

Running a grassroots sports club — be it football, netball, cricket, or any combination — comes with constant juggling acts. Among them is managing the club's technology subscriptions. Over nine years working with community clubs, I've seen first-hand how subscription bloat quietly creeps in. Before long, you're paying for services that do overlapping tasks or tools your new committee barely knows how to use.

This post dives into the typical **club tech audit** you probably need, focusing on **software subscriptions** and their impact on **committee budgeting**. If you're managing a 500-strong community of players, parents, and supporters, it's vital to understand what you're paying for, and where meaningful savings or smarter spending can happen.

Understanding Subscription Bloat in Grassroots Clubs

Community clubs rely heavily on digital tools to streamline administration. But over time, the number of subscriptions can balloon without proper oversight. Why does subscription bloat happen?

- **Committee turnover:** New members bring new tools or continue paying for old tools nobody uses effectively.
- **Feature overlap:** Paying separately for messaging apps, email lists, volunteer rosters, and registration forms —sometimes multiple times.
- **Hidden fees:** Per-message or per-contact fees that sneakily increase costs beyond monthly tiers.
- **Data hoarding:** Tools charging for stored contacts rather than active use.
- **Multiple logins:** Using separate accounts for simple tasks wastes time and creates confusion during committee handovers.

By regularly performing a *club tech audit*, you ensure every dollar spent aligns with club priorities and reduces recurring admin headaches.

Typical Sports Club Software Stack Costs Explained

Before we jump into the audit checklist, let's illustrate typical costs based on a 500-strong community (players, parents, supporters combined). Prices are approximations based on popular SaaS offerings in the grassroots club space.

Software Type	Common Tools	Pricing Model	Approx. Annual Cost	Notes
Registration & Payment	TeamSnap, ClubSpark, WildApricot	Monthly subscription + payment processing fee (~2.9% + \$0.30 per transaction)	\$1,200 - \$2,400	Costs rise with transaction volume; watch for fees on refunds
Mass Messaging	SMS services (Twilio, TextMagic), Email marketing (Mailchimp, SendinBlue)	Pay-per-send or tiered monthly packages	\$600 - \$1,800	SMS costs add up quickly; prefer pay-per-send for fluctuating volumes
Volunteer Management & Scheduling	RosterElf, Teamstuff	Monthly subscription or free tiers with limits	\$300 - \$900	Check user/license limits before upgrading unnecessarily
Forms & Registrations	Google Forms, JotForm, Typeform	Often free; premium plans add logic/branding	\$0 - \$300	Many clubs don't need paid plans; free ones do the job well
Website & Member Database	WordPress, Wix, SportEasy	Hosting + premium features	\$100 - \$600	Some platforms lock storage behind paywalls—beware

Putting those together, your grassroots club could be paying anywhere from \$2,200 to \$6,000 per year just in basic tech subscriptions. Multiply that across several sports in your region and it adds up fast.

Key Considerations When Auditing Your Club's Software Subscriptions

When it's time for a **club tech audit**, here are my personal checklist points to keep costs manageable and reduce admin headaches.

1. Map Out All Current Subscriptions and User Accounts

- Include every active login tied to the club email/domain.
- Check if tools have overlapping functionality (e.g., both Slack and WhatsApp).
- List fees per billing cycle clearly for comparison.

2. Calculate Total Annual Cost Per Software

I always do the fee math *per season, not per month*. Multiplying monthly tiers by 12 months unearths hidden surprises with services that charge only seasonally or per-message.

3. Compare Pay-Per-Send Messaging vs. Monthly Tiered Plans

Broadcast messaging is one of the biggest cost drivers, especially SMS. Clubs with fluctuating messaging volume benefit from pay-per-send pricing over locked monthly tiers.



Example: For a club of ~500 registered contacts:

Plan Type	Monthly Plan	Sample Annual Cost (for 500 contacts)	Per Message Fee	Monthly Tier
\$75/month for 1,000 messages	\$900/year	None within limit	Pay-Per-Send	N/A
Approx. \$0.03/message * 600 messages = \$18/month	\$0.03 per SMS			

If your club sends messages primarily around game days and registrations, pay-per-send may save hundreds annually.

4. Avoid Tools That Charge for Contact Storage Alone

Some crummy tools charge simply for storing your contact list, even if you're not messaging that size actively. I keep a running list of "things that break" <https://thetechleaders.com/how-sports-clubs-are-saving-thousands->

[by-replacing-paid-software-with-one-free-platform/](#) on game day”, and surprise contact storage fees often make that list.

Instead, look for tools with free or affordable tiers supporting your club’s contact volume, even if you only message occasionally.

5. Leverage Free Registration & Forms Tools Where Possible

Most clubs don’t need paid form providers for registrations. Google Forms or similar DIY tools can handle player sign-ups, consent forms, and volunteer availability without extra cost.



If you need advanced logic or payment collection directly integrated, weigh that feature against payment processing fees on your registration platforms.

6. Simplify Access: Fewer Logins, Centralize Where Possible

Multiple logins for simple tasks (rosters here, messaging there) sparks confusion and loss of information during committee changes. Centralized tools — or at least documented credentials and manuals — reduce onboarding friction dramatically.

Steps to Conduct a Club Tech Audit

1. Gather all billing statements & user accounts from the last 12 months.
2. Interview committee members about tool usage and pain points.
3. List all overlapping or redundant tools.
4. Identify hidden fees like per-contact or per-message charges.
5. Score each tool vs fees, features, and user ease-of-use.
6. Consider simpler or consolidated tool options; migrate data where possible.
7. Document changes and hand over clear instructions for the next committee.

Summary: Smarter Budgeting Means Smarter Software Spending

Grassroots clubs can easily find themselves tangled in a web of half-used subscriptions and stale software contracts. Staying on top of your tech stack with a regular **club tech audit** and keeping an eye on pricing models—especially pay-per-send vs monthly tiers—means your **committee budgeting** becomes a tool for value, not a source of frustration.

Focus on simplicity, avoid paying for mere contact storage, and leverage free registrations tools where possible. This approach saves you money and frees volunteer time — the most precious resource in any community club.

Next time your AGM rolls around, make your software stack checklist part of the agenda. Your future committee will thank you.