



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

# HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 11 September 2012

Session 4

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**Tuesday 11 September 2012**

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**HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting 2012, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

Duncan McNeil (Greenock and Inverclyde) (Lab)

**DEPUTY CONVENER**

\*Bob Doris (Glasgow) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*George Adam (Paisley) (SNP)

\*Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP)

\*Richard Lyle (Central 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)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Les Brown (Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex)

Alan Cunningham (Broxburn United Sports Club)

David Drummond (Scottish Football Association)

Dr Cindy Gray (Football Fans in Training/University of Glasgow)

Graham Hunter (Reach for the Sky Basketball)

Neil Matheson (Atlantis Leisure)

Steve Paige (Cricket Scotland)

Sarah Pryde (Scottish Swimming)

Andy Salmon (Scottish Golf Union)

Stuart Smith (Scottish Canoe Association)

Colin Thomson (Scottish Rugby)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Eugene Windsor

**LOCATION**

Committee Room 2



## Scottish Parliament

### Health and Sport Committee

*Tuesday 11 September 2012*

[The Deputy Convener *opened the meeting at 09:31*]

#### Interests

**The Deputy Convener (Bob Doris):** Good morning and welcome to the 23rd meeting in 2012 of the Health and Sport Committee. I remind everyone present that mobile phones and BlackBerrys should be turned off, as they can interfere with the sound system.

Apologies have been received from Duncan McNeil MSP. I understand that Richard Lyle MSP hopes to attend the meeting, but he has been delayed.

Agenda item 1 is a declaration of interests. This is the first meeting of the committee that George Adam is attending as a committee member. Welcome, George. In accordance with section 3 of the code of conduct, I invite you to declare any interests that are relevant to the committee's remit. I remind you that any declaration should be brief, but sufficiently detailed to make clear to any listener the nature of the interest.

**George Adam (Paisley) (SNP):** I refer everyone to my entry in the register of interests. For completeness, I add that, until May this year, I was a councillor on Renfrewshire Council and a board member of Renfrewshire Leisure Trust. Apart from that and being a St Mirren Football Club season ticket holder, I do not think that there is anything else to declare.

**The Deputy Convener:** It is important that you made that last declaration of interest. I thank you for putting that on the record. Welcome to the committee.

## Decision on Taking Business in Private

09:32

**The Deputy Convener:** The second item on our agenda is a decision on taking in private item 5, which is consideration of the programme of evidence for our community sport inquiry. Members will recall that we decided to take a similar item at last week's meeting in public. Do members agree to consider item 5 in public?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## Community Sport Inquiry

09:33

**The Deputy Convener:** The third item on the agenda is to consider whether to delegate to the convener responsibility for arranging for the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body to pay, under rule 12.4.3, any witness expenses in the community sport inquiry. Do members agree to do so?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Deputy Convener:** Agenda item 4 is our inquiry into support for community sport.

I am sure that committee members would want me to put on the record our congratulations to Andy Murray on his first major victory last night, in the US open. There are a few bleary eyes around the table—mine certainly are. We congratulate Andy not just on making Scotland proud, but on his personal achievement for him and his family.

**Members:** Hear, hear.

**The Deputy Convener:** I welcome Sarah Pryde, who is regional swimming development manager at Scottish Swimming; David Drummond, who is regional manager, south-east region, for the Scottish Football Association; Andy Salmon, who is Scottish golf development manager at the Scottish Golf Union; Colin Thomson, who is director of rugby operations at Scottish Rugby; Stuart Smith, who is chief executive of the Scottish Canoe Association; and Steve Paige, who is head of community development at Cricket Scotland.

I hope that we will have a good conversation about many issues. Gil Paterson MSP will kick off.

**Gil Paterson (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP):** It is already fairly clear from last week's evidence that volunteering is the backbone of sport. For instance, as I mentioned last week, at the weekend my 11-year-old daughter was participating in a gymnastics competition in our area. When I asked my wife about volunteering, she said that she did not have time to answer me. She was up at half past 5 in the morning, putting all the labels on the prizes and getting them ready to take to the competition, and did not finish until half past 8. Despite all that, she does not realise that she is a volunteer. I know how such activity can affect families but, given the importance of volunteering, I would like to hear the witnesses' views on what the barriers are and how we can encourage people to continue their involvement. For example, how can we encourage people such as my wife to continue her involvement in sport after my daughter becomes too old or for whatever reason decides not to continue with her gymnastics?

**The Deputy Convener:** Would someone like to kick off?

**Andy Salmon (Scottish Golf Union):** I am happy to comment, convener.

With regard to barriers, in a previous evidence session, the committee discussed the distinction between sporting volunteers—in other words, people who volunteer as coaches, for example—and volunteers who get involved in governance. Indeed, as far as the governance of clubs is concerned, the increasing amount of legislation is a significant barrier to volunteer involvement. As a governing body, what we try to do—and what we need more support to be able to do better—is to help volunteers to cut through that red tape and all those legislative requirements. We realise that we cannot ask Government to stop legislating on health and safety, employment law and other such important areas, but we can help volunteers a great deal in those areas.

**Stuart Smith (Scottish Canoe Association):** In an outdoor sport such as canoeing, it is very important that things happens safely and in a controlled way. As a result, we have always emphasised coaching and coaching qualifications; indeed, more than half our members are coaches. As Andy Salmon has made clear, the new issue to take into consideration is how we support volunteers who are doing the other things in clubs. We in canoeing might emphasise coaching, but over the past few years there have been a lot of changes in child protection and other legislation and governing bodies such as the one that I represent are trying to develop volunteering in those areas and to support those individuals better.

**Steve Paige (Cricket Scotland):** I think that we also need to define the term “volunteering”. Mr Paterson said that his wife felt that she was just helping out; I feel that the volunteer label can have positive connotations sometimes and negative connotations sometimes, and that there is an expectation that those who volunteer need to give a lot of time for such activity—time, it should be said, that they do not always have. We have to be careful about how we define the term and must ensure that the people who give up their time realise that they are volunteering instead of simply thinking that they are just helping out.

**Colin Thomson (Scottish Rugby):** Following on from Steve Paige's comments about volunteering, I believe that volunteers will be the bedrock of sport for ever. We will never have sport without volunteers, and we need to state that clearly and never forget that the work that volunteers carry out in rugby, canoeing, cricket, golf and so on produces social capital in Scotland.

Yes, the term “volunteering” can sometimes be used in a derogatory way. However, the fact is that people who get involved in sport do so because they are passionate about it, about their children taking part or, if they are schoolteachers, about their pupils having that experience. One of the barriers that we need to tackle lies in the typical Scottish trait of talking everything down. Institutions, whether it be a school recognising the efforts that a teacher has made in volunteering or the senior officials in a club recognising the efforts of the volunteers, need to celebrate volunteers and their impact on communities. This is not about producing the next Andy Murrays but about producing children who are competent and confident and can participate in the community environment. The social capital of all that activity goes beyond simply winning the next gold medal. The more people who get involved in sport, the more social cohesion we will have in schools or in rural or urban communities. We must celebrate, push and support the people who are involved in sport, whether through giving them time out of school, extra benefits or simple recognition within the community. Without the volunteers, sport will die.

**The Deputy Convener:** A couple of members want to come in after Ms Pryde.

**Sarah Pryde (Scottish Swimming):** Volunteering is so important for us in swimming. A few years ago, we devised a volunteer strategy that looked at recruitment and retention—how to get people into the sport, as well as the key issue of keeping them in the sport. It is interesting to note that, a few years ago, we had 2,500 volunteers and now have more than 5,000, yet the clubs say that volunteering is an issue. Our statistics show that volunteering has increased during the past few years but the clubs say that they really need to get volunteers in the door. Therefore, we have a lot of work to do on volunteering.

We hope that some of the clubs out there have good policies. If a child comes along to swim at one of the big clubs in Edinburgh, that encourages their parents to become members, and they are asked to do at least one volunteering job per year—by fundraising through a bag-packing event, for example. Parents might be asked to wash the kit if it is a football club. It is just something to get the parents in. We are trying to spread the word across other sports.

**David Drummond (Scottish Football Association):** Andy Salmon talked about barriers. We need to be careful that there is not too much legislation. We should continue to provide opportunities as often as possible at times that suit volunteers, certainly in football. In the south-east of Scotland, which is our region, we deliver

somewhere in the region of 80 coach education courses a year, but we have to recognise that they need to be held at a time that suits the volunteers. That need not always be Saturdays and Sundays; it can be during the day or evening. However, the timing has to work for the volunteers.

I agree with what Sarah Pryde said about volunteers. They really are the lifeblood of our game and what makes it tick. I am aware that, in other countries, volunteers get better recognition within the working environment than they get in Scotland. For example, in Sweden, staff who are going to be taking a training session on a Monday at half past 4 are given the opportunity to finish work early, at 4 o'clock. They will work until 6 o'clock on a Tuesday. There is give and take within organisations and society, but we find ourselves with a very different beast.

**Gil Paterson:** Two specific points have come up there. The first was raised by Andy Salmon. Have you any examples of legislation that was put in place for a good reason but which might be overbearing? You might not be able to produce an example right now, but if there are issues that the politicians could look at or review, we would be interested to hear about them.

I have a business—my son runs it now, thank goodness—and I am fully aware that the duty of care places a burden on employers, which is a good thing in many ways. There might be a different way to legislate while keeping the protections that were intended. Anyway, I am talking too much. What are your views?

**Andy Salmon:** I can think of two specific examples of well-meaning legislation that has placed an overbearing burden on golf: the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the more recent Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, which I understand was aimed at curbing antisocial behaviour in city centre streets late on Friday and Saturday evenings. The 2005 act has put significant cost and time pressure on golf clubs and the way in which they manage their licensing activity. Golf clubs do not tend to have many issues with antisocial behaviour late on a Friday or Saturday night so the 2005 act has had an adverse effect on them and is very unpopular with golf clubs.

We have also concerned ourselves with employment and health and safety law. We have invested quite heavily in providing a solution for golf clubs. They have a free service that helps them wade through the red tape, so to speak, rather than incur those costs themselves. I hope that that answers your question.

09:45

**Dr Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab):** I would like to develop that point.

We have been given two specific examples, and child protection has also been mentioned. It seems that one of the problems is that the governing bodies are of different sizes and strengths. Is co-ordinated support in issues such as child protection training provided for sports that may have smaller voluntary governing bodies? Are governing bodies being supported by sportscotland or any other external national organisation to provide the necessary training in child protection and other areas of health and safety? It is clearly impossible for all governing bodies to provide all their people with the training that they need. What is the situation with regard to structures and training?

**David Drummond:** The training that we provide for volunteers, particularly in areas such as child protection and first aid, is not specific to football. We always make those courses available to people involved in swimming, hockey or whatever. They are advertised on our website and we work with sportscotland to ensure that people from other sports are made aware of our courses so that they have an opportunity to come on them if they want to.

**Dr Simpson:** Do they go on your courses?

**David Drummond:** Yes. I do not know why, but we have quite a strong following from the horse-riding fraternity, who come to many of our first aid courses.

