



# CLUB DEVELOPMENT MANUAL

## ***Club Structure***

### **CLUB ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT:**

In order for a club to be successful and develop, there must be a good club structure in place. The setting up of a good committee is essential to cover all of the many aspects of a well run club and to ensure that all the work is not left to one person. Try to involve as many people as possible in the administration of the club - that way the work load is shared ensuring that everyone only has a little to do.

### **Delegation of Workload:**

How many times have you heard:

"Our Secretary does everything"

"Mary has got too much to do already"

"Johnnie has had enough - he can't take it anymore"

Many clubs have folded due to the responsibility to do everything being left to the one or two key individuals. Inevitably they will get fed up with the situation or feel that they can no longer cope with the workload and responsibility anymore and so leave the club with no one else knowing how or being willing to take over the running and organisation of the club.

This situation can be avoided by the use of 'Delegation of Workload' - this doesn't mean passing the buck - it simply means giving someone the responsibility for a specific task. Here are some easy ideas to make it work in your club:

- Make sure that your club has a full Committee.
- Divide up the key roles - don't just appoint a Secretary - appoint an Assistant Secretary, a Minutes Secretary, etc.  
People are more likely to take on jobs if they are small and have a definite role.
- Look at the strengths of your club members and try to allocate jobs based on peoples' skill sets:
- If you have someone who works with computers, ask them if they have the skills to set up a website.
- If you have an accountant as a member, they are ideal to be or help the Treasurer.
- Limit the time that you can hold a post and stick to it! For example - the Chairperson must retire after 2 or 3 years, or allow a maximum of 5 consecutive years on the club Committee in any or various roles.

- Make it compulsory that at least 2 posts out of 5 on a committee must change every year - this allows for a smooth transition and people don't get left with posts for long periods of time.
- Appoint Shadow Posts to work with the existing Office Holders to learn the job in advance effect a smooth transition knowing that the incumbent already has the skillsets and knowledge to perform the duties effectively.
- Appoint short term working groups to take on specific tasks - for example the running of the Club's Annual Regatta.
- Set up a good communication system to pass on knowledge and information to all those involved - Stop the "Knowledge is Power" syndrome where one person has all the information and will not share it - leaving everyone else in the dark.
  - Utilise social media apps such as Whatsapp & closed facebook groups.
- Actively seek out new people to take on jobs for the club - if you don't ask you don't get and many people who wouldn't have pushed themselves forward will be flattered to be asked.
- DON'T leave everything to one person just because they have always done it.
- REMEMBER - NO ONE IS INDISPENSIBLE AND CLUBS THRIVE ON CHANGE AND NEW IDEAS.

The following are necessary posts on any club committee:

**Chairperson:**

The main role of the Chairperson is to prevent meetings from becoming a 'free for all' or shouting match and to ensure that meetings follow a set agenda.

They are the central and key figure in any meeting and the club's members should elect this person along with the other key roles in the club at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Meetings are an essential part of any club as well run meetings can generate a motivating team atmosphere with everyone being consulted and involved in the decision-making process.

The chairperson takes charge of the discussion, makes sure that everyone has a fair chance to speak and be heard, that decisions are made and that everyone knows and understands what those decisions are. When a chairperson is being elected, the following skills should be borne in mind:

- Strong and fair leadership skills.
- Excellent Communicator.
- Be able to generate a good team atmosphere.
- Be able to facilitate discussion and keep the debate focused.
- Be able to take decisive action.
- Be able to delegate tasks fairly and effectively.
- Be well informed about all aspects of the club.
- Be unbiased and impartial.
- Be able to involve all on the Committee in the decision-making process.
- Be able to maintain the harmony of the group even when there is disagreement.

The Chairperson should always start meetings on time and indicate a finish time and stick to it. If there are items on the agenda that are not discussed within the set time frame, place them at the start of the agenda for the next meeting.

Don't call meetings just for the sake of it and make sure that everyone sticks to the set agenda items, which should be circulated in advance so that everyone has time to prepare their thoughts. If a single decision is required, notice could be sent by Memo to the committee with a suggested decision and a reply by date if they object to the suggestion.

