Barnsley Barbell - Personal Statement For Unit 3, Oaks Business Park, S71 1HT

History

I started Barnsley Barbell with a friend in 2016, with a strong passion for empowering individuals through physical exercise; helping men and women to increase confidence, take control of their physical and mental health and get in great shape in a friendly, welcoming and supportive environment.

Barnsley Barbell is a private fitness training facility, specialising in 1-1 powerlifting, olympic lifting and mindset coaching, as well as small group sessions. We are not a traditional commercial gym - we are a boutique, independent training facility.

Originally starting in Grimethorpe in February 2016, we moved to a slightly larger premises at the Mount Osborne Business Centre in Oakwell, Barnsley, in September 2016.

Reason for Relocating

Having built an established client base over the last 7 years, we have now outgrown our current facility (Unit 16, Mount Osborne Business Centre, circa 450 square ft) and require more space in order to serve our clients at the highest possible level.

At present, we are turning people away due to us no longer having the capacity to take on new clients. Many of our clients are now moving to other non-commercial gyms based outside of the town centre (predominantly Carlton), due to our limited space. This is preventing us from carrying out our mission to help change lives, and is also hindering business growth.

Moving to Unit 3 (approx. 1,300 square ft) will free up our smaller unit (approx. 450 square ft), which will help to support a new local start up. The unit we are vacating is owned by Barnsley Council and also has a lower rent per annum and a lower commitment, further supporting a local start up.

We have been actively looking for new premises since July 2022. The units at this size and price have been difficult for us to find. We have viewed several properties and, when we have applied for them (4 in total since August 2022), have always been outbid by national companies, due to us not being able to match their financial position or commitment length.

Unit 5 on Oaks Business Park is a boxing gym. Having spoken to the owner, we plan to work alongside them, creating transport synergy and boosting the local VGA as our members can now take their children to the boxing gym and vice-versa.

Unit 3 also provides privacy for our clients to train in, which is something that other town-centre ‘shop-front-window’ style units cannot provide. Barnsley Barbell has also become known for

supporting the ladies of Barnsley, giving them a space to exercise where they are comfortable - something that, many of them have reported, “Barnsley has been missing”.

We also have a lot of teachers, NHS staff, Police and Fire Fighting service members who train with us, who want to train in a private setting and don’t want to attend large facilities in the town centre. Many of our members come to us with very low confidence, so our aim is to provide them with a facility where they instantly feel comfortable, where there are no mirrors, no windows to look through and so they can train in private. A place where they are not judged and are surrounded by a group of likeminded people.

Customer Base

Our clients are based in Barnsley and the surrounding areas, are both male and female and range from 20-60 years of age. We are bringing an existing customer base with us, so this will have no negative impact on any local businesses within our industry.

Opening Times

Our opening hours are 5.30-8.30pm Mon to Fri and Saturday Morning 8.30-10.30am.

We are a private training facility operating by booking only. Unlike most traditional gyms, you cannot train as you please. This significantly reduces traffic to the industrial estate - so this will have minimal impact on other tenants of the site as we operate outside of the standard 9am-4.30pm work day.

Staff

We currently have 2 full time members of staff, with the scope to take on more, depending on the success of the move.

Links with Local groups and Charities

Since we started in 2016, we have placed a huge emphasis on working with and supporting local groups and charities. Below are a few examples of work we have done:

- I was proud to be Chair of Committee for the Barnsley Main Heritage Group based in Stairfoot, from the beginning of 2020 to July 2022. During this period, we regularly took our clients volunteering at the Barnsley Main site. With the move to Unit 3, I have contacted the group with an offer to bring our clients down for volunteer days to provide much needed hand-power to help on site and for litter picking between Unit 3 and the Barnsley Main site.

