



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 25 September 2012

Session 4

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**HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE**

**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2012, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

\*Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP)

\*Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP)

\*Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con)

\*Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)

\*Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)

\*Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab)

\*David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Ceris Anderson (StreetGames)

Jane Blanchard (Lochaber Sports Association)

Diane Cameron (Senscot)

Gordon Crawford (Active Stirling)

Alistair Gray (Winning Scotland Foundation)

John Heraghty (sported)

John Lee (Volunteer Development Scotland)

Gavin Macleod (Scottish Disability Sport)

Liz McColgan

Mark McGeachie (Robertson Trust)

Judy Murray

Alex Richardson (Gladiator Programme)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Eugene Windsor

**LOCATION**

Committee Room 1



## Scottish Parliament

### Health and Sport Committee

*Tuesday 25 September 2012*

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 10:18*]

### Interests

**The Convener (Duncan McNeil):** Welcome to the 25th meeting in 2012 of the Health and Sport Committee. I remind everyone who has a mobile phone or BlackBerry to switch it off as they interfere with the sound system.

First, I welcome three new committee members—Mark McDonald, Aileen McLeod, and David Torrance—and invite each to declare interests that might be related to the committee's remit.

**Mark McDonald (North East Scotland) (SNP):** I direct members to my entry in the register of interests. I believe that the only item that might relate to the committee's remit is the fact that I am a patron of the Aberdeenshire charity Gordon Dementia Services SCIO.

**Aileen McLeod (South Scotland) (SNP):** After being a member of the Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee and the European and External Relations Committee, I am delighted to join the Health and Sport Committee. I have no registrable interests to declare that are relevant to the committee's remit.

**David Torrance (Kirkcaldy) (SNP):** I refer members to my register of interests. I am a member of the Scout Association.

**The Convener:** I thank everyone for that.

## Community Sport Inquiry

10:20

**The Convener:** Agenda item 2 is another round-table session as part of the committee's inquiry into supporting community sport.

The first round-table session is focused on coaching. I thank the witnesses for their attendance and ask everyone to introduce themselves.

**Mark McDonald:** I am an MSP for North East Scotland.

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I am an MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife.

**John Lee (Volunteer Development Scotland):** I am from Volunteer Development Scotland.

**Aileen McLeod:** I am an MSP for South Scotland.

**Gavin Macleod (Scottish Disability Sport):** I am the chief executive officer of Scottish Disability Sport.

**David Torrance:** I am the MSP for Kirkcaldy.

**Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP):** I am the MSP for Clydebank and Milngavie.

**Alistair Gray (Winning Scotland Foundation):** I am chairman of the Winning Scotland Foundation.

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** I am an MSP for North East Scotland.

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** I am an MSP for Glasgow.

**Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP):** I am an MSP for Glasgow.

**Judy Murray:** I am a tennis coach.

**The Convener:** I should mention that Liz McColgan is sprinting from Dundee—she is caught up in the traffic. Alex Richardson, who is the chief executive of the Gladiator Programme, is also on his way. There has been disruption on the roads and other travel disruption this morning, so we await their arrival.

Bob Doris will kick off. I hope that the round-table format means that the meeting can be a bit more relaxed than it has been up to now, so that we can have a discussion and share experiences. I hope that the panel's knowledge will influence our eventual report.

**Bob Doris:** Good morning, everyone. I will put the committee's sport inquiry in context. Yesterday, Nanette Milne and I were at the

Aberdeen Sports Village, where we saw a wonderful facility, including the 50m pool that is under construction, and the committee recently went on a tour of the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome.

In the light of the £73 million that has been invested in quality sports facilities in the past five years, along with the hundreds of millions of pounds that have been invested in the Commonwealth games and the £25 million that I believe is in the pipeline for a national performance centre for sport, I have two questions for the witnesses. First, although we always need to do more to develop quality facilities, what difference do you think such facilities will make in developing elite athletes for the future? Just as important for the committee, what is the relationship between those quality facilities, which are aimed at developing elite athletes, and greater participation in sport and physical activity in our communities more generally? When we invest in top-quality infrastructure for sport, how do we ensure that we get general participation? Both things are desirable and the sport inquiry wants to achieve both those aims.

**Alistair Gray:** I thank you for the opportunity to join this informal discussion.

Huge investment has gone into sports facilities, but affordable access is the bigger issue. If you speak to anybody in sport, they will say that that is the key. We find too often that access is not affordable and that the focus of many owners of facilities is on having to reduce costs as a result of budgets being reduced. In fact, they miss the point, because they do not consider how to increase demand. In any facility, you can reduce costs, reduce the service and reduce opening hours, but the key thing is to increase demand.

I was recently involved with one of Scotland's major cities, which said that it needed to reduce its budget by £3 million. That was turned round by asking instead, "How can we increase revenue by £3 million?" The answers were to get more people through and to encourage programmes that brought people into the facilities and made them spend more when they were there.

We focus too often on budgets, costs, grants and investment, but without affordable access those fantastic facilities—like you, I have been round the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome and Aberdeen Sports Village—will not be fantastic in terms of developing elite athletes unless we can get a sufficient number of athletes through the doors, enable proper coaching to take place to create the pathways, and take the athletes along those pathways.

**John Lee:** I can speak more about grass-roots sport. In composing our submission, we took soundings from some of our stakeholders. Some

of the feedback was that grass-roots community organisations are concerned more about accessing fairly basic facilities, such as town halls, church halls and schools. They do not really look for high-tech, state-of-the-art, big-ticket facilities; they talk more about accessing facilities that are close at hand and which should be much more accessible to them. The two aspects go hand in hand. If we want to encourage elite athletes, we might need the big-ticket, state-of-the-art facilities, but we must pursue an open and easy access policy in grass-roots community facilities.

**Gavin Macleod:** From the disability sport point of view, the two issues are closely linked. The new facilities will be a huge bonus for sport in Scotland. Aberdeen Sports Village, which Bob Doris mentioned, is a fantastic example of good practice. The facilities are first rate, and an inclusive approach is being taken to the clubs that use them. We would like that model to be replicated across the country.

We have been unable to pursue a cycling programme in Scotland, because we have not had a facility. Our top performance disabled cyclists must go down to Manchester or Swansea to train, but facilities such as the Sir Chris Hoy velodrome will allow them to train in Scotland. That will undoubtedly be a huge benefit.

The key to which a lot of the research points is that attitudinal barriers are the biggest barriers to people with disabilities using facilities. Costs and physical access are barriers, but attitudes are the biggest barriers. Probably the most successfully integrated sports facility in Scotland is the Fife institute of physical and recreational education in Glenrothes. It is not the best building in the world—it is a 1970s build—but its ethos, the staff training, how it is marketed and the culture of the programming mean that it provides a fully inclusive environment. We must ensure that the new facilities are of good quality, which I think will be the case. Coaches must have adequate training in order that they can include people and do so appropriately. Facilities must also have a culture of inclusiveness; they must be marketed and programmed properly.

**The Convener:** That leads on neatly to coaching.

**Judy Murray:** I agree completely with Alistair Gray that we need facilities to be accessible and affordable. On the back of the Olympics and with the Commonwealth games coming up, we have an enormous opportunity to capture the imagination of the Scottish public—I mean not just children, but adults. It is parents who enrol children in sports classes, so if we can enthuse adults, we will have more chance of more children playing sport. However, there must be local facilities that are easy to access and affordable.

Facilities on their own will not get the job done; it has to be about people. We must create a workforce that can enthuse and inspire so that we can get kids and adults into sport, but we must retain them, too. It is one thing to get people excited on the back of the Olympics and with the Commonwealth games coming, but retaining them in sport comes down to people—the pied pipers who get children into clubs, schools or parks and enjoying what they are doing. There must be a plan to keep people in the game, whether that is through competition, coaching or just being part of a social group.

10:30

Sport can give so much. I talk about kids in particular. When I was young, I played every sport under the sun, but I did so at local and school levels. There is nothing better than representing a club or a school. My parents got me into sport, so it was second nature to me to get my kids into sport. I started coaching at our local club as an ex-player, not a coach: I was just a parent who was looking for something that would get me out of the house and away from my very small kids for a few hours. I started running some classes at our club and some teams at the primary and high schools, all on a voluntary basis, and from there evolved into a tennis coach. However, my drivers were my passion for the sport and what my experience of community tennis or badminton clubs and whatever else I could be part of gave me as a person. As a result, I very much believe in the localised approach.

I want to end with a little story. The team at Dunblane high school had four little boys; of course, two of them were my kids, but the parents of the other two boys were also involved. I did the coaching, the school organised the fixtures, one parent booked the transport and the venues, and the other—who was not sporty at all and felt quite threatened by the whole thing and would get very nervous before matches and go home and lie down with a gin and tonic—would set the table for the tea and then wash up everything afterwards. We all felt that we had a part to play.

Schools can play a huge role in this. They have great facilities and we should be opening them up to the wider community and getting more things happening after school and at the weekend, not just for kids but for adults. We need to bring back the competitive sport element, but we need also to encourage and educate parents and get them to help out. We do not always have to pay people to do these things; we get too caught up in budgeting and worrying about how much things cost. Parents want their kids to do things, to have active lives and to be enjoying themselves. If you can do a

good job educating the parents, you are halfway there.

When I was Scotland's national tennis coach, I had a tiny budget and was working on my own. It was a real challenge, but I had a real belief and realised that if we were to have any chance of giving a number of kids the opportunity to play well, we needed big numbers. We started with about 20 kids aged between eight and 11 and because I had no budget I had to involve the parents in lift sharing and in supervising tournaments, little mini-matchplays and so on. Four of those 20 kids played in this year's Olympics. That was from what you might call an amateur set-up with very little money but a lot of desire and passion to make something happen.

**The Convener:** When Drew Smith and I visited St Maurice's high school in Cumbernauld yesterday, we heard about the role of the school, the young sporting ambassadors who joined and are now coaching very successful basketball teams and the kind of local access to which Judy Murray has just referred. Indeed, the big message that came across was about local access and availability and the need for such activity to be on people's doorsteps.

**Alistair Gray:** I was thinking about that very issue during the time I spent getting through from Glasgow this morning; the drive was very good, in that it allowed me to reflect on what we are discussing.

I am three weeks into my 65th year; 1948 was not only the year I was born, but was the last time London hosted the Olympic games. Having lived through the two Commonwealth games that have been held in Scotland, and other such activities, I think that we have to get across the message that it all comes down to our people's behaviour and culture; it is much more about software than it is about hardware. After all, this is the time of our lives. We will never again have a legacy such as we will potentially get over the next five to six years from the Olympic games, the Paralympic games, the Commonwealth games, the Ryder cup, the world gymnastics championships, European swimming and—I hope—the youth Olympic games, which will be held in Glasgow in 2018. Can you imagine any nation having the same opportunity? We will throw it away at our peril.

I am excited by the potential of the community sport hubs—we are in danger of joining things up. [*Laughter.*] We must not throw away this opportunity. We need a new model for this new era; at the moment, it is almost as if we are using my first Walkman in the iPhone 5 era. I really must challenge some of what we are doing.

There are already danger signs of which we should be aware. For example, after the Olympics, 100 children turned up to an athletics session in Motherwell to be faced with only two coaches. A large number of cycling clubs in Scotland now have waiting lists. Cycling clubs in Britain added 10 per cent to their membership—4,500 new members—within a month of the Olympic games, but there are still clubs with a come-and-try session for early entrants into cycling whose first come-and-try race is 40km. The foundation also has a story about a five-year-old who went with his mum to a football club only for his mother to receive a text two weeks later saying, “Your son is not good enough.”

As Judy Murray suggested, we must start to address behaviours. In positive coaching Scotland, the foundation has a tremendous product to help youngsters come in and enjoy sport, to try to keep them in it for life and to give them the skills to improve their health and change not only their behaviour but that of their parents, teachers and coaches. Scottish football and Scottish rugby are embracing that programme.

We also have work out for sport, which is a programme through which volunteers from business can be brought together to do particular jobs in clubs and national governing bodies. However, the challenge is that, in some ways, the sports clubs do not know how to use those volunteers unless they have the kind of situation that Judy Murray described within the club. Volunteers want to volunteer, but they need to have the right opportunities.

