



Income generation

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This document is intended as a source of guidance relating only to income generation and events. Please be aware that you must always adhere to the terms of your premises licence.

Events and Revenue Driving

Strong revenue is a key element of a sustainable rugby club. When looking at ways to drive revenue through your rugby club one of the most lucrative opportunities is through running events. The right event can not only provide you with extra turnover for the club but it can also bring in people that may never normally visit the club and introduce a whole new group of people to potential membership.

This document, in its first section, aims to outline some of the key principles involved in running a successful event. The second half of the document highlights some great examples of events from across Scotland, both large and small.

Events

What is the event?

Your first task when looking at running an event is deciding what kind of event you should run. Be focussed and clear in your plans and what you want to achieve.

- Have a rolling annual calendar of events in place so that you can plan long term and keep things fresh and exciting while still holding regular events.
- When deciding on the kind of event you are going to run make sure you play to the strengths of the club and its members.
 - Do any of your members have relevant interests or skills?
 - Are they members of other clubs that might be involved?
 - What do they do professionally that could help?



- What are their interests?
- Does your facility offer any unique opportunities?
 - How much space do you have inside?
 - How much space do you have outside?
 - Where do you sit within the town?
- Are there any businesses in the local community you could work with?
 - Restaurants that could help with the food side of things.
 - Local breweries or distilleries that might work with you on drinks.
 - Local venues that want to promote via your larger space.
- Are there other local clubs you could collaborate with?
 - Sports club are great but look at alternatives such as theatre or dance clubs.
 - Drama or music clubs that you could link in with performances.
 - Other creative clubs like cooking or art that could link in.
- Are there any seasonal or traditional celebrations coming up?

Marketing/Advertising

When advertising the event you have planned, you should look at ways to target existing customers and members but also look at how you can reach a whole new group of customers.

- For a more detailed look at marketing guidance and techniques, see our Marketing Guide for clubs.
- Local traditional marketing and advertising should be employed to capture the local market and those who operate less online. Avoid going overboard with posters and flyers as they can become a nuisance to people. Think about:
 - Public notice boards
 - Local business notice boards
 - Flyers in local businesses
- Social media is a great tool for advertising your event but also for making people who attend or cannot make it feel part of the experience.
 - Have an event-specific hashtag that can be used for promotion and on the day for people to connect to.
 - Have someone covering the experience on the day on social media to show people why they should still try and come down or what they are missing if they can't come. They will come to the next event!
 - Photos! Lots and lots of photos.
 - The most eye-catching social media posts contain great photos and they become an amazing record of how the day went for future use.
- Cross market with external companies
 - Can you get sponsors on board with the event? For more on sponsorship see our How to Secure Sponsorship guide.
 - If you are working with an external business or club then they can also help with advertising and promotion.



- Link into each other's social media accounts to create more exposure.
- Anyone you are collaborating with will likely reach very different consumer groups so this increases the potential customer base you can access.
- Ensure you have a strong web presence for any event you are running.
 - What do people find online if they search for your event?
 - Are they able to buy tickets online?
 - Are there full details available online?

Staff and Volunteers

When planning your event think carefully about how it is going to be staffed and how to get the best out of potential volunteers.

- Any staff or volunteers involved in the event planning or involved on the day should have clearly defined roles and clear guidance on expectations.
- Don't overstretch any volunteers. Shorter shifts and smaller roles will encourage more people to be involved.
- If you are partnering with any external businesses or clubs then see if they can provide staff to help out.
- Are there any special skills within the volunteers that you can take advantage of in the planning and execution of the event?
- For any medium or large event, it is worth setting up a separate committee to oversee the planning and, on the day, running of the event. This allows full focus on the event and avoids it impacting the day to day running of the club. Look for a mix of skills in the committee which can cover the planning, advertising and execution of the event.

Targets and Expectations

Why are you holding an event and what are you trying to achieve? Knowing this in advance is key to making the most of any event.

- Have clear targets for revenue in advance. Break this down so you know where it should be coming from.
- Have clear targets for exposure in advance. How are you going to achieve this through marketing?
- Break targets down into manageable chunks for anyone involved.
- Give targets to teams and individuals.
 - How many tickets can they sell?
 - How many drinks can they sell?
 - How many raffle tickets can they sell?

One more drink per customer is easier to appreciate than a monetary figure.



Event Experience

Whatever kind of event you are running you need to think beyond the basic structure of what the event is to ensure the best possible customer experience. For every decision you are making, consider how it affects customers. It may lead to some tough decisions but will provide the best event going experience.

- **Always think customer first**
 - Give them the best experience you can on the day.
 - Make everything as easy as possible for them on the day with available helpers and signage.
 - Make the ticket buying experience as easy as possible whether it be pre-purchase or on the day.
- **Details matter**
 - Photographers on the day to record everyone's experience.
 - Family entertainment so that kids and parents can all have a great day.
 - Event specific merchandise or takeaway memorabilia if the event allows. A glass you can take away after a beer festival is a great token from the day.
 - Provide a facility for people to provide feedback and embrace it. Learn what people like and don't like and learn what worked and what didn't. Spot issues and improve them for next time.
- **Make something memorable**
 - Do something unique.
 - What are the small things you can do that people will be still talking about it the next day or the next week?
- **Do not forget the less glamorous side of planning**

These things may not be what people get excited about but if you get them wrong on the day then it is definitely how people will remember your event.

