

Team Suffolk restart

This doc describes the current status of plans, led by Cairo of Bury Bobcats and supported by a number of eager volunteers for Team Suffolk to be restarted.

Cairo's initial proposal (April 2026)	1
Aim	1
Proposed Format	1
Venue Options	2
Sustainability	2
Coaching Interest	2
Equipment	3
Finances	3
Estimated attendance:	3
Future Growth	3
Safeguarding	4
Conclusion	4
Information gathered since initial proposal	4
Options to overcome lack of available fully-qualified coaches in Suffolk	5

Cairo's initial proposal (April 2026)

I would like to propose restarting Team Suffolk. I believe this project could successfully support youth volleyball development across Suffolk while benefiting local clubs, players, and coaches. Below is a summary of the aims, proposed structure, sustainability, staffing, finances, and safeguarding.

Aim

The goal of Team Suffolk is to develop youth players aged 13–18 by providing high-quality training opportunities for all ability levels, from beginners to advanced players.

This project would also help raise coaching standards across Suffolk by bringing coaches together to share knowledge and experience.

Proposed Format

We would begin with monthly or bi-monthly development workshops, split into three groups:

- Beginners
- Intermediate
- Advanced

Each session would run for approximately 2 hours 45 minutes, with all three groups delivered across one day.

To maintain quality, each group would have at least three coaches present, ensuring players receive strong feedback and support.

Coaching duties would operate on a rotation basis, meaning coaches would only need to attend around once every three months, reducing workload and making the project manageable.

Venue Options

Possible venues include:

- Stowupland
 - Pros: Affordable, central location for Ipswich, Stowmarket, Bury, and Newmarket, good venue.
 - Cons: One court only, more difficult for players without transport.
- Bury St Edmunds
 - Pros: Two courts, convenient for many coaches, strong local player interest.
 - Cons: More expensive, some hire reliability issues, one smaller court.
- Ipswich
 - Pros: Larger population, more venue options, two full courts available.
 - Cons: Potentially higher costs, further travel for some coaches.

A rotating venue model is another option, although a fixed base may provide better consistency and player retention.

Sustainability

To ensure the project is sustainable, the first season would focus on a gradual launch with monthly or bi-monthly sessions.

By involving multiple coaches, players benefit from different coaching styles while keeping commitments realistic for staff. Coaches could also be supported with travel reimbursement and lunch expenses.

Coaching Interest

Initial interest has already been shown from several coaches, with others still to be contacted or confirmed.

Equipment

Initially, equipment could be borrowed from local clubs, with all items returned in the same condition and replaced if damaged or lost.

As funds grow, Team Suffolk could purchase its own equipment.

Finances

Using Stowupland as an example:

- Hall hire for a full day: £280
- Player fee: £15 per session

Estimated attendance:

- Beginners: up to 18 players
- Intermediate: 12–16 players
- Advanced: 6–10 players

This could generate approximately £600 income per event. After venue costs and coach expenses, surplus funds would be reinvested into Team Suffolk.

Potential future investment could include:

- Equipment
- Spare player kit
- Coach uniform
- Tournament entry costs
- Coach education support

Future Growth

If the first season is successful, the project could expand to include:

- Additional training sessions
- Competitive teams
- Tournaments and match experience opportunities
- Greater investment in coach development

All profits would be reinvested directly into the programme.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding would be a priority. Measures would include:

- Qualified coaches with safeguarding training
- Minimum of two coaches at every session (ideally three or more)
- No coach working alone with players
- DBS checks for all coaches where required
- First aider present at all sessions
- Appointed safeguarding officer
- Clear anti-bullying policy and code of conduct

A full safeguarding policy would be produced before launch.

Conclusion

Team Suffolk has the potential to create a sustainable pathway for youth volleyball development across the county. By starting small, working collaboratively, and reinvesting into the programme, we can build something valuable for players, coaches, and clubs alike.

I'd welcome your feedback and thoughts.

Information gathered since initial proposal

- We have not been able to find a fully-qualified coach (Level 2) willing to lead the programme
- A number of experienced players who are qualified Assistant Coach qualified or are expected to achieve that qualification are interested in supporting this project
- Significant funds from the pre-2025 Team Suffolk project are available to help Assistant Coaches achieve Coach qualification and to assist with startup costs
- Some venues provide adequate first aid cover
- A lease fee for clubs lending their equipment could be offered
- If rotating venues:
 - Caste Manor in Haverhill is another venue where people have been taught to play for years and it would be good for their students to get the opportunity on their doorstep. It does have a low roof though.
- Scheduling: Cairo would like to wait until fixtures are announced for the competitions the interested volunteers play in and schedule to avoid clashes with volunteer's matches. Sessions are likely to be offered on a mix of Saturdays and Sundays.

Options to overcome lack of available fully-qualified coaches in Suffolk

1. Employ a remote coach... They could have a call / calls with interested parents, players and the assistant coaches to find out what they all want to get from the sessions then plan the sessions for the assistant to deliver
2. Stick to pretty basic stuff, such as that covered in the Let's Play Volleyball framework, using pretty standard session plans and work with Volleyball England to see if they're happy with the risks and for the sessions to go ahead under their insurance without an L2 coach involved.