The running of any meeting is normally as follows;

1. The agenda is a list of topics to be discussed which should be sent out in advance along with any additional information that may be required.
2. This agenda is followed in the order in which topics are placed on the list and each issue should be resolved before moving on to the next item.
3. A Motion is a recommendation that is presented to the meeting for debate and approval.
4. The Proposer is the person who presents the motion and the Secunder is another person who expresses support for the

motion. Some club constitutions require that motions must be seconded to be open for discussion.

5. Voting rights differ from club to club and there are a number of ways of carrying out the voting procedure:

6. A show of hands for a majority.

(a) A secret ballot is sometimes required on sensitive issues where members vote anonymously on paper.

(b) In the event of a tied vote, some clubs allow the Chairperson a second vote to make the final decision.

7. A **quorum** is the minimum number of members needed to make a decision - this is normally stated in a club constitution

8. Sometimes clubs will also have a President. The difference in these roles is that while the Chairperson takes an active role in the everyday activity of the club, the President has little or no involvement in the day to day affairs and attends meetings in a neutral and uncommitted capacity. The President will be a public face for the club and sometimes Chair the General Meetings, in particular during the Election of Officers.

### **Secretary:**

Without a club Secretary, it would be extremely difficult for a club to function properly. The Secretary provides the club link between the Committee and the members as well as with the world outside the club. They must deal with other clubs, leagues, the local community and if there is no PRO, the local media.

A good Secretary must:

- Have excellent organisational skills.
- Be reliable.
- Have excellent communication skills, both written and spoken.
- Be able to delegate tasks (if a club is big enough, it may be necessary to have an Assistant Secretary to assist the Secretary by taking on some of the duties and responsibilities of the Secretary).
- Be able to work to timescales.
- Be able to maintain confidentiality.
- Be enthusiastic about the club's activities.

The Secretary receives all written communication from outside the club and is responsible for responding on the advice of the Committee. The Secretary should develop a system to deal with enquiries and correspondence quickly and efficiently.

This system should include:

- Recording when you receive incoming mail with the date and who copies were sent to (A diary is essential for any Secretary!)
- Dealing with letters and enquiries promptly and making notes of the letters you send including dates.
- To make life easier, create some standard letters that can be reused with just changes of dates, names, etc.
- Keep notes of important telephone conversations

Make sure that committee members receive agendas for any meetings well in advance. People are more attentive at the beginning of meetings so the more important the agenda item, the closer to the start it should be.

**Sample Agenda:**

1. Welcome and Introductions.
2. Apologies for absences.
3. Minutes of last meeting (these need to be approved as correct).
4. Matters arising.
5. Financial Report.
6. Consideration of reports from officers and sub committees.
7. Administration Business.
8. Date of next meeting.
9. Any Other Business.

The secretary is responsible for taking and typing up minutes at each meeting and must choose appropriate wording for this (agreed, noted, approved, recommended, received, etc.) At the end of any complicated discussion, provide a brief, clear summary of what you think has been agreed and confirm the decision, the action to be taken, who is responsible for the action and by when.

**Minutes:**

- List those people present and record the apologies for absences.
- Follow the order of the agenda and try to keep each section short.
- State the main issues and decisions made.
- Do not take sides in your recording - simply state what was discussed in an unbiased way.
- Write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting while it is still fresh in your mind.
- Circulate the Minutes to all committee members soon after the meeting so that all are aware of their action items for the next meeting.
- When Minuting General Meetings, keep a formal record with the names of proposers and seconders, quoting any resolutions and the results of any voting.
- Committee meetings needn't be minuted so formally.

If possible, set out a calendar of meetings for the year at the first meeting of the year - the Chairperson should always be consulted before fixing the date of any meeting. The Secretary is responsible for the arrangements for any meeting – venue, etc.

The Secretary is also responsible for keeping of accurate records, preferably on computer - most funding organisations want to see membership records, constitutions and records of meetings in support of funding applications.

Secretaries are also responsible for getting membership records to the relevant National Governing Body of their sport if relevant.

### **Club Treasurer:**

It is very important that accurate financial records on all transactions be kept and this is the main responsibility of the Club Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for the collection of subscriptions, depositing monies, paying the bills, issuing receipts, preparing year end accounts and keeping up to date records of all financial transactions. A good treasurer not only keeps records but should be aware of any future costs to be paid and keep these in mind.

