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Find out how **Amersham School**, 2018 Open Your Space Award winners, invested their **£8,000 prize money**

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Get more from your lettings with our top lettings tips.

Meet the people behind Kajima Community.

Find out how BookingsPlus is helping Haydon School manage their lettings.



Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of **The Key** – a round-up of all the latest news from across our network of schools and partners.

For those of you who are not familiar with us, we are **Kajima Community** – a not-for-profit division of **Kajima Partnerships Ltd**, specialising in helping schools and other venues to maximise their facilities through community lettings. We're currently working with over 450 schools, community centres, sports venues, churches and health centres across the UK.

The Community team have been busy since our last publication. Launching our BookingsPlus software into the NHS Open Space project has seen a host of new developments which we're currently working on rolling out to current customers and new venues – you can read more about the Open Space project and our new developments on page 06.

We're pleased to be running our Open Your Space Awards for the second year and are now welcoming entries up until 25th October. Find out how last year's winners used their prize money to enhance their performing arts provision within the school, and details of how to enter on page 04.

Take a look at our **Top Tips** section, on page 03, for ideas on how you could make your lettings more efficient.

You'll also have an opportunity to meet the experienced and dedicated team behind Kajima Community, and learn a little more about the services we offer.

Head of Community
Chris Smith

"We're very fortunate to have nurtured some fantastic partnerships with our suppliers, customers and wider community – helping us to make things happen."



Helping to make a real change

Our Accounts Assistant, **Tracy Street**, talks about what motivated her to tackle the Geneva Marathon.

On Sunday 12th May I ran in the Geneva Marathon – my first ever marathon - to raise money for The Cystic Fibrosis Trust. I was delighted to achieve a time of 4hrs 53. My husband, Ian, also ran in the event and he managed a time of 3hrs 30 and got a PB!

I chose the charity for very personal reasons. In 1998 my sister, Emma, passed away with cystic fibrosis at the age of 22. Cystic fibrosis is a genetic condition that affects more than 10,400 people in the UK. It is a condition that you are born with, which affects the lungs and causes breathing difficulties.

Over the years I have raised money for the cause in all sorts of ways – from abseiling to skydiving, but the marathon has been the biggest challenge to date!

I only started running 18 months ago, and the longer distances were definitely the toughest part of the training. I got involved in volunteering at local parkruns, which I found very inspirational, and where I met some fantastic people.

The day itself was an amazing experience and the route was beautiful – taking in the countryside with spectacular views of the Alps before dropping down alongside Lake Geneva for the city finish. I am so thrilled I've raised over £1,000 for my charity and incredibly proud of what I have accomplished.

I have worked at Kajima Community for five and a half years, in different departments including Lettings Co-ordination, Helpdesk, Customer Account Management and I am now Accounts Assistant. I love the community ethos of the company, and find the work that we do – helping schools to raise much needed revenue – very rewarding.

■ If you would like to donate to my charity, please visit my Just Giving page at: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/tracy-street2

Our Partners

We have once again teamed up with **iHasco**, providers of over 100 online training courses, to help businesses stay compliant with current issues and legislation.

Recently the Community department completed a GDPR awareness course providing a broad understanding of the new regulations, keeping personal data safe and ensuring responsible handling of data within the business.

■ For more information on this and other courses visit www.iHasco.co.uk or email jack.pitts@ihasco.co.uk



Supplier focus



Steve Almond, Account Director at **Mitie PFI**, contracting Kajima Community's BookingsGuru service within schools.



My name is Steve and I am part of the team at Mitie PFI. We provide Facilities Management services that connect people with innovation and technology across 100 schools within the UK. As part of our specialist services, we have a requirement to make these schools and their resources available to the community for all to use.

We work tirelessly at Mitie to ensure the educational facilities we manage and support have maximum usage and engagement with a variety of groups in the community. Each school is different in what they offer and we are proud to be part of the journey that makes their facilities more accessible.

