Easy stages guide to merging two or more Clubs

Why merge two or more Clubs?

The reasons that two or more Clubs may decide to merge may include:

- One of the Clubs is struggling for members and/or people to take office, and is concerned about its viability for the future. The majority of members would prefer to transfer to a nearby Club.
- Both (or all) Clubs are struggling for members and/or people to take office, and believe that a merged Club would make them stronger and enable them to provide a better membership offer for potential and existing members.

Note: the existing Clubs must be within a distance from each other that would still be accessible by all the existing members.

Step 1: Initial steps to merging two or more Clubs

1. Get Members’ Approval

The proposal needs to be discussed with all members of all Clubs involved and any pros and cons considered.

- Should all involved Clubs be dissolved and a new Club formed, with a new name, at a distance that all members can travel to? What should the new Club be called?
- Should one Club be chosen that members from the other Club(s) will transfer to? Will a change of Club name be needed that can be agreed by all members?
- What about the projects current supported by each Club. Will these taken on board by the new Club (or existing Club that members transfer to)?

Minute the decisions made.

2. Get Region/NA/Network Approval

Advise your Region/NA/Network that you would like to merge the Clubs and why.

The Region/NA/Network will ask Clubs in the Region/NA/Network if they have any objection to the merger and the new Club Name (if applicable) to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

Any objections, and the Region/NA/Network responses to these must be recorded, plus the approval (or otherwise) of the Region/NA/Network.
3. Get SIGBI Approval

If the merger and Club name (if applicable) is agreed by the Region/NA/Network, send the Club minutes and Region/NA/Network approval to SIGBI HQ, requesting either:

1. To close two or more SIGBI Clubs and create a new larger Club with members from all Clubs concerned (let SIGBI HQ know which members have decided to leave rather than transfer). Include the proposed Club name of the new Club. You do not need to complete a petition form, as details of the members are already on the membership database.

2. To close one or more Clubs and transfer all members who wish to transfer to an existing Club. Include any request to change the name of the existing Club using the Request a Club Name change form.

The Directors of Membership and Governance will approve the merger and name change (if applicable) and the Club will be informed.

Step 2: Next steps to merging two or more Clubs

Follow one of the two options below:

1. **If a new Club is NOT to be Chartered**

   1. As soon as the decision is agreed by all parties, or at a date requested by the Secretary of the Club members are transferring to, the members will be transferred, the Club name changed (if applicable) and the relevant Club(s) closed. No Charter certificate will be issued, and the original date of Charter of the remaining Club will be retained.

   2. The closing Club(s) need to produce their final accounts, and send a copy to SIGBI HQ. Any monies still held by the closing Club(s), once any liabilities have been met, need to be dispersed in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the existing members of that Club. Consideration may include transferring the balance to the charity account of the Club to which the majority of members are transferring.

   3. Any charities supported by the closed Club(s) must be informed, and advised whether they will continue to be supported by the new Club, or whether the support will end with the closure. If final fund disbursement is to one or more of these charities, then they can be informed at the same time that the donation is made.
2. If a new Club IS to be Chartered

1. A date for the Charter needs to be agreed between the Club members and the Chartering Officer (usually the SIGBI President). The Chartering Officer may join the Charter virtually, depending on the circumstances and location of the Charter event.

2. The closing Club(s) need to produce their final accounts, and send a copy to SIGBI HQ. Any monies still held by the closing Club(s), once any liabilities have been met, need to be dispersed in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the existing members of that Club. Consideration may include transferring the balance to the charity account of the new Club.

3. Any charities supported by the closed Club(s) must be informed, and advised whether they will continue to be supported by the new Club, or whether the support will end with the closure. If final fund disbursement is to one or more of these charities, then they can be informed at the same time that the donation is made.

4. No petition form is required to be completed, as the members’ details are already held on the membership database.

5. A Charter certificate will be issued for the new Club. The date of Charter will be used as the Charter date for the new Club, and all other involved Clubs will be closed as soon as all members have been transferred. The Charter event will include the issuing of name badges, which will be provided by SIGBI Ltd.

Step 3: Ensure viability of the new Club

- With a larger pool of members to draw from, there is a greater scope for job sharing, and for all members to be involved. Please do volunteer to take office or being on one of the committees to lessen the work for other members.

- A larger, vibrant Club is more attractive to prospective new Members. Let the community know that you have merged and are looking for new Members.

- Review the Club element of membership fees to see if these can be reduced now that membership has been increased.

- Encourage the existing members of the new Club to stay members. Continue, where possible, the work of the closed Clubs and introduce more projects if you can. Keep the Club vibrant and dynamic.