**Sarah Pryde:** I support what David Drummond has said. Scottish Swimming runs a number of child protection courses for our clubs. Our sport is organised on a regional basis, as are many other sports. We produce co-ordinated programmes within our area. We try to work with other sports such as gymnastics and other aquatic disciplines, where the child protection issues are similar. In relation to protection of vulnerable groups checks and child protection, our governance arrangements are fairly strong, probably due to the nature of the sport of swimming. We are quite confident that in the area of child protection, our governance is fairly on the money.

The emphasis of our regional model is to share resources because not every governing body—especially the smaller bodies—can offer that support to all their members. We always work with other sports in our area in an effort to support them as best we can. For example, we recently ran a course for child protection officers called in safe hands, which was attended by members of other governing bodies. That provided an opportunity for governing bodies to share good practice methods and to support one another. It is definitely a case of people working across sports.

**The Deputy Convener:** That is helpful. Does Mr Thomson want to come in?

**Colin Thomson:** Sports work together with the support of sportscotland, regional hubs and local authorities. Volunteers can tap into a range of activities including coaching, medical and physiotherapy support and PVG. The key point is whether volunteers have the time to tap into those activities, although I do not think that any volunteer in a club would say that they should not be doing those things. I return to my first point, which is that volunteers are motivated people. Many of them are very intelligent people who understand the need to comply with rules and regulations. However, it is a case of whether they have the time to do those things. For example, will they be able to take time off work, and will employers in business or local authorities support employees who are known volunteers involved in sports by giving them time off work? Many volunteers are stretched for time—Gil Paterson spoke about his wife. Time is a real issue.

**Stuart Smith:** I agree with everything that has been said. It is a time issue. When I mentioned child protection earlier, I was specifically thinking of the need for retrospective checking that is coming in from the end of October, which will deal with all those people who have previously undergone disclosure checks. The start of retrospective checking has been delayed but over the next three years it will mean a lot of work for the governing bodies and for all those volunteers who are already busy in the clubs and who will undergo that process.

**Dr Simpson:** My second question is on volunteering, which we assume is done in out-of-work hours. Have any of you had any contact with the Scottish centre for healthy working lives, which is the organisation that is supposed to support small and medium-sized businesses? Part of its role on healthy working lives is to encourage activity that will enhance workers' wellbeing and health. Volunteering and getting engaged in sporting activity should be part of that. It is also beneficial to companies to have such links. For example, in Auckland, 200 touch-rugby teams are run by the business world. It is regarded as being part of the businesses' function to support such physical activity because it is beneficial.

Have any of you had contact with the centre for healthy working lives? Have you even heard of it?

**The Deputy Convener:** Does anyone want to address that?

I guess that the lack of response means that the answer is no. If anyone has heard of that organisation, could they let us know? I think that we will take the silence as a no. It might be worth following up on that.

I have an additional question. I just want to clarify that this is right: is it the case that the

governing bodies that are represented here are of such scale that they can filter down child protection and other support to their member organisations? Are you confident that sportscotland networks effectively with other smaller governing bodies to ensure that they can all get that support? David Drummond said that his organisation makes expertise available to the horse-riding fraternity, for example. Are you confident that sportscotland performs that link role?

**Stuart Smith:** Sportscotland invests in Children 1st, which is an organisation that specialises in this area. It runs meetings for lead officers from each sport. I think that that is how the information is cascaded down to the different sports.

**David Drummond:** As regional development managers, we sit on a group on which all the different sports are represented. When we come together on a monthly basis, our agenda includes discussing courses that are coming up and ensuring that that information is shared among members.

**The Deputy Convener:** Last week, we heard in evidence that one of the issues in volunteering was that there are organisations—even successful sports clubs—in which volunteering falls off a cliff edge when people who actively participate in a sport or recreation give it up, because the family members who volunteer also give it up, leaving a vacuum in volunteers.

One model on the continent involves larger sporting clubs and, more importantly, networking between different sports so that they can share volunteers. Have any of the national governing bodies given consideration to taking forward such a model?

**Sarah Pryde:** We have looked at that in relation to events rather than in the specific context of clubs. We are looking at trying to get volunteers from other sports to support our national competitions. We would perhaps look at sports that were more like ours, but there is no harm in looking further afield. We have certainly not gone down that avenue in relation to clubs.

**Steve Paige:** Your first point was about volunteers leaving clubs when family members give up a sport. We need to realise that there is a volunteering life cycle, and we should celebrate volunteers while they are giving their time. It is important for us as governing bodies to work with our clubs to ensure that we have in place some form of succession planning so that when a key member leaves the club, the club does not fall apart. It is for our regional teams to work with the clubs to ensure that that is in place.

**Andy Salmon:** It comes back to what Steve Paige said earlier about defining what we mean by

volunteering. The answer will be different for different types of volunteers. I recognise the point that you make about clubs in the context of coaching. Very often, the junior convener in a club will be the parent of an enthusiastic child. When that child leaves, that convener will give up.

On the other hand, we have a number of volunteers at regional or national level and we found in a recent survey that 36 per cent of them have been in post for at least six years—many have been in post for 20 or 30 years—so that model is very different. Those people volunteer because they want to give something back—there is no family connection. Again, the question is the definition of a volunteer, because there are many types of volunteers.

**Stuart Smith:** In canoeing, we do not have many people from clubs in other sports helping out in specific clubs, but we have a lot of interclub working.

Another thing that has happened in the past few months is that people are formalising their volunteer roles across a number of sports. For example, on the sportscotland website and elsewhere clubs or governing bodies are advertising for specific volunteers for a role. It is a bit like advertising an employed post. The advantage of such advertising is that it can attract people from outside a specific club or sport. That might help with the situation of the life cycle of parents' and other people's involvement in clubs, because it would provide another thread of volunteers going through the club.

**Colin Thomson:** A rugby club is the heart of rugby in a community. Its *raison d'être* is to provide rugby for its community. We have worked hard over the past six years in partnership with local authorities, clubs and the Government to put in place, through cashback for communities funding, an infrastructure of club development officers who can link up with schools. The most important thing beyond the club is the school.

If we want to sustain volunteers in a sporting context, we must have a culture that drives over the years to pull people into the sport, give them good experiences and sustain them in the sport. It must also create a culture of succession planning that promotes a giving-back attitude. We have a strong club culture across Scotland in which great work is done by people whose children have long gone from the club and by former players who want to give something back. That attitude has been bred by a giving-back culture, which starts in the school.

We have had success in increasing the amount of school rugby, but I am concerned about the culture not starting in schools but being isolated in clubs, which limits the people who are involved in

the sport to children whose parents take them along. If we are sincere about creating a sporting culture, we must be open to all. We must therefore be in schools and school sport must play a greater role, because we can recruit children in school and when they are in the senior school we can train them to deliver to the primary school sector and the first year of secondary school. We can create a giving-back culture that sustains volunteering beyond just parents.

**The Deputy Convener:** I suspect that we will come on to that issue later. I want to move away from volunteering to other matters, and a couple of other members have questions.

**Jim Eadie (Edinburgh Southern) (SNP):** I thank the panel members for their contributions. I want to return to something that Mr Thomson said about the positive contribution that sport can make to social cohesion. I am interested in the wider community benefit of sport and I would like to know what specific activities the sports governing bodies are promoting in order to engage in sport those young people who are at risk of involvement in antisocial behaviour. That is particularly important in the most deprived areas of Scotland.

Mr Thomson also spoke about the need to recognise and celebrate the contribution of volunteers. Again, I wonder what the governing bodies are doing to address that issue. I am aware, for example, that the swimming governing body has annual awards. Does it provide awards for volunteers? If not, would it consider doing that? Perhaps the other governing bodies could reflect on that suggestion, too.

**Sarah Pryde:** Our annual awards include a number of categories for volunteers, so it is not just one volunteer who is recognised. In addition, sportscotland provides volunteer awards throughout the year, which all sports can access.

As part of our volunteer strategy, we recognise that volunteers do not want just awards: they want recognition in the form of a thank you or a letter, for example. We are on Twitter quite a lot and we tweet about our volunteers. We put up pictures and raise the profile of what they do.

I return to your first point. We have a leadership programme called swim for change, which is specifically for 15 to 19-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training and who live in socially deprived areas. We try to encourage them to go on a course, on which they go through lifeguard training and the level 1 teaching award. At the end of that, they are put into a voluntary placement in a local authority, a trust or a club programme.

That programme is targeted specifically at socially deprived areas. It is not a Government-funded programme, although we receive some

funding for it from Comic Relief, so we are limited in what we can do at the moment. We are trying to pilot the programme in certain areas, but we would love to run it in all 32 local authority areas.

10:00

**Jim Eadie:** You have just given a fantastic example—

**The Deputy Convener:** Could we open up the discussion by giving other witnesses an opportunity to say what they do? I will let you back in later.

**Steve Paige:** Cricket Scotland works with Asda. We have the Asda volunteer-of-the-month awards, which run from April to September, in which we recognise one volunteer a month. That can be a coach, a committee member, a club stalwart or someone who has done a sterling piece of work for the club. This is the third year of that partnership. We do not have annual awards; we just make the awards monthly through our traditional season. However, as I am sure that you will appreciate, because of the weather we have not had a traditional season this year.

Mr Eadie's first point was about social cohesion. We are working with our global governing body, the International Cricket Council, on non-traditional forms of the game. As many people are aware, cricket in whites with a hard ball takes seven hours on a Saturday. We need short games with small sides that can be played in multi-use games areas and which do not need a lot of equipment, so that we can get into areas of urban—and even rural—deprivation and engage people in the game and in some form of physical activity.

**Stuart Smith:** The Scottish Canoe Association, like a lot of other associations, has volunteer awards. We have a willing hands quach, going back about 20 years. Similar to other sports, we profile our volunteers in our quarterly magazine with a picture and a description of what the volunteer does, to spur on others to think about what they could do, too.

We have not so far had the opportunity to do much on social cohesion and working in deprived areas. Our aim is to support all the clubs around Scotland so that they can take care of people, if we can get them into the clubs. Last weekend, I was at our annual coaching conference at the national centre at Glenmore lodge. We had a keynote speech from Mark Delaney, the coach to David Florence, who has just won his second silver medal at the Olympics. Mark Delaney went to the Olympics in 1992 and 1996 and is the first to admit that if there had not been a well-run club in his neighbourhood, he would probably have ended up doing a completely different sport from canoeing.

Our aim is to make the clubs safe, well-run and welcoming places. However, we have not yet managed to do any work on how to get extra people into those clubs.

**The Deputy Convener:** I should perhaps give Mr Smith a small plug for some work that he has done in north Glasgow. Glasgow paddlesports centre, which is supported by the SCA, recently trained 11 youth coaches, some of whom had never taken to the water before. The centre will concentrate on deprived areas. I thought that I would put that on the record.

**Colin Thomson:** On volunteer awards, we all run similar things. Our awards are sponsored by RBS. We run a monthly award: volunteer of the month, club of the month, player of the month and try of the month. The winners go to an annual awards dinner at Murrayfield, which is a great event. We then push them forward to the sportscotland awards. We use social media, such as our Facebook page, to promote these stories, and we send videos to clubs. RBS generally gives us its television team and we make DVDs of club activity so that the clubs can promote what they do within their community to sponsors. That is a good programme.

