

Cross Party Group on Sport

12 November 2019

Minutes

Welcome from Alison Johnstone MSP

Liz Smith MSP, Jeremy Balfour MSP and Brian Whittle MSP in attendance

Attendance

Kim Atkinson, Scottish Sports Association

Jeremy Balfour, MSP

Tom Bishop, Scottish Cycling

Natasha Clarke, Scottish Football Association

Kirsty Cumming, Community Leisure Scotland

Malcolm Dingwall-Smith, sportscotland

Ali Dreyer, Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE)

Robin Drummond, Scottish Football Association

David Ferguson, Observatory for Sport in Scotland

Stew Fowlie, Scottish Student Sport

Alison Johnstone, MSP

John Hamilton, Scottish Adventure Activities Forum

Jane Harvey, Scottish Council of Taekwondo

Richard Haynes, University of Stirling

Ryan McQuigg, Action for Children

Gregor Muir, Scottish Sports Association

Charlie Raeburn, Observatory for Sport in Scotland (OSS)

Brian Robinson, Association of British Riding Schools

Liz Smith, MSP

Ron Sutherland

Carole Sutherland

Margarita Sweeney-Baird, Inclusive Skating

Iain Watt, Chair - Scottish Highland Games Association

Iain White

Brian Whittle, MSP

Apologies

Alan Murray, Waterski and Wakeboard Scotland

Dr Fiona Reid, Glasgow Caledonian University

Duncan Sinclair, Aberdeen Sports Village

Liza Linton, RYA (Scotland)

Gail Prince, Scottish ClubSport

Rick Kenney, Scottish ClubSport

Iain McKinven, Scottish Handball

Stuart Smith, Scottish Canoe Association

Ken Hughes, Scottish Sports Association

Thanks were noted to Tavish Scott, who leaves the Group having given up his seat as an MSP. A request was made to add Liam MacArthur MSP, Scottish Liberal Democrats, to the Group as a Group Member. This was approved.

The format for this meeting was brief talking points from attendees, highlighting key challenges or opportunities from their area.

Ali Dreyer, Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education

AD explained the role of SAPOE, which aims to support all 32 Local Authorities in outdoor education and the Curriculum for Excellence, with a role to play in health, education and the environment. Despite health and wellbeing benefits, and the bigger agenda of population health, three Local Authorities have recently closed outdoor learning facilities and others are under pressure. AD raised the question of how best to support the promotion of outdoor activities and learning.

Kirsty Cumming, Community Leisure Scotland

The membership association for culture and leisure trusts has recently produced its first 'manifesto' document, outlining its key contributions. Ongoing challenges include budget pressures and reduction in funding from local authorities, where leisure can still be seen as a 'nice to have'. There is an opportunity to articulate the benefits of increased physical activity across policy areas, with collective messaging from the sector pulling together for a stronger voice.

Tom Bishop, Scottish Cycling

Cited the growth of club numbers within Scottish Cycling, with health, environment and transport all benefiting from increasing cyclist numbers. However growth requires resources to stretch, including the need for facilities and coaches at grassroots. Club capacities can also be a challenge with waiting lists. Looking ahead, significant positives for the sport with the 2023

World Championships coming to Scotland, which will include 13 unique disciplines taking place at the same time across the country.

David Ferguson, Observatory for Sport in Scotland (OSS)

The OSS vision is to use academic research and analysis to fill knowledge gaps and help develop effective policy and practice. The OSS has produced a series of project proposals, which includes a National Survey of Scotland's Sporting Life, which follows now-regular global surveys that support more effective policy and practice from government to local levels with data and evidence around who takes part in sport, where, when and why, and why people drop out of sport.

The OSS will host a National Sport Summit on November 25th and 26th to highlight key issues and share international best practice, while discussing how research can help shape future policy.

Margarita Sweeney-Baird, Inclusive Skating

MSB discussed the work done by the charity, which has been recognised by World Skating, in providing opportunities for individuals with additional challenges to take part in ice skating. The organisation includes a specific focus on involving parents and carers as well as children, citing the importance of developing practice from a starting point of inclusion.

MSB noted that existing governing body structures tend to favour able-bodied people, with 'disability' or adapted versions bolted on. While one in ten people in Scotland have a genetic disorder, and one in seven children, the funding focus has always been on Paralympic sport, with money not always going to those who need it. With the increased focus on inclusion within funding models, organisations such as Genetics UK are providing key funding and can direct money to smaller organisations and charities.

Brian Robinson, Association of British Riding Schools (Scotland)

BR highlighted the work done across 250 schools around the UK, bringing in early age children and young adults to enjoy riding opportunities. The importance of exercise has been highlighted, but social interaction is also a key part of the group-focused experience. The work is valuable and there has been a growth in attendees, especially via word of mouth and social media, but challenges remain for proprietors who have to actively seek funding to support their work with ABRS.

Iain Watt, Scottish Highland Games Association

IW cited the need to communicate better, with the struggle to attract sufficient volunteer numbers resulting in some community events no longer taking place. With a typically over-50

demographic of volunteers, the majority of events are either static or shrinking. SHGA wants to better link up local opportunities with people who want the experience.

Attendees cited developing a volunteer development plan and providing online training as a potential avenue to explore, along with the Active Schools-linked Ambassadors programme and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award as potential sources of volunteers.

Stew Fowlie, Scottish Student Sport

SF noted that the conversation in student sport, across the network of 612 university and college sports clubs, is about changing lives, health and wellbeing, inclusion and employability. Where we are limited by the inputs of time and money, there is an obligation for sport to move closer to the physical activity aims that are in the health agenda, or to better demonstrate the way sport already meets those aims.

To do so requires better cross-sector collaboration and an understanding of how people journey through their sporting lives. That knowledge would allow for structures and programmes that can follow people and support them through the life course and avoid the traditional points when people drop out of sport and physical activity.

Natasha Clarke, Scottish Football Association

NC noted the similar issues that are faced in football as across the rest of the sector around fragmentation and the best use of in-house resources, and the need to maximise opportunities when they arise. NC also suggested individual sports should not see other sports as their competition, instead the focus should be on encouraging activity in a broad range of formats and to signpost better.

NC also noted that investment opportunities are possible by aligning with sponsors who share a sporting ethos and utilising a targeted approach, in turn allowing for additional support for participation opportunities.

Ryan McQuigg, Action for Children

A number of barriers to participation were highlighted, including transport, lack of facilities and insufficient signposting and guidance. RM noted opportunities around utilising community assets, for example a football site which developed an on-site laundry business to generate additional revenue. With Community Planning Partnerships, 1% of local budgets are designated for participatory budgeting, which can be accessed and led by community groups.

In the near future manifesto messaging, a collective voice from the sector should note that additional spending on sport and physical activity is an investment rather than a cost.

With regards to volunteering, it was noted that some people cannot afford to volunteer and therefore employers need to consider how they can support people.

AJ thanked all speakers and attendees.

Date of next meeting: 19th February 2020