There is a need for a new model with vibrant community hubs where the big banner is about fun, not about elite sport. We certainly do not want concrete hubs. We pride ourselves in multimillion-pound investments, but we want vibrant community hubs where there is less activity and more good practice. We want to focus on improving the quality of demand, rather than worrying about supply all the time. We must focus much less on individual initiatives and much more on partnership and collaboration. We must also focus on building a new generation of leaders, rather than worrying about governance, rules and health and safety. The change will come from that.

**The Convener:** On the Olympic legacy and the demand and enthusiasm that have built up, I am sure that I saw in the evidence that the number of volunteers has not risen at all. It is basically pretty flat; 14 per cent and 18 per cent of the population have been the low and the high.

**John Lee:** Actually, at the moment, about 30 per cent of the population of Scotland is involved in regular, formal volunteering. The main source for figures is something called the Scottish household survey, which the Scottish Government

and the Office for National Statistics publish annually.

The 30 per cent figure equates to about 1.2 million people, which is a significant number. However, you are right to say that it has, in essence, flatlined for the past decade—every time that we look at the Scottish household survey, it shows a quite uncanny similarity, in that it fluctuates around 30 per cent. There seems to be a slow trickle in and a slow trickle out, which creates a static picture.

Sport is generally one of the activity categories with a higher volunteering rate. About 15 or 16 per cent out of the total 30 per cent are involved in volunteering in sport. However, we notice from the Scottish household survey that volunteering in sport is always quite popular with young people—about 20 or 22 per cent of young people are involved in sport—but that tends to decline a bit with age. Overall, about 15 per cent of the population is involved in volunteering in sport.

You are right to say that the picture is static; within the 30 per cent, it tends not to shift. However, some evidence from a longitudinal study called the British household panel survey suggests that more people in the population have experience of volunteering. The Scottish household survey just gives us a snapshot at any one time. However, at 1.2 million, the number of people involved is still fairly considerable.

**The Convener:** I do not want to downplay it at all. As politicians, we know how difficult it is to get volunteers at any level and that the people who drop out must be replaced. I accept that. However, I read in the evidence that there are 55,000 registered youth football players—it is amazing that we cannot get 11 of them who can play for Scotland in a winning style—and that that demand is met, so there is a wide variance.

**John Lee:** Absolutely. Volunteering is crucial to sport in Scotland. The Olympics helped to show that, and Glasgow 2014 will definitely show it. Volunteering is absolutely crucial to our endeavours and to energising community sport in Scotland. Alistair Gray is absolutely right to say that we must look at new models of involving volunteers and making the best use of people’s talents. We think that about 84,000 of the 90,000 sports coaches and so on in Scotland are volunteers. Volunteering is absolutely crucial to the whole debate, and the committee’s investigation into it is to be welcomed.

**The Convener:** We will maybe return to what could encourage them and what would sustain their activity. It might be just the sport that attracts them—they might not want to be a club treasurer.

**Drew Smith:** I return to what Alistair Gray said about community sport hubs. We have heard a lot

of evidence about them and a number of committee members have visited different kinds of sport hubs. It is becoming apparent that we need a wholesale change away from how we imagined sports clubs in the past, with clubhouses, blazers and people being fairly precious about—well, perhaps not precious about, but most interested in—their own particular discipline. We are trying to create a new culture, and people have talked about the European example of large, multisports clubs that keep people involved in a range of different things for longer. Is that a realistic vision of how community sport in Scotland could look? From the coaches' perspective, would it change the link with those who are training more and moving towards the elite level if all our emphasis was on large community sport hubs where there was not the same focus on bringing through the very best in a particular discipline?

**Alistair Gray:** Do not get the notion that there are loads of blazers out there. There are more likely to be almost lifelong volunteers running sports clubs on very low resources. Many clubs are very fragile—and I am not just talking about those in the Scottish Premier League. A lot of volunteer-driven clubs are getting by on tight budgets and are being very entrepreneurial in what they do in their communities.

The exciting thing about community sport hubs is that they can create synergy through the local authority, local businesses, local clubs and local schools coming together to focus on fun and keeping people in sport. In that way, we can get more young people playing sport, and that is the start of any pathway to the top. There have to be numbers at the bottom, and there must be modern, supportive clubs with positive coaches who take the youngsters and deal with them in the right way.

Sport is too often world class at throwing people out, having recruited them—particularly women. The wastage rate between the ages of 12 and 16 is huge. Things such as positive coaching Scotland initiatives are keeping youngsters in sport longer because coaches are developing positive attitudes towards youngsters and coaching them to be the best that they can be in teams and to honour their game. That is so important.

Despite the convener's comments, the Scottish Football Association has embraced the positive coaching Scotland programme, and hundreds of clubs, from Celtic at the top right the way down to junior and amateur clubs, are embracing the philosophy behind double-goal coaching—coaching youngsters in sport and in life. Youngsters are being given sport to use as a tool for life that enables them to acquire skills and to develop their ambition and the sort of attitudes that

we want. The SFA is investing a large amount of resource in that—it should be supported and applauded for doing so—as is Scottish Rugby. Hillfoots Rugby Football Club is the fastest-growing rugby club in Scotland, not because it started with five people and is growing but because it is a vibrant club that is embracing the ideals. Both the SFA and Scottish Rugby are applying a quality mark to those clubs, and positive coaching is an integral part of that.

I am excited about community sport hubs, but let us not develop them on the back of what sports development professionals are saying we should do. We should be creating a community, which is what they do in Holland. The best example that I have come across in all my years of tramping the world of sport is the Dutch community model, which is multisport, is run by families and keeps people in sport.

10:45

**Nanette Milne:** I agree that if we are going to get young people interested in sport, it should be fun. We heard evidence from the Scottish Sports Association about the importance of young kids becoming physically literate—being able to run, catch, throw and swim—while they are at primary school.

The situation is improving slightly but there is a lack of qualified—for want of a better word—physical education teachers training young kids at primary school. What are the panel's views on that? If kids become physically literate at an early age, they develop self-confidence—that comes first—and they can then try a few different sports and find something that they like. The important point is that they anticipate that they will enjoy it, that it will be fun and that they might even become good at it. What are the panel's reactions to that?

**Judy Murray:** It is very important for kids to learn the co-ordination skills and the physical skills at a young age. Obviously, the best places for them to learn those skills are at home with their parents—it is therefore important to show parents things that they can do with their kids—and in the early years of primary school. We must recognise that primary school classes often have 30 or more pupils and one teacher. Many teachers do not feel physically competent themselves to do such things with kids, so we have to find a way to support them. That might be done by putting in additional workforce, or by training up PE students and trainee teachers to help out.

When I go into schools to introduce tennis to kids nowadays, it is usually a one-off. I often go into a badminton court-sized gym hall where there are 30 kids and a teacher. I always take four other coaches with me, so we can split the kids into

small groups and have six different activities taking place around the hall. We have a little game of tennis at the end so that the kids can keep score and so forth.

I would not dream of trying to occupy 30 children in a difficult sport such as tennis, in which you are co-ordinating two pieces of equipment—a racquet and a ball—within a small, badminton court-sized space. There would be no chance of me doing that.

It is necessary to support teachers. Some teachers are incredibly good at running such sessions because they are that way inclined, but for many teachers it is not for them. Support should be provided to teachers in primaries 1, 2 and 3 to help with the development of co-ordination skills. That should be linked to more opportunities for kids to go into a particular sport, so there need to be little school teams. They do not have to be of a great standard; it is about the sense of belonging, doing your best and representing your school or club.

I agree with your comment that, beyond age eight, if kids have developed good co-ordination skills, they can become reasonably competent at whatever sport they take up. If they have not, that will be much harder for them later in life. If you think, “I would like to try such and such a sport,” but you are not co-ordinated, that is a killer for your self-confidence. We should invest as much in making our kids physically literate as we do in making them literate.

**Mark McDonald:** I was not able to go to Aberdeen Sports Village yesterday, but I regularly go there to play seven-a-side football, so I know how good a facility it is. I remember that I trained there when I was younger and involved in an athletics club, when it was the original Chris Anderson stadium. It is chalk and cheese now compared with what was there previously.

I was interested in the discussion on volunteer involvement. We are obviously focusing quite a lot on the coaching side. Another element to volunteering that we must bear in mind is people who turn up to be match officials, umpires and so on. There is a problem in some places with attracting people to take on those roles.

Often, if youth football teams turn up for their game but there is no one available to referee it, they will not get a game. We need to work out how to encourage people to volunteer on the side of a sport that is, in many ways, perhaps less attractive, because that person may often be the one who gets it in the neck for the decisions that they make.

We need people not only to coach our youngsters but to facilitate activities so that young

people can put their football or tennis coaching into practice in a match setting.

I wonder whether we are being flexible enough with regard to the bureaucracy that sometimes surrounds volunteer sport. One example involves an amateur football club in my area, Newmachar United, which was eight hours late in submitting its paperwork to compete for the following season and was expelled from the league. The club has lost all its players and may now have to fold as a result. Are we sometimes a little bit inflexible with clubs that are essentially volunteer enterprises? Folk round the table may have a view on that. *[Interruption.]*

Another point concerns the notion of unstructured play and how that helps to get young people interested in sport. I have come to the Health and Sport Committee from the Public Petitions Committee, which last week considered a petition from Play Scotland that was all about developing opportunities for children to play.

How do we encourage unstructured play for children? As a parent, I am keen to get my kids out playing in the park and just running around and having fun. Do we have enough spaces available for children to play in? What can we do to improve that? *[Interruption.]* I know that the Government is looking to put funding into improving playground spaces. Could more be done in that respect?

**The Convener:** Thank you—there was a lot in there.

I see that Alistair Gray has had to do the walk of shame to turn off his phone.

**Alistair Gray:** I am well used to it, convener.

**The Convener:** I have trodden that path too many times myself. It is fine, Mr Gray—I was trying to lighten the mood, but I have probably just added to your embarrassment.

Mark McDonald raised two or three issues, including the interesting issue of workforce planning with regard to volunteers, including across-the-board officials and match officials. That is a challenge for clubs.

**John Lee:** Mark McDonald made some good points. There is now a national framework for the development of volunteering in sport, which was drawn up jointly by Volunteer Development Scotland and sportscotland and is the first framework of its kind in Scotland.

The framework tries to help clubs to plan more effectively for volunteers and to put a bit more thought into how they seek to engage volunteers. We do not want to overformalise or overbureaucratise things, but we want to encourage people to do a bit more planning to

make volunteering fun, enjoyable and easy to access, and to build on the passion that we have spoken about. The framework tries to encourage those things to ensure that we have a good experience with volunteers.

On Mark McDonald's point about bureaucracy, there is an on-going myth that disclosure checks and records checks put people off volunteering. Sportscotland and Volunteer Development Scotland have done some research on that—I think Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People has, too—which clearly shows that people are not put off by the need to have disclosure checks if it is explained to them in the right way.

If people realise that they are playing a part in protecting children and vulnerable groups, rather than just viewing the checks as a bureaucratic exercise, they are fully supportive and not put off at all. We are trying to dispel that persistent myth. Mark McDonald is right that the need for volunteers exists, and the framework addresses the need to plan for and manage them more effectively.

**Gavin Macleod:** Volunteers are fundamental to everything that we do. We are a multisport organisation, so our key partners are local authorities and mainstream governing bodies of sports. Our remit is to provide the relevant volunteers with the education, training, skills and knowledge to overcome the fear factor of working with disabled groups. Education and training are fundamental. We had a five-a-side football championship a couple of weeks ago at which we had SFA referees working with deaf people and people with a learning disability or a physical disability. They need a little bit of training on what to expect. A referee is a referee and a good coach is a good coach, but a little bit of education and training is key.

We are working with the mainstream governing bodies of sports to ensure that their technical officials and coaches are suitably trained. We are doing that at a United Kingdom level through the UK coaching certificate, trying to make sure that UK coaching structures are inclusive. We are also doing it at a Scottish level through sports governing bodies.

We are taking that ethos into schools at the moment, which takes us back to the point about the early years. One of our big issues at the moment is the anecdotal evidence that a lot of disabled pupils are not getting physical education, or quality physical education. We have great sympathy for the education sector, which is not being given the skills, knowledge and resources to be inclusive in a PE setting. We are doing a lot of work through Education Scotland and sportscotland to deliver disability inclusion training

to the education sector, both in tertiary education and through in-service training. We are upskilling the workforce to enable it to deliver.