On social inclusion, we are passionate about pushing the boundaries of rugby into areas where we have not been before. Through support from the Government and cashback for communities, we are running rugby in new areas. We have two good programmes in Inverclyde and in Methil in Fife, in partnership with Wooden Spoon, the rugby charity, for people aged 16 to 24 who are NEET.

We do street rugby, in partnership with the community safety partnerships, local authorities and street bobbies. However, it is not just about doing those things. It is about ensuring that children are being inspired and being given continued opportunities. Where we go from there is to look at how that then links back to the club—does it link via schools? Do we then get schools playing against each other and then get down to the club? It is about tying all that back together. Regional development managers spend a lot of time working with people in local authorities, in other sports and in schools to ensure that that happens.

**David Drummond:** The award scheme that we operate is similar to some of the schemes that the other witnesses have described. There are annual regional awards when we celebrate the role of the volunteers working in adult football, women's football, youth football and so on. The regional winners are then promoted to our national awards, which also take place annually—they take place later this month. The award programme is endorsed by McDonalds and the *Sunday Mail*.

In terms of trying to engage and work in the diversionary area, we have three key programmes that are all fully funded through the Scottish Government's cashback initiative. Our school of football programme is probably our flagship programme in that area. We work in schools across the country—we have 22 schools of football, five of which are in the south-east of Scotland. It is a social and academic programme for children who are in first and second year in secondary schools, who are perhaps starting to become a little bit wayward and not necessarily engaging in school. We use football as a tool to hook the children back into school. Essentially, we give them a session a day of football, which replaces one of their normal subjects—home economics, religious studies, or even English and maths in some cases. We find that the children are staying on at school for longer. The statistics suggest that they all sit above average for attendance, which is great; I do not want to stray too far into that, but that is the main evidence that we look for to ensure that the programme is working.

Another key programme is street football, which is about getting kids to play the game and doing it in a way that allows them to just go and play the game. It is very much about trying to get the kids off the street and playing something.

The final key programme is free college education for 16 to 25-year-olds. We deliver college education to them and then we try to get them into local clubs or local authority programmes, where they become more engaged with what they are doing in the communities.

**Andy Salmon:** Like everybody else, we have an annual awards programme for a variety of categories. Like rugby, we are sponsored by RBS.

Regarding social inclusion, we have a junior programme that is branded as club golf. The programme has enjoyed the support of successive Governments since it was launched in 2003. Its overarching objective is to provide the opportunity for every nine-year-old to play golf. This year, we delivered that opportunity to more than 40,000 nine-year-olds in curriculum time, which is more than 81 per cent of the primary 5 population. That, by definition, means that golf is a game for every single child, irrespective of where they live or what their family circumstances are.

Historically, a child got into golf if their father, their mother, their auntie or their uncle played golf. Now, a whole new generation of golfers are coming through who have no golfing pedigree, if you like. That is what is happening in golf.

**Jim Eadie:** I am impressed by the range of examples that we have heard from the sports governing bodies. I would like further details and

evidence on figures to back up those helpful examples. If the witnesses could write to us listing what the level of funding is and where that funding is coming from—cashback for communities, sponsorship or Government funding—that would be useful.

I was interested in what Mr Drummond said about the evaluation of the programmes' impact. He gave the example of the schools of football and their impact on encouraging young people to stay on at school for longer. Such outcomes are interesting, and it would be helpful if the governing bodies could share with us any evaluation that has been done on the work that they are doing.

**The Convener:** The witnesses could send us that information in writing after the meeting.

**Drew Smith (Glasgow) (Lab):** I return to multisport clubs, which the deputy convener mentioned. From our previous evidence session, it seems that a number of issues arise. I will set out those issues and ask you to comment on whether multisport clubs are at least a partial solution.

One issue is that the sport that a child takes up or is passionate about at eight might not be the sport that they want to be involved in at 14. There is competition between different sports: for volunteers, for facilities and, frankly, for the children who are most likely to be active. Where does that leave other children? There is also competition for public support and for support from other sporting organisations for the particular discipline. If a pupil's school promotes rugby, swimming or cricket, but they do not want to do that sport, all that the public support has done is to encourage those who were most likely to be active anyway. For the children who were less likely to be active, perhaps we have not identified the sport that is right for them.

In our previous evidence session, it seemed that multisport clubs were a big part of the solution and that community sport hubs would drive that multisport club agenda. However, we have not heard how the governing bodies are taking forward multisport clubs. Can the individual governing bodies give us examples in which they have pursued that model?

**The Deputy Convener:** I do not think that there were any examples previously, but if the witnesses have thought of an example, that would be very useful. If they cannot think of examples, perhaps they could tell us how they would take forward that suggestion.

**Drew Smith:** Given what we heard at last week's evidence session, my question would be, if such examples do not exist, why do they not exist?

**The Deputy Convener:** Would anybody like to take up that challenge?

**Colin Thomson:** We have had success with Lismore Rugby Football Club, which is now a multisport hub that involves cricket, football and rugby at the same venue—it is not far from the Parliament. It took 16 years of hard work by committee people in the various clubs to pull together.

You ask about multisport clubs and access—I return to the point that that all starts at school. At Scottish Rugby we are passionate that all sorts of sport should be played at school so that every child has the opportunity, especially at secondary school, to take part and find the sport that is right for them. As has been highlighted, sport is often too dependent on one individual volunteer in a school and his likes, wants or needs. It is not pupil focused, so the talent pool is limited, people are channelled and the same type of children are pulled in.

Sport has been marginalised over the years as a result of an overcomplication of the process. The unhealthy distinction between physical education, physical activity and sport has marginalised sport. If we are honest about wanting children to take part and have opportunities, we must have multisport clubs in schools, because that is where all children are.

As some of the bigger governing bodies, we can back that up by providing a good club infrastructure to support it, but we have to go to where the children are, which is in schools.

**Steve Paige:** On our way here, we were talking about the pathways into sport inquiry. Three or four years ago we started to ask, if a young person gets their first taste of sport at primary school, who is the delivery agent? What training does the young person receive in physical literacy skills? Who delivers that training? Who is best placed to deliver it? I will not sit here and say that it is not the physical education teacher in the primary school, but we are the sport specialists and we have an important part to play.

I echo what Colin Thomson said about the multisport clubs. We can provide the quality external exit route for the young person. We need to revisit some of the evidence that was given to the pathways into sport inquiry three or four years ago.

10:15

**Colin Thomson:** If we are serious about making the approach work, there must be an integrated approach to PE, physical activity and sport, and there must be local co-ordination and local decision making that is right for the level. We

have heard that a generation was inspired throughout the summer, but if those people have no opportunity to participate in what they have been watching, what is the point in inspiring them?

**The Deputy Convener:** We should take those points on board. You have put on record that you think that schools should do more and be hubs for sporting and physical activity, and the committee will consider the issue, of course. However, Drew Smith asked what you are doing now. You are the national governing bodies; you know where your clubs are and you could tell them what would be a good thing to do. There are clubs in towns throughout the country, which do rugby, football, netball, basketball, canoeing and so on, but which might not be talking to one another. I take on board the point that schools need to do more. You could wait for schools to get it right, but what are you doing now to make links with schools?

**Sarah Pryde:** I can give a couple of examples of how we have worked in community sport hubs. Our national top-up programme included a number of partnerships working in Forrester high school in Edinburgh, involving Scottish Swimming, sportscotland, the high school, the active schools programme, the local authority and the local swimming club. We worked across all agencies. That is an example of how we delivered a swimming programme in a focused way.

At the same site, we are working with a number of other sports—netball, basketball and hockey—on a multisport approach. The programme is specifically around coach education, so rather than being about the children who play the sports it is about how different sports can deliver a co-ordinated approach to the United Kingdom coaching certificate. We hope that better relationships will come out of that.

We try to encourage swimming clubs to engage with community sport hubs. The approach is in its early stages in many local authorities and there will be no one-size-fits-all approach. Many local authorities have virtual hubs, which are not facility based, because not every school or facility has a swimming pool, a gymnasium or a football pitch. Through a virtual hub, information can be shared, so that the local community can get access to information about what clubs are out there. We will try to encourage our swimming clubs to engage with communities.

About 10 years ago we started to look at sport-specific community partnerships, bringing together clubs in the same local authority area to try to share resources and work together on issues. Swimming clubs are struggling to find full-time staff and volunteers, so we tried to create a model whereby clubs would come together under a shared vision, while retaining their identity.

We are in favour of community sport hubs. If they have a focus, they will be successful. One size does not fit all, and I am sure that other governing bodies have a view on how they can engage with hubs.

**Stuart Smith:** The Scottish Canoe Association is a medium-sized sport governing body and does not have any regional staff. Because the cashback programme is open only to a couple of sports rather than all sports, we cannot invest in a network of development officers. We try to ensure that everything that we do is done in partnership with other people, where that is possible.

I know of examples of joint canoe and sailing clubs and examples of canoeing and rowing clubs that are in the same location. The critical thing is that the clubs talk to one another and work together; whether there is a single club is less critical. It might be quite complicated to amalgamate clubs, for reasons that might be to do with the insurances that clubs must pay in relation to the activities that they undertake, or with the fact that clubs work in different ways and have different seasons. For me, the critical thing is joint working. We do that through our volunteers and the volunteer club committees, rather than through regional staff, which we do not have.

**David Drummond:** We absolutely support community sport hubs, but from a football point of view, our priority really needs to be to develop and put in place systems for football clubs in the first instance to ensure that they have the best possible support. Once that support is in place, we can look at how they can start to engage directly with other sports.

If we want to try to use the schools as magnets for community sport, we need to consider how to open up school estates. That probably opens up a whole new debate. There are places in Edinburgh—Forrester high school, for example—that have opened up and really embraced the community sport model, but that is certainly not the case across Edinburgh or Scotland.

**Andy Salmon:** Fundamentally, we support community sport hubs, and we are interested in how they develop. I completely agree with the points that have been made about school sport. As I have already said, we are very fortunate in having a very successful schools programme for golf. Every year, more than 40,000 nine-year-olds are introduced to golf. Our challenge is to ensure that they have an exit route to go to a local club or facility to continue their interest in it. Over the past couple of years, we have had a 15 per cent conversion from the schools programme to the club programme. Critically, we have more than 300 clubs and facilities that provide that exit route, and approximately 30 of them are not golf clubs.

To go back to Jim Eadie's question, that is critical in ensuring that we can reach kids in deprived areas who would not otherwise have those opportunities. They do not have to go to the stereotypical private members club; rather, they can go to a community club. That is critical in places such as Glasgow and Dundee and, to a lesser extent, Aberdeen. The model has existed for some time. In Glasgow, community sport clubs were going before community sport hubs were dreamt up.

**Nanette Milne (North East Scotland) (Con):** I would like to broaden out the discussion a little bit into participation. We have heard a lot about the importance of getting young people interested in sport and involved in clubs. What about the other groups that do not participate so much, such as women and older people? Perhaps people in those groups drop off the end after having been interested in sport in childhood. Are the governing bodies doing anything specific to attract such groups and keep their interest? It is clear that I am in the older age group, and I think that physical activity and perhaps sport are important throughout life.