A good treasurer must:

- Be well organised.
- Be confident and competent in dealing with figures.
- Be very honest and trustworthy.
- Take great care when handling money and cheques.
- Keep up to date information and be able to answer any questions on the accounts.
- Be prepared to make instant decisions, if necessary.
- Have all the necessary equipment - calculator, receipt book, cashbook, previous years financial information, etc.
- Be able to keep very accurate records.

Many banks offer free banking services to sports clubs and organisations.

To make life easier for the treasurer, consider opening an account with a bank that is close to where the treasurer is based and one that offers 24 hour telephone or internet banking so that many transactions can be done outside of working hours. Statements should be obtained on a monthly basis and these should tally with the records kept by the Treasurer - but remember that it can sometimes take a few days for transactions to come through.

Deposit all cheques and money in the bank as soon as possible after receiving them - Money in the bank earns interest and reduces banking charges. If invoices are sent, it should be noted when they are paid. Likewise always note when bills have to be paid and pay them as soon as possible.

Don't take short cuts or try to hold all the information in your head - write it all down as soon as you can. Carry a notebook for information - don't be tempted to use the back of a beer mat or scrap of paper - these inevitably get lost!



Keys to the petty cash box should only be held by a limited amount of people.

When opening mail or collection tins containing money, at least two people should be present. Club members have a right to feel that their money is handled with care.

**Children's Officer:**

The Children's Officer is primarily a resource person who will work to ensure that club management and club members are aware of the regulation and procedures set out in the Irish Sports Councils Code of Conduct for Children's Sport.

They assist the National Children's Officer in the promotion and implementation of the values, attitudes and structures, which make sport enjoyable for children in their own club.

They act as an information source to other members and should familiarise themselves with the contact information for state agencies within their area.

Training and information will be provided that is designed to enable them to act as a resource to members in relation to children's needs. Local Sports Partnerships run courses in the Code of Ethics and Best Practice in Sport and a follow-on Children's Officer training course.

**Note:** Club Children's Officers do NOT have a responsibility to investigate or validate child protection concerns within the club and have no counselling or therapeutic role.

**Fundraising Co-Ordinator:**

In order to run a club effectively, and particularly to develop new programmes to attract members, etc., a club needs money. Very often the amount collected by way of Membership Fees only just covers the day to day costs of running the club.

A fund raising co-ordinator tries to obtain money for specific projects and club activities/regattas, etc., and manages this process with either the support of other club members or a fundraising committee.

There are many ways of raising money:

- Sponsorship.
- Fundraising events and activities.
- Applying for grants and awards.
- Financial donations.
- Membership subscriptions.
- Running Lotteries.

A good Fundraising Co-Ordinator must be:

- An excellent communicator.
- Have the ability to negotiate with potential sponsors and funding agencies.
- Able to maintain budgets.
- Able to think creatively and be able to turn ideas into reality.
- Determined and patient - doesn't let one rejection stop you applying again.

**Public Relations Officer (P.R.O.):**

This person deals with the publicity side of the club. The best way to do this is to have a promotional plan.

This should involve:

- Advertising for members - posters and flyers to targeted areas i.e. - schools, libraries and housing estates close to the club location. In local papers.
- Good signage so that the club is easy to find if your club has a club house - this is advertising in itself.
- Regular updates as to club activity in local papers and radio.
- Send photographs to local papers - a picture paints a thousand words and is more likely to catch people's attention than any written article.
- Ensure that Regatta results are sent to local papers and radio.
- Utilise parish and community newsletters and bulletins.
- Advertise beginner training sessions at the beginning of the season in order to attract new members and they can feed into the club once they have grasped the basics.
- Establish your own website or social media platform such as Facebook - no matter how simple. Many club members have the knowledge to do this if just asked.
- Make visits to schools to attract new membership to the club
- Hold "bring a friend" evenings to increase awareness of the club and to attract new people into the sport - children are not the only ones who like to try something new. People are more likely to come along if they already know someone.
- Run Promotional Events such as Open Days, Fun Days and Try it Out Days.
- Consider a reduction in club fees for those who are unemployed, and for youths and older adults.
- Don't just advertise sporting activities of the club - if other social events are organised, especially fund raising events, advertise and get as many other people involved as possible
- Promote OFTEN AND REGULARLY AND IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE
- Publish a **Club Newsletter** on a regular basis.

