Fire Sports UK

Good Practice Guidance for Sponsorship

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Sponsorship overview?

Cash – It's important to have realistic expectations before approaching sponsors for cash support. Knowing that you can offer sponsorship benefits that are commercially attractive and represent good value for the potential sponsor is key.

Value in kind – the free provision of products and/or services. What expenditure does your club currently incur? Are there products and/or services that could be provided as 'value in kind' from local businesses?

Expertise – the free provision of staff time and expertise. Are there areas of expertise that your club could benefit from, but you don't have the volunteers or the funds to pay for it? For example, book-keeping, accountancy, legal advice, IT support or marketing.

Volunteers – provision of staff as volunteers to help at club events or competitions. Employees from local businesses who will volunteer a day of their time, either as a group or individually, to support at events, help with general maintenance and/or renovations, or to support the club with profile raising/income generating activities.

Awareness – Helping to extend your reach within the local community. Increased awareness is key to the sustainability of any club. Sponsors can provide access to their extended networks, opening doors to other local businesses and connections as well as helping to attract new members by raising the profile of the club.

What does the business want out of a sponsorship deal?

Firstly, consider 'what's in it for the business?'. Why might a business want to get involved with your club? Common business reasons for sponsorship relationships include:

- Being seen to support things in their local community
- Supporting clubs and organisations that are important to their staff
- Supporting clubs and organisations that are important to their clients and customers
- Supporting clubs and organisations that are comprised of, or followed by their target audience
- Supporting the interests of the key directors / owners (how many of your club members are business owners themselves?)
- Supporting industry/product-related organisations
- Supporting clubs and organisations that can help promote and assist the health and wellbeing of their staff/people living locally.

What can you offer to businesses

What do you have to offer that aligns with any of the motivations and/or benefits that businesses want out of a sponsorship deal?

- Access to a club membership all living within a 20-mile radius and all interested in running and/or wider athletics, and, therefore, probably interested in health, fitness, wellbeing, eating well, nutrition, other forms of exercise, socialising, etc.
- What additional information do you know about your membership – age, gender, geography, etc.?
- Online exposure – know your digital reach through both social media and your website
- E-comms – inclusion within newsletters that go to members
- Ground / facilities sponsorship – track-side hoardings
- Kit/equipment sponsorship
- Race / Meet day sponsorship
- Naming of your members club (the Garstang Roadrunners Club – Sponsored by Tyler Electrical).

What do you want/need?

Now you need to return to your original questions as identified in Section 1. Why do you need their support and how much money/ support do you need?

What will you ask for?

This is not just about how much you need. This is about finding a balance between what the sponsor wants, what you can offer and the perceived value of benefit of that exchange. Obviously the more attractive the perceived benefit, the greater the amount you could ask for.

1. Sponsorship Policy

FSUK expect consistent and ethical guidelines for Fire Sports UK (FSUK) sections when engaging with potential sponsors, including template letter text (see Appendix 1). It ensures sponsorship activities align with FSUK's mission and values while maintaining compliance with legal, ethical, and organisational standards.

2. General Principles

- Mutual Benefit: Sponsorship agreements should create value for both FSUK and the sponsor.
- Transparency: All sponsorships must be openly documented and disclosed to the FSUK board.
- Ethical Considerations: FSUK must not engage with sponsors whose products, services, or reputation could harm FSUK's standing or compromise its values.
- Compliance: Sponsorship agreements should adhere to this guidance's principles.

3. Prohibited Sponsorship Areas

- Sponsorship agreements must not include partnerships with organisations promoting:
    - Tobacco products
    - Alcohol products (except where explicitly permitted under strict conditions—see Appendix 2)
    - Gambling services
    - Politically affiliated or pressure group-related activities
    - Activities detrimental to young people or general public welfare, such as those targeting under-18 teams with inappropriate content.

Examples of restricted sponsorship sources include alcohol breweries, tobacco companies, and gambling services.

4. Steps for Securing Sponsorship

1. Identify Potential Sponsors:
    a) Focus on local businesses and organisations aligned with FSUK values.
    b) Map networks of members to identify contacts within potential sponsor organisations.
2. Create a Sponsorship Proposal:

a) Clearly outline the benefits to the sponsor (e.g., logo placement, event mentions, access to FSUK members).
b) Provide details of FSUK's mission, member demographics, and expected outcomes from the sponsorship.