- In April of this year, I arranged for 60 of our clients and friends to summit Ben Nevis in Scotland, raising over £4,000 for the Molly Olly’s Children Charity:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/thebetterman?fbclid=IwAR3OdqYeFI36hntCiYxOt5aDddTCJxYjmwDUh0JAaUpKfUfpVf21e4RV7XM

- Also in April of this year, myself and clients ran an Easter Egg appeal, collecting 389 Easter Eggs for children in Barnsley Hospital, Sheffield Childrens hospital and Weston Park, with a donation also being taken Parkside Care Home in Wombwell - https://www.facebook.com/BarnsleyBarbell/posts/pfbid0CzWFWyG7hFmLxD7KjaRzASui8UKCJt6RvKbmk9eFLYcpgtgWvfhLDxhBAMFwsjkpl

- In December 2022, we ran a Christmas Fundraiser to help children in families hit by the cost of living Crisis. In total we collected over 500 toys and 500 selection boxes for local children. They were donated to and distributed by the following charities that support children and families in need: Barnsley Hospital Charity, Barnsley Children's Hospital, Sheffield Children's Hospital, Western Park, Barnsley Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Services, as well as independent local families that were struggling to provide for their little ones at Christmas 2022 - https://www.facebook.com/BarnsleyBarbell/posts/pfbid02GYoUAb4DxCFYGsnSqvC4UqqUfUaa9c37mQdh4A3DHjAvaoY624rZYKQHuaSRfsKnl

- From January 2023 to the time of this application, I have delivered complimentary Health, Fitness and Mindset workshops and support for local businesses and centres, including GIST at Carlton, Barnsley Job Centre, The Digital Media Centre and The NHS Barnsley Hospital Physio Team.

- At the time of this application, we're raising £300 and collecting sports clothing to Support Young, Vulnerable Children in the South Yorkshire area that are Seeking Asylum: https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/supporting-vulnerable-children-in-south-yorkshire

- We also have plans in place for the rest of the year to further support local causes and charities, including:
    - Raising £2,500 to pay for a Defibrillator (which will be situated on Oaks Business Park) to help save the lives of local people who live and work in Stairfoot, as well as the wider Barnsley population
    - Raising £1,000 for Barnsley Charity BSARCS
    - A huge Charity Event we have booked in September at the Barnsley Civic, which is set to raise over £6,000 for Barnsley Hospice.

- We also want to work closely with the Stairfoot Foodbank, by running 'Foodbank Bootcamps', where people in the local community can come and train with us for 'free', in return for a small donation of food to the Stairfoot Foodbank.

Working in alignment with 'Barnsley 2030 - The Place of Possibilities'

The Barnsley 2030 Strategy focuses on 4 Core areas: Healthy Barnsley, Growing Barnsley, Learning Barnsley and Sustainable Barnsley.

Quoting the Barnsley Council strategy website, it is said that:

"This means everything from a quality place to call home, to good physical and mental wellbeing and a sense of self-worth through diverse and secure employment opportunities. It's also about having access to the best possible local facilities in a community that values our people and our place.

In Barnsley we want to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn, develop new skills and, most importantly, to achieve their personal potential.

Barnsley aims to be an exemplar place to live and a great place to do business. We want to both retain and attract new people and businesses to the area, creating an inclusive and diverse community enriched with skills, knowledge and experiences. We want to meet the needs of today, without compromising the needs of the future and encourage people to connect to each other as well as to our place."

https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/healthy-barnsley/

We wholeheartedly believe that our Move to Unit 3 is in line with the Barnsley 2030 Strategy, and that our move in fact compliments all four areas.

We believe that our plans to operate from Unit 3 strongly supports the 2030 strategy in the following ways:

1 - Healthy Barnsley

The Barnsley Council ambitions are for "*Everyone [to be] able to enjoy a life in good physical and mental health.*" At Barnsley Barbell, we provide people the opportunity to follow a proven strategy to deliver better physical and mental health. At present, due to our small premises, we are turning people away who are in need of our support, as we are at full capacity.

Having helped support 100's of local men and women, we have hundreds of success stories. Below are some examples:

- Mr. H joined us at 40 stone in January 2021. Not only was he struggling physically and also with his mental health - but he had only months left to live. At the time of this application he has lost 22 stone (he's now just 18 stone), has doubled the size of his Barnsley-based business and has an amazing relationship with his 2 boys and wife. He is now inspiring other people in the local and wider area to create positive change in their lives.

