

Going for Growth....

The new season is here and so, I'm pleased to be able to report, is the first batch of development initiatives coming out of the various Federation Working Parties that were set up late last year. More will follow, but the ones that are now 'ready to go' are as follows:

The Marketing group is launching two offerings: a guide to getting your club onto Facebook and a hosted club website template. The Facebook guide is aimed at 'social media novices' and features clear instructions supported by screen shots along with ideas on how to best reach new target audiences such as 30 to 50 year olds, a much sought after demographic at many clubs. The website offering should be of interest to the many clubs with no website currently and also to some whose website is proving hard to support or is due for a refresh. The template will offer options for many features that a club would expect including Welcome, The Game, Learn to Play, Finding Us, Contacts, News, Calendar, Members Area etc. The websites will be centrally hosted and administered at no charge to clubs and guidance will be offered on how to tailor it with individual club content, providing an excellent focal point for wider marketing activities. We are looking for perhaps one club per Federation to participate in an **initial pilot** before a wider rollout during the season - **please do let me know asap if you would like to be considered for this.**

The Communication group is launching an online forum for use by any Federation committee member wanting to share local success stories, problems, requests for help, work, facilities, expertise etc with Federation colleagues around the country. The resultant increase in the volume and quality of communications between Federations should benefit all clubs as the season progresses.

The Direct Support to Clubs group is delighted to announce a new framework of assistance for clubs called '**Croquet Matters**'. It will build on all the existing support offered by the CA, the Federations and the Academies by adding details of other sources of help such as County Sports Partnerships, the Sport and Recreation Alliance, Join In etc. It will also, and in particular, look to make extensive use of Sport England's 'Club Matters' offering which comprises a self assessment tool (the Club Improvement Tool), a range of online toolkits for key areas such as Club People (members, coaches and volunteers), Club Marketing, Club Finances and Club Management and, finally, a programme of complementary workshops around the country.

A more detailed description of Croquet Matters is to be found (along with the Facebook Guide mentioned earlier) at a new section on the CA website, under the 'Clubs and Federations' tab. Whilst 'self service' by clubs is perfectly possible, our preferred approach is via a guided engagement, with Federation Development Officers currently gearing up to deliver this with central support from me. Clubs can make ad hoc use of Croquet Matters content should they know specifically where they want to improve...or alternatively they might choose to be helped along a journey of self assessment and prioritisation of focus areas that can make the biggest contributions to whatever development goals they set for themselves.

Any club wishing to engage with the new Croquet Matters framework should initially register their interest with me. I will then liaise with their local FDO and look to set up an appropriate workshop for the club committee as soon as possible dependent on the level of interest generated by this launch.

Croquet Matters is by no means the finished article at this point. We are confident, though, that it will deliver benefits to each and every early participant and we are also committed to sharing the learning from engagements across all Federations. We will also look to continue to add 'croquet specific' offerings to enhance the generic content available within Club Matters and other external tools.

So...if your club is facing development or even sustainability challenges as we enter a new season, please do consider giving Croquet Matters a chance to make a difference. All the FDOs around the country and I are keen to help so just drop me a line and we can get started!

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