**Sarah Pryde:** We have recently put in place a participation team. We have two participation officers underneath a participation manager who specifically look at active adults, the early years and intervention programmes to ensure that we hit everything.

I will give a couple of specific examples of things that we have put in place. We have rolled out the SwimGym programme and a swimfit programme to try to engage adults to do a more programmed swim, perhaps under the leadership of a coach or just with cards on the side of the pool. Aqua Zumba is another of our areas. We are trying to go with trends in other fitness industries and bring them into the pool. We try to encourage people from the gym to come along to the pool.

A number of local authorities have given us a little bit of feedback on women-only sessions, many of which happen across the country. The issue with such sessions is their cost. Local authorities simply cannot afford to put on girl lifeguards, so there are barriers.

However, we have a lot on our agenda relating to participation. It is not just about club development or performance. We recognise that participation is a huge issue for us.

**David Drummond:** We recently invested in two new members of staff for each of the six regions, so there are 12 new members of staff across the country. One of the posts is club development officer for girls' and women's football. We are looking at driving participation in such football, especially with the under-nine and under-11 age

groups, and at getting them into our quality-marked and accredited clubs. That is the key focus of those officers. There is also an attempt to engage more with females who would like to be involved in a coaching or volunteering capacity in clubs' structures. Our remit is to try to put on coach education courses and appropriate training courses for individuals.

The other post in which we have recently invested is that of football equity officer. Both posts that I have mentioned are funded through the cashback initiative. There are equity officers based in the six regions of Scotland and they are in post to drive participation in and far greater engagement with the black and minority ethnic community, which is an untapped area as far as football is concerned. I hold my hands up and admit that it is still very much a learning area for us all. We are aware that there are a number of members of the BME community who want to play football or who play football but who do not necessarily know the direct route into the game, or who just want to volunteer and be part of the game. A lot of work is being done on that at the moment.

**Andy Salmon:** Only 13 per cent of the total membership of golf clubs is female. We are uncomfortable with that, but the situation is reflected throughout Great Britain and Ireland and, to a lesser extent, the continent of Europe. That is an issue for the game.

The age aspect is an interesting one. According to recent research, the average age of golfers is 42, but the average age of golf club members is nearer 60. Golfers are lucky in that golf is a game for life—people do not have to hang up their clubs, as it were, when they reach their mid-30s. However, it is a financial issue for golf clubs. Golf clubs tend to offer discounts for seniors when they have been a member for a certain number of years or when they have reached a certain age. Now, because of the ageing profile of clubs, the books are not balancing because the vast majority of members enjoy a huge discount.

To return to what we are trying to do to broaden participation, I keep coming back to club golf, but it is a key strand of our strategy. Of the kids who go through the schools programme, 49 per cent are girls, as would be expected with such an inclusive programme. Critically, the transition rates are such that we are now seeing, on average, a 26 per cent participation rate among girls when they get through to the club stage. If we compare that with the 13 per cent figure, we are certainly improving the situation for the future. I am not saying that we are happy with a figure of 26 per cent. We would like to continue to grow that figure, but it is moving in the right direction.

As far as adult ladies are concerned, this year we have piloted an adult participation programme that seeks to target adults who do not play golf and who have no background in golf, and to introduce them to the game in a fun, socially inclusive and structured way, leading to golf club membership. That has been particularly successful with women—almost 90 per cent of those who have taken part have been women. It really appeals to ladies, who come along in groups. There is a social aspect to it.

**Stuart Smith:** As you would expect, canoeing—in that it involves going out on the water and getting wet—might appeal more to males than to females, but the difference is highlighted even more when it comes to club facilities. Forth Canoe Club, which was established in 1934 and which has produced multiple Olympians, does not have running water. There are no toilets or showers and there is nowhere to get a drink. The facilities are extremely basic, even though the club has several hundred members. Attracting equal numbers of both genders has always been a slight issue in canoeing, because the odds are against women on account not only of the nature of the activity, but of the facilities that are available.

We have had a big push through the introduction of the UKCC-endorsed coaching awards. The fact that those awards can be gained on a modular basis rather than by having to go on a course for a week has resulted in the proportion of females going through and getting our level 1 entry award rising from 20 to 32 per cent of the people who take part, so we have had a 10 per cent rise in the number of female coaches coming through. As has been done in swimming, we have experimented with some female-only sessions, which have gone down very well and, as part of the year of active Scotland, we ran a go-canoeing programme that targeted older participants. As with golf, there are no barriers to people who are in their later years doing canoeing, because it is a low-impact sport that does not involve damaging the joints. That programme was extremely successful and people got involved in their local clubs because of it.

As far as I am aware, all governing bodies are working through the equality standard in sport, which is a way of governing bodies demonstrating that in all the areas of equality, whether disability, ethnic origin, age, gender or sexual orientation, we are as open and accessible to all participants as possible. As part of that, we are devising experimental pilot projects to see how we can attract more members of different groups into the sport when there is underrepresentation.

**The Deputy Convener:** Would Mr Thomson or Mr Paige like to comment?

10:30

**Steve Paige:** We in cricket realised a number of years ago that we had an issue in the lack of females who played a role in cricket. With the help of the ICC—our global governing body—we created a women's development officer post. At that stage, we needed a figurehead to drive things forward. The result is that more females now play the game, more clubs are dedicated to females and we have more female teams.

To help us in the younger age group, we insist that a third of each team in our national primary schools cup must be female. In the primary 6 age group, 1,800 girls play in our national primary schools cup. Our club accreditation programme for all the clubs in our Cricket Scotland league, which are in effect our national league clubs, requires girls teams. Through a carrot-and-stick approach, we work with clubs to try to get more females to play the game.

I am proud to say that the ICC, our global governing body, recognised us and presented us with a global development award in 2011 for having the best development programme for females in the world. We are—rightly—proud of that. We have not finished yet and we still have a long way to go.

As for involving older people, the profile of participants who play cricket on a Saturday in some parks shows that they do not give up the game when they are 30—I take Andy Salmon's point—and that they carry on. As governing bodies, we have a role in keeping older people engaged in the game not just in a playing capacity but in other ways in clubs, so that we do not lose their expertise. We are moving in the right direction.

To go back to Jim Eadie's earlier question, I often find myself referring to the ICC's support, whereas two of our governing bodies' representatives refer to support from the cashback scheme. There is quite an issue there for sport and that programme to address. I would be happy to submit further evidence on that to Jim Eadie.

**The Deputy Convener:** We look forward to receiving that. The committee will have to look at the funding that underpins the various sports.

**Colin Thomson:** Women's and girls' rugby is a growth area for us. In eight regions, we have put in place part-time girls' rugby development officers to look at the growth of the game for girls who are aged 15 or under and for girls who are aged 18 or under. For the past three years, we have run a schools cup competition, which has been successful.

We then transfer into university—we have a number of girls' teams in college rugby—and into

adult female teams. The numbers in the senior game are not as good as we would like them to be, but we are working with clubs on that. We used to have the Scottish Women's Rugby Union and the Scottish Rugby Union, but we are now one integrated organisation. We develop rugby—it does not matter whether it is for men, women, boys or girls. Where there is interest, we try to support that, and we encourage our clubs to do the same. We have funding for clubs that run women's sections, to promote the development of women's rugby.

As for the age issue, rugby is probably not a game that people can go on and on playing. Some people think that they can, but when I was 40 I had the moment when I thought, "No—maybe this isn't a good thing to do any more," when I was a wee bit sore the next day. Steve Paige talked about the life cycle of volunteering. Rugby has a life cycle and we like to retain people in the game by signposting them into coaching, refereeing or being committee volunteers.

Participation is more than a physical issue; being part of a community club affects mental wellbeing. Sport can play a big role in ensuring that people feel part of a group and are not alienated. As people get older, sport and sports clubs provide a good opportunity to help with mental health issues and all that stuff.

We have promoted touch rugby in our clubs. A lot of clubs do touch rugby, in which people in older age groups can take part. Our clubs also have golden oldies sections.

**The Deputy Convener:** That is helpful.

**Nanette Milne:** That has been helpful. I am familiar with the golden oldies set-up and I know one or two people who are involved in it.

**The Deputy Convener:** I call George Adam, who has waited patiently.

**George Adam:** I will ask about participation in sport and access to sport and fitness. I take on board the school estate issues—there are quite a lot of them. As an ex-councillor, my opinion is that local authorities sometimes invest in the wrong places. They might get funding to put a basketball court in an area, but nobody uses it.

At one stage, our director of social work suggested to a local area committee that we put in a pensioners playground—in effect, an outdoor gym—which would cost £20,000. Everyone thought that the idea was a laugh. We did it, and the facility is regularly used. For the same area, we managed to get £220,000 from Tennis Scotland to upgrade tennis courts, which meant that people from a local housing estate had access to a sport that they would not have looked at in the past. Is it just a question of local

authorities being more focused and getting the job done in providing facilities?

I was at Kelburne hockey club on Saturday when Emily Maguire came back with her bronze medal. There are families that have been involved with that club for generations. How do we get that in other clubs? We need to strive for a situation in which young men and young women in other areas get involved in clubs. In Renfrewshire, the street stuff programme is about street football. St Mirren Football Club has helped—it has the credibility that means that it can talk to children of a certain age. There are rugby coaches, too. How do we get people involved in clubs in the way that Colin Thomson talked about in the context of rugby?

**The Deputy Convener:** We will all rush to Renfrewshire to see the template for how it is done.

**George Adam:** That was just my ward.

**The Deputy Convener:** Absolutely. Two issues have been raised. One is how we ensure that local authorities invest strategically; the second is to do with what Mr Thomson said about promoting a club ethos.

**Colin Thomson:** I think that we all understand that facility development is hugely important. We can get good facilities only through good partnerships and good research about where and when to go. We have been working with the cashback for communities programme—sorry, Steve—and sportscotland on funding our clubs. Where possible, we tie in with existing local authority funding, so that a project that is already planned can be made even better for more people.

The key is to work with sportscotland, the Government, local clubs and local authorities, to understand the need and put in place what is best for the local situation. A lot of rugby clubs are lucky enough to have their own facilities, which can be used by other groups and sports. Many clubs have expanded into other areas and are becoming more like a social centre than just a rugby club.

We need to be honest and admit that we have lost a lot of our sporting culture. Culture in a club is built up over years and years and sustains itself when there is a complete model, which covers introduction to the sport, taking part, associating with schools and so on. The culture can then be passed down from person to person. In many local authority areas and communities in Scotland we have lost that culture, because there has been a break at, say, under-15 or under-18 level, or because the second XV has gone. Once a team goes, it takes a lot of effort to start one up again.

I have some anecdotal evidence on school sport. Six years ago, we said, "We need to be in secondary schools—that is where all children are and that is the area that we need to support." I am sure that everyone is familiar with the model whereby there are four or five teams in a senior school, one at each age group, so children move up through the age groups. Only 31 state schools in Scotland have a rugby team at every age group—I think the picture is worse for a lot of sports. Some 260 schools play rugby, but there might be only one team in the school, and it is very difficult to build two, three or four teams. We need to do that if we are to build and sustain a culture in communities.