- Mrs. L joined us with struggles of anxiety and had been on medication for a number of years to support her mental health. Through coming to our sessions and being a part of our community, she was able to not only reduce her medication, but is now medication-free. Her mental health has 'never been better'.

- Miss C was struggling with low confidence, but through training with us, not only has she had a huge increase in confidence, but also competed at the Women's All England Powerlifting Championships.

- Mr. S joined us overweight, with high blood pressure and bad habits. In less than 6 months he's lost 2 stone in weight, reduced his resting heart rate by 40 bpm and hasn't drank alcohol since December 2022.

Many individuals join us due to being lonely, but soon make friends that they meet up with outside of sessions, which has a positive impact on their mental well being.

Under the section of "How we'll achieve our ambitions together", Barnsley Council suggests that "*Business and Organisations can Support and empower people to have a healthy and active lifestyle*". We believe we can only do this through the move to Unit 3.

We also strongly encourage our members to participate in volunteering, which further supports the 2030 strategy for a Healthy Barnsley.

https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/healthy-barnsley/

2 - Learning Barnsley

Barnsley council has the following ambition "*Everyone fulfils their learning potential, with more people completing higher-level skills studies than ever before*", asking local businesses to "*Encourage people to develop the right skills to meet your needs, both now and for future roles, including basic IT skills.*" At Barnsley Barbell, we consistently offer training courses to our team to enable them to upskill and continue to expand their knowledge. This is something we will also continue to do if we need to expand our team.

Another ambition of Barnsley 2030 is to ensure "*Everyone has the opportunity to create wider social connections and enjoy cultural experiences.*" This is something we pride ourselves heavily on at Barnsley Barbell. Everyone walks in our doors a stranger and becomes part of our 'family'. We run social events outside of our timetabled session times, including meeting up for food at Barnsley Town Centres Market Kitchen, walking on the Trans Pennine, visiting local coffee shops and taking part in local walks and hikes, to name a few examples.

https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/learning-barnsley/

3 - Growing Barnsley

The Barnsley 2030 Strategy comes with the ambition that "*Local businesses are thriving through early-stage support and the chance to grow."* Moving to Unit 3 allows us the chance we need to grow. Unfortunately, at present our small-unit is holding us back from growing. In fact, current members are leaving us to train at other non-commercial gyms, based out of the town centre, due to our lack of space, which is severely impacting growth.

As per the 2030 Strategy for Growing Barnsley, we always "Provide clear routes for employment and development opportunities".

https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/growing-barnsley/

4 - Sustainable Barnsley

Through the Barnsley 2030 strategy, Barnsley Council have the ambition that "*People live in sustainable communities with reduced carbon emissions … [and] can get around in Barnsley easier than ever, with an increase in cycle routes and better connections across the borough.*"

Unit 3 is a perfect location for Barnsley Barbell to move to as it links directly with the Trans Pennine, which will encourage our clients to use their bikes to get to us. This, combined with the ideal walking routes nearby, will reduce carbon emissions in the local area as less people will use their cars. Further to this, with Unit 5 on Oaks Business Park being a boxing gym, there is the opportunity for transport synergy as people car-share when attending sessions at the 2 businesses at the same time.

There are also great transport links nearby on Doncaster Road, with regular buses meaning many of our clients can now opt for convenient travel using Stagecoach and other local travel companies instead of independently traveling in their cars, further reducing carbon emissions. This supports Barnsley Councils ideal, in that residents and communities can help in the following way: *"Be kind to the environment by walking and cycling and using public transport."*

Another ambition of Barnsley 2030 is that "*People are proud of and look after their local environment"*. In strong support of the 2030 Strategy, as previously mentioned, we place a huge emphasis on supporting volunteering opportunities and community group initiatives in the local area.

https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/our-council/barnsley-2030/sustainable-barnsley/