3. Evaluate the Sponsor:
    a) Assess the sponsor's alignment with FSUK's values and ethical standards.
    b) Conduct due diligence to ensure no conflicts of interest.

4. Approval Process:
    a) Submit sponsorship proposals for review by the FSUK Board to ensure compliance and appropriateness.

5. Draft a Formal Agreement:
    a) Include terms such as sponsorship amount, benefits to the sponsor, duration of the agreement, and exit clauses.
    b) Ensure a mutual understanding of deliverables and expectations.

5. Managing Gifts and Hospitality

a) FSUK representatives must not accept gifts or hospitality that:
b) Could be perceived as a bribe.
c) Exceed a nominal value (e.g., £50, unless explicitly approved by the Board).
d) All gifts and hospitality must be declared to the FSUK ethics officer.

6. Monitoring and Reporting

- Maintain a centralised record of all sponsorship agreements.
- Conduct periodic reviews to ensure compliance with FSUK policies and to evaluate the effectiveness of sponsorship arrangements.

Appendix 1: Template Letter Text for Sponsorship Solicitation

[Your Name]
[Your Position, FSUK Section]
[Address]
[City, Postcode]
[Date]

[Sponsor Contact Name]
[Organisation Name]
[Address]
[City, Postcode]

Dear [Sponsor Contact Name],

Subject: Sponsorship Opportunity with Fire Sports UK

I am writing to explore the possibility of partnering with [Sponsor's Organisation Name] as a valued sponsor of Fire Sports UK ([FSUK Section]). We are a dedicated organisation committed to promoting [key FSUK objectives or sports] across the UK.

[Customise this section with specific events or opportunities for sponsorship.]

We believe this partnership will mutually benefit both FSUK and [Sponsor's Organisation Name] by [specific benefits, e.g., raising sponsor profile, supporting local sports relevant to the section].

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further and tailor a package that aligns with your objectives.

Thank you for considering this opportunity. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Contact Information]

Appendix 2: Appropriate Alcohol Sponsorship

1. Age Restrictions

- **Target Audience:** Sponsorship must only target events, teams, or activities involving participants and audiences that are exclusively adults (e.g., over 18 years old in the UK).
- **No Youth Exposure:** Alcohol sponsorship must not directly or indirectly target minors. This includes avoiding sponsorship of junior teams or events where children are a significant portion of the audience.

2. Content Guidelines

- **Appropriate Messaging:** Promotional content must not glamorise alcohol, suggest that it enhances performance or success, or depict irresponsible consumption.
- **Compliance with Advertising Standards:** All advertisements and sponsorship materials must comply with national and industry advertising codes, such as the *UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) Code.*

3. Branding and Placement

- **Limited Visibility:** Alcohol branding should not dominate the event's identity (e.g., event naming). Logos or branding could be restricted to specific areas like banners at adult-only zones or on promotional materials not aimed at minors.
- **Neutral Presentation:** The presentation of the brand should focus on the corporate or responsible drinking message rather than promoting consumption.

4. Responsible Drinking Initiatives

- **Inclusion of Public Health Messaging:** Sponsorship agreements may require the inclusion of responsible drinking campaigns or public service announcements, such as "Drink Responsibly" or similar initiatives.
- **Support for Community Initiatives:** Sponsors may be required to fund local community health projects or education on alcohol misuse.

5. Monitoring and Review

- **Sponsorship Oversight:** A review panel or board (e.g., FSUK or a regulatory body) should vet and approve sponsorship arrangements involving alcohol.

- **Ongoing Compliance:** Regular monitoring to ensure the sponsor adheres to agreed conditions.

6. Event Type Restrictions

- **Focus on Adult-Oriented Events:** Alcohol sponsorship should be associated only with events that are primarily for adults, such as charity runs, marathons, or professional-level competitions.
- **No Link to High-Risk Activities:** Avoid linking alcohol sponsorship with events that might encourage risky behaviours, such as high-adrenaline sports or late-night social events.

By adhering to these conditions, organisations can responsibly navigate the challenges of alcohol sponsorship while safeguarding their integrity and the welfare of participants and audiences.