The one element that we have in our sector that the mainstream probably does not have is the care element. We require greater numbers of volunteers in our workforce because many of the athletes with whom we work require a care element as well as the coaching element. We are working with physiotherapists, the national health service and universities to identify the key personnel whom we need to come in and support individuals and to give the disabled athletes with whom we work a lifelong sporting experience.

**Alistair Gray:** On the point about volunteer officials, coaches and others who get involved, it is interesting that the positive coaching work that the much-maligned SFA is carrying out is having a significant impact on the attitudes of coaches, parents and teachers as well as players, particularly in the area of respect for one another but also in the area of respect for officials and the game itself. They have embraced it to the extent that—you will not believe this—there was an under-nines tournament in Glasgow recently at which there was no referee. The youngsters controlled the games themselves, realising when they had committed a foul, put the ball out or whatever. My colleague from Dublin, who had come across to the festival with his youngster and his teen, could not believe how well it worked. By instilling the right values and behaviours at an early age—particularly in parents—there is an opportunity to change the culture of the sport.

There needs to be more recruitment of leader coaches and level 1 coaches. The UKCC is pretty exhaustive above level 2, it is expensive and it takes time. If we can get lots of coaches who at least know the basics of how to deal with youngsters and keep them in sport, that can sustain a lot of clubs going forward.

On Mark McDonald's point about officials, one of the umpires for the Olympic hockey final was a Scot—Ged Curran from Dundee—who has umpired something like 150 internationals. Scotland has had four Olympic final umpires in hockey in the past 20 years, which is outstanding. Many of the officials involved in London will be Scots who have come through, but they are the forgotten party in many ways. They are not blazers, although they get a blazer and a uniform. They are proud and are given the opportunity to move through. Sports need to make more of that. I hope that Ged will stay in hockey as a role model for a long time, as Craig Madden did before him.

11:00

It is important to inspire those technical officials, as well as the others, and for sports to have proper workforce plans that include officials and coaches as well as the administrators so that genuine succession planning goes on. Sportscotland's club development model and the volunteer framework provide a basis for that, but we need to collaborate and work more effectively together.

Let us stop calling them volunteers. What did London tell us to call them?

**The Convener:** Games makers.

**Alistair Gray:** Games makers. That is cool.

**The Convener:** We have heard some radical suggestions. We were told about walking football in a written submission and now we are hearing about football without referees. This could be a first for the Scottish Parliament—our report could be quite radical. Of course, perhaps some referees are required in the Scottish Parliament.

**Judy Murray:** I want to reinforce what has been said. The key to moving things forward is the education of people, whether they are volunteers, officials, coaches or whoever. You talk about the volunteers that we have in Scottish sport; they range from the lady who makes the tea at the cricket club to someone who sits on the board of a governing body. There is a huge range of skills, but everyone is valuable, and we must ensure that all the volunteers who want to be involved in a sport for whatever reason are educated and supported to do whatever that job is to the best of their ability, just as we encourage the people who take up sport as coaches to do the best that they can. Not everyone will get to the top of the tree, but everyone is important to making sport tick in this country. For us, clearly, volunteering is important and we must promote that.

**Mark McDonald:** On John Lee's points, I was certainly not referring to disclosure checks in any way. Having been a youth football coach, I know how important disclosure checks are.

Alistair Gray mentioned the SFA coaching badges. I have been through that process and agree that it is excellent. During the debate in the chamber last week, I raised a point about how we can ensure that people who turn up to volunteer because their son or daughter is involved in the club can get access to qualifications that will take them from the position of a helpful volunteer to someone who can give back in terms of coaching.

**John Lee:** That is a good point. We should be creating pathways for volunteers. Generally, volunteers are not looking for an award or a reward; what they want is a good volunteering experience. Part of that good experience is being

able to progress in your role in your sport. They might start off doing something fairly unstructured because they just want to participate, but they might then want to improve their skills, become accredited and become a coach.

In the framework, we are trying to create those volunteering pathways within individual sports and sports organisations so that people can build on the skills that they pick up during their volunteering experience. That will help to sustain their involvement in sport.

**The Convener:** Going back to what was said about workforce planning, any enterprising business would understand its workforce and audit the skills of the people it employed. It would know how many of them were coaches, how many were volunteer administrators and so on. Apart from the household survey, is that information gathered by the sporting organisations? Who brings that knowledge together? We are all rushing about, trying to secure the legacy and increase demand, but what capacity does that sporting volunteer network have to deal with additional demand?

**Alistair Gray:** That is a great question, but the answer is that we do not know. I cannot think of many sports that would be able to say how many people are in their coaching workforce or their technical official workforce and especially how many volunteers they have. A small number of sports know those numbers—my colleagues in sportscotland might be able to give you those numbers—but my understanding is that that information is not readily available, although it is important.

In its recent Scotland united strategy—the first such strategy in 138 years—the SFA stresses the importance of a coaching community, which ranges from the sort of people you are describing to the top level managers.

It is vital that your question about capacity is answered, because that tells you how much you have to do—it tells you the scale of the challenge involved in grasping the opportunity of this time of our lives.

**The Convener:** Is that the experience of others?

**John Lee:** Alistair Gray is right to say that there is a lack of information. Studies tend to consider overall levels of participation in sport; they tend not to drill down into the levels of volunteering. There is an urgent need to benchmark where we are.

Sportscotland does some good work in that area and we try to do so as well, but there needs to be more of a focus on getting a snapshot of where we are with regard to volunteering in sport within the overall levels of participation.

**The Convener:** Is that something that the committee should make recommendations about?

**John Lee:** That would be helpful.

**The Convener:** What should those recommendations look like?

**Alistair Gray:** It is the sort of thing that national sporting bodies should be asked to do. It will not be easy, but they can make a fair stab at it as part of their development plans that go to sportscotland. Similarly, clubs have a conduit into their governing bodies, and that could be used to get some indication of the figures.

**Bob Doris:** In Aberdeen yesterday, I heard about an area where there is a successful youth football team up to the age of 12, but there is no further provision until the age of 19 or 20. One or two of the best kids go to another area and continue to play football, but everyone else just stops. That area of Aberdeen is a black spot. They have enough volunteers to keep teams going until the kids reach the age of 12, then the support disappears. If there are not enough volunteers in that community, whose responsibility is it to fill that gap? Is it national governing bodies? Local authorities? Sports councils? Who is doing that mapping exercise at a local level?

**Alistair Gray:** The SFA has regional development staff—there are certainly some in Aberdeen. The Scottish Junior Football Association, the Scottish Amateur Football Association and various other associations are also relevant. However, I think that you would find that there are opportunities in Aberdeen for 12-to-16 football and that local leagues are being run. Again, the question should be addressed to the SFA.

**Bob Doris:** I am not criticising the SFA—the same situation could arise in basketball, cricket or whatever—but in that part of Aberdeen, provision stops at that age. We have talked about elite sports, grass-roots sports and quality provision, and the situation in Aberdeen is an example of one in which the best players go elsewhere to play and everyone else stops playing. Whether we are talking about football, basketball, tennis or cricket, are you saying that it would be the national governing bodies that would be best placed to identify those gaps and take the strategy forward rather than, say, local authorities?

**Alistair Gray:** Again, it is about working together. If an issue is flagged up, it can be dealt with.

**John Lee:** All the organisations that you mentioned should be involved, but governing bodies have a key role. We have discussions with our colleagues' governing bodies about this issue, but I think that only two governing bodies in

Scotland have volunteer development strategies and dedicated volunteer development managers. I know that some of them are run on a shoestring budget, but that is a way forward.

A lot of local authorities have developed leisure trusts, which are arm's-length bodies that have taken on a lot of sports development functions. Perhaps that gap has created uncertainty about who should take forward sports development work. The picture is complicated, but there is certainly a role for the governing bodies.

**The Convener:** You can see where the committee is going. From the written evidence and submissions that we have received and from what we have discussed this morning—the games makers, the trusts, the local authorities, the hubs, the sports councils, the sports clubs and everything else—it is clear that the landscape is a bit cluttered. I hope that it is not wrong to say that. It is clearly difficult to co-ordinate activity, meet unmet need and target communities where participation is very much lower. For example, we have heard that in deprived areas 25 per cent of children leave primary school without being able to swim. That might be only the tip of the iceberg.

**Dr Simpson:** Following your comment about the cluttered landscape, convener, I note that Scotland has 600 sports co-ordinators and, although there are fewer PE teachers, we are training other teachers to teach PE. As Judy Murray pointed out, you cannot go into a class of 30 and simply teach them a sport, particularly something like tennis that requires individual attention. How are we linking PE in school and PE teachers with the sports co-ordinators and this other lot who are volunteering? A lot of parents want to get involved. Are schools encouraging them or are they still saying, "Hang on—you can drop your kids off at the school gate before and pick them up afterwards"? Are we using that as a pathway into volunteering?

**The Convener:** I should say at this point that Alex Richardson and Liz McColgan have joined us. I am sorry about the delays that you have experienced this morning but we are delighted that you have been able to make it. If either of you wish to get warmed up by responding to Richard Simpson's question, please do so.

**Liz McColgan:** Obviously, as I have come in late and at the back end of the discussion, I have not been privy to what has been said so far. I speak as an athlete, or ex-athlete. I was at the Olympic games—I am sure that Judy Murray was, too—and heard all this emotional talk about legacy and how we were all going to go back to our little corners of the world and have all our lovely children well catered for in fantastic facilities. That has just not happened. My main grief is that although we have all these facilities in deprived

areas, local authorities are still charging kids £3 to use them; those kids just do not have the finances.

The Tuesday after the Olympics, I went up to my local club and found 120 kids waiting for me; we had three coaches and no volunteers. There are still 112 kids turning up on Tuesday and Thursday nights. It is a fantastic sight at Caird Park stadium—I have never seen it in my life—and no one gets turned away. However, how are we supposed to cope with those numbers and keep up their interest?

All the sports featured in the Olympics are fighting for a little piece of the pot but, for me, athletics is the beginning of all sport. We need to get into the schools, keep up the buzz that the Olympics created and get inactive kids involved—and the only way we can do that is through co-ordinating things and sending coaches into schools to deliver what sport actually is. Of course, it is not about going into a school, seeing the kids and asking what we are to do with them. We need a programme that is led by professional people and which, in turn, leads to clubs providing for schoolkids—and not just schoolkids. I have university people coming up to me, but I simply cannot accommodate them.

It is a shame that we cannot accommodate an interest born out of a fantastic games because so many stadiums in Scotland are lying empty and so many doors are shut. In Dundee, for example, the track is open only a couple of days a week; if I go down on a Wednesday, I cannot use it. This is an all-weather track that is closed for six weeks of the year because of the snow. It is ridiculous that, in this day and age, we do not have the facilities that we want.

To make a plea for my share of the pot, I have five athletes who I think will be main players at the Commonwealth games, but I have no indoor facility for them during the winter and I will be faced with trying to find a surface for them to train on, because the track will be closed because it is not maintained properly.

11:15

**Alex Richardson (Gladiator Programme):**

Apologies for the delay. I have spent two hours on the motorway, so I am raring to go.

Over the past 30 years, my organisation has built up a proven international track record in Olympic weightlifting. We are also a social enterprise. We deliver gala events and so on, which bring in money to support our sports side. We have been very successful over a number of years.

I back up what Liz McColgan says. Volunteering is fantastic if it is structured right. We have 12

wonderful coaches in our organisation and they all have one thing in common: they have all competed at either Commonwealth, European or World level in their own careers. This year alone, from the east end of Glasgow, we have produced 50-odd Scottish, 50-odd British and eight European medals. We have a couple of people who will go to the world university championships. However, in the past month, within half a mile of our gym, there have been 22 drug raids on houses. Last week, nine kids were lifted for assaulting two police officers who were on bicycles. Three people jumped off motorway bridges in one weekend. That is the deprivation that we are facing. People in Easterhouse say, "What is this Commonwealth games legacy? Show me it."

I have a letter from Bridget McConnell, the director of Glasgow Life, which responds to questions that we put to her via our local councillors—she does not talk to people like me, because of things like freedom of information and so on. The letter concerns the active Glasgow fund, which is contributed to by the Government and the council. It is headed up by £4.2 million of Glasgow City Council money for sports development; an additional £750,000 that is allegedly supposed to go to community sports groups, although I do not know any community sports group that has access to it; £3 million from the education budget for physical activity, which was ring fenced and put into that pot; and £4 million of NHS physical activity money. Also related to that fund is the cashback for communities money.