To support the delivery of this service and provision on our behalf, we wanted to establish a strategic supply chain partner that we could work closely with and have a real, visible impact. After our initial engagement with Kajima Community, we were extremely impressed with the professional lettings service they offer. In particular, the highly trained team had fantastic knowledge of the 'renting out space' market and provided informative advice throughout the projects we worked on together.

"Since commencing our partnership with Kajima Community in 2013, Mitie has been able to focus on delivering first class services to schools and other educational establishments."

Recently, we have been part of a fantastic initiative with a school in Camden, which has seen the development of a new 4G AstroTurf. Through our partnership with Kajima, we have assisted the school in unlocking their sporting facility to the community as well as maximising its revenue potential.

Overall, it's been a great experience working with Chris and the Community team, thanks to their expertise and awareness in the niche rental space market. We look forward to continuing our partnership with Kajima Community and delivering specialist, innovative services for all those in the community to benefit from.

Keep up to date with all things lettings!

■ Join us on social media to find out about all our latest product and service news, software developments, lettings hints and tips at:



Get more from your lettings

When hiring out your space for community use, the following tips will help you to develop a business that is as seamless and efficient as possible.

- 01 USE ALL OF YOUR SCHOOL'S ASSETS:** Anything from carparks to classrooms can be let out, and every asset owned, including overhead projectors and interactive whiteboards, can increase a school's lettings value significantly. Promote these assets online and let people know about them.
- 02 APPOINT A LETTINGS COORDINATOR:** If possible, nominate one person to take responsibility for your lettings – this could be the business manager, or a dedicated lettings manager who will take ownership.
- 03 MINIMISE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN:** Implement an online bookings system which can holistically manage the four essential elements of lettings; marketing, bookings, payments and communication, to ensure a streamlined and efficient approach.
- 04 MARKET YOUR SCHOOL:** Marketing will support sales. Some online booking systems provide expert marketing advice, with in-built features such as Search Engine Optimisation, enabling schools to maintain a strong, targeted web presence, promoting your facilities to potential hirers.
- 05 STAY AHEAD OF REGULATORY DEVELOPMENTS:** Ensure that you are fully compliant with legal, regulatory and technological developments. Some lettings products and services will do this for you.
- 06 BE PRICE SENSITIVE:** For yourselves and your clients. Price your space competitively, be aware of other facilities in your locality and what they are charging to ensure you are offering reasonable hire rates.
- 07 PROVIDE A GREAT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE:** Although much of the lettings administration process can be automated, someone should always be available to answer questions and respond to queries. Ensure your site team are offering a top-quality service to customers and users whilst on site.



Everyone's a winner when schools 'open their space'

Last year we launched our inaugural Open Your Space Awards, receiving over 100 nominations from schools, hirers, users and members of the community. The awards are an acknowledgement of the strong partnerships that are forged between schools and local community. This year's awards are now open, and the deadline for entries is 25th October 2019.

LAST YEAR'S WINNERS:

The inaugural 'Open Your Space' Awards was won by Amersham School in Buckinghamshire, nominated by the Pauline Quirke Academy of Performing Arts.

Sharon Jarrett, Head Teacher of Amersham School, commented:

"Since last year, we continue to find improved ways of working with our partners to secure positive outcomes for both the School and our hirers, with a particular consideration of how to best utilise space and storage of resources. We are thrilled to say that we will be investing the money from last year's award into upgrading our stage facility, with an improved stage floor planned to be completed by September. Our close partnership with the Pauline Quirke Academy continues to evolve, and we are investigating how to increase their use of the School's facilities throughout the summer vacation. It's been a fantastic year for Amersham School and we look forward to sharing our facilities with even more of the community."

THE PRIZE:

The Awards has a cash prize of £8,000, and recognises those schools that are exceptional in building lasting partnerships with their local community.

WHO CAN BE NOMINATED?:

Nominations are invited from secondary schools and all BookingsPlus and BookingsGuru customers who are doing great things in their community by partnering with local groups, clubs and charities.

