



## Running a Club

Running your own table tennis club is a straightforward and rewarding experience. The following provides general guidance and advice from Table Tennis Wales (TTW), on some of the things you will need to consider. For those persons becoming involved in running an established club, many of the below considerations will already have been implemented and in place.

**Starting a New Club?** – There are several reasons why an individual may wish to start a new club, a lack of table tennis provision in your area, the opportunity to utilise a new venue, or a wish to focus on performance and competition, or the social side of the sport. Whatever the reason Table Tennis Wales is committed to expanding the number of clubs in Wales and can provide advice and support.

**The Basic Requirements** – To start a new club the following will need to be considered, Venue, Volunteers, Equipment, Funding, Documentation, Insurance, Tax, Competitions. We will now briefly examine each area.

**Venue** – Choosing a suitable venue is an important consideration which will have an impact on other basic requirements. Popular locations include local authority owned and operated leisure centres and community centres, schools, even the function rooms of licensed premises have been used as successful table tennis venues. Also, local authorities maintain a list of empty buildings and it may be worth approaching the owner of suitable properties on the list. Decide the area in which you wish to start the club and try and identify possible venues, there may be others than those mentioned above. Owning and operating your own venue has many advantages over sharing a venue, however this is beyond the reach of most new clubs. Should you wish to pursue your own venue it is worth contacting Cardiff City TTC, which was the first club of this type in Wales.

The main considerations when choosing your venue are.

Suitability (Is it a safe environment, are there fire alarms and fire exit, Has the owner carried out a proper Fire Risk Assessment (a legal requirement). Is there disability access, is it big enough, would there be room for expansion, is it secure, is it heated and ventilated?)

Location (Is the venue close to current, or potential players and volunteers?)

Availability (Is there a slot available on convenient days and times?) Have you considered Sundays when venues and players may be more available?

Cost (These can vary greatly between venues; can the club afford it?)

Facilities (Are there disabled access and toilets, is there sufficient parking, can you store tables etc.?) Remember that schools are encouraged to allow community use of their facilities, which are usually very good, meet with the teaching staff and explore the possibilities.

Local Authorities sometimes enter a program of “de-vesting” i.e., selling off council owned premises to reduce their financial liabilities, it may be worth making enquiries, but do take legal advice. Also Sport Wales will sometimes consider capital funding for acquisition/conversion for those with an ambition to own their own premises.

Also, an empty building is of little use to its owner and is better occupied, ask for use, if only on a temporary basis, but do consider the suitability, particularly regards the safety issues.

**Volunteers** – The most important consideration when recruiting volunteers is to insist on a DBS check (formerly known as CRB for those volunteers who will have access to persons under 18 years of age, or vulnerable adults. This is free of charge for volunteers, please speak to TTW Child Protection lead officer to arrange the check. Volunteers are key to every successful club, and volunteers will be needed to carry out a range of tasks, these include Opening and closing the venue, setting up and putting away tables, collecting and banking session fees, supervising young players, maintaining membership details, sending press releases to the local newspaper, maintaining club website and social networking sites, seeking funding and sponsorship, transport, first aid, child.



protection officer, coordinating league and tournament entries, running club competitions, forming a constituted club committee, and coaching.

Do not be put off by the above list, most clubs start small, and take on these roles as they expand. Very often parents can fill these roles and are very willing to help when approached. Remember that, whilst none of these tasks are difficult in isolation, it is almost impossible for one person to do them all.

**Equipment** – We are fortunate that table tennis is a sport that requires little in the way of equipment, however, there are some basic requirements including.

**A playing surface** – Preferably full-size table tennis table. Give some consideration to the type of table with regards to storage and ease of movement where the storage area is some distance from the playing area. TTW recommends the use of Artengo roll away nets which can be attached to almost any tabletop in situations where the provision of purpose made table tennis tables is not possible.

**Net and Post Sets** – Do not forget each table requires a net, try and purchase a net post set which can be adjusted for height. Better quality net post sets cost more initially but allow for the purchase and replacement of the actual net itself, which may work out cheaper in the long run. (cost £20-£50).

**Bats and Balls** – When beginning a player would expect to borrow a bat. Such bat sets can be purchased from suppliers such as Tees Sports, whilst more experienced players will buy their own higher quality blade and rubbers. Do expect wear and tear on loaned bats being used by young beginners. A continuous supply of balls are needed in all club environments, as inevitably, there are breakages. All balls are now 40mm+ diameter, use Training quality balls for training, as these are cheaper, and 3-star balls for competition. Remember that the more balls in use in the venue, then the more breakages there will be, and if your venue has light-coloured walls, use orange rather than white balls. Surrounds (sometimes called barriers) are also useful.

TTW is sponsored by Tees Sports who will provide a competitive quote on all equipment see [www.teessport.com](http://www.teessport.com) or call 0800 4584141.

**Funding**- Funding can be a source of worry to clubs but this need not be the case. Provided the club does not own its venue, then the major cost to the club is venue hire and this can be offset by charging a membership or session fee from the players. Therefore, selection of the venue can be very important, as costs of venue hire can vary significantly. Obviously, a large venue with excellent facilities will be more expensive, however it is more likely to attract large numbers of players all paying a session fee, which should cover the extra expense. The setting of session fees will be a judgement call, be realistic, try and recoup venue hire costs but do not expect anything more, particularly when starting out. Some families will be sending several children and parents/grandparents to your sessions, consider a special family rate for them. My own club seldom covers venue hire from session fees; however, we attract other funding (see below), which more than makes up the shortfall. Remember that young people today, expect good facilities, if your club provides these, together with a good playing experience, then you are unlikely to have problems in this area.

