





## Jersey Gymnastics Club hit the “MARK” in achieving GymMark



### Summary of Success

-  **First Gymnastics Club to achieve GymMark within the Channel Islands**
-  **Improved standard of the club**
-  **A focused approach to setting goals and targets**
-  **Operating within a framework to guide the club in achieving minimum operating standards**

### Introduction

Jersey Gymnastics Club (formerly Grouville Gym Club) was formed in 1976 at the request of the Sports Leisure and Recreation Committee (now Education Sport and Culture) to run recreational gymnastics classes for as broad a range of children as possible from the Island Schools. The first class was run at Grouville School, hence the Club's original name. Over 30 years later in 2007 the club moved into their new St. John's 'headquarters' at St. John's Sports and Recreation Centre.

The number of gymnasts and coaches in the Club has increased year on year and today the club offer recreational classes at five primary schools around the Island as well as at St. John's where the Squad training is held. The club has a total membership of around 220 aged 4-18 years and a squad membership of approximately 50 who train up to 15 hours a week. The club has 19 qualified coaches – many of whom are ex-gymnasts who have come through the club.

The Club is non-profit making and its aims are:

- Encourage and provide gymnastics throughout the Island
- Provide an opportunity for as many children as possible to participate in gymnastics, regardless of ability or financial means
- Encourage an 'elite' competitive squad of gymnasts for those wishing to take the sport to a higher level

Jersey Gymnastics Club has over many years provided an environment for hundreds of young children and teenagers to benefit from sport on a regular basis and at a low cost. The club has a proven track record and, despite many years of having no dedicated facilities or competition experience, has produced a number of very talented gymnasts in both men's and women's artistic gymnastics. The Club's top gymnasts have competed in regional, national and international competitions with most success being at the Island Games held every two years. 2003 saw the most medals with Ben Frith (now the head Men's Coach) winning 4 Gold, 1 Silver and 1 Bronze; Matthew Maletroit 2 Silver, James Evans 1 Bronze and Nicola Booth won 1 Bronze for the Women's team. In 2010 it is hoped that they will send their first representative to the Commonwealth Games. Matthew Maletroit is currently studying and training in the UK and has already won overall Gold at the British Universities Championships as well as competing successfully at the British Open.

There is also a very strong recreational side to the Club and many of their senior and ex-gymnasts coach at this level. Jersey Gymnastics Club has strong links with the very successful Jersey Special Gymnastics Club and one of the senior gymnasts is currently helping to coach its senior boys squad including Alex Buesnel who recently became the Junior British Champion. A boy's only recreational session, which has been one of their most recent initiatives, has proved very successful.



## Key Partners

- 🌹 English Gymnastics Regional Development Officer – Helen Bushell
- 🌹 Jersey Education, Sport and Culture Department
- 🌹 Local British Gymnastics Club – Jersey Special Gymnastics Club
- 🌹 Mainland British Gymnastics Club – Dynamo School of Gymnastics, Southampton

For more information about this or other PESSCL projects in the Southern Region please contact Helen Bushell [helen.bushell@englishgymnastics.org](mailto:helen.bushell@englishgymnastics.org)



## Project Objectives



Achieve GymMark to improve the standard of the club by:

- Developing an action plan to assist Jersey Gymnastics Club with setting and achieving realistic goals
- Developing partnership working
- Appropriately supporting the volunteers within the club
- Providing appropriate assessment and competitive opportunities for the level of gymnast
- Evidencing that the club provides safe facilities and equipment
- Ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place to safeguard the parents, gymnasts and coaches to include; codes of conduct, child protection, equity, and health and safety
- Appointing and training a welfare officer
- Providing adequate first aid provision and having clear emergency procedures in place
- Forming and formalising a committee and developing a club constitution
- Appropriately communicating with parents, gymnasts and coaches
- Ensuring appropriate insurance is in place
- Promoting publicity and fundraising

## Project Delivery

Jersey Gymnastics Club first heard about the GymMark award during a Club Management training course that two of their club members were attending. Having just moved premises and embarking on a new era the club decided it was the obvious way forward to improve the club.

The GymMark award consists of five modules each of which has to be completed to a high standard. These include Development, Training & Events Programme, Duty of Care & Child Protection, Sport Equity & Ethics and Administration. The Club has had to demonstrate a level of competence and attention to detail in all these areas. For example, good coaching practice covers correct coaching methods, written lesson plans, adequate coach to gymnast ratios and appropriate training and certification. Written policies include coaches, gymnasts & parents guidelines, complaints procedures, child protection and health & safety issues. To fulfil the Club Development criteria all aspects of the club are continually assessed and the Club must demonstrate that its goals set down each year are fulfilled. Consequently the club is very proud to be the first in the Channel Islands to be awarded GymMark.

The club has had the support of their regional gymnastics development officer to guide them through each element of GymMark. This enabled the club to concentrate on what was required for GymMark.

### *Has GymMark had any impact on your club?*

The process of GymMark has made the Club more focused on what it wants to achieve and how - the Action Plan is particularly useful in this regard. The club is hopeful that now they have achieved the award it will have a positive effect on encouraging new members as well as sustaining its current membership.

### *How have you found the process of GymMark?*

The process was initially a lot of hard work and paperwork but now it is in place it should be easy to monitor and keep up to date.

### *What difficulties have you overcome in order to achieve GymMark?*

The biggest challenge was getting coaches to objectively analyse the way they work and why and in some cases to make changes by embracing new learning. The systems that have had to be put in place have helped achieve this.

### *What are your clubs next aspirations now that you have been awarded GymMark?*

The main aim following GymMark is to increase the level of coaches training and to recruit a highly qualified and experienced Women's Head Coach (at least for the short term) to mentor existing coaches.

### *What would you say to any club that is considering GymMark?*

GymMark is definitely worth doing. It has brought a professional approach to the organisation and has focused the club on what it wants to achieve. It would be advisable to be a committee-based club or at least to have a group of enthusiastic volunteers to help with the process. Setting a time scale would also be beneficial.

*President, Jackie Hill commented: "When we moved into our new premises nearly two years ago we decided that achieving GymMark would be the natural way forward to improve the standard of the Club and we are very proud to have not only fulfilled this goal but to have become the first Club in the Channel Islands to do so. With a Club the size of ours – we have 220 members participating in gymnastics for over 30 hours a week – it is important to maintain a well-structured Club with all the appropriate standards and policies in place. The GymMark slogan is 'safe, effective and child friendly' and all our parents can be assured that their children are enjoying gymnastics in such an environment".*

*Michelle Ollivro-Murphy, parent: "I am more likely choose a GymMark club over a non-GymMark club as I would expect to get higher standards and would have more confidence that I would be leaving my child in a safe environment particularly with all the policies that are in place." .*