To nominate, an entry form must be completed including a description of the partnership in no more than 100 words. Nominations will be accepted via the entry page at www.bookingsplus.co.uk/awards or via email to awards@bookingsplus.co.uk.

JUDGING:

Our guest judge this year is Lara Newman from LocatED. LocatED actively manage the portfolio of properties owned by the Department for Education to identify property for enhanced value, income generation opportunities or redevelopment and provide advice on good estate management and site optimisation to schools.

Lara Newman, Chief Executive, said:

"I am delighted to have been invited to be a guest judge for the Open Your Space Awards for 2019. As Chief Executive at LocatED, I lead the team to buy and develop sites for new schools. I am passionate about delivering projects that benefit all who access them, from students to teachers to the wider community. I am therefore excited to judge the BookingsPlus Award, as this will shine a light on the excellent work being done by many school and community partnerships across the country, although I'm a little nervous about having to pick an overall winner!"

■ Entries for this year's Open Your Space Awards are now open, so if you want to be in with a chance of winning £8,000 make sure you visit www.bookingsplus.co.uk/awards and nominate your school today!



Lara Newman



Brentside High School, Site Team Amaan Syed

"Our main focus is to make sure that we deliver an excellent service to hirers and users who access our facility at Brentside High School. We meet and greet all of our customers as they arrive on site and ensure that they have signed in to the building so that we have a record for health and safety purposes.

As well as preparing facilities ready for hirer's classes, another important part of our role on site is to ensure that the overall facility is managed to guarantee; the smooth running of activities, that users are safe whilst on site and generally that all users have a great experience at our facility.

A good day for me is when customers have enjoyed their time on site and leave with a smile!"



Haverstock School, Site Team Pullen Agbon-Ifo

"Our main focus at Haverstock School is to provide fantastic customer service to our variety of customers who use our site on a day-to-day basis.

We are really lucky to have such a variety of tasks involved in our role, it gives us some great experience of; working with lots of different people, handling sometimes difficult situations and what good customer service should be. We work as a team and that's really important to ensure that everything on site runs smoothly.

It's great when we receive some good feedback, either from customers directly or via our colleagues in the bookings office. It's a real buzz to know that someone has enjoyed their experience of our facility and that we have helped secure some ongoing business for the company."



Delivering time and cost efficiencies for our bookings business

Marketing and Development Officer Sasha Chard, explains all about the benefits of using BookingsPlus.

Haydon School is a thriving academy and sixth form based in Pinner. We pride ourselves on helping our students to develop resilience and inspire others. The community, both in school, and beyond is very important to us, and we expect our students to be considerate and respectful members of both.

The many faces of Community

People are at the heart of everything that happens at Kajima, these are just a few of the faces behind the amazing work the Community team do with venues and their communities.

Finance Team Laura Butler

"We provide clear and complete financial information to support decision-making, and the day-to-day running of the Community Department.

Our team has significant experience working across all sectors, and are all in agreement that Kajima Community is truly a positive and encouraging workplace.

In the Community Finance department we pull together to meet tight timescales, and capitalise on the strengths of each team member. We evolve around our fast-moving business and work closely with the other Community Business Managers.

A typical day involves anything from paying suppliers on time to being a part of the business' strategic decision making team. A really good day is when our spreadsheets balance first time!"

A day in the life...

My name's Amberley and my job role is Helpdesk Manger, which I have been doing for over two years.

Every day in my job is different! On the Helpdesk I mainly answer questions and try to solve customers' problems, but I also assist the Sales and Customer Service team, which involves responding to lots of calls and emails.

Another big part of my job is supporting the Development department. Kajima Community is a very innovative company, with a big focus on product development. I help by testing new and

BookingsGuru Marketing Team Domenico Forgione

"We're responsible for promoting our clients' facilities to hirers who are looking for new venues to run classes and activities. Our focus is to increase revenue for our clients.