### **Club Constitution:**

All clubs must have a constitution for a number of reasons:

- It clearly states the conditions of the club should arguments arise.
- It allows non members / potential members see the outline of how the club is run.
- When applying for funding, many organisations ask for a copy of a club constitution in order to see the aims and objectives of the club and also to show that the club is organised enough to deal with the funding in the correct way.

This document needn't be long or complicated. The following is a sample of what could be drawn up:

### **Sample Constitution**

1. The club is "The ..... Proposed name of Club".
2. The club will meet on ..... and ..... between the hours of .....
3. and ..... at .....Hall (include address).
4. The aim of the club is ..... (*to encourage and foster the sport of Coastal Rowing and provide opportunities for all levels of* .....).
5. The objectives of the club (*how you will achieve your aim*) are: (samples)
  - Provide coaching for beginners to encourage more participants to take up the sport.
  - Enter competitions at all levels of the sport to provide for all standards to compete.
  - Run club evenings that allow for all levels of participation.
  - To run a juvenile section as part of the club to ensure that new participants will continually join the club.
  - To advertise the club and its activities so that people in the locality are aware of these.
6. Membership is open to anyone who wishes to participate.
7. Club membership may be restricted to a total of ..... The limitation is based on a number which will ensure members attending the club do not have too long a wait between sessions.
8. If the membership limit is reached, a waiting list shall be drawn up and offers of membership made in order as vacancies arise.
9. The clubs affairs will be governed by a committee of ..... consisting a Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary. PRO, and ..... others.

**10.** An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held each year in the month of .....

- The agenda shall consist of the following items:
  - Apologies
  - Minutes of last AGM
  - Matters Arising
  - Report on past season by Chairperson
  - Report on Accounts
  - Proposed programme for next season
  - Subscription fee for next season
  - Election of officers for next season
  - Any other business
- All members shall be advised of the date, time and location of this meeting at least two weeks in advance. For a motion to be passed, there must be a majority of ..... in the vote.

**11.** Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM) may be called by the Committee and must be called within 14 days if a written request signed by one quarter of the club membership is received.

**12.** The Treasurer shall keep correct and up to date accounts showing transactions and financial affairs of the club.

- A statement of accounts for the financial year shall be presented at the AGM.

**13.** Cheques that are made out on behalf of the club must be signed by two authorised signatories.

**14.** The Secretary shall be responsible for all club matters of a general administrative nature including notification of meetings and will be responsible for the keeping of continuous records that are to be passed on in the event of a change in the post.

**15.** Alterations to the Committee can be made at the AGM and any EGM's provided the proposals are notified in advance.

**16.** Alterations to the constitution require two thirds of club members be present and voting to be in favour.

**17.** The annual subscription shall be discussed and fixed at each AGM.

**18.** The committee shall have the power to make rules governing the conduct of the club. Such rules shall be binding on membership all members must be made aware of any changes. Any matter in relation to discipline or the breaking of the club rules will be dealt with by the club Committee and any action as a result must be decided by a majority of .....

19. All complaints will be investigated and dealt with by the committee of the club.
20. Anyone representing the club in competition must be a member of the club or else invited as a guest if the club cannot field a squad for a particular event.
21. The club and all its members will follow the rules of the relevant N.G.B.
22. The club is agreed to all the principles set out in the "Code of Conduct"

*This is just a sample constitution and other sample constitutions can be accessed from various websites for all clubs who wish to download them and adapt to suit their specific needs.*

### **Role of the coach**

Guidance of participants at Particular Stages of the player Pathway Through a coaching and training programme

Clubs who organise regular coaching sessions at stated times on particular days have a far better chance of holding on to their membership.

All sports have creative ways of attracting young people to sport, however, without a coach to direct activities, these incentives will lose out to a better-structured sport.

#### **Some Questions . . .**

- Why are coaches so important to the success of the participant?
- What makes the coaches who guide their crews and participants to the pinnacle of their sports competition different?
- Why are they so successful with their participants and teams, whereas other coaches can't arrive to the same results with the same participants?
- Have they got a secret formula?

#### **Answers . . .**

- Yes, but it's not a secret: it's a vision, hard work, communication, and a strive to do the very best at all times.
- The vision is the start of the trip. You need many tools to make the trip but first you have to know where to go.
- Hard work is a habit, if you want to arrive at your goals you have to fight for them. They will not come to you easily.
- Communication is an important ability the coach should have.
- This is not always about talking. It's not what you say, it's what the Oarsmen & Oarswomen in their charge hear!

