



## CASE STUDY: CROWD FUNDING IN RUGBY CLUBS

OLD CRESCENT RFC – May 2020

*This case study was presented at the IRFU Webinar:  
Online Fundraising Options For Rugby Clubs (21/05/20) and is reproduced with permission.  
Irish Rugby would like to thank Old Crescent RFC for participating.*

**Crowdfunding is being used by more and more Irish rugby clubs to raise much needed funds for their club. Many traditional methods of fundraising are not possible at present due to public health measures, while crowdfunding is an online tool to help clubs reach out to their community and raise funds online.**

*Old Crescent launched a crowdfunding campaign in April 2020 and it has proved hugely successful to date. Old Crescent volunteer Paul Donnellan presented this case study to the webinar.*

**Old Crescent:** Like pretty much like all the other clubs in the country, because of the COVID-19 situation we had to cancel several fund raisers which we would normally run to keep the club going.

So, we had to have an emergency committee meeting and with one topic on the agenda-fundraising. We needed cashflow as quickly as possible, so we brainstormed.

We said there are great supporters and members out there who will be willing to give us money under these circumstances. We just need an easy way of accepting or receiving this from them and somebody suggested GoFundMe.

I had never used it before I looked at it the following morning and I had it set up in 10 - 15 minutes. It went so well, we pressed 'pause' on all the other ideas we had come up as well because we don't want to keep hitting members over and over with multiple different fundraisers at the same time.

**Irish Rugby:** *Focusing on this one initiative sounds like it was key to its success. There are sensitivities around it too - It is a difficult thing to ask someone to put their hand in their pocket during the COVID19 pandemic. How did you manage that?*

**Old Crescent:** We were conscious there are so many very worthy causes out there. We didn't want to be going out with the begging bowl and be competing with everybody else. But we have bills to pay. We have got to keep the club going and if the money doesn't come in - like any organisation - we would fold.



We were concentrating on just reaching out to our members and we had no idea how successful this would be. So, it was just one of these ideas that we tried and the massive success of it surprised and delighted us obviously.

**Irish Rugby:** *You've obviously struck the right tone with your community so how did you reach out to them with this initiative?*

**Old Crescent:** We reached out to them in multiple different ways. We set up the GoFundMe page and put up the blurb about the club and situation we were in. Then we emailed all our members. It has been three weeks since we did it, so it was a question of reminding people as well.

So, we sent out an email day one, sent another one a week later and another one a week later. Not only that, we used Twitter and we used Facebook.

We also used the weekly update function on GoFundMe. We used the local media as well – the Limerick Leader paper put a link in their online version of the story so so that was very helpful.

**Irish Rugby:** *What else really worked for you here?*

**Old Crescent::** The Facebook one was interesting. We had it up on our normal Facebook page and I had always wondered about the whole “boost” element of it. We had never used it.

I looked into it and first of all it told me it was going to give me €5 credit so that's not a bad start.

It said for a 5-day campaign you can select how far out from your location you want to go and how many people you want to hit. It was going to cost me €16 to reach to people beyond the club to reach people who are friends of friends of the club.

We reached 4,500 people in the 5 days, 556 of those clicked on the link. We don't know how many of those donated but even if one of those donated, we most likely made back our investment on that straight away so that was an interesting venture.

**Irish Rugby:** *Is there a cost for using GoFundMe?*

**Old Crescent:** There's a standard transaction fee of 2.9% and then 25c per donation.

**IrishRugby:** *Why would you recommend other clubs to look at crowdfunding options?*

**Old Crescent:** Because it is so easy to do. It took between 10 and 15 minutes to set up and once the blurb was written and the picture was ready you could take half that time off it.

It really was that simple I was surprised how simple it was. The one thing I would advise is to set up the process for withdrawing the money as soon as possible cause that can take a couple of weeks.

So, if you're looking for the money very quickly get on the withdrawal process very quickly.



It has been a huge success. People are saying is it the most successful fundraiser we have had? In terms of return on investment and the amount of effort required, it probably is.

It's not the type of thing you can do every 6 months, every year or every 2 years. This really is an emergency reach out to your members and I would imagine there are members like ours and supporters like ours who are willing to be generous so I would fully advise all clubs to have a go at this and try it.

Give an easy way for members to be able to donate to you.

**Irish Rugby:** Thank you Paul [Donnellan] and everyone at Old Crescent. Thank you for your time and sharing this case study and the very best of luck with it.

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If you did not attend the event and would like to register your interest for another webinar on fundraising. email [ross.odonoghue@Irfu.ie](mailto:ross.odonoghue@Irfu.ie) with details of your club and your fundraising role with that club. If your club has a fundraising case study to share that would be of value to other clubs, please also get in touch.

*Reference to specific online platforms in the Webinar: Online Fundraising Options For Clubs or its case studies does not constitute an endorsement by the IRFU. Clubs are encouraged to show due diligence in assessing their online fundraising options and comply with all necessary regulations.*

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