



VOLUNTEERING WITH THE BOURNVILLE WARRIORS

ROB FLEMING'S EXPERIENCE

At Birmingham Business School, we are continuously proud of our staff and the work that they do. We know that our colleagues are contributing to wider society outside of their working lives by volunteering for good causes. We're documenting the volunteering experiences that our staff share with us to celebrate how they are giving back to the community.

"It's great to see quite how many people it involves, and how many people's lives it affects"



The Bournville Warriors were established in 2000 as a football club to give young people the chance to play football and benefit from the community that surrounds the sport.

Rob Fleming, Teaching Fellow within the Department of Accounting, started volunteering with the club in 2009 after seeing the way that football coaching was being taught to under 7s elsewhere, at which point his own children were trying out for clubs in the local area. Rob started as a volunteer football coach with the club, saying, "I felt it was the right thing to do... I never had any great desire to be a football coach, it was more the community idea of a football club that I wanted to be involved with."

"With the [Bournville Warriors], I could see and felt that they had the [community aspect] at the heart of what they were trying to do.

It was for the community vibe and they were set up to provide football for people, not necessarily people who were good at football, but just to give people the chance to play."

After two to three years as a coach, Rob became chairman of the club in a volunteer capacity, where he changed how the club operated to allow for development and improvement. The club has also established an academy system, which allows for the coaching of under 7s – a big milestone for the club.

But why volunteer? What impact has volunteering had on Rob's life?

"In terms of those friendship groups that I have been involved with because of the volunteering, it's had a massive impact on my life. A couple of people from the Business School have also started helping out too.

It is hard work and can take a lot of time and dedication, but the opportunity to meet and genuinely get to know really good people within your community, and then have the chance to do good things and get out of your comfort zone a bit is really rewarding."

In the coming year, the club will welcome anyone up to the age of 18, giving all young people in the community the chance to get involved. Rob now serves voluntarily as president of the club, and says one of the most rewarding aspects of volunteering is seeing the people that he and the club help.

"It's great to see quite how many people it involves, and how many people's lives it affects. It's not just about football, there's an awful lot more to it than that; friendship groups, socialising, giving people things to do. For a lot of kids in the club, they may be having a number of problems at school, but coming together to take part in a sport really can make a massive difference. I look back at some of the teams that I coached and see that it genuinely had a huge impact on their lives in a number of ways."

"It's also great seeing the teams grow and finding new people to take on roles within the club's operations. You're not just bringing talent into the team, but also into the people that make sure the club runs, and we nurture them into roles that they would be suited to."

The club is constantly developing and looking to reach new heights. Bournville Warriors currently play at King's Norton Park, but Rob aspires to have an Astroturf pitch on the park, as well as in various other areas of Birmingham to get more people involved in playing.



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The club is always looking for new volunteers, especially coaches – if you're interested, contact Rob at r.fleming@bham.ac.uk or visit <http://www.bournvillewarriors.co.uk/>. If you want to share your experience of volunteering, please contact Chelsea Wood at c.m.wood@bham.ac.uk.