- Doing the best all the time is perseverance; finally you will have your reward as a coach.
- Obviously there are other qualities and knowledge the coach should have as:
  - Intelligence
  - Drive
  - Persistence
  - Patience
  - Enthusiasm
  - Knowledge
  - Conscientiousness
  - Confidence
  - Role Model
  - Emotional Stability
  - Decisive
  - Character
  - Organisation
  - Preparation
  - Sense of Humour
  - Appropriate

The coach plays a significant role in the development of the participant; throughout their sporting careers.

- The life choices after their sporting careers.
- The physical and psychological health of the person during and after their careers.
- Their enjoyment of the sport.

### **Developing a Youth Section of your Club**

Young people are the future participants for most clubs and are therefore essential for every organisation to develop - not having a youths' section is placing a limit on the time that the club will exist. All too often clubs try to rely on adult members who come and go and wonder why their membership is fluctuating or why they are struggling to get rowers to participate at regattas.

Developing a youths' club ensures the club's future, provides for club development and can get existing club members the chance to develop their skills. It will also help generate more income for the club by increasing the overall membership. It will give you access to another pool of volunteers as children's parents should be encouraged to get involved in their child's activities.

Funding agencies are also more willing to fund clubs that show that they are ensuring their future by providing sporting opportunities for young people and developing their club with sustainability in mind.

Remember, in developing or running a juvenile section to a club, the recommendations in the Sport Ireland's Code of Conduct must be

followed.

Young people join sports clubs for a number of reasons and these should be kept in mind when developing the Youth Section of a club:

1. To be with friends
2. To improve their skills
3. To experience the excitement of competition
4. To play sport
5. To receive encouragement from parents, family, friends and fellow club members.
6. To become part of a team

Competition should not be the main aim of a youth club. While it may be one of a number of activities offered by the club, too much emphasis on this aspect can lead to many juveniles leaving the sport:

- If they are not picked for crews they may feel that they are being left out or that they have failed - this can also isolate them from their friends.
- If too much emphasis is placed on winning, losing can be devastating.
- By emphasizing the importance of participating rather than the outcome then the overall experience is a much happier one for any young person.
- Pressure should never be placed on a child to compete or win - this situation will lead to that child quitting the sport at the earliest opportunity.
- The sport should be promoted to youths as an enjoyable, fun and sociable activity .

Quality Youths Clubs need the following:

1. A Committee with the same structure as an adult club.
2. A nominated co-ordinator who will often be part of the adult club's Committee therefore acting as a link and sharing information between the two sections.
3. People to organise and supervise in the club - these roles can often be filled by parents who may not have the necessary expertise to coach, but who have good organisational skills.
4. Trained coaches to develop the youths skills.
5. Young people who are involved in the running of the club so that they feel that they contribute to and have some say in the running of the club.
6. Parents involvement is essential.



7. A plan, which outlines the following three elements:
  - Where are we now?
  - Where would we like to be?
  - How do we get there?
8. Links with schools, youth groups, etc., to ensure that new members are always coming through the door:
  - Arrange for demonstrations and try out sessions by club coaches and members in schools
  - Keep the PE Teacher/Principal in the school informed as to local sporting competitions, etc.
9. Create two junior positions on your club committee so that youths are represented and have their say.

Rowing activities can be adapted for young people in a number of ways:

- Modify the equipment or use smaller versions.
- Focus on all the aspects of the sport rather than just winning.
- Have a safe environment that youths feel safe and free from all dangers.
- Have activities that do not leave the kids exhausted. Use time to measure the activities.
- Select crews on skill level so that there are no big differences

For new youths coming into the club, set up a buddy system whereby they are assigned a buddy of a similar age to help them settle in.

Have incentives for the children who attend - a prize for the best attendee at the end of the season, a fair play award etc.

Have an information leaflet about the club ready to give to the parents of any new members outlining how the club is run, areas where co-operation and help from the parents are necessary, costs, times and duration of sessions and the gear that their child may need.

