

VOLUNTARY ACTION ISLINGTON

Community Buildings Project Case Study

Islington Boxing Club (Islington Community Sports Academy)

About the Organisation	The Club was founded in 1974, and moved to Hazellville Road in 1981. It is open 6 days per week and provides boxing sessions for the whole community, ranging from competitive boxing classes, beginners academy classes and recreational sessions. They particularly encourage young people to attend.
Their Building	The Club is based in a two storey portacabin with a parking area situated in a park
Numbers of Staff	20 Volunteers, 2 fulltime staff (management and project management) 10 paid freelance coaches for recreational sessions
Address	20 Hazelville Road N19 3LP
Contact	www.islingtonboxingClub.org Tel : 07920 280230
Type of Organisation	Company Limited by Guarantee and a Registered Charity
Annual Income	£110,000

Why the Islington Boxing Club needed the Buildings Project

The Club was in a very unusual position with its building. Although the Club owns the building – which it bought from a building contractor who had been using it as a site hut while they did some building in the area – they did not own the land it was on. Islington Council own the land and the Club wanted to get it transferred to them and wanted to re-build the gym and other facilities they have on the site.

To this day the Club does not have many staff and rely very much on volunteers and enthusiasts who have been their core asset to raise money, coach and generally run the Club. The users of the Club pay for membership and classes to help run it and pay the bills.

To successfully achieve transfer of the land from Islington Council, the Club had to sort out the way it ran itself, clarify who its trustees were and provide evidence that they could take on the land, re-develop the site and fundraise to make it happen.

The Club contacted the Buildings Project for help and advice when it's Chair attended one of the Building Projects training days on leases.

How the Buildings Project helped the Club

To help the Club demonstrate that it could take on the land and re-develop the building, it helped them with **compiling a Business Plan and a Fundraising plan**. This entailed commenting on their drafts and questioning their assumptions about what was possible, providing other documents and guidance they could work with and learn from.

To help the Club sort out its governance it first had to help them settle some disputes between trustees by **finding them a lawyer** who was experienced in governance issues in organisations similar to the Club.

The Club also had to re-structure so the Building Project advised them about the kinds of **options** they had and the **models of governance** that are operated by similar organisations, including details such as the **roles of trustees** and issues associated with the operation of the Club such as advice on health and safety and other **statutory compliance** needed to run the Club. They also

To get their land transferred the Club had to **understand what a lease would entail** and what they might want from Islington Council as leaseholders. This helped them to save money on legal advice because they could clearly instruct their lawyer and fully understand their responsibilities as an organisation.

To re-build their facilities the Club had to **understand the process of developing a building and getting planning permission**. This has helped them draw up their plans for the new building and apply for planning permission.

What the Boxing Club said about the help they got from the Buildings Project

"It turned the Club around really"

"The project provided very flexible and professional support by phone, e mail and face to face that fitted in with us. The project knows what it is talking about. Trustees benefitted enormously both personally and professionally"

"The third party objective view they gave was extremely valuable so that trustees could focus on issues facing them all rather than trustees' individual views about different parts of the process"

"The Building Project is very clear about its remit and utterly professional. They provided invaluable help guiding us around Islington Councils structures and staff"

“We accessed the Sport England Club Mark accreditation for clubs that work with young people as a result of their help”

“They made excellent improvements to our business plan by challenging us on any assumptions or inklings of poor practice”

“We would not have known we needed some of the advice we got but, because we got it, it saved money on lawyers that they helped us to get and who were very experienced on the issues we needed to deal with”