

Facilities case study

Project: Haverhill Gymnastics Club, Suffolk
Type: Industrial/Commercial Unit conversion
Cost: £88,000



In 2008, Haverhill Gymnastics Club started delivering sessions at Abbeycroft Leisure Centre. The club began with just 37 gymnasts, but due to its popularity, there was soon a need to grow. After relocating to a local school while refurbishments took place at Abbeycroft, the club decided to increase the number of sessions, allowing them to take up to 150 participants, mainly in general gymnastics.

Project overview

With popularity growing, it was time to look in to a dedicated facility project. After considerable time, effort and finance was invested in an unsuccessful new build project in 2013, the club refocused on a unit conversion which led them to the facility they have today.

The project

The club viewed several units in the 2013-14 period, all of which proved unsuitable due to a number of factors including cost and lack of parking. A unit was finally identified as suitable in late 2014 and after a three month planning and negotiation phase – this included looking at layout design, change of use feasibility and rent negotiations – the club agreed terms. At this point they applied for British Gymnastics facility funding and other local grants as well as changing the company structure to be limited by guarantee.

With change of use authorised, the club were given the keys in September 2015. The conversion took just six weeks as the unit was in good condition.

The main works completed included creating a viewing window into the main gym, installing new electrics, heating, lighting and alarm systems throughout and converting offices and an accessible toilet. Due to a tight timescale the major works were completed by paid contractors who were sourced locally.

Project cost

The project was jointly funded by Haverhill Gymnastics Club and several other partners, including:

Business Loan: £25,000

British Gymnastics facility funding: £25,000

Local Authority funding: £25,000

Parish and Town council funding: £4,000

One Haverhill: £3,500

Sanofi (local business): £1,500

Club funds: £4,000

Total: £88,000

The funding provided allowed the club to fund the following:

Solicitors and planning: £2,899

*Surveyor and architect gave service free of charge.

Equipment: £32,340

Electrics, heating and alarm systems: £18,771

Office equipment and miscellaneous: £3,089

Building works: £12,699

Rent deposit - £20,000

Expenditure	£/month
Rent	£ 2,812.50
Staffing	£ 10,000
Utilities	£ 614
Director's loan	£ 750
Insurance	£120
Other, including accountancy	£ 696.79

Project impact

- From November 2015 to November 2016 the total number of club members rose from 200 to 700.
- 80% of current members are taking part in Gymnastics for All sessions.
- New freestyle sessions are at capacity with 30 attendees. The club are looking to increase this.
- My Leadership Academy is growing and now has 14 members.
- The club have a dedicated team of volunteers who manage the viewing area and fundraising.



Developing space



Equipment set-up

The future

The club have close links with the local authority and have a clear understanding of the town plan, including the projected housing/population increase. Due to this a second dedicated facility is part of the club's medium-term plan.

Top tips for other clubs

- If you have someone who is happy to project manage, let them.
- Do as much work as you can without spending any money. Get volunteers in, ask for donations from local businesses and members for help – what trades do they have?
- Be conservative with your projected member increase, especially in months 0-6. Leave room to grow.
- Engage young leaders. They are the future, so make them happy.
- Design your layout carefully. If you're not high performance, don't have a high performance layout. Maximise your general gymnastics.