



**Innovation during the Covid-19 pandemic:
Volunteers and voluntary sports
organisations in England**

Case Study 7: Implementing club membership management application (app)

Research report for Sport England

Published January 2022

Case Study 7:

Implementing club membership management application (app)

Sport: BMX biking

Size of club: 174 members (100 junior)

No of volunteers: 20

Own premises/land: No, facilities rented on long term lease

Age range: 4 to 70, with approximately 60% under 15

Paid staff: Coaches are reimbursed expenses

What is the innovation?

The club introduced a club membership management app. The system used was Spond.

Why was this innovation implemented?

In response to Covid-19 restrictions, the club were required to restrict the number of BMX bike riders at any one session. They also needed an effective Covid-19 track and trace system and an electronic payment system to avoid handling cash.

“We used to have anybody could just turn up and we’d find a bike and a helmet and gloves and see how they got on but, because of covid restrictions, we had to set up a more formal process.”

What impact did this innovation have on the club as a whole?

Implementing an online system for registering members and booking sessions saved time spent by volunteers on administration. It also helped improve the accuracy of membership data. Furthermore, the app has improved member communication. For example, the app allowed the club to collate details of all of their riders (including parents of under 15 year-olds) and message them efficiently – “it’s made it a lot easier for us to contact people”.

What impact did this innovation have on sports volunteers?

Club administrators can now use Spond to send messages to members about volunteering events. This has made life considerably easier for club administrators:

“Sometimes it can be difficult to ask people to help if you’re not sure if they’re going to be a volunteer or not.....The secretary used to spend maybe two evenings going around asking people face-to-face or by email if they can help, whereas now it’s done in two or three minutes with a message on Spond and seeing what responses you get back. That has been one benefit of moving to Spond.”

With the app in place, members seem more willing to put themselves forward for roles. It has increased the pool of volunteers and reduced reliance on the same few volunteers to man BMX racing events/sessions.

“ [Previously], we didn’t have the process to contact them reliably, which we now have, so we’re getting more people responding.”

What were the challenges faced when implementing this innovation?

The club implemented the app rapidly because of the Covid-19 situation. Whilst the app was easy to set up, the club would have preferred to spend more time testing it before going live.

What prevented this innovation from happening before Covid-19 restrictions?

The club committee had been hesitant to use new technology. Older members of the committee did not understand ‘modern processes’. Covid-19 forced a change, which some more technology literate committee members were able to take forward.



Eight short case studies that showcase innovative practices in sports volunteering:

Case Study 1: Introducing technology to enhance participation

Case Study 2: Forming buddy groups to enhance engagement

Case Study 3: Using a survey of members to spark modernisation

Case Study 4: Using social media to attract new members

Case Study 5: Purchasing own land to offer an outdoor format of the sport

Case Study 6: Getting involved in the local community

Case Study 7: Implementing club membership management app

Case Study 8: Increasing Volunteer Inclusion and Diversity