 - Clean, accessible and plentiful toilet facilities can make or break people's memories of an event.
 - Whether it is the focus of your event or an addition to your event, availability of good food makes a huge difference. For shorter events snacks can be enough. For longer events or events with alcohol then food can be the key to keeping people there for the length of the day.
 - Catering for families again provides the opportunity for more potential customers and also opens them up to stay longer.
 - Parking availability and parking assistants adds to the ease of attending the event which increases the potential customers numbers.



Legacy of Events

Any event you put on is not only about the build-up and the day of the event, but it is also about what comes after it. What have you gained from the event? Was it purely turnover or did you add new members or increase the club's profile? The legacy of your event very much ties into the goals you may set yourself for an open day. Ensure the event drives participants towards club membership.

- Have a visible rugby presence at event. This could be players available to chat to people or a game happening. Make sure that, even in a small way, that event goers are aware of where they are and what you do.
- Information points for the club available. Either in the form of leaflets or possibly a designated volunteer available to discuss the club.
- Collect information from event goers including contacts details. Having a strong mailing list from any event can provide a great support to any marketing you do for future events. If people buy tickets in advance you can often get a contact email address from them which you can use to pass on info of any future events, as long as this is approached in the right way. Pay close attention to data protection laws whenever you are collecting personal details.
- Can elements of the event be incorporated in to match days, sevens, or other events? When you debrief after the event and get feedback are there any particular things which worked? These elements could strengthen your match day experience.
- Make each match day feel like an event. If customers enjoy a specific element of your event and it convinces them to come down to a match will they find a similar experience? The more you can do to expand the match day experience beyond what is on the pitch the more potential you have to create new customers and members.

Examples of good practice

The following are real world examples of how events of varying sizes can become a success. They vary in execution and style, but they all serve to not only drive revenue through the club but also act as a great advert for the club to external people.

The following two events are great examples of smaller events with a low set-up cost which can provide a significant boost to club finances. In the example from Ayr the event was run as a one-off while the Lismore event is one that has carried on year after year.



Events of turnover up to £1,000

Example: Ayr Duck Racing

- *What was the event?*

A duck race using plastic ducks on a river. Customers placed live bets on racing ducks. Although it takes a similar form to the pig racing example below it has a much lower initial cost but still a strong potential for profit.

- *Who organised it?*

It was organised by Ayr Ladies Rugby Team with a focus on fundraising for the team. It was mainly managed by the team captain with assistance from the rest of the team.

- *What were the expectations and goals?*

The short-term goal for the event was to raise funds for the team's transport, development and strips for the coming season. The longer-term aspiration was to create an event that could become an annual fundraiser for the women's team.

- *How long did the planning take?*

Planning took approximately 8 hours in total over the course of a couple of meetings with key members of the team. On the day of the event the team was involved in roughly 5 hours of work covering the length of the event. The on the day work was predominantly carried out by the team.

- *How much did it cost?*

The event had a very low total cost in part due to the amount of work carried out by volunteers. The rental of the plastic ducks for the race was £40 and the rest of the event requirements had no cost attached. This included the time invested in the project by the team and volunteers in the lead up to the event and on the day along with printing carried out for the event.

- *What was the turnover/profit?*

With the low costs of the event of £40, the total profit for the event came out at £700.



- *What knock on effect did it have?*

The event was a success with the goal for the season being achieved of allowing the women's team to purchase new kit. Although it was successful the event was never repeated as it wasn't picked up through the growth of the team.

- *What were the key learnings?*

You need to have plenty of support from people and a succession plan so that there is no single point of failure to allow the event to continue year after year. Successful events have the potential to carry on every year, but there needs to be a plan in place for who is going to continue them. This helps with any potential issues due to club members moving on or pressure on one specific person to handle an event each year.

Example: Lismore Pig Racing

- *What is the event?*

The Lismore RFC annual pig race event is a night of music, food, raffles and an organised race event run in conjunction with 'Cracklin' Rosie' pig racing. (<http://www.cracklinrosie.co.uk/>). It is a free event open to all, with live betting, on battery operated pigs, restricted to over 16s, and hosted by Nigel from Cracklin' Rosie.

- *Who organised it?*

Run by one person, but scope to split responsibility between race sponsorship finders, pig sellers, raffle organiser, ticket sellers (on the night).

- *What were the expectations and goals?*

The target to be raised was approximately £800. In addition to the financial target, the event aims to be a family-friendly social night at the club. Previous event experience shows that this is a firm favourite for players with children and families, and regularly find it attended by partners and families that might not normally attend social events.

- *How long did the planning take?*

The planning for the event begins three months before the event. Once the date is confirmed you can begin selling the race sponsorship spaces to players and supporters. Ideally all spaces need to be sold a minimum of two weeks before the



event in order to process the race cards and organise the prizes. Prizes can be purchased for convenience or if possible, can be donated to save on costs.

