

Minute of the meeting held in the Scottish Parliament.

**PRESENT** Margo MacDonald MSP, Mark Griffin MSP, Clare Adamson MSP, Nanette Milne MSP, Alison Johnstone MSP, John Park MSP, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, James Kelly MSP, Hugh Henry MSP, Peter Warren, Kim Atkinson, Lee Cousins, Neil Matheson, David Reid, Mark McGeachie, Susan McDonald, Jim McIntosh, Brian Robinson, Julie Mason, David Laing, Laurene Edgar, Stewart Pitt, Oliver Barsby, Morag Arnot, Hayley Wotherspoon, Michael Chisholm, Charlie Raeburn, Allan Alstead, Jane Campbell Morrison, Douglas Bryce, Sharon MacDonald, Alan Craw, Sharon Drysdale, Stew Fowlie, Hugh Hall, Ian Findlay, Rodger Evans, Jim Moffat, Stuart Gallagher, Diane Cameron, Roger Scrutton, Rick Kenney, Sarah Mills, Tom Bishop, Hazel Robinson, Walter Macadam, Greg Coburn.

#### **APOLOGIES**

Bob Aitken, David Carey, John Clayton, Ian Crawford, Sara Ebbett, Jim Fleeting, Margaret Ann Fleming, Jim Bunn, Duncan Hamilton, Stephanie-Anne Harris, Robert Heatly MBE, Karin Jackson, Alasdair MacLennan, Gavin MacLeod, Torquil Macleod, David Martin, Terry McLernon, Steve Paige, Neil Park, Colin Rennie, Denis Robertson Sullivan, Liz Smith MSP, Roddy Smith, Ron Sutherland, Brian Walker, Cameron Watt, Stuart Younie, Nigel Holl, Fiona McLeod MSP, Deborah Benson.

#### **Previous Minute:**

Matters Arising – None.

Margo invited members to support the ‘Back the Bid’ programme for the 2018 Youth Olympics in Glasgow.

The draft work programme for the Cross Party Group on Sport for the coming year was circulated and approved.

#### **Round Table Discussion**

Margo opened the meeting by welcoming guest speakers Neil Matheson (Atlantis Leisure), David Reid (Tryst Community Sports Club, Mark McGeachie (The Robertson Trust) and Susan McDonald (Active Communities). Margo informed those present that this topical session would focus on ‘Support for Community Sport’ to add value to the current Inquiry in this name being undertaken by the Scottish Parliament’s Health and Sport Committee. Margo stated her pleasure in especially welcoming Nanette Milne MSP to the meeting tonight as the Committee’s nominated representative at this Cross Party Group meeting.

#### **Neil Matheson – Atlantis Community Leisure**

The aim of Atlantis is ‘To bring the community together in a motivational, energizing environment by participation in sports and other activities. To provide development opportunities for the community, particularly its young people. To facilitate community cohesiveness and growth by enabling other community organisations.’ Atlantis was born in a backdrop of limited sports facilities provision by a team with a shared vision.

The venue commenced in October 1992 and doubled the users in the first year alone. The initial vision of a building and facilities in place was delivered but it was recognised that there were further opportunities for Atlantis. The ‘Playsport’ programme was launched to ‘encourage all to play sport’ along with their ‘kids in trainers’ programme.

Community engagement is at the heart of Atlantis’s work and a key reason for their success. More recently they have built a new soft play area, installed a new biomass boiler and airsource heat pump, supported the Oban Community PlayPark and launched their Healthy Options GP referral scheme, along with a host of ‘diversionary’ programmes.

