

# Club Governance & Development Toolkit

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# Start a Club

Starting a squash club can be a highly rewarding experience for squash enthusiasts, offering not just a space to play but also a vibrant community where members can connect, improve their skills, and share their passion for the game. By creating a club, you're laying the foundation for a supportive environment that fosters growth, camaraderie, and healthy competition. Whether you're bringing together seasoned players or welcoming newcomers to the sport, your squash club can become a hub for fitness, friendship, and fun, making a lasting impact on both the local community and the sport itself.

## 1 Research & Planning

- **Assess the interest in your area:** Use online surveys, social media polls, community boards, put up posters in local shops, schools or gyms, send an article to the local newspaper to gauge the level of interest. The Local Sport Partnership may also help you providing support in the organisation of the first sessions and the promotion to the broader community
- **Identify Target Audience:** Determine who your potential members might be, such as beginners, or advanced players, juniors or seniors etc. Remember: junior sections require additional restrictions for dealing with minors, however they are highly rewarding and guarantee the long lasting of the club.
- **Location Analysis:** Identify potential locations where your club can be based. There are many squash courts in Ireland, even in the most remote areas. Contact local gyms, community centers, or schools to find the squash court closest to you, and determine costs for your activities.

## Legal Structure 2

Decide if your club will be a nonprofit, a for-profit business, or a social club. An Unincorporated Association is the most common structure for clubs. It is the simplest and most informal way to set up an organization. This type of club is based on a constitution document, which outlines the rules for members and activities, and establishes a committee to oversee its operations. There's no requirement to file any paperwork, and the administrative costs are low. It's important to note, though, that while an unincorporated association isn't regulated by Company or Co-operative Society law, it is still subject to Common Law. This means that members and others can bring legal claims against the association under this legal framework.





## 3 Create a Committee

The Committee is the executive and policy maker body of the club. The first committee will probably include a small group of enthusiasts willing to take over the effort and perks of building the club.

A committee must include at least 3 people in the role of President, Treasurer and Secretary. A Children Officer may be needed if the club involves U18 players. Other roles may include Public Relationship Officer, Event Manager, Welfare Officer, Social Media Manager, Facility Manager etc.

The Committee structure and its responsibilities are defined in the constitution.



## Write a Constitution 4

The first job of the committee will be writing a Club Constitution. A Constitution is the most important document a club must have in order to run smoothly and effectively. A constitution includes all the basic rules & regulations to run the club, and it's the backbone of the organisation to provide information to prospect members and external bodies. It includes rules regarding disputes, code of conduct, committee responsibilities and more.

You can find a template for writing your own constitution [here](#).

## 5 Register Your Club

Register your club with the appropriate local or national authorities. This may involve filing paperwork for a business license or nonprofit status. Get in contact with Squash Ireland to get affiliated and receive benefits and support deriving from it.



# Club Committee

The Club Committee is the body elected by the members for the management of the business and activities of the club.

Mandatory committee roles are:

- Chairperson or president
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Children Officer (if club involves any U18 member)
- Designated Liaison Person (if club involves any U18 member)

Additional roles may include but not be restricted to Vice Chairperson, Public Relations Officer, Junior Coordinator, Head Coach, Fundraising Officer, Facility Manager.

Officers are elected annually at the AGM. Description of roles and responsibilities should be provided to the public at any time and a job description shared at the moment of candidature and election.

Committee members must be known among members. All parents and juniors must be aware of who the Children Officer is and how to get in contact with them in case of Safeguarding concerns.

## Club Committee responsibilities

The Club Committee is responsible for adopting new policies, codes of practice and rules for the club, as well as developing club development strategies. No rule shall be inconsistent with anything contained in the Club Constitution, Sport Ireland or Squash Ireland rules and guidelines. The Club Committee must ensure the club's regulations and policies are in place, up to date, and available to all members.

The Club Committee is responsible for all assets of the club.

The Club Committee adheres to a code of conduct that encompasses, but is not limited to, confidentiality, objectivity, loyalty, fairness, and a continual awareness of their responsibilities to the club and its members.

## Committee Meetings

The Club Committee meetings is organized by the Secretary of the club according to the frequency defined in the Club Constitution.

The Chairperson presides at all meetings; in the Chairperson's absence, a member of the Club Committee may be nominated.

The Secretary, or in their absence a member of the committee, takes minutes.

The Treasurer relays the financial position of the club at each meeting.



## Chairperson

The Chairperson plays a key role in managing the club efficiently and effectively, always adhering to the club's constitution. They have overall responsibility for providing direction, maintaining focus, and offering guidance to ensure the club achieves its goals. The Chairperson should be elected during the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

In addition to their leadership duties, the Chairperson oversees meetings, ensuring they are conducted fairly and inclusively, allowing all attendees an opportunity to voice their opinions equally.

## Secretary

The secretary is the primary mediator between the Club Committee and external parties. The Secretary is responsible for managing all written communication received by the club.

To ensure smooth operations, appropriate systems and procedures should be established to handle incoming correspondence efficiently. This ensures that all communications are processed, addressed, and distributed promptly and accurately.

## Treasurer

Maintaining reliable and accurate financial records for all club transactions is essential, and this responsibility lies with the Club Treasurer. The Treasurer is tasked with safeguarding the club's funds and overseeing various financial activities, including:

- Collecting membership subscriptions.
- Depositing received funds into the club's bank account.
- Paying bills and issuing receipts for payments.
- Preparing year-end accounts.
- Keeping up-to-date and detailed records of all financial transactions.

It is crucial that the Treasurer does not commit the club to any expenditure without prior approval from the appropriate authority within the club. This ensures transparency and accountability in financial decision-making.

## Agenda

An agenda for a meeting is a structured outline of the topics and issues to be addressed during the meeting. Each committee meeting should have an agenda to ensure the discussion stays organized and on track while giving participants the opportunity to prepare in advance. The agenda typically includes a mix of recurring administrative items, specific issues to be resolved, and opportunities for open discussion.