**Stuart Smith:** This inquiry is into community sport, and part of the question was about how to sustain and grow the culture. Canoeing has produced medals at the past three Olympic games, including gold medals in two events this year. A challenge faced by canoeing—not by all canoe clubs, but some—is that the people who win those medals have to leave their clubs and go to England to train on other facilities, because there are no facilities of the required standard in Scotland. I am talking about artificial white-water courses. England is where the athletes have to be, much of the time. A drain on the culture of some clubs in Scotland is that aspiring athletes have to leave and there are no role models left.

**George Adam:** Does the funding go with them?

**Stuart Smith:** Athletes tend to go when they are receiving UK sport funding through GB Canoeing, rather than sportscotland lottery funding through the Scottish Canoe Association.

The situation means that the kids who are coming up through the ranks have no role models in Scotland. As we speak, the junior GB slalom team is coming back from the European championships in Slovenia. Forty per cent of that team is Scottish. I dread to think what will happen in the future, because we do not have any facilities in Scotland that can meet the needs of those athletes who want to make it on the world stage and the Olympic stage. Thirty-three per cent of the junior GB sprint team is Scottish. As things stand, those athletes may well have to move down to England.

The big project that will help—I will give it a quick plug—is the Glasgow paddlesports centre at Pinkston. There is a funding shortage at the moment, but if it is built it will have a 90m artificial course. The course will not be to the international standard required to run an Olympics or a world championship, but it would make a huge difference to the athletes who are coming through, who might be able to remain in Scotland.

**The Deputy Convener:** I am familiar with the recently proposed centre, and I know that some funding applications for it are in the pipeline. I hope that they are successful.

**David Drummond:** I guess that the issue of local authority investment gets batted back to us, as governing bodies. We have a duty to know and understand our clubs, in the first instance, and that will allow us to work with local authorities to place their investment strategically in the right parts of the local authorities and the schools. That should, in turn, allow us to work with the clubs so that they benefit from better facilities and grow better infrastructures.

The two questions that George Adam asked are linked, in my eyes, because better facilities can often be the catalyst for a club to grow and develop, put structures in place, support their volunteers and grow the club ethos. The main thing that clubs can do is to inspire and enthuse the young people who are coming through, and provide pathways from their clubs to the adult game. The two things are linked. The clubs in the south-east of Scotland that have their own facilities tend to be the best-run clubs, with the best ethos and a real club mentality.

**Andy Salmon:** In terms of local authority investment, the key for us as a sport is to be clear about our strategy. We have recently launched a facilities strategy, based on an extensive facilities audit, that clearly says what the sport needs to progress and achieve its goals in terms of facilities on the ground. We have already had examples of some clubs and facilities applying for funding and being unsuccessful because their plans did not align with the strategy. On the other hand, there has been more focused funding for applications that were aligned to the strategy. It has been really successful.

In terms of club ethos, we have a challenging goal to reach. Very often, local authorities see themselves as the poor relation in terms of golfing provision, but we do not see that as being the case at all. We see local authorities as having a critical role in making golf a sport for everybody, particularly in places such as Edinburgh, South Ayrshire, Dundee and Aberdeen, where municipal golf courses play a critical role in the player pathway. We are spending a lot of time and effort with those local authorities—Glasgow and South Ayrshire are the current examples—to try to breed the club ethos that Colin Thomson talked about, which is critical.

10:45

**Sarah Pryde:** I represent the only indoor sport at the table today. It is difficult for us, because we do not own facilities or clubhouses. Our swimming

clubs very much come down to what the facility can provide.

We are fortunate in that we have a seat at the table through our partnership with sportscotland. That gives us an opportunity to provide input on any new facilities that are coming online or being planned with regard to access for our club development or performance programmes.

In addition, we have a facilities strategy that highlights some of our key priorities such as competition pools and other club development pools. We have a pool programming guide, which is a tool to help local authorities and trusts to programme their pools better, so that they can provide access for learn-to-swim programmes, adult-and-child clubs and performance programmes, and make the best possible use of their pool time.

A culture is developed through our community partnerships, where clubs come together around a shared vision and try to develop an ethos of co-operation and cohesion to move things forward. We are envious of the sports that have clubhouses, which provide a central point where people can have a pint after a match. That is difficult to do with swimming, so we concentrate on creating virtual hubs.

**The Deputy Convener:** Given what was said before, are you aware of any local swimming clubs that have approached other clubs with clubhouses? I imagine that those clubs would be keen to see additional footfall in their clubhouses, because that is a source of revenue and it would give you a base. Is that something that your organisation has sought to develop?

**Sarah Pryde:** Not at a national level. Some of our clubs may well have looked at that and linked in with other clubs in the area, and we would not rule that out.

**George Adam:** Ms Pryde could solve Andy Salmon's problem with the 2005 act.

**The Deputy Convener:** Do you want to add to that, Ms Pryde? You were distracted by Mr Adam.

**Sarah Pryde:** I guess clubs find their own culture and try to bring other clubs along. As I said, we are very much open to working with other governing bodies and sports clubs through community sport hubs or any other vehicle. Our clubs are strong, well supported and well organised through our accreditation scheme, and we are willing to support other governing bodies.

**The Deputy Convener:** We might be fostering some form of arrangement this morning. Would you like to come in, Mr Salmon?

**Andy Salmon:** Very briefly. We would welcome that, but the 2005 act would cause us some

difficulties on that front and we would have to circumnavigate those somehow.

**The Deputy Convener:** We are looking at barriers to greater participation and integration; I am sure that those can be overcome, and you can talk about that after the meeting.

I have a brief question that follows on from George Adam's comments about local authorities making appropriate strategic funding decisions on infrastructure for community sport. Although I have an interest in it, I will not plug Stuart Smith's Glasgow paddlesports centre again, but it is one example. If it is successful, there will be money available from sportscotland and Glasgow City Council, but the benefits would accrue to a wider local authority area.

Are there examples of local authorities working together to put in place community infrastructure that they can share? Have any of the governing bodies tried to foster such relationships? Should we do more of that in the future?

**Colin Thomson:** It is not just about local authorities. On Friday night, we launched Glasgow Warriors' first home game at Scotstoun leisure centre, which is a fantastic facility. There are a lot of sports on the one campus and it is now the home of Glasgow Warriors. It has had good support from Glasgow Life and Glasgow City Council, and working with the facility over the past three or four years has been fantastic. It gives us a focus for rugby in Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, East Dunbartonshire and the surrounding council areas so that we can pull teams in to the facility. For example, before the game on Friday night, we had teams from Whitecraigs and East Renfrewshire, and the Cartha Queens Park club across the river. We are working with the council to do that, and it has been more than happy to create a venue that is a hub for rugby in the west. That has been very positive.

**Sarah Pryde:** We have a regional structure and we try to pull the local authorities together. For example, in the east of Scotland, I link in with the five or six local authorities in that area and bring them together to consider education opportunities and so on, in order to ensure that things are co-ordinated and there is no duplication of effort. Resources are limited and we need to ensure that we are making the best possible use of them.

Our clubs are arranged in an informal structure and have a district-based arrangement. We try to support them in one forum in order to share good practice across each area and our regional managers come together in a national forum to share ideas. That works across the regions.

**The Deputy Convener:** That is an example of a governing body that is working across local authority areas.

**George Adam:** I know that local authorities would like the idea of working within a bigger structure and are desperately looking for one. In my time on Renfrewshire Leisure trust and in the Scottish Parliament, I have seen that we constantly agree with each other that hubs are the way forward and that we need to get everyone together, but we still do not seem to be doing that. How can we manage to do it? What is the magic bullet? I have had these same meetings for about the past five years.

**The Deputy Convener:** That is a big question, but it might be left hanging in the wind, given that we have about 10 minutes left of this evidence-taking session. I see that Sarah Pryde wants to answer it.

**Sarah Pryde:** You have to be focused and you have to have a reason to bring people together. There is no point in having a forum or a hub for the sake of it; there must be a specific purpose, such as education, participation, club development, performance or whatever. We have found that that makes a difference and ensures that things happen.

**Colin Thomson:** The answer to your question is about the empowerment of the volunteers and understanding which agencies are support agencies and which are delivery agencies. Sometimes, people think that they are the deliverers, but it is the volunteers who will deliver sport hubs, and everything else should be empowering them. Sometimes, we get that balance wrong.

**The Deputy Convener:** Drew Smith and Richard Simpson have intimated that they would like to ask additional questions, but Richard Lyle has sat quite patiently and has not spoken yet.

**Richard Lyle (Central Scotland) (SNP):** I apologise for being late. I was held up by a severe crash on the M8.

George Adam's point was well made. We have 32 councils and they all have sports development officers. Do they develop sport enough, and do they talk to the organisations that they should do before they, for example, develop a sports hall that might not be required?

**The Deputy Convener:** Given time concerns, we cannot take many comments on that. Does anyone want to take up the baton? Mr Salmon has made the mistake of making eye contact with me, so he can make a comment.

**Andy Salmon:** It is not my first mistake.

Briefly, I would not necessarily encourage anyone to assume that the presence of a sports development officer is good for the development of that sport. We have examples of where it is and examples of where it absolutely is not. As I said in

response to George Adam's question, we are working with local authorities to ensure that, if they have those posts, they are aligned to the strategy of the sport and the strategy of that local authority.

**The Deputy Convener:** Anyone else?

**Richard Lyle:** I think that everyone agrees.

**The Deputy Convener:** That might be the case.

Given the time constraints, I will ask Drew Smith and Richard Simpson to make the points that they want to make and allow people to decide which one they want to reply to.

**Drew Smith:** We can find out where the cashback for communities money comes from, but would it be possible to get a breakdown of where the money is spent? People can get back to us in writing, if they like.

**Colin Thomson:** Every year, we submit a cashback report to the Government as part of the on-going monitoring. We can send that to you.

**The Deputy Convener:** I know that there is an issue about the fact that some organisations qualify for cashback funding and some do not, so others might want to write to us on the matter.

Richard, would you like to ask a question?

**Dr Simpson:** Has any of the governing bodies developed links with general practitioners and primary care on prescribing for older people? I ask that to follow up on Nanette Milne's question about involving older people in fitness programmes and getting them engaged in sport.

**The Deputy Convener:** It is important to put that on the record.

**Andy Salmon:** The one thing that I have on my wish list as an outcome from this meeting is that I would love GPs to refer people with particular conditions to sport—not just my sport. Golf can be conducive to involving people with particular conditions in sport, because it is not overly strenuous on weak hearts or obesity. GP referral is a massive opportunity for sport, but we have so far signally failed to achieve anything in that regard.

**The Deputy Convener:** If other national governing bodies support that, could we hear some more about it?

**David Drummond:** It is a bit more difficult with football, which is very different from golf, but we definitely support the idea that, where appropriate, we should try to encourage and channel those with a more sedentary lifestyle into sport.

**Steve Paige:** The governing bodies must do more about that. We have an ageing population and it would be remiss of us not to provide further activity for that client group.