The lead agency for that fund is Glasgow Life, which is the local sports authority. However, as far as I am concerned, Glasgow Life is a laundering exercise. It gets that money and gives it only to places that it knows it can get it back from. I am making two full-time coaches redundant because the one-year funding that paid for them ends this week. We have 12 good quality volunteer coaches, but without the two full-time guys who were going into schools to run taster sessions, starting a back shift at 12 o'clock, feeding the kids through and ending their shift in the local club, the potency of the volunteers is reduced. They have their own jobs to do—they cannot do the 101 things that have to be done to manage the process. Liz McColgan is right: there has to be a structure.

We asked the director of Glasgow Life how much of the roughly £14 million of physical activity and sports development money had been spent on community sport. In the letter, she admits that, across 500 community sports organisations in Glasgow, she spent a fantastic £25,000.

Basically, community sports groups do not see this legacy. The Commonwealth games legacy in Glasgow is for politicians and departments that will hail the fantastic new facilities. The east end of Glasgow is supposed to be being regenerated. The Easterhouse and Baillieston area has been called the murder capital of western Europe and it has the lowest life expectancy in western Europe, with direct links to poverty and child obesity. There might be facilities in the east end that Glasgow will say have been built for the games, but they certainly have not been built in Easterhouse, which is one of the communities that were used to make a case for the games.

I speak with a bit too much passion for my own good at times, but the days when we will sit back have gone. Last year, Glasgow Life offered us £3,000 towards coaching courses. I told them, basically, "The days of you lot throwing us crumbs from the table when we are facing real social deprivation are over."

Sport saves lives in Easterhouse. We run physical activity play programmes, which thousands of kids took part in last year. There is a myth that a kid has to be involved in a sport to keep fit. I would say that not every young kid wants to be involved in sport, but they all want to play. If you get them involved in physical activity through play, you can create the base from which they can progress to getting involved in sport. We have been highly successful at that. We have Government reports coming out of our ears about how successful we are, but we cannot access the funds that are there for physical activity and sports development because Glasgow Life's bottom line is that it puts money only into places that it can get it back from.

Take Glasgow Rocks, for example. It is fantastic—any sporting activity that gets kids off the street is fantastic. However, it is a client of Glasgow Life, as it hires facilities from Glasgow Life. Glasgow Life will lead for Glasgow Rocks to be able to access cashback for communities funds. That money is being recovered from communities like mine, but groups such as mine do not see any cashback for communities funds. Why would Glasgow Life lead for my organisation to access those funds? We run our own facility and create our own development plans. We feed X number of kids into our facility, but any crumbs of income that we get go into our facility, not the facilities of Glasgow Life. Heaven forbid the money should go to us, not Glasgow Life.

There is a laundering exercise going on. People need to take a right good look in the mirror and stop looking at tick-box exercises that let everyone agree that the system is working well.

As far as I can see, following announcements that Shona Robison has made, active schools is about quantity rather than quality.

On Sunday, we had the mascot launch for the Commonwealth games in Easterhouse. Two so-called city target sports were represented. The first was gymnastics, and the gymnastics clubs had to come from Irvine. Where was the gymnastics club that was connected to active schools in Glasgow? It was non-existent. The second target sport was badminton. There were two badminton coaches hitting a shuttlecock over a net—no kids. Why? Because there is no badminton club in Glasgow. The only worthy sport representatives were our kids. We had kids who were all 12 years old and had already competed at European club level. Those kids will be 18 years old in 2018, which is when Glasgow hopes to hold the summer youth Olympics. Were they invited to the launch of the 2018 youth Olympics bid? Not on your life, because they are from the east end of Glasgow and Easterhouse.

If a community sports club has any success, local authorities make sure that it is buried, because that could reflect badly on what they are doing and people like you guys might ask why they have not produced what the community groups have been producing.

We asked Bridget McConnell how many Scottish, British, European or world-class athletes had been produced in the 16 target sports as a result of the spending of the £14 million pot. In her letter, she proudly says that there were seven Scottish and three British. We can win 50 times that from a small £40,000 budget.

Glasgow Life is not producing. There is no quality coming through—none whatsoever. Meanwhile, our organisation saves lives through sport and gets kids off the street, but we are not getting funding or being taken seriously. As far as I am concerned—and others in the organisation will say the same thing—we do not see the legacy that people are talking about.

**The Convener:** Well, there is a challenge. Nothing is being done in the east end of Glasgow, and those are the deprived communities that need support more than any other communities. Does anyone want to take responsibility for that?

**Bob Doris:** I will not take responsibility for that, Mr Richardson, but I will say that you have done yourself a great service by putting on the record clearly what you think that the shortcomings are. It is a lot for MSPs to take in. As a Glasgow MSP, I would be keen to meet you as soon as possible after this meeting—

**Alex Richardson:** I would never have come here unless I could back up what I say, so feel free—

**Bob Doris:** If you are hanging about after the meeting, perhaps we could discuss some of the details of what you say, because this issue has to be taken forward in detail. I would be keen to do that.

**Alex Richardson:** The members of the board of directors—all volunteers—of my organisation, which has a 30-year history, have given me licence to put my head above the parapet today, knowing that we will probably be hammered by the local authority when we go back because we dared even to raise these issues.

**Bob Doris:** Could we open your folder and discuss some of the details after the meeting?

**The Convener:** This is a committee meeting, not a surgery.

**Bob Doris:** I think that it is quite appropriate to answer the person's concerns.

**The Convener:** You did not answer the person's concerns, Bob, you offered them an appointment. We are all interested in doing that.

Let us get back on track with our discussion of the wider issues. The sports and voluntary organisations that are represented are all culpable in what we have just heard, in that they are not doing enough—at least, they are being accused of not doing enough—in areas such as Easterhouse, which have the unmet need that Bob Doris talked about and which need committed support. It is suggested that there is more support for sport in communities that have facilities and where there is a greater degree of parental buy-in and more volunteers are available. I suppose that that is the challenge that we have just heard. What are we doing to meet unmet need in areas such as the east end of Glasgow and poorer areas of Dundee, which I presume have a similar profile?

**Liz McColgan:** Yes, it is not only Easterhouse; there are places all over Scotland that are in the same situation and Dundee is a prime example. I can say exactly the same thing for my club: we are not getting the finances. Our clubhouse is derelict and we have to rent a toilet facility from the council for the club to use at the track. There are clubs in similar positions all over Scotland. That is the sad state of affairs that we are in.

We are saying that Scotland is a great nation, and we have Andy Murray and fantastic sporting heroes, but those people have not come up through development in Scotland. They are exceptional people who excelled despite all the bad things around them. They have not been supported in the way that we, as a nation, could support a lot of our good sportsmen and women.

Because we are not supporting the top end, we are failing the schoolkids who should be getting introduced to sports and getting involved. We have

no legacy. Where is the next Andy Murray? I do not see him. Where is the next Liz McColgan? I have not seen a runner come from Scotland for 20-odd years. That is not because we do not have the ability. I go into a lot of schools and I have athletes under my wing, and they are great, but I have to go elsewhere to get the support that I need for them.

**Alistair Gray:** We have heard tremendously passionate contributions from Alex Richardson and Liz McColgan that get to the heart of the message about community hubs and why there has to be a different model. There is an opportunity during the next five or six years—the time of our lives—to do something different, and the community hubs are in danger of giving us that opportunity, as I said. Do not apply the old local authority and community sports development models to where we are now, because the situation is quite different.

**The Convener:** In some of the evidence that we have heard, people's passion for their particular sport has come across—we heard that from Judy Murray. The sport itself is the focus, and the club is someone's baby. Some sports clubs have sounded a note of caution, suggesting that although advocates for hubs are enthusiastic about their potential, the passion and the commitment are locked up in individual clubs.

We picked up a wee bit of concern yesterday that unless people conform to the club model and are on that inside track—excuse the pun—in an accredited club, they will be outsiders. That gives great challenges to people who have devoted 20 or 30 years to their sport. They are concerned about joining the hub, because it is someone else's concept. We have evidence that people do not necessarily want to conform to the hub model, particularly at an early stage, when they are not clear about the benefits that it will bring.

11:30

**John Lee:** We started by talking about the importance of grass-roots community sport and moving away from big-ticket, state-of-the-art facilities towards making more opportunities and facilities open to grass-roots organisations—that is where we must go. We need to go back to what we were talking about and focus on affordability, support, easy access and how we utilise existing facilities.

**Alex Richardson:** I have seen all this before. I tried to create sports foundations way back in the late 1980s and early 1990s—nobody worked harder on those concepts. There is a real danger here that if the funding for a community sport hub is channelled through the local sports authority, the hub will become a mere extension of the local

sports authority. The little groups will get the crumbs and it will appear that the sports authority is doing its job to assist them, but the real money will stay in the council's budget, to offset cuts elsewhere. That is my feeling.

Even in a perfect world, where we spent £1 billion a year on facilities and £0.5 billion on coaches, everything would be built on sand. I have a talented kid just now. She is 12 years old and she is Scottish under-18 champion, as well as British under-13 and under-16 champion. She is third at European club level. That girl needs to travel to five or six British events a year. Her mother has three other kids. She works, but she is on a low income. The three other kids miss out because the mother has to spend the money on the older sibling, just to get her to events.

A couple of thousand pounds a year could support that girl. We should have a parents support fund for talented kids. If a thousand kids in Scotland have that potential, in 20 sports, the national budget would be maybe £2 million a year to help parents to support their kids. Instead, we spend billions on facilities and £50 million or so on active schools. It is all built on sand.

Some parents feel guilty. They say, "My kid was talented, but my kid lost out on that opportunity, because I couldn't afford for them to be going to London five or six times a year at £500 a pop." What decent parent would allow a 12-year-old girl to go down to London by herself? The parents have to go too, so they have hotel and other costs. A small budget of a couple of million pounds a year from the Government could take that barrier away, because when the wolf is at the door, it does not matter how talented the kid is; poverty is the unclimbable barrier.

I was sixth in the world in two world finals. I would have won the world championships if it had not been for poverty. I came up in Easterhouse. I treaded water for four weeks before I went to Canada for the world championships, just to get rid of an injury, because at the time I could not afford £50 for a physio. At the end of the day, I know where I am coming from. Poverty is the unclimbable barrier. No matter how good the kid gets, when they get to a certain level, that is the end of their career. If it is an active schools sport and there does not happen to be a club in the area, as soon as the school bell goes: end of sporting career.

**Dr Simpson:** I am concerned about what you are saying, because from our previous inquiry and indeed from this one, I understood that the elite programme—albeit that it is not perfect—is working reasonably well. If your example is not just a one-off and significant numbers of really talented young people are not being supported so

that they can participate in events for which they are fit and ready, we have a serious problem.

We need to put what Mr Richardson said to sportscotland. We need to invite the public and all the other organisations to provide illustrations, if they have them, of individuals who are performing at the level of the 12-year-old who has been described and who are not being supported adequately in a way that takes into account their family circumstances. They should let the committee know now about such situations, so that we can take that into account.

**The Convener:** I call Bob Doris.

**Alex Richardson:** How do you get on to an elite Olympic fund at 18?

**The Convener:** Mr Richardson, you are on a roll and you are doing well, but—

**Alex Richardson:** I am just saying—

**The Convener:** Mr Richardson, nobody is denying you your say, but other people want to contribute.

**Alex Richardson:** I am sorry.

**Liz McColgan:** I admire Alex Richardson's passion, but we are getting a wee bittie caught up in talking about a 12-year-old kid. If we are on about funding, we need to be very aware of what is available to fund at what level. A lot of 12-year-olds think, "I'm going to go in there and do that," and we can throw £3,000 at them but, two years later, they might not be in the sport. We must look at the development of a sport and where people are going with it.

Councils should have something like grant schemes that are available to cover travel expenses on the basis of just cause, but that cannot be just for every talented 12-year-old. I could have said of many of the young kids who have gone through my hands, "God—they could be the next Seb Coe," but they do not stick at it.

We must be careful. We are dealing with children and with investment not for now but for the future. Where are people going to go? Is that about the Olympics in four years' time or is it a six-year cycle? A lot of other things must be brought into play.