## Minutes

Meeting minutes are a formal, written record of what occurred during a meeting. They summarize discussions, document decisions, and outline action items for follow-up. Minutes serve as an official record and help ensure accountability and transparency within the organization.

Avoid overly detailed descriptions. Focus on key points, decisions, and action items. Document facts without personal opinions or interpretations.

Share the minutes with attendees soon after the meeting to ensure accuracy and timeliness.

You can find a template for your minutes [here](#).

### Key Components of Meeting Minutes

- Header Information
  - Name of the organization or committee.
  - Date, time, and location of the meeting.
  - Name of the chairperson presiding over the meeting.
  - Names of attendees and any absentees (with apologies noted).
- Call to Order: statement noting when the meeting was officially started by the chairperson.
- Approval of Previous Minutes: confirmation that the minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and approved (or amended if necessary).
- Reports
  - Treasurer's Report: Summary of financial updates.
  - Secretary's Report: Any administrative updates or correspondence.
  - Reports from subcommittees or working groups, if applicable.
- Matters Arising: Updates or progress on unresolved issues from the previous meeting.
- Agenda Items
  - Record of discussions for each item listed on the agenda.
  - Details of decisions made, including votes taken and results (if applicable).
  - Assignments of tasks, including names of responsible individuals and deadlines.
- New Business: Summary of new topics raised and any resolutions or actions decided upon.
- Open Forum: Notes on member suggestions or concerns raised during the open forum (if applicable).
- Any Other Business (AOB): Brief record of miscellaneous items discussed at the end of the meeting.
- Adjournment
  - Time the meeting concluded.
  - Next meeting date and time, if determined.
- Prepared By: Name and signature of the Secretary or note-taker who prepared the minutes.



# Annual General Meeting



The AGM is an annual meeting for members to get updated on club affairs and activities, vote a new committee and express their queries and suggestions. Members must be notified of the date, time, location, and agenda of the AGM at least 21 days before the meeting.

During the AGM, the annual report is presented, which includes the Chairperson's report, Treasurer's report, and any other committee member's report relevant to the club's activities.

Resolution to amend the club's constitution can be presented and voted at AGMs. Members must be informed of any changes or updates to the club constitution or club rules within 3 days following the AGM.

Nominations for officers of the Club Committee must be submitted to the Secretary prior to the AGM and will be voted on during the meeting.

All members over 18 years of age with full membership are entitled to vote at the AGM.

## Procedures

No business shall be conducted at a general meeting unless a quorum is present. A quorum of 25% of the eligible voting members is usually used as quorum. If a quorum is not present within half an hour of the scheduled start time of the meeting, or if a quorum ceases to be present during the meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned to the same day, time, and place in the following week, or to another time and place as determined by the club committee. If a quorum is still not present within half an hour of the start time at the adjourned meeting, the members present constitute a quorum.

Election of the Club Committee members takes place at the club AGM each year. At this time the executive officers of the club get elected - Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, along with other members of the Club Committee as deemed necessary by the previous Committee, and at least of a number to reach the minimum quota.

A proposer and seconder are required for all nominations and notice of motions.

Voting will be conducted by a show of hands, with the votes counted by the Secretary. However, the Club Committee may recommend that a vote is conducted by secret ballot, depending on the context.

Nominations will be passed at AGM's by simple resolution of 50% plus one.

No voting by proxy should be allowed.

Motions for a change to the club constitution must be passed by a special resolution of two-thirds of persons entitled to vote present at the meeting.

The Chairperson will have a casting vote if there is an equality of votes.

If an executive officer of the club steps down during their term, the Club Committee may appoint an existing committee member or a club member (co-opt) to fill this vacancy until the following AGM.

## Agenda

An agenda for a meeting is a structured outline of the topics and issues to be addressed during the meeting. Each AGM should have an agenda to ensure the discussion stays organized and on track while giving participants the opportunity to prepare in advance.

The agenda should be distributed to all members well in advance, ideally along with any supporting documents or reports, so attendees can prepare effectively.

A template to create your agenda can be found [here](#).

### Sample Agenda for a General Meeting

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks: Chairperson opens the meeting and sets the tone.
2. Attendance and Apologies: record of members present and note apologies from absent members.
3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes: Review and approve the minutes from the last meeting.
4. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting: Follow up on unresolved issues or action points from the prior meeting.
5. Treasurer's Report: Financial update, including income, expenses, and budget status.
6. Secretary's Report: Correspondence received and any administrative updates.
7. New Business: Discussion of new agenda items proposed by members or the committee and specific issues or decisions requiring member input.
8. Club Events and Activities: Planning or updates on upcoming events, matches, or initiatives.
9. Member Suggestions or Open Forum: Opportunity for members to raise concerns, suggest improvements, or discuss relevant topics.
10. Any Other Business (AOB): Miscellaneous items not covered elsewhere in the agenda.
11. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Confirm the schedule for the next general meeting.
12. Closing Remarks: Chairperson concludes the meeting.

## Extraordinary General Meeting

An Extraordinary General Meeting is called at any time in the following circumstances:

- If a resolution to hold a club EGM is approved at the prior club AGM.
- If 20% of club members submit a written notice, duly signed, requesting the holding of a club EGM.
- Where two-thirds of the Club Committee decide to convene a club EGM.

A club EGM must be held within 14 days of receiving such a request and must allow for 7 days' notice to all club members. Only the specific matter outlined in the submitted EGM notice may be dealt with at the EGM. Procedures for EGMs are the same as for the AGM.

Managing finances effectively is crucial for the sustainability and success of a sports club. The financial affairs of the club are the responsibility of the Treasurer and the Club Committee. The Treasurer is in charge of book keeping and to prepare and present the annual accounts at the club AGM.

