



CLUB SUCCESS STORY

'IMPLEMENTING GOOD GOVERNANCE TO UNDERPIN EFFECTIVE RUNNING OF THE CLUB'

Ilkley Lawn Tennis & Squash Club

Ilkley Lawn Tennis & Squash Club in West Yorkshire offers a vibrant tennis scene for various ages and abilities. Chairman Stephen Hepplewhite shares the club's experiences and tips for governance in terms of structure, finances, and committee and member management.

CLUB STRUCTURE

Challenge:

The club was previously unincorporated, with Trustees accepting the burden of risk.

Solution:

The club became a limited company with the shares limited by guarantee (£1 per member). This required Articles of Association which was in itself a good exercise to formalise the constitution of the club. To retain the financial advantages of being a registered charity, the club sought HMRC's approval of the Articles and introduced two fund raising methods - 'buy a brick' and a Patrons category.



COMMITTEE

Challenge:

As a limited company, a Board of Directors was needed to manage increased governance and compliance requirements.

Solution:

The club devised a small four-person Board consisting of Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and a new role, Compliance Director, that worked with the full time General Manager. This reassured members that risk was being managed at Board level. The main club notice board displayed pictures and contact details of committee members. Sub-committee Chairmen for Tennis, Fitness, Squash and Social were also invited periodically to the Board meetings.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Challenge:

The direct line reporting structure was sometimes compromised, with tensions amongst the paid and volunteer staff.

Solution:

The Chairman upheld relationships by reiterating the integrity of the management structure and seniority of the General Manager for smooth running of the club. For transparency, all minutes were made available to members and the committee produced newsletters, emails and kept the website up to date.

CLUB FINANCES

Challenge:

Discretionary spend lacked a defined plan and budget.

Solution:

Expenditure was split into two parts: major capital projects with a three-year plan, and a maintenance schedule for the club and equipment. The club also benefited from support and guidance from the LTA with regards to tennis promotion, marketing and court management.



TOP TIPS for Governance

- Set terms for committee roles with a maximum extension period to ensure fresh 'blood' and ideas
- Facilitate a smooth transition and continuity by introducing a 'Chairman Elect' in the final year of a Chairman's term
- Define time limits for meetings (two hours, for example) and encourage contribution from the naturally quieter members
- Establish a member feedback procedure including anonymous surveys to manage expectations, listen to your community and deal with any discontent as a team
- Support fellow committee or board members so no one feels isolated or burdened
- Contact your regional LTA offices regarding financial support schemes for capital projects

"Tennis clubs can be quite complex organisations. They are non-profit making but need to be profitable; professionally managed yet reliant on volunteers; and offer social tennis whilst striving for performance tennis too."

"My aim as Chairman was to improve the unseen aspects such as governance and compliance, and strengthen the management team, systems and financial controls while continually improving the member experience."

Stephen Hepplewhite

Chairman, Ilkley Lawn Tennis & Squash Club

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