Our daily tasks involve; managing social media accounts, online advertising, gathering and deciphering marketing analytics, which can sound boring but which we all surprisingly love to do – I guess it's because it helps us to see what is working or not and helps us to plan our ongoing marketing activity. It's always great when we see that something we have done is getting results for our clients."



Customer Services Team Kimberley State

"We are the BookingsPlus Customer Services team and our focus is all of our lovely customers. We spend our time setting up new systems, providing training, ensuring everyone is kept up to date on new developments and working with our customers to help develop their lettings further.

We're really lucky to have such a variety of venues to work with. From initially setting out to service the schools market we now have community centres, churches, housing authorities, libraries and more on board!

A good day for us is to see a new venue Go Live with BookingsPlus – we're always really excited to see a new customer start their journey with us."

Development Team Albert VanJaarsveld

"Understanding users requirements and translating this into customer-friendly code is what we're about. Software shouldn't need manuals and 'how to' guides to teach people to use it, this is always the challenge when writing software.

Our work is split into two categories:- bugs and new developments. Bugs are flaws in a software program that causes either an incorrect or unexpected result. The more code you add the more chance that bugs will appear. Those bugs that significantly affect the software's performance, we will jump on straight away and get fixed. New developments get split into chunks of work that will get designed, spec'd out in terms of time, developed, tested and then released. Depending on the size of the development this can take from a few hours to months.

Happy days in the development world is deploying code and not seeing it again for A LONG time."



Caroline Chisholm School, Site Team Dean Ventris

"We are the front-line staff whose job it is to engage with hirers and users every time they visit and to deliver a quality service from start to finish.

We ensure the customer is greeted by a smiley and welcoming member of staff at Reception, that the hired area is set up on time as well as being clean, presentable and safe for use, that the toilets are fit for purpose, walkways are well lit and free from litter, changeovers are carried out on time etc.

As a long-standing member of the site team it gives me personal satisfaction in making sure that we deliver these elements to a high standard."

BookingsGuru Team(South) Mandie Shaw

"One of our key goals is to work together to make the hirer's journey as satisfying as possible. We work in constant liaison with them, as with the school lettings staff to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Good communication skills are imperative to enable the BookingsGuru Co-ordinators to work competently as a team. We are very fortunate in that all staff are very personable, energetic and working toward the same objective.

The office is host to a combination of varying people's skills sets; this nurtures a vital respect for each other. Banter always prevails which helps keep one's spirits positive, in the office. A great day is when everything comes together for all of us; when our hard work has paid off as we've ensured clients' needs are met – consequently, a job well done!"



BookingsGuru Team (North) Sharon Raistrick

"Our focus is to work with schools to provide a first-class lettings service.

From our office in the North, I oversee 15 individual schools. We're really lucky to have a variety of schools and clients who I enjoy liaising with on a daily basis.

Myself and my Manager, Julie, have the determination and passion to deliver an excellent customer experience every time, whether that be to our clients or the end users who access the facilities to run their classes.

A really good day is when we get an enquiry for a new booking which we're able to accommodate at one of my venues. It's great to know that what we do not only supports the schools, in terms of generating revenue, but also supports local businesses and suppliers to deliver groups and activities to the local community."

■ To keep up to date with all the new and exciting updates and developments coming from Kajima Community, visit www.bookingsplus.co.uk/news or sign up to our e-newsletter by emailing hello@bookingsplus.co.uk

Chrissy Foulds, Hirer John Smeaton Academy

Q WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE CLUB YOU RUN?

A I run a franchise of Aegis Martial Arts, we teach martial arts and self-defence classes for anyone from the age of three upwards, in the Yorkshire area. Our classes range from tots to family classes, where parents and kids can be on the mats at the same time. Everyone learns a mixture of kick-boxing, karate and jiu jitsu from our black belt instructors who strive to teach personal development over competition.

Q HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HIRING SCHOOL FACILITIES?