## Opening a Bank Account

All clubs should establish a dedicated Club Bank Account to ensure that all financial transactions are accurately recorded and transparent. When selecting a bank, consider factors such as the location's convenience for the club, the bank's fees (some banks offer free banking specifically for Sports Club Accounts), and the requirements for opening an account.

Typically, the following documents and information are required:

- A letter from the club listing the elected Club Committee Members (some banks may require this on official Club Headed Paper).
- A copy of the Club Constitution.
- Proof of identity and address for all signatories on the account.

Since each bank may have slightly different criteria, it is advisable to call ahead and confirm their specific requirements.

Once the account is open, it's important to regularly deposit all incoming funds, including membership fees, sponsorships, and other income. Obtain monthly bank statements and ensure they align with the Treasurer's records for accuracy and accountability.

## Budgeting

The committee should prepare an annual operating budget to guide the club's financial management. When forecasting revenue, it is important to remain cautious and avoid overestimating potential income. Expenses should be calculated realistically, factoring in all anticipated costs. To account for unforeseen expenses, it is advisable to include a contingency fund of 5–10% of the total budget. This ensures the club is prepared for unexpected financial challenges during the year.

Define short-term and long-term financial goals, such as funding for new facilities or increasing membership.

### Costs of running a club

Affiliation fee  
Court Rent  
Heating  
Insurance  
Equipment  
Coaching Fees  
Club Admin Costs



Fundraising is crucial for ensuring the sustainability and success of your club, enabling you to improve facilities, organize events, and expand programs. This section offers practical tips and creative approaches to engaging your community, attracting sponsors, and hosting successful fundraising events, all aimed at helping your club reach its financial goals and continue to thrive.

## Membership

Maximising membership revenue is a fundamental aspect of fundraising for a squash club. Here's how to make the most of it:

- **Tiered Membership Levels:** Offer different membership tiers (e.g., junior, adult, family, premium) to cater to varying levels of commitment and affordability. This allows you to reach a broader audience and increase overall membership revenue.
- **Loyalty Programs:** Implement loyalty programs that reward long-term members with discounts, free access to events/courses, or club merchandise. This encourages member retention and reduces dropout.
- **Membership Drives:** Periodically run membership drives with special incentives such as discounted rates for early sign-ups, or referral bonuses where existing members receive rewards for bringing in new members.
- **Flexible Payment Plans:** Offer flexible payment options, such as monthly, quarterly, or annual payments. This makes membership more accessible to a wider audience.
- **Value-Added Benefits:** Enhance the value of membership by offering additional perks like free coaching sessions, priority booking for courts, or discounts at local sports stores. These benefits can justify higher membership fees and attract new members.



## Sponsorships

Sponsorships can provide significant financial support and help offset costs. Here's how to attract and maintain sponsors:

- **Identify Potential Sponsors:** Look for businesses that align with the values and interests of your club's members. Local businesses, sports apparel companies, and health and fitness brands are good candidates.
- **Create Sponsorship Packages:** Develop a range of sponsorship packages with varying levels of exposure and benefits. Include options such as logo placement on club uniforms, banners at events, mentions in newsletters, and social media shoutouts.
- **Tailored Proposals:** Customize sponsorship proposals to align with the potential sponsor's goals. Highlight how their brand will benefit from associating with your club, such as increased visibility in the community or access to a targeted audience.
- **Maintain Relationships:** Regularly update sponsors on the club's progress and achievements. Acknowledge their contributions publicly through events, newsletters, and social media. Building a strong relationship can lead to long-term sponsorships.
- **Offer Exclusivity:** Consider offering exclusive sponsorship opportunities within certain categories (e.g., the official sportswear sponsor), which can be more attractive to businesses looking for a unique partnership.

## Events

Hosting events can be a highly effective way to raise funds and engage with the community. Here are some ideas:

- **Tournaments and Competitions:** Organize squash tournaments for different skill levels (eg. social, juniors, women only), charging entry fees for participants. Offer prizes or trophies sponsored by local businesses to attract more participants.
- **Charity Events:** Host charity squash matches or tournaments where a portion of the proceeds goes to a local cause. This not only raises funds but also enhances the club's community profile.
- **Social Events:** Organise social events such as club dinners, quizzes, or networking evenings. Charge an entry fee and consider incorporating raffles or auctions to raise additional funds.
- **Sponsored Matches:** Arrange matches where players are sponsored by friends, family, or local businesses based on their performance (e.g., amount per point won). This can be a fun and engaging way to raise money.
- **Open Days:** Hold open days where non-members can experience the club and participate in activities for a small fee. Offer membership discounts to attendees who sign up on the day. This would also allow you to target different age and target groups to diversify your membership base.

## Grants

Applying for grants can provide substantial funding for specific projects or general operations. Here's how to approach this:

- **Research Available Grants:** Look for grants available from County Councils, Local Sports Partnership, Squash Ireland, Sport Ireland, and charitable foundations that support sports development, youth activities, or community engagement (eg. Credit Unions).
- **Tailor Your Applications:** Ensure each grant application is tailored to the specific requirements of the funding body. Clearly outline how the funds will be used, the expected outcomes, and how they align with the grant's objectives. Be specific: broader targets are usually not better as grants are given for specific topics.
- **Emphasise Community Impact:** Highlight the positive impact your squash club has on the community, such as promoting physical activity, offering youth development programs, or providing a social hub for local residents.
- **Prepare Detailed Budgets:** Provide detailed budgets in your grant applications to show exactly how the money will be spent. This demonstrates that your club is organized and financially responsible.
- **Track and Report:** If awarded a grant, carefully track the use of the funds and be prepared to report back to the grant provider. This accountability can improve your chances of receiving future funding.

See a list of available funds [here](#).

## Merchandising

Selling club-branded merchandise is another effective way to raise funds.