Neil provided further details on the work of Atlantis taken from their ‘Did you know’ boards:

1. Atlantis Learn to Swim, Oban Otters and Lifesavers receive over 750 visits to their swim classes every week
2. Their customers and instructors bike over 100,000 miles a year on their indoor cycles (equivalent to 4 times round the planet)
3. Atlantis receives in excess of 16,500 user visits per month, more than twice the population of Oban
4. Atlantis provides over 50 different fitness classes, the widest range of any sports centre in the West of Scotland
5. The annual Atlantis dance show typically attracts over 400 spectators and encompasses 8 different dance disciplines with over 100 dancers
6. Seven businesses operate out of Atlantis employing over 25 local people

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7. Atlantis was the first leisure centre in Scotland to have a Starbucks Coffee outlet
8. Atlantis partners and supports over 25 clubs and social enterprises in the local community
9. Over 175 young people from the local area have worked within Atlantis since 1992, going on to a variety of professions
10. Atlantis currently employs 52 local people, making up 27 full time equivalent jobs
11. Atlantis is open 95 hours per week, longer than any other leisure centre in Argyll and Bute
12. More than 30 athletes from Atlantis have gone on to compete at national level
13. The major projects that you see appearing around Atlantis, such as softplay and the biomass boiler, are driven by a board of 9 volunteer directors who have a passion for the wellbeing of their local community
14. Atlantis hosts over 35 events per year
15. Atlantis publishes an informative weekly email newsletter every Friday which you can receive free by signing up at [www.atlantisleisure.co.uk](http://www.atlantisleisure.co.uk)
16. The Atlantis staff team are 157% more enthusiastic than the maximum safe limit for human enthusiasm as measured in a 1992 NASA study.\*  
\*This is made-up, but you know what we mean.
17. Atlantis delivers over 5000 hours of sports coaching every year
18. "In 1992, Argyll and Bute Council were the first council in the UK to support this type of social enterprise and have done so ever since."  
*Willie Young, Community Sport Lead Manager, Argyll & Bute Council*
19. Atlantis provides in excess of 75 different sports-related activities, making its range one of the largest in Scotland
20. Every year, in partnership with Argyll & Bute Council, Atlantis trains and qualifies nearly 500 sports coaches in 56 courses and 26 disciplines at Sporting Champions Coaching conference, the largest event of its kind in Scotland
21. Every Friday night, around 80 teenagers attend Friday Freestyle, when Atlantis is dedicated entirely to their activities led by volunteers, partner organisations and the Atlantis coaching team
22. You can join over 1000 fans and keep up with what's happening at Atlantis on a daily basis at [Facebook.com/atlantisleisure](https://www.facebook.com/atlantisleisure).

### **David Reid, Tryst Community Sports Club**

David outlined the evolution of the Club and the partnership with Stenhousemuir FC. Stenhousemuir FC had reached a glass ceiling in relation to a wide range of programmes they supported/had undertaken, including: young maroons, community teams, mini maroon, twilight leagues, Quality Mark, as a community interest company and attracting 500 boys and girls to the club on a regular basis. The Tryst Community Sports Club emerged following discussions about how to progress sport within the local community, via a common set of drivers and a desire to change the culture within the community:

- Lots of disparate community activity
- Significant social and health issues
- Lack of a true community spirit and pride
- Lack of available quality facilities
- A desire to make a real difference
- To create a sustainable future for the club
- Create a pathway for volunteers to apply their skills.

The Club's vision is "to create a community organisation for all age groups which inspires participation, rewards endeavour and nurtures talent providing a foundation for the promotion of a socially attractive and healthy lifestyle where the members feel a sense of ownership for life."

The Club's first priority was to support the development of the 5 sports club's own members as members of the Tryst Community Sports Club: golf, cricket, football, dance and basketball. Engagement with further sports was planned as part of phase two.

Strong partnerships were at the heart of the Club's development. They supported the Club's 'virtuous circle' of new members, new clubs, new volunteers, unlock facilities. To date the Club's achievements include:

- Feb 2011: 5 clubs, 62 members
- Aug 2012: 15 clubs, 550 members
- With active schools: 2000+ participants/week
- Adult classes started: sustainability
- Volunteer development programme

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At the present time the Club now support a range of sports:

- *Tennis*
- *Golf*
- *Cricket*
- *Rock-it-ball*
- *Cheerleading*
- *Dance*
- *Rugby*
- *Basketball*
- *Water polo*
- *Table tennis*
- *Hockey*
- *Gymnastics*
- *Football*
- *Karate*
- *Jiu Jitsu.*

### **Mark McGeachie, The Robertson Trust**

The Robertson Trust is currently the largest Independent Trust in Scotland. They awarded £14.6M to charities in Scotland in 2011/12. The Trust adopted Community Sport as one of its key Development areas in 2008.