**Funding Grants** – These are available to clubs; however, funders are spending public money, which is in short supply, and insist on certain safeguards as a means of ensuring that the money is being well spent. To submit a successful bid to a funder you may need the following which we recommend all clubs should have whether they apply for funding.

- **A Club Constitution**- An example of a constitution is attached at appendix A, please feel free to adapt this to your needs.
- **Financial accounts** – set up a club bank account with 2 signatories, not all high street banks currently offer these accounts, however at the time of writing Lloyds TSB does offer such an account. A financial report required by funders is merely a balance sheet of income, and outgoings showing any surplus. It should be carried out annually and independently audited. You will need to consider tax. Where income and potential tax will be very small or non – existent it is often possible to obtain exemption from HMRC to submitting returns. A simple letter to HMRC can be sent to apply. If not exempted, then returns will need to be made.



- Club policies on matters such as Child Protection and Equality. Providing your club is registered as a Community Club with TTW, then your club can adapt TTW's policies to your needs. Also, an internet search on the policies of other sports can provide information.

Obviously, whether you are applying for funding or not, having the above documents and policies in place, will ensure that your club is being operated on a firm legal basis, and able to show that this is the case.

Writing a funding bid, is usually a straightforward matter using the forms provided. Do read any guidance documents provided and be realistic on any targets or outcomes you state in your bid. Remember that funders will require proof that funding is spent exactly as per your application (keep receipts and use your club bank account for an audit trail) and will require the return of funding if you are unable to provide proof. Funders usually require an end of project report.

Some funding streams at the time of writing are.

**Be active fund-** The Be Active Wales Fund is supported by the National Lottery and Welsh Government. The National Lottery provides millions of pounds every year for Sport Wales to distribute to grassroots sport in Wales.

**Sported-** Sported is a registered charity which supplies assistance to local community sports clubs who can demonstrate that they can enhance the life of their communities through sporting provision. They focus particularly on clubs with 11-25 age groups involved. Clubs which join them can apply for grants to increase capacity including equipment, coach education costs etc. and obtain free support on constitutions, governance and other matters involved in running a club. Their grant panel meets quarterly. They have small grants available up to £2000 and major grants up to £10,000. Membership of Sported is free and the application form can be downloaded via their website. We would urge our clubs to join them. Clubs that are members can apply for their grants even though they may have had a Community Chest grant.

**Sported website-** [www.sported.org.uk](http://www.sported.org.uk)

**Other Funding Sources** – There are other organisations in the locality of your club that provide funding. These are less well known than the major funding streams mentioned above but do provide a source of revenue. A club member or volunteer who lives locally, and attends local public meetings, can be invaluable in this regard. Each area has its own organisations which you will need to discover, here is a list for the eastern S Wales valleys area to give you an idea of what may be available in yours.

Community Council – several provide annual small amounts to local clubs.

Trust Funds – usually in ex mining areas, set up with money left over from mining business, again provide small amounts annually to local clubs or individuals.

Local Tenants and Residents Associations – These have funding and can be approached

Local Authorities – have various schemes to support individuals or clubs.

Local Community Safety Partnership – A joint Police and Local Authority initiative which spends money on reducing crime and disorder.

Local Councillors – May have funding or will have advice on where to get it.

Local Charities – some are interested in funding projects or clubs.

Local Businesses – Approaching local businesses for sponsorship can be worthwhile, even in the current financial climate. Before making the approach think about the business and how your club could help them, advertising is usually a possibility with a company name on shirts or mentioned in club press releases. Do the parents of your players work for such a business? Could they approach the business on your behalf? Avoid anonymous approaches to businesses as these are seldom.



successful. Find out the name of the appropriate person and write to them directly. Another avenue is your local superstore as these usually permit collections or bag packing.

Fundraising – Club members will have ideas on how to fundraise, ask them for their ideas. Clothing collection is an easy option, organisations such as Bags4Sport will collect old clothing, bedding, curtains, shoes, handbags etc. and pay £40 per tonne. Also recycling companies will pay for old newspapers, aluminium cans etc.

In club fundraising can also take place, examples are raffles, social evenings, and organising table tennis tournaments.

**Documentation-** Any club will benefit from the use of documentation to aid the operation and assist with matters such as maintaining membership lists and fundraising (see above). The following is a list of documentation recommended by TTW.

Constitution (Appendix A)

Club Registration Forms (Appendix B)

Player/Club Affiliation Forms (Appendix C)

Child Protection Policy (Appendix D)

**Insurance** – One benefit of the club becoming affiliated to TTW is the third-party liability insurance provided to the club. Affiliation is free of charge and just one of the benefits of affiliation. Should your club wish insurance to cover equipment, then a specialist insurance provider should be approached.

**Competitions** – Table Tennis is a competitive sport and therefore it is only natural that club players enjoy playing each other and those from other clubs in a competition or tournament setting. A club Ladder, a club “closed” tournament and other internal competitions can be held within the club to provide in house competition. Good fun, and a great way of including parents in club activities, is to offer parent and child competitions. Those wishing to play others should consider entering team(s) in their local league (contact details for these are on the TTW website). Consider entering players into TTW events. The TTW run a suitable competition program for players of all standards ages and abilities, again see the website for details.

**General Note** – Please consider the wishes of your club members and organise your sessions accordingly, for example consider making it “cool” for youngsters with background music (though not too loud!!), take a break for refreshments, and incorporate a fun activity into each session. Please remember that the TTW General Manager is always available to provide more detail on any of the above including funding sources and will be delighted to do so.



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