- **Club Merchandise:** Offer items such as club-branded apparel, bags, water bottles, and other sports accessories. Members and supporters are often proud to wear or use club-branded items, which also serves as free advertising. Websites such as Vistaprint provide an on demand printing service, with full customization available.
- **Limited-Edition Items:** Create limited-edition merchandise for special events or anniversaries. These can be sold at a premium, generating additional funds.
- **Online Store:** Set up an online store through your website or a platform like Etsy or Shopify. This makes it easy for members and supporters to purchase merchandise, even if they can't attend events.





# Marketing & Communication

Effective communication and marketing are essential for the success and growth of any sports club. By strategically utilising tools like press releases, social media, and website management, clubs can build their brand, engage with members, and attract new participants. These best practices ensure that your club's message reaches the right audience, enhances visibility, and fosters a strong, connected community.

## Social Media

Social media platforms are essential for engaging with the local and broader community, and promoting your club. Here's a few tips to effectively use social media:

- **Choose the Right Platforms:** Focus on the platforms where your target audience is most active. Tiktok may reach the youngest, Instagram has a broader audience among millennials, while Facebook has less impact on juniors. Each platform has its strengths, so tailor your content accordingly.
- **Consistent Posting Schedule:** Regularly update your social media profiles with fresh content, such as event announcements, match results, player highlights, and behind-the-scenes footage. A consistent posting schedule helps keep your audience engaged. If you are not sure what to post, the social media itself or simply Google can be inspirational. Use the scheduling option to set a time for your content.
- **Engage with Followers:** Respond to comments, messages, and mentions promptly. Engage with your followers by asking questions, running polls, or holding contests to increase interaction.
- **Visual Content:** Use high-quality images, videos, and graphics to make your posts more appealing. Visual content tends to have higher engagement rates than text-only posts. Short videos bring high engagement and are quite effective. Create your short videos with highlights, interviews or funny moments from your activities.
- **Promote Events and Achievements:** Use social media to promote upcoming events, matches, training sessions, and any achievements by the club or its members. Share live updates during events through stories to keep your audience engaged.

## Community Engagement

Building a strong connection with the local community can boost your club's visibility and support.

- **Host Community Events:** Organize open days, free training sessions, or charity matches to engage with the local community. These events can attract potential new members and sponsors.
- **Partnerships:** Partner with local businesses, schools, and community organizations for mutual benefits. Sponsorships, joint events, or collaborative marketing campaigns can help increase your club's reach.



## Website

A well-designed website serves as the central hub for your squash club's online presence. There are many platforms online that allow you to create your website easily, quickly and with little to zero costs. Follow these best practices to maximize its effectiveness:

- **User-Friendly Design:** Ensure your website is easy to navigate with a clean, professional design. Important information such as schedules, contact details, and membership options should be easily accessible.
- **Mobile Optimization:** Make sure your website is mobile-friendly, as many users will access it from smartphones and tablets. A responsive design ensures a good user experience across all devices.
- **Regular Updates:** Keep your website updated with the latest news, events, and results. An outdated website can give a negative impression and may lead to lost interest.
- **Member Resources:** Provide a dedicated section for members, including downloadable forms, club rules, training schedules, and event calendars. Consider having a members-only login area for exclusive content.
- **SEO Optimization:** Optimize your website for search engines by using relevant keywords, meta descriptions, and high-quality content. This will help your club's website rank higher in search results, attracting more visitors.
- **Integrate Social Media:** Embed social media feeds on your website and provide easy access to your social media profiles. This helps create a cohesive online presence and encourages visitors to engage with you on multiple platforms.

## Press releases

Press releases are a powerful tool for gaining media coverage and sharing important news about your squash club in your local area. Here's how to make the most of them:

- **Craft Clear and Concise Messages:** Ensure that your press release is well-written, with a clear headline and a concise, informative body. It should cover the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the news you're sharing.
- **Target the Right Media Outlets:** Send your press release to local newspapers and radio stations. Build a media contact list and maintain good relationships with them.
- **Use a Professional Tone:** Press releases should be professional and free from jargon. Include quotes from key club members or players to add credibility and a personal touch.
- **Include Essential Details:** Provide contact information, links to your website, and any relevant social media profiles at the end of the press release. Attach high-quality images if appropriate.



## Email newsletter

Email newsletters are a direct way to keep your members and supporters informed. Here's how to use them effectively:

- **Regular Updates:** Send out newsletters on a regular basis, such as monthly or bi-weekly, to keep your audience informed about upcoming events, match results, and club news.
- **Personalized Content:** Segment your email list to send targeted content to different groups, such as members, sponsors, or parents. Personalized emails tend to have higher open rates and engagement.
- **Call to Action:** Include clear calls to action (CTAs) in your newsletters, such as registering for events, renewing memberships, or sharing content on social media.





Making insurance for a sports club is essential. It helps protect the club, its members, and stakeholders from various risks and liabilities associated with sporting activities.

When clubs affiliate, they will receive official copies of their insurance cover, ensuring you're fully informed and protected. You can find a summary of the insurance cover [here](#).

## Public Liability

Most venues will require a letter of indemnity to allow your club to use the facility. This indemnity is a note from your insurers to the owners of the venue saying that any claims brought due to the negligence of the association/club/members while using the venues lands and/or facilities, and if the venue is drawn into the claim, your insurers will act on their behalf.

To obtain a letter of indemnity please fill out the [indemnity form](#) and send to [info@irishsquash.com](mailto:info@irishsquash.com). The insurance covers coaches as well, in the situation where they are coaching on behalf of a member club or Squash Ireland. If they are coaching as their own commercial business, they will need their own insurance. All instructors and leaders must hold the correct National Governing Bodies (NGB) qualification or have had an appropriately NGB-qualified technical advisor assess them. Where there is no relevant NGB qualification all instructors and leaders have received appropriate training and assessment for or are appropriately experienced to undertake instruction in the activities concerned.