- *How much did it cost?*

The club opted for the 8-race package and race cards followed by a disco which cost £280 for the night (there are reduced packages available). Venue hire was free as the clubhouse was used. All food purchased for the night came out of the money collected on the night.

- *What was the turnover/profit?*

Selling all the available pre-purchase spaces gave £344. Minus Nigel's cost and prizes this left a balance of -£50 on the night. However, following the ticket touting this increased to £600. Bacon roll and raffle sales gave an additional £245. Total profits from the event were £845.

- *What knock on effect did it have?*

In the organiser's own words: '£845 is obviously a great benefit to the club, and for relatively little time, is a rather easy way to make money for the club. However, the main benefit in the past couple of years has to be the social aspect. This event introduces new families and supporters to the club annually and re-engages those on the fringes of the club. We often see these families returning to other events following the night and it is a good tie in to integrate the youth and senior sections of the club.'

- *What were the key learnings?*

'Having run the event for several years the process of organising has got easier. The main challenges are ensuring that all the pre-sale spots are sold in advance of the night. Often players/supporters that cannot attend the night opt not to buy pigs, however this year we really pushed the event and assured all players that if they won, the prize would be kept aside for them, and this helped with sales. The more people that attend on the night, the higher the profit. I'd recommend doing the event either as a pre-season fundraiser or an end of season social.'



Large scale event with high turnover

These are events which have grown year on year since their inception and have come to provide a strong level of income for the rugby clubs. Both events grew in scale after early success to provide strong support to the clubs. There are also many great learnings here that can apply to smaller events too.

Example: Perth Beer Festival

- *What is the event?*

The event is Perth Beer Festival run by Perthshire Rugby Club. The festival was first run in 2011 and has grown year by year since then not only in the size of the festival but also in the associated events the same weekend. The focus of the weekend is the beer festival itself which takes place on the Saturday split between free entry during the day and a ticketed event with entertainment in the evening. On the Friday night, there is now a comedy night as part of the expanded weekend plan along with a sevens competition on the Sunday. Beer sales at the event are covered by tokens and come in at £4 a pint or £2 a half. Further details on the event can be found here <http://www.perthbeerfestival.co.uk/>

- *Who organised it?*

The event is run by the club as whole, but focus is kept by regular meetings chaired by the Chief Exec of the club. The Chief Exec retains overall control and responsibility for the event. The Business Development Manager for the club takes on responsibility for a large amount of the planning and admin that goes into the event. On the weekend of the event the club takes an 'all hands on deck' approach with each section within the club taking on its own responsibility.

- *What were the expectations and goals?*

The expectations for the event have evolved as the event itself has evolved but ultimately the focus is on driving revenue to support the club. The focus of the event is not about the promotion of the rugby club itself. The marketing materials and website don't focus heavily on the club so as not to distract from the event itself which is viewed as a separate entity. Although this is not a focus, the running of the event does positively impact the perception of the club itself.

- *How long did the planning take?*

Any booking required for the following year is carried out immediately after the current year's event. The bulk of the planning and organisation kicks off in January



with the event taking place in May. Planning for the event is ongoing as each year improvements can be made, and extra scale and turnover possibilities added.

- *How much did it cost?*

Although aspects of the event take a large investment such as a 45m marquee, it is possible to keep costs down. The extra add-on events such as the comedy festival are a great way to ensure the absolute best value is made of large investments such as the marquee as they are used to their fullest. The marquee would need to be there on the Friday anyway so it may as well be used. Sponsorship always helps with costs. Each keg or cask served on the day has its own sponsor which helps cover the cost of the beer purchase itself. There is also large-scale event sponsorship which assists with the costs of things like the marquee.

- *What knock on effect did it have?*

The profit, although hard earned, has a large impact on the club's overall finances and what they can achieve. The event also serves to bring together members from all different sections of the club and have them working for a common goal. Although the club don't market the beer festival as being tied to the club there is still a positive boost for the club based on the club's space being used along with being able to showcase the sport of rugby itself across the weekend.

- *What were the key learnings?*

The club is constantly looking to improve their offering and constantly evolve the concept of the event. The clear areas of responsibility of the event allow it to continue year in year out and increase its success every year. Growth every year is also vital in getting to the scale they have managed to achieve. They started with an achievable goal in year one and have grown every year since then.



Example: Crieff Beer Festival

Crieff & Strathearn Rugby Club have historically run a beer festival that had a similar makeup to that of Perthshire. It was an early success and is another great model for an event that can bring in circa £10,000.

They would operate the festival on Friday and Saturday night with a quiz boosting the offering on the Friday night, with the daytime on Saturday having more of a family focus along with a vets game. The Saturday night was boosted by a BBQ and live music. The funding of the event was backed up by keg sponsorship along with event sponsorship.

This festival was an early success with:

- 400-500 customers over the 2 days.
- Profit of £8,500.
- Inveralmond Brewery sponsorship and support.
- Successful showcase of the rugby club.
- Support for youth section through hosting awards at the event.