



Hartlepool Sport Toolkit – Fund your Club

Simple, steady ways to pay the bills and grow sustainably — without chasing every grant — in Hartlepool

Funding is where many good clubs lose their way.

They start chasing pots.

Writing bids.

Bending delivery to fit criteria.

Promising too much.

Burning out.

Then the money ends... and so does the club.

Here's the mindset shift:

A healthy club is funded by its community first, grants second.

Grants should **support what already works** — not keep something alive artificially.

This guide helps you build **boring, reliable income** so your club feels calm and sustainable.

1. Start With the Basics (before any funding)

If these aren't covered, don't apply for grants yet.

First make sure:

- ☐ regular attendance
- ☐ subs collected consistently
- ☐ venue secured
- ☐ small volunteer team
- ☐ simple bank account
- ☐ clear offer that people value

If families wouldn't pay £2–£4 a week, funding won't fix that.

Demand first. Money second.

2. Build a Simple Income Stack

Avoid relying on one source.

Think **layers**, not lifelines.

Healthy mix looks like:

- 50–70% subs



- 10–20% small fundraising
- 10–20% sponsorship
- occasional grants for extras

If 80–100% is grants → you're fragile.

If most income is local → you're resilient.

3. Membership & Subs (your foundation)

This is your most reliable funding.

Tips

- small weekly or monthly fee
- keep it affordable (£2–£4/session typical)
- collect monthly where possible
- simple system (cash tin, bank transfer, standing order)
- quiet hardship options

Free sounds inclusive, but:

- attendance drops
- commitment drops
- sustainability drops

Low cost > free.

People value what they contribute to.

4. Small Fundraising Beats Big Events

You don't need galas or black-tie dinners.

Simple works better.

Easy wins

- raffle
- bake sale
- sponsored challenge
- club tournament



- Christmas or summer fun day
- tuck shop
- kit sale
- quiz night

These also build community, not just money.

Rule of thumb

If it takes more effort than a normal session, it's probably not worth it.

5. Local Sponsorship (often overlooked)

Small businesses love backing visible, local activity.

Especially:

- kids
- families
- positive stories
- trusted community groups

Offer simple packages

- £100–£300 logo on banner or socials
- sponsor kit or equipment
- sponsor tournament
- sponsor awards

Keep it human:

“Would you like to support local kids’ sport?”

Not:

“Please review our corporate partnership proposal”

Relationships beat proposals.

6. Grants: Use Strategically (not habitually)

Grants are best for:

- equipment
- start-up costs

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- new pilots
- one-off projects
- training
- improvements

Grants are risky for:

- core wages
- rent
- anything you must pay forever

Because when the grant ends... so does the activity.

Healthy grant rule

👉 Only fund things you could survive without.

7. Make Your Case Clearly (when applying)

You don't need jargon.

Funders want:

- real people
- real need
- real outcomes

Keep it simple

Explain:

1. Who you serve
2. What you do
3. Why it matters locally
4. What the money buys
5. What changes because of it

Avoid:

- buzzwords
- inflated promises
- copy-paste strategies



Plain English wins.

Stories beat statistics.

8. Show Your Value (light touch evidence)

You don't need complex reporting.

Just capture:

- attendance numbers
- ages
- photos (with consent)
- short quotes
- small wins
- case studies

Examples:

- "Sam was shy, now leads warm-ups"
- "Parents say it's the only activity they can afford"
- "We've doubled girls' participation"

This makes future funding easier.

Collect as you go — don't scramble later.

9. Spend Like a Community Club

Money coming in doesn't mean money must go out.

Healthy habits

- buy second-hand
- borrow/share kit
- use local venues
- avoid long contracts
- avoid debt
- build small reserves



Aim for:

2–3 months running costs saved

That buffer reduces stress massively.

Calm finances = calm leadership.

10. Think Social Value, Not Just Money

In Hartlepool, your club isn't just sport.

It:

- reduces isolation
- supports families
- improves health
- builds pride
- develops young leaders
- creates safer spaces

That's social value.

This means:

- partners may support you
- venues may discount
- businesses may sponsor
- schools may collaborate

Not everything needs cash.

Sometimes the best "funding" is:

- free space
- shared kit
- volunteer time
- donated food
- printing help

In-kind support often beats grants.

11. Avoid the Funding Traps

Common mistakes

- ✗ chasing every pot
- ✗ designing projects to fit funders
- ✗ hiring staff too early
- ✗ growing too fast
- ✗ relying on one big grant
- ✗ over-promising outcomes

If funding changes your mission, it's the wrong funding.

Your club's purpose comes first.

12. A Simple Annual Plan (example)

Ongoing

Subs cover core costs

Quarterly

Small fundraiser

Twice yearly

Sponsor push

Annually

1–2 small grants for improvements

That's usually enough.

Nothing complicated needed.

Funding Health Checklist

- ☐ Subs collected consistently
- ☐ Multiple income sources
- ☐ Small reserve built
- ☐ No dependency on one grant
- ☐ Fundraising feels manageable
- ☐ No constant stress about money

If yes → you're financially sustainable.



One-line philosophy

Earn locally.

Spend simply.

Fund extras, not essentials.

Build reserves.

Chase relationships, not grants.