## Personal Accident Cover

In case sudden and unforeseen accidents occurred during trainings or competitions, Squash Ireland members are entitled to personal accident cover under the association insurance policy.

The individual must be a member of Irish Squash. All Injuries must be diagnosed and certified by a Medical Doctor.

Find a summary of details of personal accident cover [here](#).

## Incident Report

All incidents should be notified to Squash Ireland and Arachas insurance as soon as possible, do not wait for a solicitors letter or notice of intention to take action. The quicker we can get information to insurers, the better prepared they can be.

Incident report forms can be found [here](#). Please fill out a report form and send to [info@irishsquash.com](mailto:info@irishsquash.com) who will verify the membership and forward to Arachas Insurance. Arachas have a dedicated claims handler for Squash Ireland and will be in touch to advise next steps.



# Club Affiliation



Clubs are encouraged to affiliate to Squash Ireland to avail of the benefits given from Squash Ireland to its members, including personal and public insurance cover, unrestricted access to SportyHQ club management system (including membership fees, court booking system, and club events), funding opportunities, and associated coaches and referees.

## 1 Complete the Club Affiliation Form

Fill in the affiliation form [here](#) to provide all the required information in order to get affiliated.

## 2 Pay the club affiliation fee.

Clubs are required to pay a fee in order to affiliate via bank transfer to Squash Ireland. Squash Ireland offers early birds discounts for clubs wishing to affiliate before October,

## 3 Provide Safeguarding documentation

Within the application form, you will be required to provide information and documents regarding safeguarding aspects of your club. This will include names of Children Officer and Designated Liaison Person, Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment. Find more information regarding dealing with minors [here](#).

# Membership



Squash enthusiasts are welcome to join Squash Ireland as members. Members will have access to personal accident cover and to all Squash Ireland events, tournaments and leagues.

## Benefits

- Personal Accident Insurance Cover: this coverage includes accidents or injuries sustained during training, matches, or tournaments, providing peace of mind whether you're playing recreationally or competitively. It's an essential benefit that helps safeguard your well-being, allowing you to focus on enjoying the game with confidence.
- Affiliation grants you entry to a wide range of tournaments, from local events to elite national championships, ensuring you're always ready to compete and take your game to the next level.

## Affiliation Through Club Option

Clubs can streamline the membership process by submitting a list of their members to Squash Ireland, similar to last season's process. We will invoice the club based on this list and all listed members will be registered. Clubs can also add new members throughout the season as needed.

## Individual Membership Option

For individuals not yet registered by a club, residing abroad, or not affiliated with any club, there is an option to register directly with Squash Ireland. Registration can be completed [here](#).

### Competitive Membership

€25

This membership allows you to enter all Squash Ireland sanctioned events alongside unlocking all the benefits of affiliation.

### Social Membership

€15

This membership provides all the benefits of affiliation. However player won't be able to compete in Squash Ireland sanctioned events.

### Junior Membership

€5

This membership covers any player competing in all junior categories. This expires when a player has progressed past the u19 level.

### Student Membership

€10

This covers any student and grants all benefits along with eligibility for Squash Ireland tournaments.

# Start a Junior Section

By fostering an environment that supports and nurtures young players, a junior section can be a valuable asset that ensures the sustainability, relevance, and vibrancy of a squash club for generations to come. A vibrant junior section signals a forward-thinking, inclusive, and family-friendly club.

## Benefits

### Cultivating Future Talent

Introducing juniors to squash at an early age allows the club to nurture and develop skilled players who may excel at competitive levels. Junior players can represent the club in local, regional, or national competitions, raising its profile.

Juniors who start young often remain engaged with the sport, ensuring a steady influx of future adult members.

Junior squash teaches teamwork, discipline, and resilience. A well-structured junior program can create pathways to scholarships, leadership roles, or careers in sports.

Junior memberships, classes, and events can provide an additional and stable income stream.

Parents often join clubs that cater to their children, potentially boosting adult memberships as well.

Many sports organizations and governments offer funding for programs aimed at youth development.

### Financial Benefits

### Building a Community

A junior program makes the club more appealing and accessible to families, fostering a sense of community.

Junior programs foster friendships and camaraderie among young players.

Parents and club members can get involved as coaches, mentors, or organizers, strengthening community ties.

Collaborations with schools can bring new players into the club, further expanding its reach.



## Step-by-step guide on how to start a junior section

### 1 Establish a Structure

- Define Roles and Responsibilities for people who will be in charge to administer and develop the junior section in your club. In particular, you will need an individual to oversee and co-ordinate the junior sections activities. This co-ordinator should be a part of the clubs committee to act as a link.
- Draft policies for safeguarding, code of conduct, attendance, and discipline. Ensure compliance with local and national regulations.
- Define a Safeguarding Children Officer and a Designated Liaison Person.

### 2 Build a coaching programme

Select a properly qualified and experienced coach for your sessions.

If a coach is not available in your club or area, gather interest from current or past club players who may be interested in taking over, and support them in their path to become a coach and collect the relevant qualification.

Any person involved in the session, must go through Safeguarding training and Garda Vetting background check according to the law.

Once a person or more are selected, define together the age group(s) and timetable for classes.

Suggestion: start with a limited amount of sessions (4-10 sessions once a week) to gather interest a little bit at a time. Players may pay per class or per set amount of weeks.

Build a plan including goals on numbers and performance. Remember: fun is priority! Balance fun and skill development, include drills, matches, and fitness activities to keep juniors engaged.

Incorporate games to make sessions enjoyable, especially for beginners. Include mental toughness, sportsmanship, and teamwork development games and activities.

### 3 Link with the community

Promote your new youth sessions in your community through flyers, social media, local papers and community noticeboards. Ask to the Local Sport Partnership to support you in the communication and promotion.

Contact local schools for taster session during school time, or to develop programme that would gauge interest in pupils.