I admire Alex Richardson's passion, but it is not all about an age-related scheme and what is available to a talented kid at a young age.

**Bob Doris:** Mr Richardson makes an important point. In preparation for today's round-table session, I looked at the budget that is available to support elite athletes. I will give the numbers; how well the money is used is another matter.

In 2011-12, sportscotland had a pot of £3.3 million. By 2013-14, it will have £5.2 million. I do not know whether that even touches the sides or whether that is a fantastic commitment; I merely give the numbers. The committee could look at how groups access funding—whether that happens directly at the sportscotland level or whether a portion goes to local authorities to support individual athletes. I have given the numbers. How do we use that money most effectively?

**Liz McColgan:** If we have a couple of talented 12-year-old kids, I would rather see the money go towards having a great coach in place, to provide access for a group of talented kids. I do not want £50 to pay for a bus ride down to London; I want to ensure that a pool of talented 12-year-olds, 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds gets the expert advice and gets the medical, nutritional and strength conditioning support. That should be in place, rather than monetary support.

I came from the poorest of areas. I had no electricity and I could not afford shoes, but I made it. That was just through dogged determination and not giving up. However, we should be away from that now; we should have in place facilities for people to get the right direction and the pathways to the senior level and to competing with the best in the world and reaching their full potential. Just now, we fall short of allowing kids to reach their full potential.

**The Convener:** We have moved on to the elite programme. Does Judy Murray want to say anything about that? The committee's focus is on the other end—on maximising the opportunity to get people active and on the opportunities that that presents. That concerns facilities, access and community-based sport. We hope that, if more and more people participate, more and more people will stick at it and, consequently, we will be in a position to help people to make it at the highest possible level.

**Judy Murray:** If we are talking about the elite end, I am of a like mind with Liz McColgan about the development age, which is probably between 10 and 14—that depends on the sport. In my sport, it is important for the best kids to have not just access to an indoor facility—those facilities are expensive, because the units are big—but the support structure around them in terms of sports science input; that is great if they are able to become part of the area institutes of sport or the Scottish institute of sport. However, the key is the coach, who understands skills development and the child's stage of development. The coach gives the child the skills that they can get the maximum out of once they get to 15 or 16, when the physical and mental sides start to kick in more. If we miss out on skills development, we get mediocrity and

we are just investing in mediocrity, which does not get us anywhere.

I return to my earlier point about investing in people. We talked about investing in volunteers, officials and coaches and strengthening the club structures so that people work to a plan and get support. However, we need world-class coaches if we are going to produce world-class athletes. In my opinion, we do not have that in Scotland.

Where I am with tennis, I completely understand the journey from the age of eight right through to the top of the game, which is not easy. We have had to have a lot of different people involved in Andy's development over the years, inputting different things. However, he learned his skills in Scotland, so it can be done here. Once someone gets to 15 or 16, they probably need a training base overseas where they can train outdoors. However, that requires money and there is still not money to pay for that for the kids coming through now who are good enough; they need £30,000 or £40,000 to go overseas, but that money is not there.

Liz McColgan and Alex Richardson made the same point, although it was about different sports and perhaps slightly different money scales: if we have the talent, we must ensure that we can invest in the right people to nurture their talent and create the right opportunities for every step of the way, not just up to 14. We do not want to say when someone is 14, "You're pretty good, but we've run out of money for you and we have no facilities or coaches, so unless your parents have a lot of money, you're stuck."

We need to invest in world-class coaches if we want to be a successful sporting nation. I would love to see us having Olympic athletes, because for me the Olympics is so much about athletics and it kills me that we had few Scottish athletes at the Olympics this year.

**The Convener:** Gil Paterson has a quick question, and I think that Aileen McLeod has one, too.

**Gil Paterson:** My question is on community sport. I would not like to interrupt the flow, so I will come back to my question later—if you do not mind, convener—if any member has anything further to ask on this issue.

**Aileen McLeod:** Judy Murray's point about the need to have more world-class coaches is fundamental. Alistair Gray made a good point earlier when he said that more than 100 kids turned up in Motherwell for the local athletics club but there were only two coaches. Given the amount of enthusiasm and interest that we have seen being generated from the Olympics and in the lead-up to the Commonwealth games, how do we get the support into our communities to

encourage and develop more coaches who can take kids through as they develop their sporting abilities?

Alistair Gray referred to leader coaches and level 1 coaches, and to progressing training for developing coaches. Coaches' training is fundamental.

**Judy Murray:** The easiest way to learn how to deliver coaching well in any sport is to work alongside somebody who knows what they are doing and is an effective communicator. All sorts of things go into being able to communicate effectively, including personality, desire, passion and knowledge. The most successful coaches tend to have big passion, good knowledge and big hearts. When we are working with young kids, the fun element is crucial because we can get kids to work hard while they are having fun if we organise and deliver in the right way.

It might be worth considering a mentoring scheme in which coaches could be apprenticed to assist Liz McColgan or Alex Richardson, for example, if they have a particular interest in their sports, in order to see how they deliver and to feed off their enthusiasm, knowledge and experience. If it was me, I would totally welcome that. Whether it is a student, a sixth-year pupil or somebody who is already a coach but wants to learn how to deliver more effectively, let us attach them to people who know what they are doing, because that is the best way to learn how to deliver.

**The Convener:** Alistair, do you want to make some additional points?

**Alistair Gray:** I support everything that has been said. We still have a large number of volunteer coaches in Scotland, which is good. Their commitment, in terms of the hours that they put in, is huge. That is a big barrier to people who are in work or, indeed, to those who are not in work who want to spend time in coaching. In my experience, the reward is important, but recognition is much more important.

The chance for volunteer coaches to work alongside an experienced coach who mentors them so that they can learn from the best and then be recognised in whatever way possible by their sport or their community will sustain people in coaching for much longer. Very good professional development opportunities are now available for coaches through some of the larger governing bodies. Perhaps, Alex, that is one of the challenges in your sport—it does not have the infrastructure of, dare I say it, football or rugby.

**Alex Richardson:** Absolutely.

11:45

**Alistair Gray:** Coaching has to be at the top of the agenda for all the stuff that the committee is talking about; as you say, the variety and the range are huge. Any system must include coaching in its widest possible sense, from administrators to people who are working on the field of play. Perhaps even more important, there must be a coaching philosophy that is keeping youngsters in sport, helping them to honour their game, and changing the behaviour of their parents, the coaches and the teachers. Unless that is being addressed through everything that is going on in communities, we will not get the legacy that we deserve or indeed that we want.

**Gil Paterson:** The point was made earlier that we have lots of volunteers in sport but it is a changing feast. Although the numbers are fairly high, the people who are volunteering can change all the time.

My experience is that when a child does a sport, parents volunteer—in my family, although my wife says that she does not volunteer, she is out nearly every night helping. However, parents tend to move out of volunteering and people with expertise and experience are lost. That experience and expertise may be in one particular sport, but—if my understanding is right on hubs—one of the benefits that we get from hubs is that people who volunteer their administrative talents, for example, could spread that expertise to another sport.

What are the panel's views on what mechanisms to use to retain people like my wife? She puts in a lot of time but I feel that when my daughter moves on from gymnastics my wife will probably give up volunteering.

**John Lee:** That is an excellent point. Perhaps we should move away from words such as "retain". We do not want to lock people into volunteering, so that it almost becomes a life sentence. We should be looking more at sustaining, or perhaps rotating, people within sport. We should give them different opportunities so that if they want to move away from a particular club or sport, a pathway is there so that they can get involved in another area—in another sports organisation or in another sports club.

It is about moving away from a recruit-and-retain approach that is based on a workforce model towards involving, sustaining and rotating people more within organisations and giving them pathways so that they can move into different areas. Burn-out is probably still quite a big problem in a lot of sports clubs when too much responsibility is placed on volunteers. We must look at ways of managing that and giving people a greater pathway within individual clubs and within individual sports.

**Alex Richardson:** To be honest, with regard to the success that my organisation has had through the years, the school pathway to the local club is vital. We are very good at what we do in that respect. However, quite a lot of sports are being taught in the active schools programme just now and the club in the community for those sports is not there—it does not exist. If there are two or three sports in a certain area of a city and they have the backing of the community and a track record and a history over years, those should be the target sports for that area. That is where the pathway links with active schools should be happening.

There are two elements to work on. The first part is the logistics of sport development. We have 20 primary schools that feed on to four secondary schools that all feed on to our weightlifting gym—it is falling down—which is the excellence base. Kids find their level progressing through there. We make sure that there is a top-quality coach at the bottom level so that the skills are taught well from the very beginning. We do not wait until the kids progress, so that bad habits are formed in their technical ability and it is only when they make it to a certain level that we give them a better standard of coach. That is not how we work. We ensure that there is quality from the day that the child is introduced to the sport and is enthusiastic about going further in it.

I am a great believer that X amount of funding for sports development should go to well-established amateur sports groups. Maybe the community sport hubs will be a structure for that. For a kick-off, you know the pathways there because you are funding the club. A sports club will be constituted to take a kid as far as they can go, even to the top of their sport, whereas somebody who is teaching a taster session for a local authority sees that as simply providing a service. They go into a school, teach a sport, the bell goes and they are off home. They do not have a club or anything to feed on to.

It should not be taken for granted that every piece of funding should go through the local authority for the delivery of sports development. Find the well-run and well-structured amateur sports clubs and allow them to employ a development officer or a coach. Let them go into schools and bounce it through the pathway—you know that it exists, because you are funding it—instead of letting the funding follow a theory.

**Judy Murray:** That makes total sense. In my sport, there has been enormous investment in mini-tennis, which can be played indoors with a wee bat and a sponge ball on a badminton court. However, if there is no tennis court anywhere nearby, all those kids who have tried mini-tennis do not get to play on a full-sized tennis court and,

as a tennis exercise, it is wasted. I completely hear where Alex Richardson is coming from and I totally agree that the best coaches should teach children at a young age to develop their skills. That is absolutely crucial, and we do not do that enough.

**The Convener:** We must bring the session to a close, but Mark McDonald has a final question.

**Mark McDonald:** It follows on from the discussion about equality of opportunity. Does a 12-year-old from a deprived area have the same opportunity to get involved in a sport as a 12-year-old from a less-deprived community, or do we need to look at that? Are we missing out on some of the stars of the future because youngsters at the age of 12 or 13 do not have the same opportunity to access sports? Could there be talent that is not being spotted and brought through because that opportunity does not exist? We should perhaps bear that in mind for future sessions.

**Gavin Macleod:** That rings very true with me. You are talking about geographical disadvantage, but from our point of view the disadvantage knows no boundaries. The number of kids that we are dealing with in some areas is very small, so the chances of their getting involved inclusively in a sport are minimal. The real battle that we have is in driving the inclusion agenda and ensuring that we get the next batch of Paralympians. We have just had a fairly successful Paralympics and have increased our number of athletes in a larger number of sports, but where is the next generation coming from and how can we provide good local opportunities for them? The disadvantage exists in other ways—it is not just geographical.

**The Convener:** I must bring the session to a close. I have enjoyed this morning's discussion, in which we have shared experiences and learned from your experiences. In all the evidence sessions that we have had, the passion and commitment that people have for their sport, their area or their club has come across. The challenge for us all is to harness that passion and enthusiasm to create better outcomes for as many people as possible. I hope that we can reflect some of your ideas and concerns in our report.

I thank everyone who has taken the time to come along here today. The committee members have all asked their questions. It is always dangerous to open it up when the session is coming to a close, but if there is something that you came to say that you have not yet got on the record because we have not asked a question on it, you have the opportunity to mention it now. If you want to reflect on this session, you can also e-mail us. I urge you to stay in contact with our inquiry. Is there anything that we have not covered that anyone wants to put on the record? Or are

you desperate to get out of here? In that case, we will move on. Thank you very much for your attendance and participation.

11:55

*Meeting suspended.*

12:07

*On resuming—*

**The Convener:** I reconvene the meeting and we move to our second round-table discussion of the day. I thank the witnesses for their attendance and ask everyone to introduce themselves.

