

**SPOTLIGHT  
CLUB  
OF  
THE  
MONTH**



# Granite City Wanderers Hockey Club





# Becoming a Charity

Granite City Wanderers pride themselves on being a progressive and ambitious club who have always looked for ways to continue to develop and improve. In December 2012, the club were successful in applying to Scottish Hockey's Professional Coaching Programme, which was a watershed moment for the club, as we had never even thought about employing staff to help support the clubs development plans.

The coach was in post for two seasons and it made the club think seriously about if we were to do something similar in the future, would the club have the most sustainable structure to support it?

This further led to discussions about the potential for giving the club charitable status, and the potential benefits that might bring. One of the very long terms aims of the club has always been to look into pitch development, and we thought that moving from a constituted group to a charity would not only help the club attract more funding for this objective (*should we find an appropriate area of land to develop*), but would also give us a better governance structure and legal position to enable us to do this.





# The Process.....



The process of becoming a charity was actually relatively straightforward. We approached our local Third Sector Interface (Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations - ACVO). They provided a range of options for the legal structure for the club, and agreed that we would have the correct aims and objectives for OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator) to potentially accept our application to become a charity. With his advice, we decided the best option would be to apply to become a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation), ACVO helped us write our application, and also change our constitution so that it would be suitable for a charitable organisation.

The trickiest part was convincing the general club membership that moving to get charitable status was the right thing to do. It took a while to convince the wider membership of the merits of the change, particularly when this including having to effectively wind up one version of the club, and transfer the assets across to the new charity.

In terms of the “bad bits”, we now have to submit financial accounts to OSCR every year, along with a annual report, but these can be submitted up to 18 months after the end of our financial year (a date which we can nominate). This puts a little extra pressure on the committee, and particularly on our treasurer – but we managed to submit our first year’s figures without too many issues.



# What are the benefits?

As a charity, we needed to appoint trustees for the club, and we now have 5 in place, who support the strategic direction of the club, and ensure that our club development plan is being progressed. This has meant a slight change in structure regarding club management and committee structure, but it means we get the right people in place to take the club forward. As part of the support ACVO provided, we were able to access training courses for new trustees, to allow each individual to get information on what they are committing to.

We can also look at recruiting trustees from out with the club to help with our financial and marketing capability.

Currently we are also investigating the merits of registering for Gift Aid, to allow us to increase income on donations received and help with fundraising.

We have taken developments relatively slowly since becoming a charity, to ensure we get things right before we look at implementing larger scale projects.





# Our Advice to Other Clubs



- Big decision for clubs that won't be for everyone

- Be clear on why the club want to gain charitable status

- Investigate which charitable status suits your club - there are a lot to choose from!

- Creates a lot more admin but is worth it in the long run

- Long term benefits to the club rather than short term fixes

- Support of ACVO – Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations – very valuable. Clubs should seek support from their local organisation



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For more  
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