Collaborate with other local clubs and organise open days for come-and-try sessions.



# Safeguarding Children

It is required that every club with underage and vulnerable players involved follows Sport Ireland guidelines and requirements on Child Welfare. These requirements are applicable for any club that has at least one minor in their club.

Squash Ireland is committed to ensuring that the best interests of children and young people playing squash is of paramount importance. The Safeguarding Policy for Children and Young People playing Squash is underpinned by national policy and legislation in ROI Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, and the requirements under The Children First Act 2015, and in Northern Ireland – the Children (NI) Order and Cooperating to Safeguarding Children and Young People 2017.

For safeguarding concerns, you can reach out to:

- Ann Sheppard, National Children's Officer: [childprotection@irishsquash.com](mailto:childprotection@irishsquash.com)
- Rosie Barry, Designated Liaison Person (DLP): [president@irishsquash.com](mailto:president@irishsquash.com)
- Paul Nugent, Mandated Person (MP): [coo@irishsquash.com](mailto:coo@irishsquash.com)

## Requirements

- Any person involved with young or vulnerable people must go through Safeguarding training and Garda Vetting background check according to the law. This must be checked and promoted by the club when inducting a new volunteer or coach.
- Appoint one or more Club Children's Officers and Designated Liaison Persons (see description below)

## Documents

Here following you will find templates for documents that are required in order to ensure Safeguarding of children.

- [Safeguarding Risk Assessment](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Statement](#)
- [Code of Conduct – Youth Members](#)
- [Code of Conduct – Adult Members](#)
- [Code of Conduct – Coach](#)
- [Code of Conduct – Parents](#)
- [Code of Conduct – Volunteers](#)



## Safeguarding 1 – Child Welfare & Protection Basic Awareness Workshop

### **Mandatory for Coaches, Leader, Junior Event Directors and Organisers, Club Children's Officers (CCO) and Designated Liaison Persons (DLP)**

This workshop offers foundational information on key topics such as codes of conduct, bullying, recruitment, and child protection guidelines. By adhering to the principles, policies, and practical guidance outlined in the Code, sports leaders contribute to creating a safe, supportive, and enjoyable environment where children can learn, grow, and thrive.

### Club Children's Officer (CCO)

Club Children's Officers (CCOs) ensure the well-being and interests of young members remain at the core of the club's activities. Their primary role is to foster and maintain a child-centered ethos within the club. Acting as a vital bridge between the children and adults, the CCO facilitates effective communication and understanding. Additionally, they are responsible for monitoring how club policies influence young members and leaders, providing regular reports and feedback to the Club Management Committee to ensure policies are supportive, inclusive, and effective.

Individuals appointed as Club Children's Officers must complete the Child Welfare & Protection Basic Awareness Workshop and the Club Children's Officer Training Course (Safeguarding 2). This training equips them to effectively fulfill their role within the club and to support the implementation of best practices. As part of the course, participants will also receive a Club Children's Officer Action Planning Document to guide their activities and responsibilities.

### Designate Liaison Person (DLP)

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is responsible for reporting any allegations or suspicions of child abuse to TUSLA Child and Family Agency or Social Services (NI) and/or An Garda Síochána or PSNI. Ideally, this role should be filled by a senior club member. However, if it is challenging to identify a separate individual, the Club Children's Officer (CCO) may also take on the role of the DLP, provided the club clearly defines and differentiates the responsibilities of each role.

The Safeguarding 3 training highlights the regulations and laws under which the DLP acts, and how to act in case of allegations.

## Garda Vetting

"Under the terms of the National Vetting Bureau (Children and Vulnerable Persons) Acts, 2012-2016 ("the Acts"), all persons who are employed in positions where they have regular access to children and vulnerable persons must be vetted by the National Vetting Bureau. Section 21 of the Acts provides that it is an offence for an employer to employ a person who works with children or vulnerable persons where an application for vetting has not been submitted to the National Vetting Bureau for that person by 31 December 2017."

For those residing or working in Ireland, vetting is conducted through the National Vetting Bureau (NVB). For those in Northern Ireland, it is conducted through Access NI (ANI) (see below).

Full Vetting Process & Procedure can be found [here](#).

Documents needed: [Vetting Invitation NVBI](#) and [Vetting ID Verification Form](#).

## AccessNI

An AccessNI check provides information on an individual's criminal history for those working in Northern Ireland. Its primary purpose is to assist organizations in making safer recruitment decisions when In some cases, organizations are legally obligated to assess applicants' suitability for specific roles or verify that they are not barred from working with vulnerable groups.

You will be required to apply for AccessNI if you are coaching or working closely with children and young ones.

To get more information regarding the AccessNI process, please contact [a.azuara-blanco@qub.ac.uk](mailto:a.azuara-blanco@qub.ac.uk), safeguarding person for Squash Ulster.





# Equality, Diversity, Inclusion



Squash clubs are more than just places to play a game; they are communities where relationships are built, skills are developed, and joy is shared. By committing to inclusivity, your club can break down barriers, embrace diversity, and create an atmosphere where every individual, regardless of their background or ability, has the opportunity to thrive.

Inclusivity means creating an environment where everyone, regardless of their identity, background, or circumstances, feels welcomed, respected, and supported. It goes beyond simply avoiding discrimination; it involves actively working to eliminate barriers and foster a sense of belonging.

- Embracing people of all genders, races, ages, abilities, socioeconomic statuses, sexual orientations, and cultural backgrounds.
- Identifying and addressing obstacles that may prevent people from participating, such as cost, accessibility, or unfamiliarity with the sport.
- Creating opportunities for everyone to engage in squash, from beginners to seasoned players.
- Cultivating a culture where members support and respect each other, celebrating the unique contributions of each individual.

Inclusive clubs serve as spaces where diverse groups of people come together, fostering connections that enrich everyone involved. By opening the doors to underrepresented groups, clubs can attract new players and grow the game of squash. A welcoming environment ensures members feel valued and are more likely to stay engaged and participate actively.

