

# IRFU Welcoming Clubs Programme



## Case Study #1: Tralee RFC

The town of Tralee has a population of 25,000 and is situated in the GAA heartland which creates huge competition for participants, volunteers and sponsors. Five years ago it was recognised that the club needed to be more proactive in the community and more importantly it needed to attract volunteers who were “workers first and talkers second, not the other way around”.

In response to this realisation the constitution was changed and a “business management structure” was introduced in which there were 5 Directors – finance, rugby, youth rugby, development and administration each running a specific business area. A strategy was developed which provided targets for each of the business areas and this allowed the Directors to work independently which removed the need for weekly meetings. The volunteers were all given roles and responsibilities, they were valued and as a result of this approach the club now has over 50 volunteers involved in a thriving club.

The club’s ethos is to:

- Increase the number of individuals playing the sport and to develop their skills
- Foster team spirit, a work ethic and friendships within the club
- Promote the personal values respect and discipline
- Be successful but not at the expense of the above ethos

The club believes that if the above ethos is established in the young people then they will take it with them as they move up the club strengthening the clubs ethos overall.

### **The Family**

There is a huge family focus within the club and this can be seen in several areas of the club.

Encouraging “Family Harmony” at the Club - As we are aware the social nature of our game is very important and we all enjoy our time in the bar after the game enjoying a beer and the chat. However, those players with families have other people to consider and they may have to “leave early” after the game to fulfil the needs of the family.

At Tralee rugby club they have thought about the family needs and have come up with a solution. They have created a small indoor play area with colouring books, toys and books for the children. Some of their teenage female members organise games/ face painting for the children and they have even provided magazines for those mothers who are great rugby game watchers! As a result for a small amount of investment they provide entertainment for the children and allow the parents to enjoy an hour or two in the bar which puts a few extra Euros across the bar.

The club has over 300 young people under the age of 17 years of age playing for the club. The focus is on playing and enjoying the game, not on winning. The club actively works to find games for all of the young people in the club and also to attract teams from quite a distance by offering a great day out in Tralee (The game, visit to the Aquadome and a visit to MacDonald’s!) All parents are actively encouraged to become involved in all activities such as transporting the teams in cars, coaching as well as providing and serving the food on match days. As a result of this family focus the club now has over 350 family members which are a very valuable source of income for the club (recent Welcoming Clubs seminars analysed the value of a family and this varied between e400 and e1200 depending on the club).

### **Income Generation**

The club has an extremely successful fund raising strategy and an active group of volunteers working to generate the income. These are a few examples:

The Scratch Card Programme; in partnership with MacDonald’s the club has produced a “MacDonald’s Scratch Card” which they sell for e2. Every card wins something even if it is a coffee or a packet of chips but the prizes rise up through burgers to meals to cash prizes. The club paid for the actual cards to be printed (e1700) and MacDonald’s paid for the prizes. The club is well on the way to achieving its financial target and Macdonald’s are extremely satisfied with the increase in their footfall.

[http://www.irishrugby.ie/club/welcomingclubs/welcoming\\_clubs\\_index.php](http://www.irishrugby.ie/club/welcomingclubs/welcoming_clubs_index.php)

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Scrap Metal Collection; the club asked all members and others connected to the club to drop off any scrap metal they had. The metal was then sold and an income was generated for the club.

The Club House; a wide range of one off and weekly activities take place at the club house including summer BBQ's, Birthday parties, a Christmas Fair, business meetings, keep fit classes and the renting of the facilities to a cricket team. These activities generated a substantial sum for the club over the year

Dewathlon; over 250 individuals will take part in a Dewathlon this year (run 4k, cycle 20k, run 3k) which leaves from the club house and returns to the club house. There are prizes, T shirts for all participants, music, BBQ and much more. The club generate funds for the club as well as introducing the club to many individuals who could become "customers" of the club in the future.

Miscellaneous – sale of International tickets, the Lotto, Pub Quiz, clothes collection to sell, bag packing at Supermarkets, street collections on St Patricks Day and car washing have again generated substantial funds for the club over the year.

Rugby; the club also runs a tag tournament throughout the summer and an International Youth Tournament which both generate substantial funds for the club. The International Tournament attracts teams (U11, U12 and U13) from across the 6 Nations; it is run over 3 days with a well-constructed Itinerary of sport and recreation

### **Community Links**

The club works exceptionally hard to foster links with its local community and has two MPs, one MEP and the local Mayor as current members.

Employment schemes – the club has three young people working on the grounds and one painting the club house who are employed under the Community Employment Scheme. It is also about to employ an "Intern" through the Government scheme who will be responsible for running the events at the club over the next 9 months.

The club also has three young people on scholarships at the local college. This is part of a wide ranging partnership, the young people are supported up to e1000 a year and in return they play for the club. Other aspects of the partnership include coaching and facility provision.

### **Communication**

The club recognises the need for a good communication structure and strategy. As a result of this it has an exceptional communication programme which includes social media, web site (1400 unique hits per week), texts, and an e zine and data base.

### **Key Points**

The club is run and structured as a business. Everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities, working together to deliver the strategy.

There is a strong ethos within the club which is understood by all and a conscious effort is made to adhere to it.

The club focuses on the wants and needs of the family. As a result it attracts and retains families, some that have a rugby background and many who don't.

The events diary is very full but the focus isn't just on generating an income. The events are also used to attract new individuals to the club on a regular basis and to ensure that the club is "visible" within its community.

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