**The Deputy Convener:** We will not go round everyone, because I see other witnesses nodding. Has any of the governing bodies formed a formal relationship with, perhaps, part of the national health service for monitoring participation and health benefits? We considered that a little bit last week, but does any governing body have a formal link on it?

**Sarah Pryde:** We have such a formal link. I am not well equipped to answer the question, but we can provide some information about how we are developing work with local authorities on that.

**The Deputy Convener:** That would be useful. I think that part of the motivation behind Dr Simpson's question was that, although we all know the health and social benefits that derive from greater participation in sport and other physical activities, it can be difficult to measure them. The need to measure should not be a barrier to getting on with the work but, if we can measure the benefits, that is useful for public policy makers when they allocate cash to different strands of public funding.

We have almost finished our evidence-taking session but, if there is anything that the witnesses want to say—such as what Mr Salmon wanted to say about referrals from GPs for sport and physical activity—I give them the opportunity to do that now.

**Steve Paige:** What I will raise will be no surprise: cashback, and the need to broaden the programme to other sports, needs to be investigated.

**The Deputy Convener:** Are there any other takers? This is the opportunity for the witnesses to inform our inquiry.

**Sarah Pryde:** I echo what Steve Paige said. We have been knocked back a couple of times for cashback funding, especially for our swim for change programme, so we have had to try to find funding from other avenues. I would definitely welcome some further consideration of that programme.

**The Deputy Convener:** There is always a reaction when money comes up.

**Stuart Smith:** I echo what has already been said. To return briefly to the Pinkston project—

**The Deputy Convener:** Even though I support it, I ask you to be brief.

**Stuart Smith:** I mentioned it in the context of the performance of top athletes, but the wider project is much more about the community and about getting people into canoe sport in the heart of Glasgow—where there is a massive population within a short distance—with clean water. It is a perfect way for the SCA to start developing

canoeing for a whole raft of people who have not had the opportunity to take it up.

**Colin Thomson:** I re-emphasise the fact that it all begins in schools and that we need to consider school sport.

**The Deputy Convener:** Mr Drummond, did you want to say anything?

**David Drummond:** I am happy with what has been said.

**The Deputy Convener:** I thank all our witnesses for their time. We will consider carefully the evidence that you have given, but this should not be an end to your involvement in the inquiry. I invite you to follow the other evidence-taking sessions that take place. Although you have given written and oral evidence, if something else crosses your mind or you want to react to something that you hear, you should get back to the committee in writing and let us know, because it will form part of our analysis and conclusions.

10:59

*Meeting suspended.*

11:08

*On resuming—*

**The Deputy Convener:** Welcome back to our inquiry into community sport. We move on to our second round-table discussion of the morning, and I give a warm welcome to the fourth panel of witnesses in our inquiry. They are Dr Cindy Gray from the football fans in training project and a research fellow with the University of Glasgow; Neil Matheson, chairman of Atlantis Leisure; Alan Cunningham, secretary of Broxburn United Sports Club; Graham Hunter, founder and managing director of Reach for the Sky Basketball; and Les Brown, director and treasurer of Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex. Thank you all for coming. We will go straight to questions.

**Gil Paterson:** I do not know whether all the witnesses were here at the start of the earlier discussion, but I will ask the same question that I asked then. We fully understand the important role of volunteering in sport, although I am sure that you can assist us with your experience. We seek input on how to encourage people to participate in volunteering at different levels in sport and, perhaps more importantly, on what methods we should employ to retain people.

**Alan Cunningham (Broxburn United Sports Club):** My club has 650 members and 70 volunteers. It is a football club, although we are breaking into other sports. It is quite easy to get volunteers for the football side. There are plenty of volunteers, such as fathers—we can always get

them. However, two years ago, we had a £2.7 million new development, so we now have a facility to run as well. We have two full-time employees, who are funded by the Robertson Trust and the Rank Foundation. Those people tend to get drawn away for programmes for the Rank Foundation and Robertson Trust, so they cannot give all their time to the facility, which means that we rely on volunteers to run it.

To be honest, people do not jump up to volunteer to be the secretary or treasurer for a facility. I find it harder to get volunteers for those sorts of areas, but we have lots of volunteers for the sporting side. In fact, we have a waiting list of volunteers for the teams. Those are young guys who are going through their courses with David Drummond and the SFA to get their qualifications.

We have a good programme of volunteers for the sporting side but not for the support side. The development of the facility was funded by West Lothian Council, sportscotland, cashback for communities and the Robertson Trust, but we were left to manage the building, so we look after everything and pay the bills. We are actually running a business—we are a limited company and a registered charity, and we do all the gift aid stuff, too. For me, the hard bit is finding volunteers for the facility, not for the teams.

**The Deputy Convener:** To be clear, you are saying that the coaching element is fine, but the bureaucracy and responsibility bit is harder.

**Alan Cunningham:** Correct—that is the hardest bit. We advertise for volunteers, but it is the kind of thing that does not attract people, so we go out looking for people such as retired professionals to give us support. We are involved in the West Lothian voluntary sector gateway to try to get support from businessmen and entrepreneurs.

**Neil Matheson (Atlantis Leisure):** Alan Cunningham makes interesting points. Our centre is a little different in that it is a multi-use sports centre—it is a real community sport centre. We have a board of nine volunteer directors who run, manage and look after the centre. Our centre does lots of things. We have been going for 20 years, but we built the centre about 15 years ago, having run a swimming pool for five years.

Our concept was to take the pain out of volunteering, so we considered how to go about doing that. The project started with a tennis and squash club, and I ended up being on the committee. At a standard committee meeting, 75 per cent of the time would be spent talking about the drains, the problems with the roof, who was manning the bar and who was doing the cleaning and tidying up, and then 25 per cent of the time would be spent on sport. We observed that and decided that we needed to change it.

Basically, we have built a centre that we run, manage and maintain and that sports clubs use and access as best they can. Clearly, we cannot deliver everything to all sports, but the approach allows clubs to concentrate on their sport. Now, when the tennis and squash club meets, 100 per cent of the conversation is about tennis and squash, and the same is true for other groups. That happened because we thought about how to take the pain out of volunteering.

Another interesting and highly successful thing that we did, after we built the building, was to set up a project called playsport, which was innovative at the time. We had no sports development officers of any description. Basically, we went to every single club and group and asked them what they were doing well, what they could do better and what the barriers were to their getting anywhere.

Alan Cunningham mentioned the Robertson Trust. We were very fortunate that the Robertson Trust really liked the concept of what we were trying to do and said that it would give us some support for it. We went to each group and said, “What’s your biggest hassle that really stops you developing?” If that was administration, we said, “Right, we’ll do your admin. We’ll do that support for you.” If the netball girls said, “We’d love to get new tunics, but we can’t afford them,” we would get them tunics. We were able to spend a bit of money in areas that really made a difference, and we found that tiny things made a big difference.

11:15

**The Deputy Convener:** That is very helpful.

Mr Hunter, would that kind of thing help your club?

**Graham Hunter (Reach for the Sky Basketball):** I would not say so. We use other people’s facilities; we do not have our own. We have retained volunteers through setting up a coach and volunteer pathway, which was piloted through the Voluntary Action Fund. We have engaged with the volunteers to find out what destination they wanted to get to. We have asked whether the person is a sports leader at high school who wants to go to university or a university student who needs a placement for their dissertation or their second year. We have simply tried to work with volunteers to find out where they are trying to go. We have also provided funding for their basketball qualifications, refereeing badges, child protection training and first aid training, for example.

We did not have to try to bring in volunteers when we came to the second stage of the pathway. They come to us now. We thought that we had only around 20 volunteers, but from

evaluation it was found that 37 were taking part. We helped to get four of them into full-time employment; the rest are either still working with us or are at university. They come back and forth, and we are helping them on their paths.

**The Deputy Convener:** Mr Cunningham talked about two types of volunteer. One is the volunteer who does the paperwork and ensures that the work relating to the protection of vulnerable groups and so on is okay. The other deals with the coaching and participation pathway. Has Reach for the Sky Basketball been successful in both areas? Was the Voluntary Action Fund one of the key drivers in getting you to the point at which you had to be?

**Graham Hunter:** No. The key drivers were Firstport, the Robertson Trust and the Rank Foundation, and we have worked in partnership a great deal with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture's sports development team and active schools team. They have all been very helpful. We have also done a lot of work with the University of the West of Scotland.

**The Deputy Convener:** That is important to know.

**Les Brown (Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex):** Our prime sport at Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex is skiing. We are in a fortunate position in that we have been doing what we have been doing for quite a long time and have managed to retain the same volunteer group of directors throughout that period. Therefore, we have a stable organisation that is doing the things—the finances and the running of the business—that were talked about earlier.

We employ one full-time manager at the site who does the day-to-day bookings and the coaching. She is a bit of a Wonder Woman, as she does all the sports. She does the skiing, snowboarding and mountain biking, and she hopes to get into climbing, which is the next area into which we are diversifying. She can teach all those sports. Basically, with her and one or two dedicated volunteers on the sporting side, we manage to keep things running, although we rely a lot on bringing in casual trainers and instructors as well as our full-time staff and volunteers.

**Dr Cindy Gray (Football Fans in Training/University of Glasgow):** We do not rely terribly much on volunteers. The coaching staff at the clubs run our programme. That said, some of our former participants come back to help out with the programme, so we have volunteers in that regard. Some of the clubs also have links with local colleges. Sport science students, for example, might assist with the running of the programme, but we do not rely heavily on volunteers.

**Gil Paterson:** I have a couple of questions relating to Neil Matheson's contribution. I understood exactly what you have said, but how did you put the volunteering system in place? How did that come about and where did the volunteers come from? Were they interested in something in particular in the first place? How did the board coalesce to become a management team?

**Neil Matheson:** When we started, we formed a group and we picked and targeted people in the community whom we thought would be committed to the project. That was not about volunteering, but the focus was the ultimate objective of building a big new sports centre, and through that process we learned to do other things.

**Gil Paterson:** It sounds to me as if you already have a mini hub.

Mr Cunningham, you raised a problem of finding certain volunteers. Are you considering participating in a hub?

**Alan Cunningham:** Yes. We are working with West Lothian Leisure, which has a programme known as xcite, and we have met the chairman to form a sports hub. We have a bowling club next to us—our location is suitable for multisports—and we have just received funding through the Bank of Scotland Foundation charity to convert the old junior changing rooms into a boxing club

We are looking to become a sports hub and to move away a bit more from the football side of things. The bulk of the project was initially football related when we started football teams. As I said, it is always easy to get coaches for football teams as parents often do that. However, it is doing the other things required to run a business—not the glamorous things—that people sometimes struggle with, which is why we are going into the professional sector to find the right expertise.

**Gil Paterson:** Is it too early in the process to see any movement or the coming together of people who work in the background?

**Alan Cunningham:** No. We have made good headway. In fact, three of the main people who I help on the board are retired—they have recently taken early retirement—so we are getting that support to help run the club.

**Gil Paterson:** Did you headhunt those three people or were they involved in another sport?

**Alan Cunningham:** They were involved in another sport.

**Gil Paterson:** So you are benefiting from experience in another sport.

**Alan Cunningham:** Yes. As I said, West Lothian has a good volunteer gateway and we are getting help from outside through the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian. It comes to us—it

has been already—and it provides coaching and support through finance and information technology skills.