All of their Development projects are externally evaluated to determine what works, what doesn't work and why.

Mark confirmed that sport can be a valuable vehicle to engage hard to reach young people in communities and enable them to develop key life skills. To be effective sports facilities and programmes should be:

- Accessible,
- Provide opportunities to engage in high quality programmes
- Responsive to and driven by the needs of the community.

In addition to this, volunteering can provide benefits for individuals and communities.

### **Susan McDonald, Active Communities**

Jogging Buddies was launched in 2003. Jogging Buddies started with a group of Mums at Ralston Playgroup who were asked by founder Susan McDonald if they would like to take part in a physical activity programme linked to 'Have a Heart' Paisley. The parents were interested in walking/jogging and a class was set up on a Friday morning while children were in playgroup. This meant there was no need for babysitters and Mums felt comfortable in this community setting.

The types of people who come to their classes wouldn't describe themselves as "sporty" and would be too intimidated to go along to their local sports centre/club. Jogging Buddies grew in numbers because they listened to people, responded to their needs and emphasized the fun/social aspect of physical activity.

In 2010 Jogging Buddies changed its name to Active Communities (Scotland) Ltd and received charitable status. The name change was essential due to their success in delivering community sport, physical activity and well-being programmes. The new name is a better reflection of the range of work they do in local communities. When they refer to "active" they mean physically active to improve fitness/health and community active to help improve local communities and make positive changes.

The programme currently supports:

- 10 venues Renfrewshire wide
- 65 trained jogscotland leaders
- 3 jogscotland tutors
- 300 members.

Active Communities aims:

- to inspire communities to create a culture of sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing.
- provide programmes and services that will promote the benefits of sport, physical activity and mental health and well-being
- provide support and training for volunteers, leaders and coaches
- promote a community led approach
- to use sport and physical activity as a vehicle to teach valuable life and social skills

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- to harness the energy and commitment of partner agencies to work with them.

Active Communities bring individuals from all backgrounds and social statuses together in a relaxed and natural environment that is ideal for exploring serious and sensitive issues. Engaging residents, voluntary groups, and partner organisations is essential to the creation of supportive communities and Active Communities.

They believe that sports and physical activity instill the critical "can do" outlook that is vital to personal development. They believe in the power of sport and physical activity to create lasting individual and social change, build self-esteem, develop leadership skills and strengthen relationships and, through sport, communities can be the agents of their own development

They encourage and support everyone regardless of age or ability and are committed to a community led approach where they engage, support and enable local communities to take action and improve their health. The organisation delivers a wide range of programmes and services that provide opportunities for the whole community to become healthier and more active in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Crucial to the success of the organisation is the training of local people to deliver classes. This enabled them to be role models in their community and because the majority of their leaders started as beginners they could understand the challenges many people faced to becoming active. This group are their Community Champions. They engage with the local community, promote opportunities, deliver health promoting activities, support local people to achieve their goals and mentor new volunteer leaders.

They pride themselves on the development and support of their volunteers. They all have national governing body awards but they have also developed a series of workshops and training opportunities to address their needs. They have a mentor programme and provide resources/tools needed to work within their local community. They have an annual education & training programme, meet with our volunteers on a regular basis and organise an annual team building day. Over the last year they have added additional training for their leaders including, Health Issues in the Community & British Heart Foundation Healthy Heart Training to allow them to further develop their skills as "Community Health Champions".

In 2007 they were asked to develop a national Girls on the Move Project aimed at increasing physical activity and leadership opportunities for young Mums (16-24yrs). The project was piloted in Renfrewshire working initially with a group of 10 young Mums from Paisley Threads. The project involved physical activity sessions (walking/jogging & buggy buddies) & personal development sessions. The Mums not only participated in the pilot project but had input into the final design & delivery. They brought in professionals to deal with some of the other issues raised by the Young Mums, and now as part of the Mums on the Run pack they provide advice sheets for leaders such as getting help with finance, alcohol, smoking cessation, drugs and well-being.