Inclusivity aligns with values like fairness, respect, and equality, which are essential to the spirit of sportsmanship.

## Barriers to playing squash

Despite good intentions, many clubs face challenges in achieving inclusivity. These can include:

- Financial constraints: high membership fees or equipment costs can exclude lower-income individuals. Providing spare equipment to newcomers and collaborating with external associations and LSPs to reduce the cost of activities will help you overcome this barrier.
- Accessibility issues: facilities that lack ramps, elevators, or accessible restrooms may deter people with disabilities or different needs. Flag what areas of your club are a barrier to what group, and find creative solutions to overcome the issue.
- Cultural and language barriers: communication gaps or unfamiliarity with the sport can discourage participation from diverse cultural groups. The goal is increasing participation of a sport that is closed in a room. Hence, promotion and collaboration with different entities are mandatory to make the sport visible and attract new players and volunteers.
- Unconscious bias: stereotypes or assumptions may lead to subtle exclusion or make some individuals feel unwelcome. By making the sport a fun activity open to all, we put the emphasis on welcoming newcomers and returning squash passionates.

By understanding these barriers, clubs can take proactive steps to address them and ensure that squash is accessible to everyone.

## Building an Inclusive Culture

Creating an inclusive culture within a squash club requires intentional effort and a commitment to fostering respect, understanding, and belonging. Inclusive cultures start at the top.

Club leaders should openly champion inclusivity, setting the tone for the entire organization. This can include:

- Creating a clear inclusivity statement/policy aligning with aligns with the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 (or relevant equality legislation in Northern Ireland) and sharing it with members.
- Appointing diversity lead or committee to guide and monitor efforts.
- Ensuring leadership reflects the diversity you aim to achieve (eg. make sure your committee is diverse in age, gender, background etc).

Equip your club's staff, coaches, and members with the knowledge and tools to support inclusivity by offering training sessions on topics such as unconscious bias, cultural competence, and inclusive language. Provide resources and workshops that raise awareness about barriers faced by underrepresented groups, as well as sharing directions on working with groups with diverse needs.

Develop and enforce policies that prioritize inclusivity:

- Zero-tolerance policies for discrimination and harassment
- Codes of conduct that outline expected behaviours and promote respect
- Transparent complaint and resolution procedures for addressing issues.

You can use [this template](#) to write your Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.



Build partnerships with local organizations and advocacy groups to learn from their expertise and expand outreach efforts. For example, collaborate with schools, community centres, or disability sports organizations to promote squash to new audiences. These associations are usually keen on creating new opportunities for their members, and constantly looking for activities.

Remember: inclusivity is a plus to your club, not a burden!

# Managing Volunteers

Volunteers form the backbone of a thriving squash club, providing invaluable support in various roles, from coaching and event organizing to administrative tasks. Ensuring the effective recruitment, management, and retention of volunteers is essential to the long-term success and sustainability of the club.

## Recruiting Volunteers

Effective recruitment involves finding passionate and committed individuals who align with the club's vision and goals.

Start by reaching out to existing members, parents of junior players, and local squash enthusiasts. People who are already involved in the club often have a strong sense of community and are more likely to volunteer. Advertise volunteer opportunities through the club's website and social media channels, local community boards and newsletters, schools, colleges, and sports centres, Local Sport Partnership and Squash Ireland, and within local businesses and organizations.

Before recruiting, determine what your club requires: what roles need to be filled? (e.g., event organizers, coaches, committee members, social media managers) What skills and experience are essential for these roles? How much time is required for each role?

Create detailed role descriptions that outline responsibilities, time commitments, and any specific qualifications (e.g., coaching certificates).

Many potential volunteers may have limited availability. Create flexible roles that accommodate different time commitments, making it easier for more people to get involved.

People are more likely to volunteer when they see value in it. Emphasize the benefits, such as:

- Gaining new skills (e.g., leadership, event management, coaching).
- Making a positive impact on the club and community.
- Networking and meeting new people.
- Access to club perks like free court time or training opportunities.

## Selecting Volunteers

Once you've attracted potential volunteers, a thoughtful selection process ensures you recruit the right people for the right roles.

1. Gather applications: create a simple application process that matches the complexity of the role.
2. Conduct informal interviews or meetings: discuss their motivation and interest in the role, their experience and skills, and how they align with the club's needs. This is also a chance to answer any questions the volunteer might have and ensure the role is a good fit for both parties.
3. Check references (if applicable): for roles that involve working with children or handling finances, check references to ensure the applicant's suitability.
4. Ensure compliance with safeguarding policies: for volunteers working with juniors, follow legal requirements such as background checks or safeguarding certifications. Ensure compliance with local laws and guidelines.

## Managing volunteers

Once volunteers are recruited, effective management ensures they feel valued, supported, and equipped to succeed in their roles.

- Provide a structured induction: introduce volunteers to the club's mission, culture, and operations. See info below
- Offer training and development: equip volunteers with the skills they need through training sessions or workshops.
- Assign clear points of contact: ensure each volunteer has a designated supervisor or mentor they can turn to for guidance and support.
- Use Technology for Coordination: implement tools like shared calendars, task management apps, or volunteer management software to streamline communication and scheduling.
- Foster Open Communication: encourage regular feedback from volunteers and provide opportunities for them to voice concerns or suggestions. Regular check-ins help build trust and address issues promptly.
- Recognize Their Efforts: publicly acknowledge volunteers' contributions through thank-you events or awards, social media shoutouts and small tokens of appreciation, like free club merchandise or event tickets.

## Retaining volunteers

Retaining volunteers requires a focus on keeping them motivated, engaged, and appreciated over time.

