



# Setting up a Pickleball Club

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This is intended to be added to PI's website to aid clubs in setting up their own Club and to give them the best chance of being successful and securing support from their local councils and community. Information here developed from a number of sources including <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/travel-and-recreation/sport-and-leisure/setting-up-a-new-club/>



## Why do you want to set up a club?

Your Local Sports Partnership has organised some introduction days and you've found that you love the game but know that it is going to end after the intro is finished.

If you are setting up a club, such as a sports club, there are a few questions you should consider:

Are there enough potential members?

Are there enough volunteers to run the club?

Is there another club in the area that is already meeting the need for this type of club?

Is the club going to be for the retiree community or a mixture including those working?

This reflects the time slots that you'll need.

Once you have decided to set up a club there are a number of things you will need to agree on.

## 1 Gather your tribe

- Gather Group interested in playing with basic contact info.
- Invite expressions of interest in setting up a club. Who'd like to be involved in initial committee? Need minimum of 3 people for committee.



## 2 First steps with your initial volunteers

Gather sample documents required by the club. (Will have links to these documents online)

- Sample Constitution
- Membership forms with waivers
- Stand-alone waiver doc for visiting players on intro days
- Code of Conduct Form
- Risk assessment form required by insurance company.
- Sample letter for credit union
- Get info from your local Credit Union/Bank regarding setting up a Club Account
  - Call into your local Credit union/bank so that you will have the information required by them to save going back and forth and having extra meetings to sign papers etc.
- Make contact with your local community centre and check out available times to play and costs etc.
- Find out about insurance required by the centre/school and if they need letter of indemnity
- Contact insurance broker, many clubs use Marsh Insurance (Contact Brian Boswell 012026020) or BHP Insurance (Contact Nick Ryan 014277600), and get a quote on insurance.
- Contact Pickleball Ireland [info@pickleballireland.org](mailto:info@pickleballireland.org) to see if you can borrow equipment for when you start.



- On initial startup there may be people willing to invest in setting up the club by purchasing equipment etc but a plan should be in place so that they will recoup their startup investment costs and this should be factored into session costs.
- The costs of setting up the club. Purchasing club equipment with nets costing between €120-€210, paddles €40+, balls €3+ and Public Liability Insurance €310+.
- The club shouldn't cost people to be a volunteer but should be able to sustain itself. To that end clubs should review budgetary requirements to ensure financial viability and sustainability to avoid any individuals incurring personal expenses with regard to the organising of the clubs affairs

### 3 First Formal Meeting where a Committee is elected by the Club Members.

- Invite everyone who wants to play in the club to the meeting.
- On initial meeting decide who will record minutes.
- Elect principal officers. Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and other roles if required PRO, Children's Officer and/or Designated Liaison Person, Membership Officer, Coaching Officer, Safety Officer, etc. and ordinary members. Max 9 members
- Decisions on documents etc can have been discussed and shared beforehand so that this is a formal agreement on decisions recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- Decide on Name of Club. Make sure that a similar named club doesn't exist keep the name simple and local.
- Decide on wording of Constitution adjust as necessary to align with annual year. Adjust as necessary to fit into the values of your club. Sample available from PI (insert link here)



- Decide are you going to be a club by association or if you are going to plan on capital expenditure eg building courts etc. then becoming a limited company might be more appropriate (beyond scope of this set of recommendation's)
- Agree on Club Code of Conduct
- Agree that the committee can set the cost of annual membership and cost of session play. Remember you not only need to cover the cost of the court but will need to cover cost of replacing paddles and balls as they do break and making sure that the club is sustainable. Making sure the club can cover the costs when less people than normal turn up.
- Decide who are going to be the 3 signees for the credit union/bank account. Usually 2 required for withdrawals. And formally record this information. A letter expressing this will need to be written and signed for by the 3 people.
- Close meeting with a plan of next actions by the New Committee and when they are going to meet up again.

## 4 Finding Sources of Funding

- Joining your Local Authority Public Participation Network PPN.
  - Once you have your constitution, committee and credit union account you should be able to apply to join your local PPN
  - <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/b59ee9-community-network-groups/>
  - Here you will find sources of grant aid and other information that might make funding and running your club easier.
- Contact your local County Councillors as they may have additional sources of funding or information that might help in your club development.



- <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/fd139-local-government-councils-and-councillors/?referrer=https://www.housing.gov.ie/local-government/administration/local-authorities/local-authorities>
- There might be local businesses or even club members who would be willing to sponsor club activities or teeshirts etc. (This might come down the line when you are more established)

## 5 Running your sessions

The great thing about Pickleball is that it is really easy to pick up a paddle and start playing however you want to have some basic systems in place to keep things safe, make sure that you collect your session fee's and that as many people as possible have a great time. Involve everyone in the setup and teardown of the equipment remember it is their club and they have a part to play in making it work as well as possible.

### Keep your club and players safe

- Prior to coming to the venue to play, review your Risk Assessment Documents and on arrival get the area set up as safely as possible. Identify risks that can't be changed.
- Before play remind all the players of the built-in risks of the hall and make sure that they are aware of where they are playing and to take appropriate care
- Brief every time about the dangers of,
  - Backtracking when someone lobs, risk of injury. Get their partner to chase it down or leave it.
  - chasing down balls that they have no right to get, injury risk
  - diving for balls, injury risk



- If you have longer sessions 1.5-2hrs+ then tell new people that they will need to take regular breaks as the game takes more out of people than they expect.
- Have someone assigned the role of signing in people and collecting cash or Revolut payments using a roll-book/notebook for current members
- Have waivers on hand and make sure new people sign them on their first try-out and someone assigned the role of collecting waivers and their session payment for new people. This might be a membership officer.
- Get people to sign up and join your club as members if they like the game after their first or second try-out.

## Organising Play

When you start the club hopefully you will have been given some introduction by your local sports partnership who will initially provide equipment and give basic instruction (this might be very basic depending on the experience of the tutor). When you are then left to your own devices you need to have a plan.

- Hopefully you will have basic contact details and permission to use WhatsApp as with this you can create a poll and have an idea of how many are going to come to the session.
- It can be very helpful initially to have name tags available for people to have their names easily visible, this helps people get to know each other much quicker.
- In the beginning having a simple tool like a set of coloured lollypop sticks (4 of each colour and a colour per available court) and a bag can be used to mix up the players into different teams and courts.
- If you have a very limited time like 1 hour then having timed games eg 8-10 min games work best as you have players coming on and off the courts at the same



time. You can use the coloured sticks to repopulate the courts carefully noting those who didn't get to play if you are ever subscribed so that they don't get put out again.

- As your club develops there will be players who will be stronger than others and usually because of age, experience and ability and while it is good to mix these players in with everyone else often its not as much fun for any of the players if there is too big a disparity in playing ability. Here is where somebody needs to be assigned the role of pairing off players for games based on your session poll results. This can be done with a pen and paper or through the use of a dedicated application that will mix your players of similar abilities together. E,g, in order of cost all apple apps atm
  - <https://apps.apple.com/app/id6448711338> PickleTeams good for random games including single courts. Have to enter players each time. But can copy and paste from another application
  - <https://apps.apple.com/app/id1455799642> PB Play good for teams
  - Match Up which is expensive when you purchase the full pack but works really well when you have bigger numbers with different skill levels.  
<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/matchup-tennis-pickleball/id1294059754>



