

Carmarthen Athletic Hockey Club's journey and transformation with Mind Cymru

Carmarthen Athletic Hockey is a club with over a hundred members from the ages 8 and above. We welcome all individuals into our hockey family; no experience or knowledge needed. Our journey to team up with Mind Cymru began when we held our first fundraiser. Initially, our event was meant to benefit only our club and our members, however, we wanted to take this opportunity to help others.

Mental health is becoming an increasingly common issue in today's society and sadly, affects many lives. As a club who promotes physical activity to boost health, we thought that we should also promote the awareness of mental health. For instance, everyone's mental health is just as important as their physical health even if it isn't recognised in the same way. By helping fundraise for mental health, not only will we be raising awareness within our hockey club and local community, but we will be giving charities the chance to expand and gain new vital resources that can help make a difference. Also, this will allow them to spend a greater amount of time improving the lives of the people who turn to them for support.

The feeling we had after donating money to Mind Cymru in 2018, was something words could not express. The money we had raised could help change a life and provide that all important help and care so desperately needed. By selecting a charity each season, we are going to help more people in need and helping spread awareness, not only in our club, but also the wider community. That's when our perspective changed and the clubs committee gathered and discussed the idea of setting up a new scheme.

This scheme was put forward and developed by two of our volunteers, Megan Henry and Laura Massocchi. Megan and Laura volunteer for our club working and developing our social media, marketing opportunities, social events and now fundraising. Together, they formed the idea that during each hockey season (September to April) the club will choose a campaign and a corresponding charity to spread awareness within the club, local community and hopefully further.

By supporting charities as a hockey club, we are able to contribute to the community and our members will feel part of a bigger team by helping others. A point they argued for this idea was that one day, somewhere in the near future, these charities could change our lives, or become a last hope for our families. Therefore, if we can help make a difference now, then this could create a positive impact on those relying on these charities.

Starting this scheme at first was a difficult process as there are so many charities we wanted to help! However, as previously stated, mental health is becoming a worldwide issue affecting thousands of people. From what we've seen and experienced through our contact with Mind Cymru, they are one of the biggest and best people locally working towards aiding mental health in the area. Therefore, Mind Cymru was our chosen charity to kick off our new campaign.



However, we also wanted to help support more local mental health charities such as, 'Get the Boys a Lift' who raise awareness by making clothing, campaigning on social media, getting involved with the community as well as making coffee! Therefore, we kitted out our members with training tops from the charity based in Haverfordwest.



within the club and local community. For example, as we saw more of the statistics of mental health affecting those in the younger generation, we used our training sessions to express that we as a club are available to listen or help with any issues they may have, big or small. This took place during 'Children's Mental Health week' in February 2019, a perfect time for us to check in with our younger members. As a club, we see all our members as family and want everyone to know that we are there to support one another, as well as playing hockey!!

We kicked off this scheme with a pub quiz fundraiser in November 2018 at the Carmarthen Athletic Rugby Club, this event raised a total of £403. This involved 5 rounds of questions based on different categories delivered by our guest quiz

master, Royston Massocchi. For this event, each team was made up of 6 members with prizes to cater for 1st-3rd place. Our prizes were kindly donated by, Winter Wonderland Carmarthen, Xcel Bowling and Sai Wu. We concluded this campaign with our last fundraiser event in March 2019, at the Carmarthen Athletic Rugby Club. Due to the high generosity of our members and companies there was even two raffles; including a special raffle with huge prizes including a voucher for a local Indian restaurant, Ginger! For each round of bingo (5 rounds) there were a range of prizes for those who won a 'line'. Then for those lucky people who won a 'full house' they won, a self-made luxurious hamper!! Once the 5 rounds of bingo were completed, we held a flyer round with a prize worth £150 kindly donated by; Days Motor Group. The event raised a total of £800 for Mind Cymru and our Club.



Finally, it was time to use our math skills and confirm the total we'd raised for this seasons scheme (September 2018 – April 2019). Once counted by our club treasurer Emma Davies, it was confirmed that we had reached a sum of £1203 which was evenly split, meaning Mind Cymru were given £601.50. Once we included the money we'd previously given to Mind after

our first bingo fundraiser in February 2018 (£510) which then led to this scheme, as a club we have fundraised a generous amount of **£1,111.50!!** We were completely amazed once the total was confirmed, and as a club, we truly have to thank our fantastic fundraising team, Megan Henry and Laura Massocchi for their fantastic work during the events and advertising. In their own words they responded to this success saying,

"It is small events like these with the support of our members, friends, family and local community that keep charities such as Mind Cymru going. We chose Mind Cymru to start our new scheme of campaigning for charities because we believe in the work they do. Likewise, we want to help our hockey members be more aware of the illness that is mental health as well as our local community; whilst providing funds to help the charity grow and further help others. We'd like to thank everyone for their continued support to our club during our events. We plan on continuing the campaign to reduce the stigma that is behind mental health and hopefully raise awareness so mental health problems within our society, can be significantly reduced".

This is a journey that once started as a one-off event, to us now looking at a new charity, a new campaign every season! Not only that, but we are showing our members that we are a family who share the same passion of hockey and love for one another. A united front willing to tackle not only the opposition in a game, but any problems that face us as a team, or individually. As a club we all share the same aspiration when fundraising for Mind. We hope that one day, the stigmas and issues behind and caused by mental health can be reduced.

If you'd like to support the club's charity events or to find out more about us, please keep an eye out for any information updates on our social media pages:

- Twitter - @Carmshockeyclub
- Facebook - @CarmarthenAthleticHockeyClub
- Instagram - @Carmshockeyclub