**Mark McDonald:** I am an MSP for North East Scotland.

**Jane Blanchard (Lochaber Sports Association):** I am from the Lochaber Sports Association.

**Dr Simpson:** I am an MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife.

**Gordon Crawford (Active Stirling):** I am from Active Stirling.

**Aileen McLeod:** I am an MSP for South Scotland.

**Mark McGeachie (Robertson Trust):** I am a project officer with the Robertson Trust.

**David Torrance:** I am the MSP for the Kirkcaldy constituency.

**Gil Paterson:** I am the MSP for Clydebank and Milngavie.

**Diane Cameron (Senscot):** I am the social enterprise and sport co-ordinator at Senscot.

**Nanette Milne:** I am an MSP for North East Scotland.

**Drew Smith:** I am a Glasgow MSP.

**Ceris Anderson (StreetGames):** I am from StreetGames.

**Bob Doris:** I am an MSP for Glasgow.

**John Heraghty (sported):** I am the Scotland manager of sported.

**The Convener:** I am Duncan McNeil, the MSP for Greenock and Inverclyde. Bob Doris will get the questions started.

**Bob Doris:** I will try to make my question fairly brief, given the time constraints that we may have this afternoon. Towards the end of the first panel, we discussed how we can best invest to support wider sports participation on the ground while, at the same time, taking young athletes and sportspeople from the local, grass-roots level through to an elite level. What would be the best

way to achieve that? We have a number of funding providers represented in the room. We have heard that around £5 million is spent each year in promoting elite athletes. What are your initial comments on how that is working? Is the link with successful elite athletes boosting local participation?

**Mark McGeachie:** Sport development pathways are well established through governing bodies and local authorities. Our objective is to widen participation and access and to ensure equality of access, and one way in which we do that is by supporting a youth work approach in sport. That gives people who have been turned off from sport for whatever reason—for example, in school or because they have had a negative experience—the opportunity to be supported into those pathways.

We recently held a mass-scale taster event that was delivered by youth workers and sports organisations working together in a school environment on a Friday night. That is a perfect diversionary time, but there were a lot of young people outside who just did not want to come in because the event was in a school. I will not tell you the words that they used, but they had spent all week trying to avoid being in the place and they were not going back on a Friday night in their own free time.

We have found through our youth work and sport initiative—which we have funded with the Rank Foundation for the past year—and through our girls on the move programme that we can open up access by going into environments where young people choose to be, such as youth clubs and youth work facilities. The relationship that develops between young people and their youth worker can help to facilitate their access to traditional sports environments.

Young people who have the ability and the desire to progress to an elite pathway can be fed into that, whereas others who just want to participate for fun and enjoyment can choose to do so. It is about finding the right mechanism, and the one that we support is the youth work approach.

**John Heraghty:** We support that participation through working with groups and sports clubs in areas of disadvantage. Those groups are sometimes quite fragile and rely on one person or a couple of people to keep them going. Sported has been able to develop those groups so that they are sustainable. They develop a business plan for the season beyond the next six months so that they can see where they are going in the next three or five years.

Young people may want to participate and use those sports groups as a way to develop themselves and their confidence and skills,

especially their life skills. As Mark McGeachie said, if there are other young people in those groups who want to move on to a more elite pathway, that opportunity exists too. The key for us is to ensure that the groups have a really robust structure to allow them to progress.

**Bob Doris:** We are focusing on grass-roots participation, but I asked about that particular issue because we have heard a number of times that, although there may be provision for a number of years in a certain sport, it then just falls off a cliff because there is no joined-up local provision.

In the previous session, Judy Murray told us that she tries to be careful where she does some of her tennis coaching, as there is no point in giving kids a taster session if they get enthused by it but then leave school and find that there is nothing in the local area. That is not money well spent. Alex Richardson made the same point with regard to the active schools network, which has to be careful when it gives taster sessions to ensure that it does not get kids enthused about a sport if, once the bell rings at half past 3, there is nothing available in the local community.

Mr McGeachie, do you ensure that such a pathway exists before you fund your taster events, so that kids do not just get eight or 12 weeks of participation and then find that there is no progression afterwards?

**Mark McGeachie:** In the specific example of the taster events that the Robertson Trust funds, we try to bring together sports groups and youth work groups so that there is capacity to facilitate ongoing participation. That does not necessarily take place in a sports club: if there is enough demand for recreational participation, a youth club or youth work organisation can provide those opportunities.

Through the youth work organisation, there is also the opportunity to empower young people to undertake personal development opportunities, such as sports leadership awards, youth achievement awards and dynamic youth awards, which enable them to develop as individuals as well as in their sport. That increases capacity in the community to meet the recreation or participation need.

From our perspective, if there is demand in the community that is being met on a recreational basis, local sports development officers can tap into what is going on and create a route into wider regional and national pathways. In a nutshell, I am saying that the work does not necessarily have to be done by a sports organisation; it can be done by a youth organisation.

12:15

**Diane Cameron:** The organisations that have been invited to be on this panel are all partners. Our role is to support community sport as best we can. We try to have as joined up an approach as possible, and we often signpost to one another.

The suggestion that we should not offer taster sessions for sports if there is no club in the area is interesting. We are a very rural country. In the Highlands and Islands, kids might get a four-week taster session in lots of sports without there being any follow-up. Kids could end up only ever trying two sports if they never had taster sessions. There is a challenge, because committed volunteers are needed to start a club in a particular sport, but to say that kids should never be allowed to try a new sport if there is no club in the area is a sweeping generalisation. That would worry me a lot.

**Ceris Anderson:** I work for a charity called StreetGames, which is just starting to grow in Scotland but has a lot of projects in England and Wales in areas of high deprivation, where I agree there is a lack of infrastructure and local clubs—that relates to providing taster sessions in such areas and in rural areas, where there might be no exit route.

We try to grow local clubs through young volunteers. By “club”, I do not necessarily mean a building that has a roof; a club can be a group that meets in a park or a multi-use games area. We even have activities in car parks. It is about supporting the volunteer infrastructure and helping groups to become sustainable.

**Gordon Crawford:** I represent Active Stirling, which is a local leisure trust. Our philosophy is about building communities. We are trying to do that by utilising the contribution of PE, physical activity and sport to link local communities, which we have broken down into clusters. We try to influence all the facets of the pathway from nursery provision to primary and secondary school.

In Stirling we have failed to increase participation at secondary school level, so we have come up with a new model in an attempt to change things. We are trying to provide a better service in the community. We have club development officers, who are linked to the geographic clusters and who work with and among local clubs. We respond on what is required to support clubs, whether that is about increasing volunteers, recruiting officials or developing training pathways for officials. Our club development officers facilitate that work—they are animators in the local community and they act as a conduit to our partners, including the other organisations that are round this table.

We are in a luxurious position, in that in a small geographic area that has a population of only 90,000 people we have active schools co-ordinators in primary schools, secondary school sports co-ordinators, club development officers, sport-specific development officers, a coaching manager who has coaching staff, a coach education officer, an outdoor team and a performance sport team. It is therefore a lot easier to have a vision that links PE, sport and physical activity.

PE is an area of the continuum that we are trying to bring closer to the others. We are using the PE support money through the Scottish Government, Education Scotland and sportscotland to appoint a PE manager and align PE closer to sport and physical activity.

We are trying to shape what we do for sport. What is our sporting community? Is a school a school or is it a community in which activity, sport and learning happens? We are trying to focus on the learner's voice. We seek to identify their requirements and link what we can do for PE, sport and physical activity to the contribution of the health and wellbeing agenda as well as the education agenda. We are trying to embed ourselves within education.

Primary schools are well catered for, although I agree with the previous panel's comments that we need to do a bit more through physical education in primary schools and support physical literacy better. However, there is a real drop-off in participation in secondary schools. That is the area that we really need to get right. We can address the issue through community sport hubs but also through the framework at Active Stirling and through our staff working with our communities. We should not give them something that we think they should have; we want them to influence and shape how we build our communities.

**The Convener:** Gil Paterson will come in on this point, but I have a question about the tension that arises between the two things. We all have an ambition for professionalisation. We want better organisation, better use of resources and better coaches, and it is inevitable that that sometimes means that we have to professionalise the system. How do we professionalise the system and still harness the tremendous enthusiasm and commitment that there is among volunteers in sports clubs?

**Gordon Crawford:** We try to link the two. We have professional officers, but their work is not to the detriment of our volunteers. We value the volunteers and have a vibrant volunteer workforce in Active Stirling.

We also work in partnership with our local sports council. It changed its name to ClubSport Stirling because it felt that its new name represents what it is involved in—sports and clubs. It felt that, when it was labelled a council, people stayed away. When its name was changed, a lot more people became involved in what we are trying to do.

There is a good partnership between Active Stirling and ClubSport Stirling. In the past 10 years, we have really invested in club sport, so much so that Active Stirling has a service-level agreement with ClubSport Stirling whereby we give it £34,000 to reinvest through work plans with the clubs, whether it be in club development or in coaching and volunteer development. Our officers are the conduits that help the clubs to put together good proposals to get the funding. We value volunteers and have a mixture of professional officers and volunteers working together in the clubs and in both the primary and secondary school estates.

**The Convener:** Although we all value volunteers and there are audits and so on, we heard during the previous evidence session that even among the organisations that deliver the best programmes we do not really know who the volunteers are and what their skills are. There is no workforce planning, despite the fact that many sports are delivered by volunteers. We have heard about the fragile nature of some of the delivery. There is no human resource management to support volunteers to do the job or to address their skills gaps. Does anyone have any comments? Jane Blanchard wants to come in.

**Jane Blanchard:** I want to go back to a previous point.

**The Convener:** Can we stay on the theme of how we support volunteers? If you are going back to a previous point, we will catch you later.

**Jane Blanchard:** I want to speak about the active schools co-ordinators and the pathways. Two witnesses have already highlighted the fact that primary schools are very well catered for by ASCs. In Lochaber, which is the only area that I can speak for, a fantastic group of ASCs go into primary schools to do taster sessions. However, I am not totally aware of how many of those lead on to further participation in sport.

The problem throughout the Highlands—I do not know whether it is the same in the rest of Scotland—is that, when the children go to secondary school, there is just one ASC who works for one day in each school. Lochaber high school, which has 900 pupils, has one ASC who goes in for one day. That person tries to organise activities for 900 pupils and to encourage them into sport and healthy activity, but they cannot

achieve anything in that time, which must be incredibly frustrating for them.

We need to concentrate on secondary school level. At primary school children are supported by their parents and driven everywhere to do whichever activities are on offer, and they are willing to try new things. However, when they get to secondary school, they are—such is the nature of the beast—much more independent and they want to do their own thing.

Those children need to be led into healthy activity through a proactive movement. I will not refer to such activity as sport, because a lot of children find that term quite scary. They see sport as being for people with rippling muscles who do athletics at the Olympics. However, I am talking more about healthy activities and all the things that go with doing sport such as discipline, working together as a team, becoming a valuable member of society and building self-confidence. Referring to that activity simply as sport does not cover all those things, and it does not encourage children in general to take part.

Active schools co-ordinators would need to dedicate an awful lot of time to encouraging that approach, and they simply cannot do so if they have one day to cover a whole high school.

**The Convener:** In the previous evidence session we heard a passionate contribution from someone who is running a local community sports club that is successful by anyone's terms. He has looked at the budget and seen that £2 million could be spent in sport and education. It seems almost pejorative to put, for example, Gordon Crawford's £34,000 into a club's development out of all the millions.

However, there is much more than just a simple transfer of money. We have heard today that, in some areas, there is a serious split between what some view as the professionalisation of the delivery of sport and how some community clubs view that development. Does anyone want to comment on that?

**Diane Cameron:** There are two distinct elements: community sport, which is run by community clubs, and sports development, which involves club development officers and organisations such as Active Stirling that support the clubs.

In this country, we are completely reliant on the clubs to deliver community sport, and almost all of them are volunteer driven. A lot of those guys do not need a regular pat on the back, and they probably do not want to be paid for what they do—in fact, a lot of them say, "If I got paid, I would not want to do it". However, we could help them with all the non-coaching stuff. For example, we could give them some money to do a feasibility study or

let them have a look at taking on their pitch and creating their own pavilion so that they have a home. We should let them become rooted in the community.

Those people could do with that type of help. They perhaps need a part-time development officer to help them to build links with the NHS, active schools and the social work department. That is where the professionalism comes in, and such an officer could perhaps look at all the messy stuff such as accountancy. I do not think that the coaches would want there to be 10,000 paid sports coaches throughout country—they volunteer because they are passionate about sport—but there is a lot of stuff with which we can help them.