**Gil Paterson:** Mr Brown, are the people from the skiing fraternity that you have said do sterling work involved in skiing and boarding in some way? Is that their interest? I am trying to get a flavour of where people come from.

**Les Brown:** Yes. We have all come from a skiing background, with some people more active than others. The facility that we operate has been there for 30 years. It was a council-run facility way back in the days of Strathclyde Regional Council. We took it over because we believed that the local council was going to close it. We formed a pressure group and ultimately formed a company to take over the running of it. That group of people saw the initial focus as to prevent the facility from being closed; we have managed to retain that same group and moved on from there.

**Gil Paterson:** I am a boarder myself, so I am wondering whether it might sound a bit obscure for someone to be both a skier and a boarder. In that regard, are you looking at the prospects of engaging within a hub?

**Les Brown:** Yes, very much so. We have diversified from skiing and snowboarding—we have a mountain boarding track and a mountain bike track, and we have just recently taken delivery of an old mobile climbing wall from East Ayrshire Council. We will take that on and diversify yet again.

**Gil Paterson:** Did that bring other people into the volunteering management side?

**Les Brown:** None of those sports brought any more volunteers into the management side because that focus was already there.

**The Deputy Convener:** It would appear that we have some templates for how to take things forward throughout the country. Can we take it that this is what is happening throughout the country, or do the witnesses here have exceptional ideas of what can be done?

The other question that springs to mind is: although we talk about community sport hubs and we all support them—I am delighted that they are being rolled out—do they not exist anyway? In other words, is it not about the buildings but about people talking to each other, and co-ordinating and integrating what they do? Has that been happening in some places for a number of years and we are only now giving it a name and rolling out best practice throughout the country? Are you typical of what is happening throughout the country or are you the good practice exceptions?

**Les Brown:** I would say that there are enough examples around the table. However, although

you have four examples here of good practice and of people talking to each other, there are probably at least the same number, if not more, out there.

**Neil Matheson:** In my experience, in our area, we are not really typical. We have not seen anything like it elsewhere.

To return to what was said a minute ago, we targeted individuals to work in our set-up. We headhunted them all as professional businesspeople because they would be running a business. They all have a sporting involvement—there must be something to spark their interest—but they are very much professionals and they have a very difficult business to run. Running a sports business is not easy. It is a marginal business, and every month you are looking at the figures and checking and changing. It is hard work. It was made clear at the start to any volunteers who wanted to get involved in the board or in any other way that it would be hard work.

To pick up another tiny point, there were 10 board members on the first board and it was 10 years before one left. Every three years, we revolved them and they came off the board, but they were voted back on. The dedication is phenomenal. It is essential to get the right people. A big problem with a lot of sports is the assumption that someone who is good at it, for example kicking a ball, should run that sport. That is a big mistake, which we constantly make.

**The Deputy Convener:** Before I bring in Richard Lyle, does anyone else want to add anything about volunteering?

**Dr Gray:** I could perhaps add something. Although the programme does not run mainly with volunteers, we hope that once the men have completed the programme, one of them will take it forward and keep the group going. We end up with individuals who are very proactive at that but it is difficult for them to keep going because they have no support. We struggle with our volunteers in that regard.

**Richard Lyle:** Good morning, everybody. We have just had the Olympic bounce and everyone is euphoric about it. We are now moving forward to the Commonwealth games. I do not want to take away from all the great work that your volunteers and clubs do, but will you share with us your frustration about how long it has taken you to get there, the paths that you have had to take and the people that you have had to deal with? I think that that is the magic bullet that George Adam was talking about earlier. Should clubs get more involved? Some councils have local sports councils and sports development officers. Are we developing and talking enough? Should we be trying to make, say, a West Lothian plan, an East

Ayrshire plan or a North Lanarkshire plan in order to develop all the sports that are in our community?

**The Deputy Convener:** Any takers?

**Les Brown:** We have been on this journey for about 10 years. It has taken us a long time to secure capital funding to develop the site. It has been a bit of a struggle. The key message for us is perseverance and consistency. If board members or management team members had chopped and changed, we might not have had the level of perseverance that we needed to get to this point. It has been such a long time.

**Richard Lyle:** I have driven through Newmilns and passed your facility on several occasions. You say that you were scared that the council would shut it down and that you therefore took it over. How much help did you get from your local sports council or local authority to develop your plan to reach your goal?

11:30

**Les Brown:** We got initial funding to start us off. The council was the prime funder, but we also had to take out loans from some loan funders to get match funding from the council, so we had to take a big leap of faith to get the thing going. It has paid off, but it was quite a daunting prospect to begin with.

**Richard Lyle:** How many years did it take you to establish your facility, Mr Cunningham?

**Alan Cunningham:** It was also a long road. We started in 1999. The facilities in the area were terrible and everybody was complaining to the council. Mr Raeburn, who has since left but was with the council at the time, produced a community initiative for the whole of West Lothian, not only for Broxburn. Broxburn jumped at the initiative, and all the teams came together under the Broxburn United Sports Club umbrella. A lot of them have history—the junior team has a history going back 100 years—so they keep their individual names, but they are part of the club.

It took us until 2007 to get anywhere at all. To be honest, we were put through a lot of hoops to become accredited. There were West Lothian community club accreditation schemes but once we achieved the accreditation, because no funding was available we had to complete another part of the scheme. It was the same with the quality mark through the SFA: it was necessary to achieve the quality mark before we could get funding. We were fortunate that it was election time and things started to happen in 2007.

**Richard Lyle:** The point that I am trying to get at is whether there is any way to reduce the time that it takes to get a facility. It took Alan

Cunningham eight years and—I did not catch how many years it took Les Brown.

**Les Brown:** About 10.

**Richard Lyle:** So it took eight and 10 years respectively. I heard it being said yesterday that it is hoped that the next generation will remember the Olympics. I share your frustration about the time span from having an idea to getting people together and getting the facility. Is there any way that we can reduce that time span?

**Les Brown:** It would be nice if it could be reduced, but I cannot say, “If you do this, it would reduce the timescale.” A lot of different factors would help to reduce it. It would certainly be a big help if the timescale could be reduced in some way.

**Alan Cunningham:** The hardest thing for us was to keep volunteers. It is hard when you are doing lots of work but you do not see a lot happening. It is not just about facilities. It is a club, so you really need a clubroom or somewhere for everybody to meet. When people come in and do their activity then disappear again, there is no club ethos; it is necessary to have a facility to pull them all together. That was the situation for seven years. Until our facility was built in 2010, it was hard to get everybody together and create a club feeling and identity.

**Richard Lyle:** Thank you.

**The Deputy Convener:** We will move on to another question—sorry, Graham Hunter would like to comment.

**Graham Hunter:** It is obviously different for me because I use other people’s facilities, but I was able to get started quickly through working with the sports councils. They had a policy in place that hall lets would be free for under-16 participation. That gave me the chance to push forward, because there was not a huge risk that, having taken out all these different facilities and tried to create academies, I would be hit with a huge bill that I could not pay if no one turned up. It was really helpful to work in partnership with the local authority when I was getting started.

**The Deputy Convener:** I am glad that we did not move on, because that was an important piece of evidence.

Is there anything else that helped speed up the growth of Reach for the Sky? You mentioned getting free lets for facilities from the sports councils. Was there anything else in place that allowed you to grow the club at pace?

**Graham Hunter:** Support from the Robertson Trust and Firstport was very helpful. Support has been provided by a combination of organisations—Senscot has also been really

helpful. At the very start, the local authority took a lot of time to sit down with me and talk me through the process, which allowed me to develop a model that I can roll out anywhere.

**The Deputy Convener:** You have done the inquiry a service. It makes me think that it does not matter whether it takes eight or 10 years, because that is blood, sweat and toil. However, there is usually a game changer when someone or something steps in to make things fall into place. What was the game changer for you in your situation, Mr Brown? When did things start to fast-track to grow the organisation?

**Les Brown:** I suppose the thing that really changed it for us was when we started talking to the Big Lottery Fund. We had a vision to resurface completely the skiing surface and put in a new building. We started talking to the Big Lottery at that point, and we got well down the road with funding from the Big Lottery, so much so that it wanted to take our application to the next stage and it funded the cost of that. Feasibility studies and technical studies on the site were done, architectural designs and drawings were produced, planning permission was applied for and granted, and a building warrant was applied for and granted. Once we were at that stage, we were able to take the project to the next stage relatively quickly—within a couple of years. We had to have the vision, but getting on to the first rung of the ladder in the way that we did was the crux for us.

**Neil Matheson:** The game changer for us was getting in the early days the community involvement that we wanted. We were already running the swimming pool, but we wanted to build a big sports centre around it. We spoke to a number of funders and got answers, but they were not particularly specific. However, one thing that was clear was that we would have to get our own pocket of money. We were told that we needed not only evidence that what we were doing was being done well but our own money.

We therefore went to our local town and basically had a 12-month hit on the town in which we attacked everything in it. Our wee community helped us raise £350,000, which was phenomenal. We apologised to all the funding organisations because we were going to hit them hard for a year but said that in 12 months we would shut down our work completely. That totally changed the focus. There was a groundswell of opinion that nobody could stand in the way of. It did not matter who the funders were: when we had the evidence, that wee pile of money and a clear need for more money, it was just too hard for them to say no.

**Drew Smith:** I am interested in the connection between the previous evidence session and this one. Earlier, we spoke to the governing bodies

about their role and how they promote multisport opportunities. In this evidence session we have heard various examples, in particular from Mr Cunningham, of that being done on the ground at a grass-roots level. You now welcome as positive the involvement of the councils and the progress towards community sport hubs, but that is not what started you off down this road.

Mr Cunningham, you said that your biggest volunteering challenge was to do with governance and the bureaucracy that that brings. What support have the various governing bodies that you have to interact with given you as a multisports club? What more support could they give?

**Alan Cunningham:** Our biggest help has been working with the West Lothian volunteer gateway. When we do accreditation programmes, such as with the SFA, it involves more than just coaching because it rolls in the business side of the club as well. West Lothian Council has been helpful to us. To be honest, it has been behind the project all the way through. I attend a lot of meetings at which people from other regions might talk critically about support from the council. However, West Lothian Council has been behind our project from day one and has given us a lot of support beyond that through some of its other departments.

I do not know whether I have answered your question.

**Drew Smith:** I suppose that I am asking whether some of the work that you have to do to comply with what the governing bodies are asking you to do could be brought together. I presume that there is form filling involved for your affiliation to different sporting bodies and for your accreditation for different things such as doing their particular coach training. Do you get any sense that the bodies with which you are involved are saying, "How can we help you to do this together?" You are a multisports club that is doing something that those bodies just told us they agree with and support, but I do not see a lot of evidence of that.

**Alan Cunningham:** We do not find any real problem with that because we have specialists from each of the sports that we are involved in who look after their sport as well as volunteering for other roles in the club. They look after that area, so that is not really an issue for us.

