



DERBYSHIRE Cricket
Foundation

Creating a good first impression – how welcoming is your club?

Joining a cricket club can be a life-changing experience. For many of us it has provided access to a community and lasting friendships that has changed our lives for the better. For those of us who have enjoyed such positive experiences, it can sometimes be easy to forget that for others joining a new club can be quite daunting, particularly if they're new to the game or returning after a long absence, or if they are different in some way to the majority of people at the club. First impressions are important, and in this short article we look at some practical steps you can take to help make a positive first impression which can help attract and retain new members.

Does your club profile on the internet convey that you are a welcoming and inclusive club?

These days somebody thinking about joining a new club is likely to do their initial research on the internet, so in many cases your website and social media profile will provide them with their first impression of your club (which they'll almost certainly compare with other neighbouring clubs in the area). There are a few things you might want think about to create a welcoming first impression on-line.

- At the risk of stating the obvious, your “welcome” message on your website or social media profile should be very welcoming, and for example could include the following:
 - Your commitment to welcoming all new members of any ability.
 - Your commitment to Women & Girls cricket. As well as attracting new female members, it may help attract male players who have other family members interested in playing.
 - Your commitment to welcoming any under-represented groups – this could include referring to your Disability Champion Club status or using a Pride rainbow symbol to illustrate your commitment to welcoming new LGBTQ+ members.
- If you have mixed open-age and junior teams you should identify them as “mixed” in the Teams section of your play-cricket site, rather than “Mens” or “Boys”. This will help illustrate your commitment to providing equal opportunities for women and girls.
- Make sure your social media accounts consistently portray a positive impression of your club. Most people will be attracted to a friendly, social, family-orientated, community club. Celebrate the successes of your Women & Girls teams as well as your open-age teams, and highlight fund-raising, social, or community events.
- Have a named contact for membership enquiries on the website – people prefer to communicate with a real person rather than with an anonymous e-mail address.

Do you provide a warm and personal welcome to potential new members?

- Make sure that any new member is welcomed in-person before they join in any activity. They should know who they are going to meet in advance, and the designated contact should be expecting them.
- The welcome to the club should be judgment-free, and shouldn't focus just on playing ability. Take time to understand what the new member might want to get out of your club. It will help you describe how the club can provide what they are looking for. There's a place for enthusiastic players of any ability at most clubs, and every new member is a potential volunteer as well, and might have other valuable non-playing skills and experience that could benefit the club.

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- Existing members are key in welcoming new members. Most people are friendly anyway, but it might be worth a gentle reminder of the importance of this to existing members at the start of each season or ahead of your winter training programme.

Find fun ways of introducing people to the club or re-introducing them to cricket.

- Extending invitations to social events to friends of members or to your local community could be a good way of introducing more people to the club.
- Why not run some informal taster sessions for adults as well as juniors? It could be a good way of helping introduce new players to the game or reintroducing former players. Parents of your junior members could be a target for these sessions.
- Mixed friendly teams playing shorter formats of the game can help take the pressure off everyone, especially those new to the sport.
- Establish an introductory or social membership offer that is less expensive and provides new members with a chance to “try before you buy”.

Your club may already be doing all of these things, and may have found other ways of attracting new members. What has worked at your club? We’d love to hear about what has worked well for you, so please do get in touch with us if you are willing to share your good-news stories.

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