The project developed into "Mums on the Run" and has been launched nationally by jogscotland. It has been used as a case study in the [Girls on the Move Impact Statement 2005 - 2011](#) and was featured on BBC Reporting Scotland as a project that has been successful in engaging young Mums from disadvantaged areas. Four of the original Mums trained as jog leaders and now work on a sessional basis with Active Communities delivering "Mums on the Run". They have delivered sessions to 5 further groups involving 50 Mums and have organised 3 community events involving approximately 200 people. Again the success of this project was the youth work approach/community led approach taken.

Active Communities was asked by ROAR to deliver physical activity sessions at ROAR clubs. As a result of consulting with club members and partner agencies on their needs, they were instrumental in developing the "ROARing to go" programme which provides physical activity sessions and health & well-being at 12 ROAR clubs on a weekly basis. Participants in the Ralston ROAR club recently helped organise the Ralston Community Games, an intergenerational community event. They were delighted to be able to show off their new skills and commented on how they felt "part of their community".

### Mark McGeachie

Preventative spend:

- Delivered in the right way, sports can help hard to reach groups (such as those who are excluded from school, engaged in offending behaviour or at risk of becoming long term unemployed) to develop key life skills that increase their chances of achieving positive outcomes in the future
- Annual cost of housing a prisoner = approx £40,000 (Scottish Prisons Commission, Scotland's Choice, 2008);

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Organisations can't assume that participants automatically achieve positive outcomes through engaging in sport. They need to consider:

- Positive outcomes might be caused by other external factors, rather than just their engagement with a sport programme
- Sport will not make a positive difference for everyone who engages with it and when it does, that difference may take time
- Factors such as background of participants, personalities, motivations, the delivery model adopted, quality of coaches/sports leaders and support received all influence whether or not someone engages with a sports programme and the outcomes the benefits they will achieve through doing so

Many organisations don't have the skills or resources to properly evaluate their sports programmes

- Evaluation is key for helping to understand what works, what doesn't work and why within sports programmes
- Community Sport and Enterprise Evaluation Learning Set aims to help community sport and enterprise projects to build better self-evaluation skills.

Margo thanked all the speakers for their presentations and opened the floor for questions.

Margo started by asking the presenters how they ensure that they get the right volunteer in the right place at the right time, who provides support for this and how they share what they're doing with other organisations.

Mark praised the support provided to clubs through Diane Cameron at SenScot. Neil reiterated the importance of a shared vision and in maintaining enthusiasm.

Paul Wheelhouse MSP asked if disclosure checks were putting volunteers off.

David confirmed that this was a challenge. The process is too bureaucratic, the backlog of applications takes too long and can be a dampener to a volunteer's initial enthusiasm when it then takes time before they can volunteer.

Hugh Henry MSP asked if cost is a challenge for disclosure checks. Both David and Susan confirmed that both cost and the bureaucracy of the process were challenges.

Margo encouraged those present who have issues in this regard to contact their local MSP in this regard to ask for action and support.

Julie Mason suggested there was an opportunity to engage more with students and HE/FE around the gathering of evidence in relation to prevention and monitoring.

Diane Cameron highlighted the sporting chance initiative as a link between universities with opportunities for clubs and placements.

Clare Adamson MSP reported that in the Education and Culture Committee meeting earlier today they were discussing Trusts and how local authorities engage with Trusts to prevent duplication of effort and demonstrate that they are meeting the expectations of their funders.

Mark Griffin MSP asked about the increased use of the school estate and how the presenters had overcome contract issues.

David described the initial challenges they'd faced in this regard due to restrictive contracts limiting club access. However, a new headmaster arrived in the school who was keen to support their work and they continue now to have a positive relationship in this regard.

Susan confirmed that it's important for the community to feel comfortable to use facilities and the importance of welcoming facilities.

Margo confirmed the date of the debate in Parliament on this issue and urged people to contact Peter if they wished to attend the debate.

Margo thanked the guest speakers and those present for a lively and positive discussion.

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