12:30

**The Convener:** I do not know whether the witnesses were here for our earlier evidence session, but there was a big question about how the budget is allocated. I think that part of the problem was that the Gladiator Programme is at the lower end of the budget. Mr Richardson felt that the work of the Gladiator Programme will suffer because all the budget goes to other areas. There is a tension—although I put it no stronger than that. That was one piece of evidence that we heard this morning. I seek your views on that.

**John Heraghty:** For us, the key thing is that the groups with which we work—whether they are sports or youth groups or arts groups that want to do something involving physical activity—are coping and can inspire young people. Any structures that are put in place are really just there to facilitate that rather than prevent it. Those groups are doing the hard job of engaging hard-to-reach young people, and the only thing that organisations can do is facilitate them to continue to do that rather than put obstacles in their way.

The key thing is to inspire the groups that do the hard work. Diane Cameron is right about the business aspect, and people such as volunteer business mentors can help with that. That then lets groups get on with the thing that they are passionate about, which is making a difference for young people.

**Gil Paterson:** Mark McGeachie talked about hard-to-reach young people. The Government plans to create 150 hubs that are centred around schools, which is natural because most of the good facilities are located in schools. All of us, including the committee and the Government, want to get the benefit to the folk who need it most—the hard-to-reach young people—but how do we overcome the barriers to that? Mark McGeachie's organisation, the Robertson Trust, has a lot of experience in that. Can you say a bit

more on the public record about how we can overcome the barriers?

**Mark McGeachie:** There are two points to raise. We hear a lot about accessibility of facilities. On many occasions, that comes back to financial issues, but there is another issue that the trust has found, not just for the sport projects that we support but in all our spheres of work, and the best way to highlight the issue is with an example.

The new community campus in Raploch, which was built to help regenerate the area, is a fantastic facility. We fund several projects there, although they are not—I apologise—sports projects. However, when I visited them last year, the people there spoke about the tremendous difficulties that they have getting people who live just across the road to come into the facility. For members who have not been to the campus, the facilities are the best possible. However, there is an issue about ownership and people feeling welcome.

That situation is reflected in the work of sports organisations that we fund. The facilities and the buildings are only one aspect; we also need people from the community or who know the community and who want to work with young or old people, or with anyone in the community, to help them to feel part of the project.

We have more expertise in youth work and engaging hard-to-reach young people. One critical success factor that Youth Scotland identified from the evidence on the girls on the move project was that, by having a relationship with community organisations across the country, youth work organisations could speak to young people in their terms and ask them what they wanted to do, if not to participate in rugby, football or netball. The organisations then worked with young people to identify activities. Some activities were obscure things such as boxercise, yoga and table tennis. Dance was incredibly popular, but traditional team sports were not. Many of the girls are characterised as being hard to reach because of a number of factors, including the index of multiple deprivation and rural isolation. However, they can also be hard to reach simply because they have been turned off sport.

The Robertson Trust and the Rank Foundation funded a programme called youth work in sport, whereby we fund six community sports organisations across the country that have identified a young person between the ages of 18 and 25 from their community, who is paid as a full-time member of staff and funded to undertake a youth work diploma. A number of them are now going on to do the degree.

One of the key things that came out of that in its first year, and which is a prime example, is from Reach for the Sky Basketball in South

Lanarkshire. The young trainee youth worker there, Aaron, was beaten up in his own community when he was younger. He did not do well in school and was pretty much written off. I am sure that he would not mind my sharing that with the committee. However, he has now gone back into the local schools to work there, and is visible within his community, whose young people can aspire to be like him because they can share his journey.

A lot has been said about the impact of role models and elite-level athletes, particularly because of the Olympics. However, there is a lot of evidence that role models within communities have a stronger impact on engaging those who will not, of their own volition, choose to participate in sport.

That was perhaps a long-winded answer, but I hope that there is something in it that has addressed Mr Paterson's question.

**Ceris Anderson:** From the StreetGames perspective, I would echo a lot of what Mark McGeachie has just said. All our projects are based in areas of high deprivation. All our provision is what we call doorstep sport, which means that it is delivered at the right time and price, and in the right place and style. That sounds basic, but sometimes it is about thinking outside the box in sport. For example, we do not necessarily provide football on Sunday morning. That is how it has been done for 100 years, but it may need to be on a Friday night at eight o'clock, because that is when the young people want to come.

The style is not necessarily all skills and drills, because that is not what necessarily maintains their interest. It is about teaching skills through a fun game-led approach in friendship groups. It is very much about having local role models and ensuring that they are accessible. A lot of people in areas of deprivation do not have parents to drive them to sessions; the children have to get there under their own steam, so a fantastic facility a few miles away is not going to engage them. It is much better if we can provide a session using a community hall or even a tarmac area.

I support most of the things that Mark McGeachie said, because it is very much about encouraging local role models who will be the pied pipers who will keep people coming along.

**The Convener:** Does anyone else want to respond to Gil Paterson's question?

**Diane Cameron:** The community sport hub is a fantastic idea and I hope that it is a long-term strategy. However, as Mark McGeachie said, a lot of young people will not want to go into school for sport; they do not want to go to school during

school time and will certainly not want to go there later to participate in sport.

I work with 60 sport social enterprises across the country and work in all sorts of different areas. I find that young people will engage with a club and that it will develop what they need; for example, they might do a non-vocational qualification there or go to a local jobs club that is based in another sports club. Young people will engage in activities in a club in a way that they would otherwise not do, because the club is outwith school and the school itself can be a barrier. However, going to the local football club is perhaps a bit cool and they can hang out there. In that way, a lot of organisations can channel them back towards education and stuff that is useful for them. The school can be a big barrier. Even kids who are not disengaged from school do not want to go back there outwith school hours. Having the option of the community sport club that is not school based can be quite valuable.

**Gordon Crawford:** I agree with the point about the school becoming a barrier. However, rather than see that as a problem, why do people not use that to problem solve?

For me, it is about breaking down the perception of the school and the school estate. When pupils go back to school to take part in sport, it can be quite curricularised. They may enjoy sport during PE at school, but after school it is all formalised and there is an exam at the end of it. It is not about playing sport; it is about the theory of sport in practice and how they would lead and coach it. In Stirling, we have tried to get away from that and have worked with one of the high schools on a pilot scheme that offers pre-school activity, lunch-time activity and post-school activity for secondary schools only. It is about playing sport or officiating at sport and trying to foster school clubs.

Community clubs can be quite a threat to young people because they are formal and full of old people—people who have different dress sense—and they have to be on time and finish at a certain time. We are trying to create a different environment within school clubs that meets the needs of people there. It is great.

I agree with what was said about using different activities. In Stirling, particularly in Raploch, the school pilot scheme that we are working on is linked to the PE, physical activity and sport—PPAS—model. We have a new head of PE at Wallace high school who is responsible for PE, physical activity and sport, and PE is a core part of that. It is about using partnerships with sport and physical activity to support what we are trying to do in PE. We are saying that it is about not just physical education, but taking part in sport and how we use the school facilities to enable that. We are trying to link the clubs with the PE and sports

departments, and we have a secondary co-ordinator in every high school.

As Jane Blanchard mentioned, it is a problem that co-ordinators may come in for only one day a week, but we have tried to extend the link with that person beyond school time to before and after school time. The approach is about the partnerships delivering PE, sport and physical activity. It is changing the model and using school clubs to link in. Before, it used to be about school to sports club links, but we think that it should be about school club to sports club links and about trying to create partnerships whereby the community clubs come into schools and support the school clubs, helping the young people to be new leaders and new coaches, to take part in sport and to have fun.

**Jane Blanchard:** As the discussion has gone on, there have been quite a few points that I have wanted to comment on. Access to school facilities is a problem. We are just coming to the end of a feasibility study on building an indoor training facility. All the clubs and the community chose to build the facility on the school estate and to link to the existing school facilities, even though the clubs acknowledge that, at the moment, they have very limited access to the existing school facilities for training.

We are working up a management committee that we hope will not just manage the new indoor training facility—which is ostensibly a community facility that will be linked to the school estate—but consider access to all the school facilities. That committee will be drawn from the local clubs and the school's parent council, and will probably be led by the headteacher. It is hoped that, together, we can work out how the clubs and community can gain access to all the facilities at a price that they can afford—that is absolutely critical. However wonderful the facilities are, if the clubs cannot afford to use them they will not use them.

Mark McGeachie mentioned the problem of the feeling of having ownership of facilities. A lot of that seems to depend on the headteacher of the school. We are lucky because we have a very good relationship with our headteacher, but if the headteacher is precious about the school's facilities, it will be awkward for the community to get in.

Diane Cameron mentioned the problem of pupils going back to school to take part in an activity when they do not want to be there in the first place. It is the going back to school that is the problem. When children leave secondary school, many of them go home and go on Facebook or whatever, and that is it. If there are to be after-school activities, they must take place immediately after school—they must roll on from school.

12:45

The idea of clubs coming in to lead after-school activities is a fantastic enforcement of the pathway from schools to clubs. The outside element comes in, so the schoolteachers whom the children have been seeing all day do not run the activities. If the children are interested, they will go on to join the clubs, off the school premises, but it is good to have a crossover from the school to a club that uses the school's facilities. That is good economy of resources.

**John Heraghty:** Sport hubs are a cracking idea, but they do not need to be in schools or even in buildings. There can be a virtual hub, made up of a group of people who are interested in developing a sport, which takes us back to the convener's point. We do not want hubs to become structures that present barriers to hard-to-reach young people. There are different models for sport hubs, and it is important to keep the options open and find out what communities and young people want their hubs to be. Some hubs might be in schools and some might not. Some might be on the street, which offers another interesting way of looking at the issue.

**Mark McDonald:** When Diane Cameron was talking about support for clubs and organisations on the administrative side, an example came into my head. Before I was elected to be a councillor in 2007, I was involved with the Dyce Sports and Leisure Development Trust, in Aberdeen, which brought together local youth football, amateur football, a bowling club and a gymnastics club. The idea was to develop a community sports facility on land that had been set aside for that purpose. A group of willing volunteers was trying to negotiate leases, develop a business plan, find sources of funding and unlock funding, while having limited—if any—support in that regard.

I took Diane Cameron's point about how we help willing groups of volunteers to do those kinds of things, because clubs rely on getting experts in such things to join them in their efforts. In some areas that is easy. In some communities, a club might have a member who has a strong background in accountancy and who can be club treasurer, but other communities do not have that.

We discussed with the previous panel whether governing bodies need to do a skills audit of the volunteers in their areas. Perhaps we need to look for the gaps. What support do community clubs need, and who are the right people to deliver support?

**Diane Cameron:** I am employed by Senscot, which is about social enterprise, and I am part of an initiative between Senscot, sportscotland and the Robertson Trust, through which we support community sport that wants to adopt a social

enterprise model. Senscot is all about connecting folks. Because there is just one of me and I do all Scotland and all sport, which is an awful lot, a lot of the time my job is to signpost.

There is an awful lot of support out there. Perhaps the bunch of clubs that you described did not know that; it can be hard for clubs to find out how they can get help. There is an organisation that is funded by the Government to help community groups to take over leases, negotiate with the council about the asset and so on. People do not know that. There is help from the third-sector interface, there is help from me and there is help from just enterprise.

There is lots of help, but the issue is how we connect the clubs, which have the need, to the support, whether that is mentoring from the Winning Scotland Foundation, sported or the just enterprise consortium. Clubs need to find out more easily where to get help. People regularly phone me up and say, "Er—how do I find out about this?" That might be because they have got my number from someone. I do not even know how easy it is to get my number. We need to make getting help easier.

**Mark McDonald:** Is there a role for local authorities? You mentioned a number of organisations, but the problem is in people knowing that they exist and being able to access them. When a club negotiates a lease, it often does so with a local authority. Should local authorities be more proactive and ask whether the club has considered whether there are organisations that might be able to support it in its efforts? Should they take more of a signposting role?

**The Convener:** I do not want to discourage the conversation—I ask Diane Cameron to respond to Mark McDonald—but John Heraghty wants to speak and other witnesses want to respond to Mark McDonald's original question.

