



Guide to Setting up a New Club

Introduction

This information booklet will guide you through the process of forming a new club with the Association. It will also provide you with an idea as to what the Association is all about.

We recommend you visit our website (www.airc.ie) for further information as it will give you an up-to-date overview of the activities covered by membership of the Association.

Minimum Criteria

Each new club must register a minimum of 20 new riding members i.e. those who have never been a member of a riding club before. The Executive Committee may review this figure if there are no other riding clubs within a thirty mile radius of your proposed new club.

Other factors are taken into consideration when making a decision on your clubs submission including location and the impact your club may have on existing clubs in your area.

Application Procedure

1. Your club must submit an application form (F18/11) to National Office.
2. Your clubs application is then forwarded to your prospective regional committee for their consideration. This is a meeting of all clubs in the region of which you are not entitled to attend. The regional committee will then formulate an opinion on your application and forward their comments to the Executive Committee. This will be based on the impact your club will have in the region and to clubs in your locality.
3. The Executive Committee will then make the final decision based on your proposal and any comments received from your respective region committee.

If your club has been approved, a representative of the region and our Director General or other representative may arrange a meeting with your group, at a location convenient to you, to answer any queries that you may have. Clubs find this visit useful as they can discuss the idea of riding clubs on a person to person basis.

The relevant registration forms will be distributed to the club secretary and then when your new members receive their membership cards, they can participate in A.I.R.C. activities.

About the Association

In 1973 a group of people from various riding clubs came together to form the Association of Irish Riding Clubs (A.I.R.C.) under the chairmanship of Eddie Fowler.

The membership of the Association at that time was 15 clubs. It has since steadily grown to approximately 130 clubs. This growth was boosted in the latter years by the introduction of a blanket public liability insurance policy.

The administration of the riding club movement is organised as follows:

- The Association is the national body responsible for policy, the grading system, rules for competition, examinations, judges and examiners lists, liaison with other equestrian bodies, etc.
- The Association is divided into eight regions for administrative purposes.
- The day-to-day business of the Association is the responsibility of the Executive Committee (which is appointed by the National Committee). The Executive are active members and have a good knowledge and understanding of what is required by the members of the Association.
- The National Committee consists of 24 members on which each region nominates three members. The National Committee is a discussion forum, formulating policy for the Executive Committee to consider.
- The Association organises (in co-operation with the regions) the national championships and these are designed mainly for enjoyment.
 - Hunter Trial Championships
 - Riding Clubs Festival
 - Show Jumping Championships
 - Team Show Jumping Championships
 - Dressage Championships
 - Horse Trials Championships
- The Association also provides an equitation and horse care training system offering four levels to enable members to improve their knowledge and skills.

Vision

Enjoying Equestrianism

Mission Statement

Encouraging riding as a sport and recreation, to promote good fellowship among riders and to improve and maintain the standard of riding and horsemastership in Ireland.

Benefits of Membership

The benefits of affiliation to the Association of Irish Riding Clubs include:

- **Insurance**

Automatic Public Liability for all riding club organised events up to a maximum of €10,000,000. This insurance covers clubs and their members during organised club activities. Members must be in possession of an up-to-date membership card which is proof that they are fully paid up. Extreme care must be taken when running inter-club events that all competitors' cards are checked. The rules of the A.I.R.C. must be carefully implemented at all A.I.R.C. events

Although a basic personal accident policy is also in place, members are strongly advised to ensure they have adequate personal accident cover suitable for their own needs.

- **National Competitions**

As mentioned earlier the Association organise 7 national competitions annually:

- Hunter Trials Championships
These championships cater for the Advanced Primary, Intermediate, Advanced Intermediate, Open and Advanced Open riders.
- Riding Clubs Festival
This is one of Ireland's biggest amateur equestrian event providing almost 70 competitions in dressage, show jumping, showing and working hunter over two days. There are no qualifiers for this event as it open to all members who wish to participate. The main focus is to have an enjoyable weekend and an emphasis is on providing fun competitions including fancy dress music, musical ride and novelty show jumping competitions.
- Show Jumping Championships
These championships cater for all levels from Primary riders up to Advanced Open riders.
- Team Show Jumping Championship
Regional qualifiers culminate in a final which is held at the Dublin Horse Show each year.
- Dressage Championships
Regional qualifiers culminate in a final which is held in August at a different venue each year.
- Eventing Championships

Qualifiers are held on a regional basis culminating in a final which is held at a different venue each year.

- **Training**

An importance aspect of the Association includes training riders, officials and volunteers. The Association provides this through a number of channels:

- Club training focuses on riders and improving their skills.
- Regional training usually offers more specialised training usually through clinics and seminars.
- National training focuses on up skilling club and competition officials.

Regional Training Bursary Scheme

The Association provides €12,000 to the regions to support training initiatives in their area each year. Each region can claim a maximum of €1,500 towards their tailored programme.

Equitation and Horse Care Exams

This exam system encourages riding club members to attain a higher standard of both horse care and equitation, and so improve the conditions and welfare of the horse in Ireland.