Many parents are reluctant to get involved for a variety of reasons:

1. They feel that they don't know enough about the sport:
  - a. These parents can be used in the role of supervisor where they are there to be an extra set of eyes watching the children.
  - b. Build up their confidence by giving them small easy tasks to do until they feel more sure of themselves

2. They just want to use the club as a cheap babysitting service:
  - a. Hold an enrolment night where parents must come along to enroll their child and sign an agreement to supervise on X number of sessions over the course of the year. A rota can then be drawn up for the season and sent out to all parents. If they cannot make the assigned dates then it is up to them to find someone else to cover for them.
  - c. Some clubs take the line that if parents aren't willing to help then the child cannot attend the club - how tough clubs have to be depends on the individuals involved.
  - d. For those who use the Code of Conduct for working with children as an excuse not to get involved, it should be pointed out that the Code is in place to protect those working with children as well as the children themselves.

Ensure that the club remains focused on the enjoyment and participation of all members. Many youth clubs have teams that compete in local youth leagues but they also ensure that there are other participation opportunities for those who are not on teams or do not like to compete.

- Try to cater for crews in as many age groups as possible.
- Run internal competitions for those not up to the standard with small prizes so that they feel that they have also achieved.
- Have fun competitions for all club members (i.e. - at Christmas, Easter, etc., hold a competition where strong participants are partnered with weaker ones).
- Run a club league where all club members can participate - this does not have to be a competition.
- Have friendly competitions against other clubs – Joint Club League mix the participants from all the clubs together so there are no club loses out.
- Hold enjoyable fundraising events that cater for all members (Table quizzes, race nights, etc.)

### **Youth Development Officer:**

The Youth Development Officer is someone who will facilitate the club coaches with the organisation of coaching for youth participants in the club. He/she will liaise with the Club Committee on recruitment initiatives and youth participation activities. Development and coordination of youth participation in the club will be done by the Youth Officer.

### **Event planning**

When clubs want to promote a regatta or event they should in general liaise with their local association. By doing this the event will avoid any major clashes with other events which may be organised for the same time.

To properly plan your event, start the year before as regards setting the date, look at the present events and see what else is on that might affect numbers participating. Elect a committee that will help with organising the event.

Remember when organizing an event plan plenty of time in advance. Is the event only open to clubs affiliated to your local association or is it open to all clubs.

Advertise the event on your Social Media platforms and with your national organisation. Request that they put it into their calendar of events.

Source sponsorship if possible

Have a press launch 2months before the event to arouse interest.

## ***Sources of Funding and Application Advice***

In any club, the issue of finance is a vital one that can be addressed in a number of ways.

Club members should be asked to pay an annual subscription, the amount of which will depend on the activities of the club

However, often clubs require alternative sources of funding for large expenditures such as equipment, clothing special events ,etc., and this can be done in a number of ways:

### **General Fund Raising:**

Often fundraising in the local community is regarded as a last resort but this needn't be the case. Raising money locally should be an important part of any club's fundraising strategy as it also raises awareness of your club's activities in the locality. There are many ways in which to carry out general fund raising:

- Lottery or Raffle
- Sponsored fundraising activity – charity row
- Dinner dance or disco
- Barbeque or pot luck supper
- Fun Competitions
- Club birthday party!
- Outings doing another activity – golf, outdoor pursuits, etc.
- Table Quizzes
- Treasure Hunts
- Boat Pushes.

As you can see from the list above, many fundraising events can also be regarded as social events by club members. Encourage members involved to bring friends and family along to increase the numbers.

Supporters can be asked to contribute through donations, subscriptions, gifts (for prizes), advertising of event, promotion of any kind or sponsorship.

**Donations:**

This is where money or goods are donated with no expectation in return. Money is often donated to help run certain events and goods such as sports equipment and prizes for social occasions are often given by local companies. The key to receiving donations is to build a good relationship with potential donors and not to ask too often.

**Sponsorship:**

Corporate sponsorship is an arrangement between a company and a voluntary or community organisation (as all sports clubs are). The company funds either an event or project in return for the good publicity that it will receive. Sponsorship is not the same as a donation where a gift of money or goods is received without any expectation of return. Sponsorship is a form of marketing for many companies and they will therefore expect a return - the guarantee of publicity especially for the company name, coverage in the media creating an awareness of the good that they are doing and the company name, etc.

Most companies allocate sponsorship once a year so contact them before you send in a proposal to see if they have used their annual budget or not. If it is gone, then ask what is the best time of the year to apply for future reference.

Also ask if they have any set procedures or sponsorship policy so that you are aware of how the company likes to deal with potential sponsorship partners.