**Diane Cameron:** The local authority role is difficult and it would be a bit of a burden. With which department would responsibility for that sit? Collectively, we all need to take responsibility for making information more available. For example, sportscotland is redeveloping its website, and perhaps my organisation needs more robust support. The third-sector interfaces need to get better at connecting on the range of services that they offer. We all need to look at a more joined-up way of thinking and communicating.

**John Heraghty:** My first point relates to what Diane Cameron said. One skill that we can develop in local sports groups and sports clubs is networking. We almost need to take them out of the sports world to show them the other worlds out there from which they can benefit—whether that

involves the wider voluntary sector world or other development bodies. Such groups can benefit from lots of stuff.

We need to match up mentors and volunteers in rural communities. We are doing work to provide business mentors for local sports groups, much of which is based in cities. We are thinking of trialling in the coming period, through technology, a virtual way for mentors in one part of the country to mentor groups in another part of the country, so a group in a quite rural area could work with a mentor in another part of the country, which would be a good way of working.

**Jane Blanchard:** Diane Cameron talked about communication. As a sports association, we have had an enormous amount of help from Senscot on signposting. Our clubs probably do not even know that Senscot exists, but we get a lot of information every week from Diane Cameron, which we can send out to clubs, which can then use it or not.

On communication, we are kind of trying to be a virtual community sport hub, so that we can get all the information and help out to clubs. We are volunteers, but we have chosen our role. Volunteers in clubs are people who are passionate about their club and their sport. They spend all their limited spare time on trying to find facilities where they can do their training or play their matches, and on trying to find funding. All that takes up much time and saps a lot of the energy from a club.

If we can get information from other organisations, we can pass that on to clubs to use. Otherwise, clubs would not know where to look in the first place. We need virtual hubs to support clubs and to take knowledge from Senscot and so on.

**Gordon Crawford:** On the support for clubs question, locally professional support comes from our club development officers, who are attached to each of our community clusters. We hold community forums led by a club development officer in conjunction with ClubSport Stirling, our sports council. In attendance are clubs from that community, sports providers and usually the head of PE. The agenda is not fixed—there might be some core elements, but it is influenced by the clubs that attend.

From those meetings we have had follow-up meetings between clubs, facilitated by one of our officers, on what was mentioned about accessing funding, how to develop coaches and so on. We have found that model to be quite effective. The meetings are within the community, not within the school. We have held a meeting in a local pub in Callander. Meetings can be held at a club as well, but they could be at any facility at all. The forums work as a virtual community sport hub because we

are looking for the clubs to try to influence and access better use of facilities and upskill their workforce. Clubs can also try to develop by making links with the professional staff and having school taster sessions that may link directly to the club, with the club helping to support the taster.

We wish to build on and tie into that community forum with education as well.

**The Convener:** It comes back to that earlier question about volunteers—who are an essential human resource. Given the number of volunteers who are coaches, an illness or someone walking away can collapse a club. In all of the organisations that the witnesses represent, workforce planning will take place when there is a gap or somebody is retiring and there will be human resources management. It is much easier when you are paying someone, and they are not a volunteer who can decide when they are going to be there and when they are not. How do you spot a volunteer who is under pressure and deal with that?

We heard in the earlier evidence session that not much planning around volunteers takes place, even among the better organised groups. We had an admission that we do not know exactly how many people are out there volunteering; we depend on the Scottish household survey to tell us how many people there are. We cannot identify the gaps and we do not know the pressures that volunteers are under.

Mr Crawford, you are on the strategy side in Stirling. Do you engage the clubs and organisations that you work with in workforce planning and can you anticipate when they will need to get new volunteers and how many they will need to get on a five-year cycle in order to maintain the activity?

With all of the enthusiasm after the Olympic games and everything else, we are hoping that demand will increase, but we do not know whether the volunteers or coaches will be able to meet it.

**Gordon Crawford:** We are working on that. The key role—perhaps I have glossed over it—is the role of the club development officer, whom the clubs see as working with the club secretary and the president. We want our staff to take away the unnecessary chores that a volunteer would perhaps have to do. We want to utilise a volunteer in their area of expertise and enhance that expertise; we do not want them to be bogged down in laborious administration. The club development officer is that animator. They are in the local community and their local clubs inform them about what they need them to do—we do not tell them what they should be doing.

It is about pulling together the resources and information from a variety of different partners in

local communities at a variety of different levels—whether it is a national agency, a regional central sporting partnership, or the local authority. The clubs cannot be expected to stem the tide of information from people; they need a conduit to help them navigate their way through it.

**The Convener:** I am picturing a Mr Smith, who runs a club that involves 50 young people. Mr Smith decides with Mrs Smith that he is going to give it up next month. What is in place to ensure the future of that activity? What thinking takes place in that scenario?

If Mr Smith takes ill, is there a co-ordinator who can step in until they get other volunteers up to speed?

**Gordon Crawford:** We have done that in the past.

**The Convener:** What I am asking is whether there is any planning or thinking or whether we just have to react to emergencies.

**Gordon Crawford:** Planning takes place, but we also need adaptability and flexibility. After all, you never know when someone will fall sick. If you have good communication with a club, you can contact someone who will provide support, help to deliver training or find a coach.

13:00

**The Convener:** You might not know when someone in your department will fall sick, but at least you know that if it happens, a workforce plan will cover it and certain procedures will kick in. If you know that Mr Smith is going to retire from your department, you can plan for the eventuality. Everyone who has provided written and oral evidence has said, “We can’t run sport in Scotland without volunteers,” but we have discovered this morning that there is no workforce plan or human resources management to cover that tremendous resource. If we were running this for profit, would we be running it as we are now?

**John Heraghty:** The group of volunteers we recruit to work with sported and to support clubs have business skills, among which is the ability to look at succession planning and where their next group of volunteers is going to come from. When volunteers begin work with us, we make it clear that we see them as part of the team and provide training in the role of a volunteer and in mentoring skills. We see them as having a career with us that might last two or three years, and they work with us on a series of projects. Over that two or three-year period, we will get feedback from them on their volunteer experience; give them training; and get them together as a group to share best practice. There are ways of working with volunteers, but the key thing is to see the

volunteer not just as giving something to the club but as getting something out of the relationship that allows them as a person and their skills to develop. With such an approach, you can build a really sustainable group of mentors or volunteers, no matter whether they are in a group such as sported and pass those skills on to sports clubs or are part of the sports clubs themselves. We definitely need a plan for training and keeping volunteers.

**Mark McGeachie:** With many of the charities and voluntary organisations we deal with, a balance needs to be struck between getting on and delivering—which is, after all, what most volunteers are interested in—and forward planning, evaluating things and trying to see beyond sustaining a club for the next month, the next six months or whatever, all of which are hard to do given the limited amount of time that volunteers can give. A number of the organisations funded by the trust, such as active communities Paisley, Reach For The Sky Basketball, Spartans Community Football Academy and many others that I cannot name, look to grow their own leaders, but that process takes time; it requires opportunities to grow to be identified and provided to the young person who comes through as a result of their activity and wants to take on more responsibility in coaching, advertising, organising activities and so on. Perhaps we need to examine the current structure to allow organisations to develop organically.

Of course, all of this comes back to ownership. Someone who became a jog leader in active communities had never been physically active in her life until she had a baby and took part in the mums on the run programme; she then trained as a jogscotland jog leader and delivered her own group, which freed up time for the paid staff in active communities to focus on the broader picture and growing other leaders to deliver activity in the community. We need to strike that sort of balance with our time if we are to provide the right support to volunteers and allow them to develop in their own time.

**The Convener:** We are now into the last 10 minutes of the meeting. I call Mark McDonald.

**Mark McDonald:** You raise an interesting point, convener. There are a range of sporting clubs out there: there are clubs that have a strong infrastructure and could cope with events such as the one in your example; others are, in effect, one or two-man or one or two-woman bands. In those cases, if there is illness, a loss of motivation or a decision to step back for health reasons, the club’s future can be put in jeopardy. The question is whether we should go in and try to perform some life support to keep the club going or whether the important thing is to ensure that the young people

who were members of the club find new opportunities elsewhere.

The sporting landscape, particularly at the community level, is such that clubs come and go depending on the availability of willing volunteers. I do not think that we should focus too heavily on the notion that we have to keep clubs active in perpetuity. Instead, we should ensure that there is still a broad range of opportunities for people. As clubs fold, new clubs start up in other places. We should focus on ensuring that there is still provision rather than saying that we must keep clubs active.

**The Convener:** No other members have indicated that they have questions. As we have about 10 minutes left, I offer the witnesses an opportunity to put whatever they want to say on the record. We have had about an hour for the session, but I know that that is never enough time. If there is something that you want to mention to us—perhaps a priority area—you can do that now. Alternatively, we would welcome further written contributions and reflections on today's meeting, earlier meetings and the evidence in general. I invite you to communicate with us on things that you strongly agree or disagree with, as that will help us in our deliberations.

**Ceris Anderson:** I return to the point about difficulties with obtaining public funding. I appreciate what was said about that. There is a place for public funding for sports projects, but there are lots of other sources of funding out there. Although I know that it is difficult for small clubs to evidence what they are doing, if they can put forward a good picture of their work and the impact that they have, there are opportunities to obtain funding.

We are fortunate to have commercial funding from organisations, which has brought us not only cash but fantastic opportunities. This year, for example, 40 volunteers worked at the Olympics for eight weeks through one of our sponsors, and we had 10 volunteers assisting the Co-op with its Highland games roadshow. It is important to focus on such opportunities as well as on the cash. We have been fortunate in being sponsored by the Co-op and Coca-Cola. It is sometimes important to look beyond public funding.

**The Convener:** You raise the important issue of the transparency of the outcomes for clubs that are looking for funding, and whether there can be a barrier there.

John, do you want to place anything on the record?

**John Heraghty:** We have been running our activity in Scotland since February and, looking at the landscape in Scotland, including the people who are round the table today, we have been

impressed by the willingness of organisations to work together to find the best ways of using sport to help young people in deprived communities.

We have talked about volunteers and some of the barriers that exist, but what we have found around the sport for development agenda is the amazing potential that exists. Organisations really want to link up so that they can work with young people. It is important to take that forward.

**The Convener:** I ask Jane Blanchard whether she wants to put anything on the record. Do not feel compelled—it is just that I saw you indicating earlier that you wanted to speak. If you have no further comment, we will move on.

**Mark McGeachie:** I have a final point, convener, if that is all right.

**The Convener:** Certainly.

**Mark McGeachie:** It follows up on the funding question. As funding for sports organisations is so tight, there is an issue about funding being outcomes led. The sports organisations that we support find it difficult to evidence their outcomes and show robustly that what they do makes the difference that they think it does. Purely in a business context, some social enterprises that we support that have limited self-generated income and grants income have to know that what they do with the money makes the difference that they believe it makes.

To support capacity in the sector, the trust has a pilot programme that involves eight social enterprises undergoing a two-year period of evaluation training through Evaluation Support Scotland. Organisations really want to contribute to local and national outcomes, but it is critical that they learn about what the outcomes are and how to evidence them. That is important for organisations in managing and making best use of their cash, but it also enables them when they say to public funders that they can deliver a programme to say that they know what it will achieve and they have evidence for that.

**Diane Cameron:** There is a huge appetite among sports clubs to become sustainable in the long term. There is also a huge appetite among communities to help to avoid closure of sports facilities. Communities are desperately keen to keep facilities open, but it is challenging for organisations to find financial support to do that. The Robertson Trust runs a fantastic community sport funding stream and sportscotland has Government and lottery money, but that is all based on facility. We could do with a way to support community sport organisations, or just communities, to do some of the good work that they are desperately keen to do. Organisations do not have a place to go to try to access money to allow them to do that extra bit and to become

robust and sustainable and so have more impact in their communities. They do that already through volunteering but, when they want to do more, it is difficult for them to find a way at least to kick-start that. The phone rings every couple of days with the organisations that I work with. There is a real gap.

**The Convener:** Those are interesting points on sustainability.

On behalf of the committee, I thank the witnesses for attending the meeting and for their written submissions. Today's evidence session and the written submissions will inform us greatly in preparing our final report. I urge you to keep an eye on progress and you should feel free to communicate with us throughout the process. If things that are important to you are not appropriately recognised or if you strongly agree or disagree with something, feel free to get in touch. Thank you for attending and participating in the meeting and for the information that you have provided, which I am sure will be useful.

We now move into private session for agenda item 3.

13:14

*Meeting continued in private until 13:17.*



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