A While the Aegis Martial Arts organisation has been around for 37 years, my franchise has been hiring facilities at the John Smeaton Academy for just over two years, and I couldn't be more content!

Q HAS HIRING FACILITIES HELPED YOUR CLUB TO GROW?

A Definitely- without the facilities at John Smeaton we wouldn't have been able to grow the way we have, they are flexible, we can store our equipment and without that facility it would have been a totally different starting point for us. We began with 0 students and now have 70, we have expanded from 2 days to 3 days and increased the number of classes in that time, who knows what's next.

Q TELL US ABOUT A SPECIAL EVENT/OCCASION FOR THE CLUB:

A My favourite events of the year are the black belt test day and black belt graduation. Getting my black belt and earning the knowledge and experience to keep going made me realise this is what I want to do with my life. Sharing this experience with others and seeing how they have progressed makes me feel really proud of what I do, it's a shame these events are only twice a year!

Q WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH KAJIMA COMMUNITY?

A I've had really positive experiences with Kajima Community, they are extremely flexible and accommodating. They update us on everything, I really can't fault their communication.



Amberly Kent

existing platform features to make sure that everything is working correctly before it goes live. This is one of my favourite things about my job – I love seeing ideas grow from seed concepts into a functional part of our offer.

Typically the ten of us on our floor work really closely together. There are currently two of us on the Helpdesk, but every day we work with the Developers and Development Manager, as a bigger team.

Since I joined, things have changed quite a lot as our offer and the business have expanded. Now, Customer Service is a separate department, we've grown from having one to five Developers!

I'm really proud of the fact that I started working with Kajima Community when I was only 17, as part-time on-the-ground support staff at the local school, where I was a student at

the time. I've gone from literally helping to set up badminton courts to my current role co-managing the BookingsPlus Helpdesk!

The office is really outgoing. We socialise together out of work, from regular nights out to the summer social activity day and our Christmas get together. We have a strong team dynamic that works well and keeps us all motivated.

We're really big on people's birthdays and love celebrating them. One of my favourite moments was when we bought a giant cardboard cut-out of Gary Barlow for one of the team – when we brought him through the door she started screaming! She's still got him – I think she took him home with her!

The ability to open up our facilities for use by local groups and clubs is therefore very important to us, particularly as many of our students benefit from and participate in additional activities and clubs outside of the school day - from learning Taekwondo to joining the Italia Conti Arts Academy.

Until six months ago we were using a basic and laborious booking system which included an outlook calendar and an excel spreadsheet, before introducing the online school lettings platform; BookingsPlus. Implementing this system and its integrated website, which we have the ability to tailor in-line with our own school branding, has transformed our bookings business. Not only has it delivered significant time efficiencies for staff involved in bookings, it has meant that we can be much more efficient with hiring space.

A surprising number of staff are involved in managing bookings, from the onsite team such as Caretakers and Receptionists, to the Finance department. Prior to working with BookingsPlus, I had to spend time each day briefing these teams. Now, they can simply download each day's booking schedule in one simple report. This has freed up a significant amount of my time which I can dedicate to

other aspects of my role; including marketing and alumni engagement. Previously I had to search retrospectively through the Outlook calendar to identify booking dates and durations for invoicing purposes. Now, BookingsPlus' automated, end-to-end booking and invoicing service means that invoicing is instant, accurate and efficient - freeing up both my time, and that of the finance department!

As well as staff time, BookingsPlus has helped us to use our space more efficiently. Our clients can now specify their exact requirement – for example, two badminton courts for one hour. This means that we are able to take back-to-back bookings, maximising the revenue potential of our facilities. And because the system is controlled via one central administrator, the potential for error is reduced. No more double bookings!

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, our clients are very happy with the system. They find it easy to use and are getting increased sign-ups thanks to advertising their clubs on the 'What's On' page. We, in turn, have seen an up-lift in booking enquiries. A win-win all round thanks to BookingsPlus!

