will be important to raise funds to run the club; initially these funds are likely to come from membership subscriptions. It is also advisable to produce a list of costs to run your club throughout the year, which will help you create a budget of income and expenditure for the next 12 months, ensuring that there will be enough income to meet the outgoings.

A club will need to set up a Bank / Building Society account in the name of the club. A bank will usually ask for two signatories for the withdrawal of cash or signing of cheques.

The Treasurer must maintain either:

(a) a bound account book for recording details of the financial affairs of the club, or

(b) a computer-based program from which printouts can be made in the format of an account book. If a computer-based system is used, appropriate back-up arrangements must be put in place to avoid irretrievable loss of data.

Normal book-keeping practices must be observed, particularly in that entries should never be changed, but any errors corrected by a new entry. A receipt book with numbered counterfoils will be required to keep a record of income received.

All monies and cheques received should be paid into the club bank account, recorded in the account book and, for cash received, a receipt

issued from the numbered counterfoil receipt book. No cash payments should be made directly from cash received.

Membership.

Your constitution should state that your club is open to all and thus your club should offer different membership categories for young people, and possible discounts/ reduced-cost membership for those less privileged. You will need to draw up a list of information that will be needed from members, also thinking about whether each member will need to affiliate to join leagues / competitions, and whether there is a need for a photograph. On the joining form you will also need to clearly lay out the yearly membership subscriptions and any other costs members should expect to incur during the year (e.g. match fees).

Insurance

Clubs are advised to obtain adequate insurance to cover their members (including coaches, volunteers, officials, parents, spectators and players) plus visiting competitors. This may be mandatory before you enter certain leagues and competitions. Clubs must have suitable Public Liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance for the activities they deliver. Advice on insurance for your sport can be obtained from your NGB.

Affiliation

It is recommended that the club affiliate to its relevant NGB. Although each governing body offers different benefits from affiliation, some include; insurance, access to training course (sometimes at a reduced rate), access to qualified umpires and officials for competitions, entry to competition and leagues, magazines and advice leaflets and discounts on equipment and kit. These are on top of the direct benefits you gain through affiliation. It will also allow the NGB to work on your behalf to represent your sport's interests, work on issues surrounding your sport, help develop and move your sport forward and to work together with other national and local sporting bodies and organisations in the development of sport within the UK.

Meetings / Leagues / Competitions

The club will first need to decide what type of club it is, whether it is going to be a recreational club or a club that runs in house training and/or enters inter-club competitions.

If the club decides to run in-house competitions it will need to decide the format and how these will operate alongside entering local leagues and other competitions. Each activity will have different competition structures dependant on the sport. The club may also need to decide (depending on sport and demand) what teams it will run, whether it will have a youth team(s), womens team(s), mixed team(s) and at what level

these should compete. If you are unsure about the competition opportunities available to the club, please contact your local NGB officer who will be able to help and advise you as to the opportunities available locally.

Venue

It is likely if you are starting up a new team that you will need to find a local facility to operate from. This might be a school, local authority facility, or facility belonging to another voluntary group / club. It will depend on your sport, how often you need to use the facilities and on costs involved. You might want to note in the membership joining instructions that alongside the yearly club membership there is a session fee to cover the cost of hire. Your local Sports Development Officer (SDO) should be able to help you find a local facility.

Once you have chosen a venue you will need to look at Health & Safety and the Duty of Care which the club has to members whilst at the venue.

Equipment /Kit

Equipment and kit needed prior to the club starting could include team uniforms and equipment to play the sport with. You may be able to access local grants or funding from sources such as "Awards for All" to help buy start-up equipment. Local businesses are often a good source for sponsorship of local team kits.

Results / Public Relations / Press

If the club has entered a local competition, you will need to comply with their results format, and this might include providing a match report and results. It is advisable that this is taken on by one person to ensure that it is completed efficiently. It is also advisable for a club to build up a good relationship with the local newspaper, to help raise the profile of the club to attract new players. Often a local paper will run a story on the formation of a new club.

Further Information and Support

Further information regarding club development and the Running Sport programme is available on Sport England's website at www.sportengland.org.

More detailed information about the practicalities of running the club committee, and the roles of key club officials, is available on the GreaterSport website.

Taking the next steps

Above is the information on setting up a club, but that is the easy part - once you have a set up your club, you need to work on keeping it going. It is advisable that you write a five-year development plan, breaking this down into detailed one-year development plans. This might include looking at applying for funding; sponsorship; increasing membership; entering competitions and hosting open events. There are many other things that a club may want to consider.

Coaching Qualifications

Are their coaching qualifications available for the sport? If a person is running a team or section, do they have appropriate skills to run / work with the athletes? It is also essential to organise Child Protection training for coaches working with young people.

Criminal Records Bureau checks

The CRB system has been established to enable organisations working with young people to obtain a detailed background check for people working with children or vulnerable adults. CRB checks are free for volunteers. More information on CRB on checks can be found at www.crb.gov.uk or from the help line on 0870 909 0811.

Child Protection Policy

If a club has a young members it is advisable that the club writes / adapts a Child Protection Policy. A sample policy and guidelines for your sport can be obtained from your NGB.

Equity Statement

Each NGB has an Equity policy which clubs should look to adopt; each club should then write its own Equity Statement about how it will implement this policy effectively.

Clubmark

This national initiative is probably endorsed by your NGB. Most NGB's have written their own club accreditation programme which gives clubs a process to work through to help them to develop into good quality clubs. On completion of the club accreditation process, you will receive an award. The idea of this award is that clubs can demonstrate to potential members that they are safe, effective and child-friendly.