If any club members work for or have links with any companies, these should be approached first as the connection gives a good introduction to any proposal.

The key to effective sponsorship is ensuring that the aims of a company match those of the club applying. It helps to take into account the nature of the company's business involved - those involved in the promotion of sport are obvious candidates (whether it be sports equipment, etc.) But don't stop at obvious choices. Think laterally - it is simply about looking for an angle that will appeal to a sponsor and using that in your proposal.

If you are looking for a large amount of sponsorship, it can help to break these down into smaller sections and apply to various organisations. Think carefully about what you are seeking sponsorship for and also about the interests of companies in trying to find the best

match. Research the companies that you are applying to.

You are more likely to find a sponsor on your own doorstep so always include the local perspective. This works especially well with companies that are new in an area given that they are trying to build a local profile. Always ring before sending in a proposal to establish the appropriate person to send the application to and make sure that you get the correct spelling of their name and job title.

Always state that you will contact the company on a certain date to see if the application has been successful or not - give a reasonable amount of time 3 or 4 weeks - this means that a decision will usually be taken one way or the other so that you are not left sitting waiting for the company to contact you. Make sure that you always follow up on the date that you state.

Where you are applying for an event/project involving young people, there are some ethical principles to be aware of:

- Particular care should be taken that the association with a sponsor should not put them under pressure to purchase the sponsor's products.
- Where programmes or events are directed at primary schools, they should not promote products or services aimed at a children's market.
- Sponsorship by alcoholic drinks or tobacco companies should also be avoided.

If you are unsuccessful in your application, don't be afraid to contact the company to ask why - this can give you valuable information for your next application.

### **Writing Proposals:**

Research the potential funder before you begin - What kind of organisations and projects do they fund? What are they interested in? What are their requirements in terms of supporting documentation, accountability and evaluation?

Some funders have their own applications that list the details required - if this is the case you should still include a covering letter and supporting documentation.

For those who are told to structure their own submissions, make sure to include the following details:

- Profile of the club.
- The general needs that it meets.
- The specific needs that the funds will meet.
- Exactly what the organisation plans.
- How the proposal will be carried out.
- How much money is required
- How its other funding needs will be met.
- The expected outcomes of the project
- Why the funder should be interested

Start your application with a covering letter outlining who you are and why you are writing. You have to make an impact in the very first paragraph of your covering letter. Remember, some organisations receive dozens of applications every week so it must stand out.

Always be positive. Write down all the good qualities of your project without being modest. Tie this in with what you know about the funding agency/sponsor and show that you have done your research.

Draw in all of the benefits to the sponsor (if applicable), the club and the potential participants in events/projects. Always show that the funding being applied for is part of an overall sustainable scheme.

Keep the proposal concise and easy to read - list points and type if possible.

Get someone unconnected with the application to read it over before sending it in to ensure the clarity of the proposal. Use tables and graphs where possible and don't crowd the text onto the page.

Make sure that the proposal is well presented - don't just throw a few sheets of paper together. Use colours for different sections and use a folder to keep all of the information together.

Personalise it - don't send off the same letter and information to all funding agencies and potential sponsors. Use the information that you have on each company to direct each proposal personally towards the recipient.

Include any information, press cuttings, accounts, newsletters, etc., that you have on any previous projects/events to show a successful history if possible. This gives the funder a broader view of the work of your club. Any endorsements from the local community, letters of thanks/appreciation, etc., are also useful as they show that the club can motivate people and does good work that is appreciated.

Be clear about the amount that you are asking for - you should also indicate a willingness to fundraise at least part of the total cost. Asking for partial funding is far preferable to simply asking for the whole amount.

In budgeting for the proposal, the club must show that it has its finances under control. It is important that accounts are kept up to date and that they are easy to understand.

