

Grassroots sports clubs—football, netball, cricket—juggle dozens of admin tasks every season. From player registrations and volunteer rosters to club communications and fundraising, the work never stops. Many clubs end up overpaying for software subscriptions packed with features they don't fully use, leading to what I call **subscription bloat**. The money spent on recurring tools could be redirected to areas that truly benefit the club and its members.

Let's take a real-world pricing example: a club with about **500 players, parents, and supporters** on their contact list. If this club trimmed down its software costs by around **\$1,800 per season**, what could that mean? How can clubs make smarter software choices and reinvest savings into what really matters?

Subscription Bloat in Grassroots Clubs: The Hidden Drain

It's easy to fall into the trap of paying for shiny software "all-in-one" tools that promise to do everything. But the reality is often different:

- High base prices monthly, plus extra charges for contacts or message volume
- Multiple tools you'd never use bundled in your package
- Paying for overlapping features across different subscriptions
- Upgrades or add-ons pushing costs even higher
- Committee changes leading to poor documentation and lost knowledge of what's critical

When a club pays, say, \$150 per month for messaging and registrations, but only uses half the capacity, that's wasted money. Multiply this by a typical ~6-month winter season, and you're looking at around \$900+ in avoidable fees from just one tool, before adding others.

Typical Club Tool Stack Costs

Most clubs tend to use a combination of tools for:

1. Player and member registrations
2. Communications — emails, SMS messages, notifications
3. Volunteer rosters and scheduling
4. Event ticketing and payments

A rough but common subscription breakdown for a club with ~500 contacts might look like this over one 6-month season:

Tool Type	Monthly Cost	Season Cost (6 months)	Comments
Email/SMS Communications	\$150	\$900	Flat rate or tiered fee including X contacts and message sends
Online Registration Platform	\$75	\$450	Often charges per form or monthly tier
Volunteer Scheduling	\$50	\$300	May overlap with other tools but billed separately
Event Ticketing	\$50	\$300	Fees sometimes based on per-ticket or percentage basis
		Total	\$325 \$1,950

Nearly \$2,000 a season on multiple subscriptions isn't unusual, but much of it might be unnecessary or replaceable with smarter solutions.

Choosing Pay-Per-Send Messaging VS Monthly Tiers

If your club has a large base (~500 contacts), communications can be one of the biggest software costs. Many platforms charge a monthly flat fee for a contact list up to a set number plus message sends included in the tier. The problem is:

- If you send irregular messages, the monthly fee often isn't cost-efficient.
- Upselling or sudden contact list growth bumps you to higher tiers.
- Hidden transaction fees for certain message types or countries.

Instead, clubs can consider pay-per-send models, where you only pay for exactly the SMS or emails you use. Advantages include:

- Total control over your messaging budget
- No wasted fees for unused monthly allowances
- Scales naturally with your communications activity

For example, a club might pay only \$0.05 per SMS send instead of \$150/month base fee. Sending 1,000 messages in a season would cost \$50 instead of \$900 — a huge \$850+ saving.

Leveraging Free Forms and Registrations

Online registrations can also cost clubs for each form or registrant. But some tools offer:

- Free forms with unlimited submissions
- Integration with club payment gateways without extra fees
- Simple report downloads and data management

When you avoid expensive monthly all-you-can-use plans for registrations, combined with pay-per-send messaging, you can radically reduce your subscription bloat.

What Should Your Club Do with the \$1,800 Saved?

Shifting \$1,800 back into practical club needs can have a meaningful impact — especially for grassroots organizations with tight budgets.

1. Boost Your Equipment Budget

New balls, nets, training gear, bibs, goalposts, or even first aid supplies are vital for quality training and game day success. \$1,800 can buy:

- About 30 new quality footballs or netballs
- Several sets of training cones and markers
- Replacement kits for coaches or junior players

2. Fund Coaching Development

Good coaching drives player satisfaction and development. Investing these savings into coaching gives long-term returns:

- Pay for accredited coaching courses and certifications
- Bring in specialist trainers for clinics or workshops
- Provide coaches with access to software, resources, or CPD (continuing professional development)

3. Enable Facility Upgrades

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Improving playing fields, clubrooms, or spectator amenities makes a huge difference in player and supporter experience. Possible upgrades include:

- Installing improved lighting for evening training
- Buying portable water stations or benches
- Enhancing storage solutions for gear
- Small infrastructure fixes like repairing nets or fences

Realtime Example: Your Club's Season Cost Breakdown Before & After Software Savings

Item	Before (Cost per Season)	After (Optimized Cost)	Savings
Email/SMS Communications	\$900	\$200	\$700
Registration Platform	\$450	Free or \$50 pay-per-registration	\$400
Volunteer Scheduling	\$300	Free or included with other tools	\$300
Event Ticketing	\$300	\$250 (pay-per-ticket fees only)	\$50
Total	\$1,950	\$500	\$1,450

In this example, the club saves about \$1,450 but even conservative scenarios show \$1,000+ in practical savings every season. That extra cash can be a game changer.

Final Thoughts: Smart Software Choices Empower Your Club

Software is essential but should never become a financial drag. By:

- Auditing your subscription stack regularly
- Eliminating tools you don't fully use or that duplicate features
- Choosing pay-per-use over expensive monthly tiers wherever it makes sense
- Maximizing free high-quality options, especially for forms and registrations

Your club can keep admin overheads low, reduce subscription bloat, and channel valuable savings back into what matters most: **equipment budget**, **coaching funds**, and **facility upgrades**.





Imagine the flow-on effect — better gear leads to better player development, great coaching raises skills and morale, and improved facilities keep players and supporters coming back season after season. That \$1,800 is more than just numbers; it's investment in your club's community and future.

Start your season strong by reviewing your software spending now — your club's next upgrade might be just a smart choice away.