BookingsPlus,
the key to
effectively
managing
lettings across
a number of
properties.



Property Services

Smarter Systems

Kajima Community recently delivered a project for NHS Property Services (NHSPS) to provide the booking system behind NHS Open Space.

This will enable users to hire both clinical and non-clinical space, at first across 20 properties, with a view to roll it out across their UK portfolio. This huge project has led to a number of developments which will now be rolled out to other current and potential BookingsPlus customers.

The main development we are pleased to announce is the added ability our online lettings software has in order to efficiently and effectively manage multiple properties via one, easy-to-use, portal. This development means that BookingsPlus can now easily accommodate venues with a collection of properties, such as Multi Academy Trusts (MATs).

The lettings software is a web-based, end to end booking system, including all the functions required to manage lettings effectively, from a simple room booking tool to, invoicing, online payments, automated communications and full suite of reports. The software, which can be accessed via any device including laptops, tablets or mobiles, streamlines the booking process, making it easier for clients and hirers to book space, delivering efficiencies and cost savings.

Chris Smith, Head of Kajima Community, commented:
"Over the past five years particularly, there has been mounting pressure on NHS budgets, and for many Trusts the ability to generate additional revenue and drive efficiencies across their estates is vital in enabling them to offer the best possible frontline service and patient care.

"The software development work, in-line with the NHSPS project, has allowed BookingsPlus to widen its appeal to those clients who need to effectively manage a variety of properties from one centralised system and we're also pleased to be announcing a number of other new developments that will benefit a wide audience.

There will be a central landing page where clients are able to search and view availability with an option to book facilities. Up-front payments and guaranteeing payment for the duration of a regular booking, means debtors will become a thing of the past."

Building lasting and successful partnerships

Over the past 13 years of close collaboration, Kajima Community has worked with Haverstock School to establish a successful, long-term partnership with the central aim being to transform Haverstock School into an integral part of the local area and a true community school.

Since its rebuild in 2004, Haverstock School has become an active and bustling hub of activity within the community, with between 2,000 and 4,000 users accessing its facilities in the evenings, at weekends and during term breaks.

For the past three years, the effective partnership has enabled Crisis at Christmas to use the School as a shelter for 250 local rough sleepers, and following the tragedy of Grenfell Tower, the School hosted members of the Camden community who were evacuated from their homes.

Community use has helped generate a substantial annual revenue and additional funding opportunities have been brought in from third parties through the proactive management by Kajima Community. Power League, a regular user of the School's sports facilities, funded an upgrade of the all-weather pitch to support its busy 5-a-side football league.

Paul Edwards, Regional Operations Manager at Power League, commented:

"Kajima Community is an inspiring partner to work with. Having facilitated our initial relationship with the School, it brokered the agreement for the funding and operation of the new pitch which now benefits our club members, Haverstock pupils and the wider local community."



Mark Slater, Hirer Caroline Chisholm School

Q WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE GROUP YOU RUN?

A I started Mark Slater Training last October as a way to teach people proper exercise technique, while having fun and getting fit.

Q HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HIRING SCHOOL FACILITIES?

A We have been hirers of the school facilities for just over a year now.

Q HAS HIRING FACILITIES HELPED YOUR GROUP TO GROW?

A Yes, absolutely. We started out in the small primary hall and then when we outgrew that, we moved to the sports hall. Kajima has helped raise exposure among other people using the facilities at the School and has set us apart from different boot-camp groups in the area.

Q TELL US ABOUT A SPECIAL EVENT/OCCASION FOR THE CLUB:

A I think the most special moment was this February when we had a record turn-out at one of my classes. The more people join a session the more fun it is and the more people get out of it. We cater to all ages, so the sense of camaraderie and fun only increases with group size.

Q WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH KAJIMA COMMUNITY?

A I have really enjoyed my experience with Kajima Community. The staff managing the site know what I need, booking is really easy and I think the whole process is great.