



Timperley sports club



Location
South of Manchester

Founded
1877

Legal structure
Unincorporated Association

Description of activity
Community sports club providing on site pitches/ clubhouse, coaching, and a wide range of playing opportunities for all ages (from five to 75+) for cricket, hockey, junior football and lacrosse. The club also delivers coaching in local schools, hire facilities to local and national groups and individuals.

Key assets
Two all-weather pitches, clubhouse, administrative buildings and bar.

Employees
Four full-time equivalent, eight to ten part-time.

Volunteers
120

Biggest obstacle to success
High volunteer turn over leading to a lack of retention of experienced volunteers, lack of community engagement, limited people with relevant business and/or funding expertise.

Overview of Timperley sports club

Timperley sports club (TSC) started in 1877 as a cricket and lawn tennis club in a village in the outskirts of south Manchester. Since its foundation it has developed and grown, and currently provides a wide range of sporting opportunities for all ages. The club provides all-weather pitches, a clubhouse, coaching for cricket, hockey, junior football and lacrosse. Additionally, TSC delivers coaching in local schools and universities and has social facilities that are accessible for local community groups, individuals and schools.

Historically, the majority of the TSC’s members have been residents of the local community. However, as a result of the increased reputation of the club in the past ten years is now attracting members from other areas near Manchester. TSC has been particularly successful with its specialised junior sport programmes and its efforts to increase the number of women playing sports. For example, as a result of the club’s outreach programme for girls and women, the number of junior female hockey, croquet and football players have significantly increased. At present, TSC is considered to be one of the most important junior clubs for female lacrosse in England.

Timperley sports club’s journey to success

There are several factors that have contributed to the success of Timperley sports club through the years, especially in the past two decades.

Developing and sustaining strong partnerships

Over the club’s long history, forming and sustaining strong relationships with local partners and the community has been key to its success. For instance, TSC has regular contact with the local authority with whom they currently have a 90-year lease for the land from which they operate. The club also works closely with the local authority on matters relating to leisure and sport development, local community engagement and education.

In addition to investing in and developing local partnerships, they have also developed strong relationships with key funders and government organisations. For instance, the club has received significant support from Sport England, for whom they have successfully delivered projects almost every year for the past





20 years. Sport England's funding has helped the club in a number of ways, from helping to improve facilities to funding sports programmes for local children.

Moreover, TSC has developed robust relationships with national government bodies e.g. England Hockey, England Lacrosse association, England Wales cricket board, that have helped address issues of local community development and welfare.

In addition to the club's relationships with local and national organisations, they have also found that the durable relationships they have developed with local groups and societies have been invaluable to their success. Specifically, a key aspect of this success is the club's willingness to accommodate specific or bespoke requirements. For instance, TSC hosts yearly events on behalf of a number of local groups which allows exclusive access to some of the club's facilities, e.g. antique car fayres and religious groups.

The club finds that it is important to demonstrate to its partners and community members that its business is transparent and financially responsible. Thus, as a result of the club's rapid growth in the past 20 years, they have developed an important working relationship with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. In this sense, TSC believes that strong finances and sound management further strengthens existing relationships and attracts further support from existing partnerships and the community it serves.

Furthermore, TSC has found it particularly beneficial to their business development to have a clear focus when networking. For instance, in the early stages of preparing grant applications, they found it useful to access certain networks to seek specific advice. It is important to discuss grant applications with peers and other organisations before submission. The club believes that its success in securing certain grants was based on having these early stage discussions with the right contacts within potential or similar funding bodies as these help to ensure that grant applications clearly meet the needs of the funder and thus have a higher chance of success.

Recruiting and retaining motivated and well-trained staff and volunteers

Another vital aspect to the club's success is its ability to recruit and retain skilled and committed staff and volunteers. Over 2016/2017, the number of volunteers have proportionally increased with the growth in the club's membership. During this time, the club was particularly successful at recruiting a high number of volunteers with a diverse range of knowledge and skill sets compared to previous years. This increase in volunteer numbers and skills, in conjunction with retaining key staff members, has been a fundamental contribution to the club's ongoing ability to deliver high quality services.

There is also a culture of mentoring within the club, with well trained, knowledgeable and motivated staff passing on their experience to volunteers. In turn, volunteers assist the club with tasks that not only facilitate the day-to-day running of the

business but also contribute towards its longer-term success. An example of which is the collection of relevant statistics on the club's users by volunteers, i.e. general information about their gender, ethnic background, age, type of sports they are engaged in. This data collection has been driven by an increasing obligation from funders. In this way, volunteers are directly supporting the business to meet funder requirements.

For the club, retaining experienced and knowledgeable staff, has been a vital aspect to the success of the business. The club makes continuous financial efforts to retain key paid staff whose roles are essential to the delivery of their services, e.g. child protection officer and financial officer. Key paid staff are also fundamental to foster the club's culture of mentoring by providing adequate training to volunteers. In turn, having consistent staff in key roles has allowed the club to maintain high standards in service delivery and create a stable environment that facilitates well-informed initiatives for the future development of the business.

Financially self-sustaining

Timperley sports club believes that the ability to be financially self-sustaining is a key aspect to the success of their business. Only 5% of the club's income is generated from grant funding, whilst the remaining 95% is trading income generated from hiring out facilities, club membership fees and an on-site bar.

The club strongly believes their financial success has been the result of a combination of having the right skills and strong operational management. Exercising tight control over the club finances, allied with excellent finance skills and operational management of the club's activities has given the club strong foundations to operate a successful business. The club has also benefited from skilful staff whose efforts have encouraged community engagement and have supported successful capital funding bids. As a result of these skills and actions, the club has been able to maintain and improve its assets and remain competitive.

In particular, TSC highlights the important role the local community plays in supporting their business to be sustainable. The community perceives the club as a historical and social asset, and therefore is supportive in ensuring it remains successful. To that end, the community has contributed greatly towards the club's finances as demonstrated by a local fundraising campaign that allowed the club to match funds against a capital investment grant from the National Lottery.

Likewise, retaining excellent finance and management skills within the business have meant that investment and growth in the club has been implemented wisely over time. For example, revenues generated from trading income have been invested into new equipment, improvement of the facilities and the retainment of key paid staff. Additionally, the club believes its strong reputation and sound financial history have been important factors in securing grant funding. The club's proven ability to generate match funding from their

trading and fund-raising activities have been beneficial when securing grant funding to support capital investment projects.

In fact, over the past thirty years, capital investment grants have been a key factor in enabling the club to be successful and remain competitive. Some of these grants were provided on the condition of securing match funding, which the club had to raise independently. For example, a vital capital investment in the club's facilities was enabled by a grant from the National Lottery. The total cost of the project was £1.4 million, of which the club committed to raise £700,000. The club was subsequently able to raise the funds through a successful fundraising campaign conducted within the local community.

Future direction

As described previously, Timperley sports club has been running for over 100 years, and the business has grown rapidly in the past few years. However, this growth has highlighted that the current legal status of the club as an unincorporated association is no longer fit for purpose. Therefore, the club is currently evaluating the pros and cons of changing their legal status to either a charity or a community benefit society. For example, having a more appropriate legal status can optimise the club's tax position and maximise its income. However, a change of such magnitude will require suitably qualified staff with sufficient time to manage the process.

Despite the challenges faced by Timperley sports club, they are very confident their business will be sustainable for the long-term future. The club's sound management and financial approach, allied with strong community engagement puts them in a strong position for the future.

Furthermore, the club is aware of the importance of investing time and effort into building and maintaining strong relationships with the local community, key funders and partners, in addition to becoming more inclusive and more self-critical.