Building a sense of community by creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where volunteers feel connected to the club and its members makes everyone involved feel at home within the club facilities. Organize social events, team-building activities, or informal gatherings to keep the community involved, and acknowledge long-term volunteers and significant achievements, such as organizing a successful tournament or reaching membership goals. Check in periodically with volunteers to ensure they're still satisfied with their roles. Be flexible in adjusting responsibilities to prevent burnout or dissatisfaction.

Whenever possible, align volunteer roles with their interests and skills. For example, a tech-savvy volunteer might enjoy managing the club's social media accounts, while someone with a passion for youth development might excel in coaching juniors.

Offer pathways for volunteers to take on greater responsibilities or develop new skills. This not only benefits the club but also enhances the volunteer's experience.





## Volunteer Induction checklist

- ☐ Greet the volunteer warmly and thank them for joining.
- ☐ Provide a brief overview of the club's mission, values, and history.
- ☐ Introduce the volunteer to key members (e.g., committee members, coaches, team captains), including the volunteer's primary point of contact (e.g., volunteer coordinator or supervisor)
- ☐ Tour the club facilities, including courts, locker rooms, first aid stations, and equipment storage areas. Explain access to club facilities (e.g., court booking systems, storage areas), and provide instructions for handling and maintaining equipment.
- ☐ Provide a detailed description of their role, including tasks and expectations. Discuss time commitments and schedule flexibility. Explain how their role fits into the club's operations and goals. Share examples of past volunteer successes to inspire confidence.
- ☐ Provide a copy of the club's constitution or handbook (physical or digital), code of conduct, safeguarding and child protection policies (if working with juniors), EDI policy and any other applicable policy and procedure.
- ☐ Explain health and safety protocols, including emergency procedures (e.g., fire exits, first aid) and incident reporting processes.
- ☐ Share the club's communication methods (e.g., email, WhatsApp groups, newsletters), and explain how to report issues, provide feedback, or request additional support.
- ☐ Discuss any training required for the role (e.g., first aid, coaching certifications), provide access to club resources, workshops, or webinars.
- ☐ Discuss the specific goals of their role (e.g., increasing junior participation, running events) and encourage them to share their ideas for improvement.
- ☐ Explain any benefits available to volunteers.
- ☐ Schedule a check-in meeting within the first month to review progress and address concerns.
- ☐ Share the schedule for regular volunteer meetings or updates.
- ☐ Provide a welcome pack containing:
  - A letter of thanks or welcome note.
  - Club contact details and key dates (e.g., tournaments, social events).
  - A branded item, such as a T-shirt or water bottle.
  - Volunteer handbook or guide.

# Club Development

In line with our "Connecting the Dots" strategy, Squash Ireland is eager to strengthen member clubs to become vibrant communities catering for all ages and levels, to secure the future of our game.

Each squash club is a unique community gathering for players, volunteers, coaches, families, committees and more. In order to foster our community and grow the sport in a sustainable way, Squash Ireland's focus is the development of each club on a one-on-one basis, understanding the stage the club is at, strengths, needs and future goals.

Our Club Development Officers have build programmes and resources for all our members clubs to facilitate reaching goals each club committee has in their plans. We have a comprehensive offer to support your development from governance to participation.

## Club Development Toolkit

Resources with best practice for

- Starting a club
- Starting a junior section
- Child welfare
- Marketing & Communication
- Fundraising

Templates for good governance

- Club Constitution
- Safeguarding Documents
- Policies & Procedures

## Club Support Meeting

Our Club Development Officers are available to meet club representatives and discuss the stage your club is at, strengths, needs and future goals of your club and coaches

- Coach and player development
- Partnerships and funding
- Good governance
- Facilities and equipment
- Producing a club development plan.

## Equipment

We regularly propose grants for purchasing new club equipment and repurposing facilities, in order to provide the best experience to existing members and newcomers.

The current grant is open until April 14, 2025. See more details here.

## Coaching courses and mentorship

Squash Ireland organise coaching courses regularly in every province.

- Funds are available to develop more women in coaching positions
- Mentorship opportunity offered, to help building experience and confidence for new coaches
- New business opportunities for professional coaches can be discussed



## Programmes funded by Squash Ireland

Squash Ireland designed a series of programmes clubs can run to grow participation and membership. In order to run these programmes, each club must contact our development officers to align with the programme structure before the delivery.

### Social Squash Tour

The Social Squash Tour is a series of one-day friendly tournaments hosted by clubs, bringing people together to play squash, socialize, and have fun. Squash Ireland supports the events with organizational assistance, participant t-shirts, and up to €250 for court costs and refreshments.

### HIIT Squash

The HIIT Squash Programme is a six-week, beginner-friendly initiative combining squash fundamentals with High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). Designed by women for women, it features weekly one-hour sessions in a fun and active environment. Squash Ireland supports the program with session plans, organizational assistance, and up to €300 in funding.

### Disco Squash

The DISCO Squash Programme is a six-week initiative designed to engage teenage girls in squash through fun and free play. It features weekly coached sessions, culminating in a disco-themed squash night with music, lights, and glow-in-the-dark equipment. Squash Ireland supports the program with session plans, event equipment, and up to €500 in funding.

### Inclusion projects

Grow your club's membership through projects that promote diversity and inclusion. Clubs are encouraged to identify underrepresented groups and develop tailored programs to engage them. Funding is available for juniors (especially girls), women, people with autism or disabilities, schools & teachers, the LGBTQI+ community, disadvantaged communities, and ethnic minorities. Grants are limited and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## How to access our offer

1. Clubs must be affiliated to Squash Ireland and have paid your player and club affiliation fees or, in the case of clubs in the process of forming or in early stages of development, have an appropriate club development plan in place. Affiliation fees and the Club Affiliation Process is detailed on the Squash Ireland website - <https://www.squashireland.ie/club-affiliation/>
2. Organise a call with our Club Development Officer, to discuss the current stage your club is at, strengths, needs and future goals of your club and coaches. Book your appointment [here](#).



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