It sometimes seems that the effort put into applications isn't worth the result at the end of the day but persistence will pay off - remember, there are many selling points for your sport:



**Summary of Guidelines when Applying for Funding of any Kind:**

- Research your proposal before you begin.
- Address proposal to an identified contact.
- Always follow up on written proposals with a phone call.
- Include any information that you feel may be relevant in supporting your application - press cuttings, statistics of club, etc.
- Adapt your application to the specifics of the company/funding agency that you are applying to.
- Be business like - be positive not defensive
- Show that you are planning for the long term. Funding agencies especially want to see that the funding will be used on something sustainable or for an event that is part of a bigger plan - drawing up a club development plan could help you in this.
- If successful, keep the funder informed of progress with regular updates - this creates a contact that could lead to further funding at a later stage.
- Keep a file of all press cuttings, other publicity, etc.
- This will show that they are getting coverage of their investment.
- Invite them to attend events being staged such as prize givings.
- Don't forget to say thank you!
- Even if the contact doesn't respond positively this time, ask for feedback on your application for future reference. Also keep them informed of other opportunities - they may not have had the budget at the time and may be interested at a later stage.
- Keep records of all funding applications, successful or not as these can help in future applications.
- Don't come to rely solely on one sponsor as they may decide at some stage to withdraw the funding - keep trying to make other contacts at all times.

**Reasons why requests for funding are rejected:**

- Funds may be oversubscribed
- The applicants may not have made a good case for themselves.
- The aims of the club and project/event are not clear.
- There seems to be no financial control in the club.
- The club seems to be well off and could get the money elsewhere without undue difficulty.
- The club seems to provide an expensive service.
- The application does not contain all of the required information.

### **Lotteries:**

A permit is needed for lotteries not held privately or in conjunction with an event. Application is made through the local Garda or Police station. A permit is also needed from the Garda or Police to collect money in a public place. These applications must be made to the Garda or Police in the area where the collection or lottery is to take place and they will be confined to the area applied for.

Collecting without a permit is an offence and entitles the Gardai or Police to seize any money that has been collected.

### **Sports Capital Funding**

Sports Capital Programme

Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media

New Road

Killarney

Co. Kerry

<https://www.sportscapitalprogramme.ie/>

Telephone Numbers:

Calling from:	<b>Donegal</b>	085 8768032	<b>Louth</b>	085 8583102
	<b>Mayo</b>	085 8768033	<b>Dublin</b>	085 8049667
	<b>Galway</b>	085 8583102	<b>Wicklow</b>	085 8583088
	<b>Kerry</b>	085 8583211	<b>Wexford</b>	085 8583059
	<b>Cork</b>	085 8583211		

The Department provides funding at local level under the annual **Sports Capital Programme** which provides funding to voluntary sporting and community organisations towards the provision of sport and recreational facilities in terms of construction, refurbishment, improvements and equipping to high standards.

The online **OSCAR** website <https://www.sportscapitalprogramme.ie/> is the only way to apply for grants under the Sports Capital Programme. **OSCAR** also allows groups to view previous grants and payments, change contact details, seek payment of a grant and otherwise communicate with the department online. Before applying for a grant all organisations must first register on **OSCAR**.

**Local Sports Partnerships:**

Since 2001 Local Sports Partnerships were established by the Irish Sports Council (*Sport Ireland*) throughout the country.

These partnerships were created to support and promote sport at local level.

**Local Authorities:**

Each local authority is empowered to support and fund community activity and recreational facilities in its area. This is done by support in kind and use of facilities. Some councils provide community grant schemes such as activities relating to children, youth, recreation and the purchase of equipment and others provide grants to voluntary groups and organisations to encourage and assist their work

Projects should have clearly set out aims and objectives that relate to those of the authority. They should represent "value for money" and provide a benefit to the local community. Local newspapers are the usual method of letting groups know about council grants but they are not always advertised so contact your local council for further details.

There should also be a Special Projects Officer in each local authority to help source funding for all voluntary organisations:

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### **Sports Councils**

<https://www.sportireland.ie/> - Sports Council of the Republic of Ireland.

<http://www.sportni.net/> - Sports Council of Northern Ireland.

### **Sports Forums**

<https://www.irishsport.ie/> - Federation of Irish Sport.

<https://www.nisf.net/> - Northern Ireland Sports Forum.

### **Sports Capital Programme**

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/d13385-sports-capital-programme/>

- Sports Capital Programme Information

### **Community Finance**

<https://www.clanncredo.ie/> - Clann Credo Community Loan Finance.

<https://communityfinanceireland.com> - Community Finance Ireland.

<https://www.communityni.org/> - Community Finance Northern Ireland.

### **Additional Resources**

<https://www.rlss.org.uk/club-resources> - Helpful resource for new and existing clubs

<https://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/Club%20Constitution.pdf> - Sample Club Constitutions for clubs associated to UCD (*University College Dublin*)