The stage by stage approach encourages the rider to strive for the next higher level and provides a consistent and impartial yardstick by which their progress can be measured.

There are currently 4 levels on offer and these can be taken on a modular basis.

- **Other Benefits**

The Association also offer a number of benefits and support services including:

- Club Mail
Each club is issued with a club mail account. This is essentially a club email address under the airc.ie domain. This allows us and other clubs to easily communicate.
- Membership Online
This gives members and secretary's access to their membership account with the Association. Members can use this to enter and pay for national events online.
- Email Newsletter
Members can sign up to receive our regular eNewsletter via email through the form our www.airc.ie.

Club Requirements

Your club will need to establish the following basic requirements:

- Membership

There is a minimum requirement of 20 new riding members (i.e. those who have never been a member of a riding club before) before a club may be formed.

This may be reviewed by the Executive Committee on a case by case basis provided there are no other clubs within a 30km radius.

- The Club Name

The members will need to establish the name of the club. This must be separate to the name of any riding establishment where the club will be based. Geographical names are preferred.

- The Club Committee

Clubs run their affairs through a committee elected by its members. The elected committee should in turn, elect from within itself, a chairman, a secretary, a treasurer, safety officer and a grading officer. It is advisable that the committee be kept small. Where the club is based at a riding establishment, the club must operate as a completely separate entity.

It is also recommended that the committee elects a public relations officer to liaise with the regional public relations officer and to generate publicity for the club. A child welfare officer will be required in clubs that have members aged 17.

- Constitution of the Club

The objects of a club and a set of rules should be produced as soon as possible to safeguard the interests of the members and committee alike. A template is available on www.airc.ie. This may be adapted to suit your club, but the points covered should be addressed by your committee.

This can be put in place shortly after the clubs application has been approved.

- Bank Account

The club will need to open a bank account to enable it to manage its finances. This must be under the control of the club committee and separate to any other third party, company, etc.

This can be put in place shortly after the clubs application has been approved.

Suggested Activities

The following are suggestions for club activities. They have been operating in other clubs and are tried and tested. They give an excellent basis for any club setting up.

- Riding instruction in all forms. Most clubs gather for a lesson every week, fortnight or even monthly.
- Competitions:
 - Dressage
 - Prix Caprilli
 - Combined Training
 - Show Jumping
 - Derby Show Jumping
 - Horse Trials
 - Hunter Trials
 - Showing
 - Cross Jump
 - Trec
- Lectures, demonstrations, film shows, on all sorts of equestrian subjects.
- Visits to horse shows and other events, i.e. Punchestown, Dublin Horse Show, Millstreet, race meetings, the National Stud, etc.
- Social events:
 - Barbeques
 - Nights out
 - Weekends away
 - Holidays
- Fundraising:
 - Table Quiz
 - Raffles
- Communication with Members:
 - Club Newsletters
 - Club Website
 - Social Media
 - SMS Texts
 - Email

The Application Form

New clubs must submit the new club application form (F18/11) to assist the regional and Executive Committees in making their application.

The application contains the following:

- **Name of the Club**

This is the name the club will register under if approved. This should be geographical and not linked to any establishment.

- **Overall Objective**

Each club in the Association can be fundamentally different; some put a huge emphasis on competitions while others focus mainly on training and social aspects.

- **Further Objectives**

This could include further objectives such as, 'to promote the fun ethos of the A.I.R.C.' A brief paragraph should explain how the club intends to fulfil its objectives.

- **Proposed Location**

This section should outline the following details:

- The exact location of the club (i.e. where the club will be based, please include full address, county location, etc)
- What facilities are available?
- Details other riding clubs in your area. If you are unsure, contact National Office.
 - Outline how your club may affect them and how will you overcome this and interact with them.

- **Proposed Membership**

- Outline the proposed numbers you will have with the following details:
 - Provide details of their names
 - Provide a breakdown of the rider / non riding membership
 - Provide details of proposed members who have already been a member of a riding club.
- How will the club sustain and attract new members without affecting local riding clubs?

- **Benefits to the Region**

How your club will benefit the region you will be affiliating to?

- **Benefits to the A.I.R.C.**

How will the club benefit the Association as an organisation?

Membership

Membership of the Association is restricted to those aged 17 and over.

In addition to riding members, some club supporters will be non-riding people who are attracted to the club through an inherent love of horses. No opportunity should be missed in providing attractions of an equestrian nature for them, encourage them to help and learn about show organisation and the construction of show jumping and cross-country courses. These members are invaluable.

The registration fees (D01/11) are available on to view or download in the club and members resources section on www.airc.ie.

Useful Resources

The club and members resources section of our website provides a number of useful documents and sample forms which your club can use:

- The Club (D20/11)
 - Meetings & Procedures
 - Club Membership Form Template
- The Club Constitution (D21/12)
- The Club Officers (D22/11)

Other useful documents we recommend you consult include:

- Rules and Regulations (D04/12)
- Insurance Information (D05/12)

National Office

National Office is open Monday to Friday between 09:30 to 13:30 and 14:00 to 17:00 and we would be delighted to assist you in anyway that we can.

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