**Drew Smith:** You are comfortable that that is done separately.

**Alan Cunningham:** We are comfortable with that, yes.

**The Deputy Convener:** Mr Hunter, do you want to widen it out to your experience of national governing bodies?

**Graham Hunter:** Yes. In the start-up phase, the governing body was really helpful with the different policies that we needed to move forward, such as the child protection policy. I had never had experience of those things previously. I am not using it currently but, to get started, I was given a template to work from as a starting point that enabled me to go and get a hall let and to get start-up funding. That was helpful.

**The Deputy Convener:** Does anyone else want to put on record their experience of national governing bodies? Mr Brown, have you been working in partnership?

**Les Brown:** Yes, we have indeed. We have worked closely with Snowsport Scotland and Scottish Cycling. The support that Scottish Cycling, in particular, gave us was fantastic, not only when we were building our mountain bike track but in supporting some of the volunteers in that sport to get accreditation. The training, expertise, support and help that they were given was excellent.

**The Deputy Convener:** Dr Gray, is the football fans in training programme supported by the national governing body?

**Dr Gray:** It is certainly supported by the Scottish Premier League, which has worked with us closely on everything that we have wanted to do. At the start, our aim was to implement an evidence-based programme—not just any old programme but something that would really help to engage men and to help them to make long-standing changes to their health. The Scottish Premier League and Scottish Premier League Trust have been fully supportive of all our efforts and have allowed things to progress at a different pace from what they perhaps would have liked, to enable us to put in place the best programme that we could develop.

**The Deputy Convener:** Richard Simpson wants to ask some questions about the health benefits of greater participation. Has the Scottish Football Association been supportive of the programme? You mentioned the SPL and the SPL Trust. Has the SFA helped to drive the agenda as well?

**Dr Gray:** No, it has been only the SPL and the SPL Trust. I think that the SFA would be very interested in the programme, and we hope that, in the long term, the programme will be rolled out beyond the SPL. Initially, however, our partnership has been with the SPL rather than the SFA.

**The Deputy Convener:** This seems a good opportunity to bring in Dr Simpson to continue the line of questioning that he pursued with the first panel.

**Dr Simpson:** I am trying to look at further links. You have talked a little bit about local authority

links and how important the volunteer gateway is. We have also talked about the sports' governing bodies. There are two further groups of organisations that I want to ask for your comments about. First, what about health boards? Are you getting any support from them, either on the volunteering side or on the governance side? If they encouraged volunteers to help, that would sometimes be beneficial to them in meeting their objectives. Are they engaged in this area at all? The other group is primary care practices. Do you have any links with primary care in somewhere like Oban, for example? Are the primary care practices engaged in prescribing activity and giving you support?

**The Deputy Convener:** For clarity, Richard Simpson's question is about how the NHS, GPs or whoever may have signposted towards you people who may participate in the sports that are on offer. Has there been any experience of that kind of partnership work?

11:45

**Dr Gray:** We have started to look at ways of doing that. That was hampered a little last year because we were doing an evaluation for which we would have needed national health service research ethics committee approval, so we had to make informal approaches to clinicians throughout Scotland. The majority of the clinicians whom we approached were interested in the programme and agreed to put our leaflets and advertising around surgeries.

We could not make formal recommendations or get clinicians to prescribe the football fans in training programme to their patients, but we very much want to pursue that. Once we get the evidence that the programme is effective, our next step is to engage with practitioners and health boards to get the programme into surgeries, so that it can be prescribed for patients.

**The Deputy Convener:** At some point, we might come back to the difference between prescribing and signposting patients to what is on offer.

**Neil Matheson:** I have a wee bit of a long story. We have a health professional on our board, who is excellent and progressive. We have done GP referral schemes for a good number of years. We saw significant challenges with such schemes, so we investigated what exactly was going on. We looked at national stuff and found that it was not good quality.

We liked the principle of GP referral, but we asked how we could make it better. We set up a completely new business called Lorn and Oban Healthy Options, which is a separate charity that is partly funded by the Robertson Trust, which has

been hugely helpful. An interesting wee aside is that small lumps of money from independent organisations that let us do what we really want to do, because it will make a difference in our area, are game changers.

Our local GP practice has 10,000 people on its books, of whom at least 3,800 are deemed to have chronic conditions but to be able to be influenced by sport or a healthy lifestyle. We now have a trained person who goes into the health centre and whom a GP sends to an individual. She sits down for half an hour or whatever with that individual and spends time on flushing out what that person might sign up to do.

The project is relatively new—it is less than a year old—but its results are stunning. That is a game changer that could be rolled out elsewhere. The principles are fantastic. The term “social prescription” is used. I am not involved directly in that part of the project, but I think that any sport or healthy activity can be prescribed.

**The Deputy Convener:** The clerk has just made the helpful suggestion that it would be good to get more written information about that initiative.

**Neil Matheson:** I provided information when I was at the Parliament a couple of weeks ago, but I will send more. It is a really good story.

**Dr Simpson:** Mr Matheson referred to the national research about the simple prescribing of activity, which is not good. That has not worked. Espousing a system in which GPs are encouraged to write a social prescription is just ticking a box. We must have more than that—as Mr Matheson said, somebody must meet patients to look in detail at their situation. We should get that critical evidence in writing, too—that would be welcome.

**Neil Matheson:** I will make a comment on the fall-off rate from GP referrals under the current scheme, in which a GP gives something to an individual. Such individuals are often in no way sport or health conscious, so they never turn up at where they are meant to go and the programme does not even start. We are trying to kill that off.

**The Deputy Convener:** Having more information would be good and I will let you back in later, as you have something meaningful to say, but I would like to hear from other witnesses. Do such initiatives provide a potential pool of more volunteers or participants? If a co-ordinator who is down the local health centre says, “Here are your local physical participation options—what would you like to do?”, would you like your organisations to be part of the mix? Would that be positive for you, Mr Cunningham?

**Alan Cunningham:** We do not get referrals, but we are working with schools on a health and wellbeing programme that is supported by the

national health service. Someone from the NHS and one of our coaches go to schools to talk about simple things such as cleaning teeth and what people eat. That is linked to sport and involves a quiz and games. The programme is being delivered to all primary 3 pupils in schools in the Broxburn, Winchburgh and Uphall area.

Also, at primary 5, 6 and 7, we are doing work on fitness through football. Some kids are involved in football, but many are not. Because of obesity and suchlike, we are trying to bring them in, in a non-competitive environment.

Another aspect of our work is that the club has its own physiotherapist, who does not work only in the area of football. People come in from the community, including older people—last week, a lady of 80 came in—and the cost is geared to that. A physiotherapist session usually costs £35 or £40, but we charge £10 a session. We are really busy with that kind of thing in the community.

**The Deputy Convener:** I do not doubt that you are busy. I am interested in what the other witnesses think about the model that has been raised. Mr Hunter, could the pool of people who are not active potentially get involved in your club?

**Graham Hunter:** Absolutely. We would be happy to have people signposted to us, and we, too, do a lot of work in primary and secondary schools. I am more keen to look at the NHS child healthy weight programme, because we have a better fit with that. However, if people are directed to us, that is fine.

**The Deputy Convener:** That is good to know. Mr Brown?

**Les Brown:** I agree. It would be great to get some referrals or signposting from the NHS.

**The Deputy Convener:** It is important for people to choose to go to your organisations rather than being told to do that. I think that that is the point that Mr Matheson was making.

Dr Gray, I apologise for cutting you off. I just wanted to find out the general feeling on that. Do you want to come back in?

**Dr Gray:** Yes. Mr Matheson made the point that the fact that someone gets a referral from their GP does not necessarily mean that they will go along. We have lots of anecdotal evidence on that. Many men who have been on our programme because they were overweight, inactive and at serious risk of health complications were told by their doctors time and again that they should be doing something and they were given some signposting, but they did not turn up. There must be a suite of options with something for everybody, because an activity that one person will engage with is not necessarily something that others will engage with. The project that involves representatives

from Mr Matheson's organisation going into health centres is excellent.

**The Deputy Convener:** Does anyone else want to come in on that before Nanette Milne asks her question? Richard, do you want to comment?

**Dr Simpson:** I will come back in later, if I may.

**Nanette Milne:** My question is related to that point. Last week, at the cross-party group on sport, I heard an impressive presentation from Mr Matheson about the development of his organisation. Mr Matheson, have you shared that presentation with the committee clerks?

**Neil Matheson:** Yes.

**Nanette Milne:** I am glad to hear that.

It is clearly important for people to be referred to sport for health reasons, but being active and being involved in sport are important for people throughout life. There are groups that do not get involved in sport enough, such as women and older people. Initiatives and programmes are happening and are being developed in various areas, but are they are being monitored in any way? Is research keeping track of what is happening and noting good practice so that it can be rolled out?

**Neil Matheson:** In the case of the healthy options work, the answer is yes. It is being monitored closely to see exactly what is going on. It is interesting, because we are finding that many people who are referred have mental health issues and, for them, doing a little bit of something can make a big difference. I find that inspiring.

A week last Saturday, I went to a wee art gallery and I was stopped by somebody who said, "Are you still involved with Atlantis?" I said, "Yes." He said, "That healthy options girl saved my life." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "She has completely changed my life. I had this, that and the next thing wrong with me, but being referred to her completely changed my life."

That is why we still do what we are doing 20 years later—because we get that kind of feedback. That is why we have thousands of kids going backwards and forwards doing stuff. It keeps the energy going, and that is why people want to keep going as volunteers. However, we need to keep statistics, because we are keen that the scheme will go somewhere.

I did not mention before that we got no help at all from the health service. We are in a rural area and there is a massive challenge with governing bodies and all sorts of other things because we are rural. That is a big issue that still needs to be overcome. Basically, we create our own models for everything, because we have to do that. If we do not do something, it ain't going to happen. That

is why it is important to have dedicated people. If someone goes after a period of years, we need someone who is keen and enthusiastic to continue their work.

**The Deputy Convener:** Nanette Milne mentioned monitoring, which came up last week when a question was raised about various sport clubs in the country and working out where the underrepresented groups are. Nanette Milne mentioned females, and there are also older people and people in deprived areas. How can we get sport clubs that are doing a good job but are stretched to the limit already to engage with underrepresented groups? I suppose that there are two aspects to that. Do any of the organisations represented here today monitor who comes through their clubs? Do you then have time to decide how to reach out to underrepresented groups?

**Dr Simpson:** Could I just add to that list people who have a disability? We have just had the Paralympics. I would be interested to hear comments on engaging that group as well.

**The Deputy Convener:** Absolutely.

**Graham Hunter:** It goes back to the game changer situation. When we first engaged with the Robertson Trust, it felt that it was not enough just to give us a lump sum and let us try our idea. It partnered us with Evaluation Support Scotland, and we have been working closely with that organisation for the past two years. It helped us to develop a tool for each project that we go out and deliver so that we can get the right statistics about who we are working with.

We have a girls initiative, which takes us into primary and secondary schools to give girls a chance to play basketball over four weeks without boys being present. After that four weeks, we hold an academy in the local community and we try to move them along the pathway into sustainable activity. We try to have a long-term effect.

We have a monitoring system and I have a piece of work on that with me today if anyone would like to have a look at it.

**The Deputy Convener:** Thank you. If you could make that available to the committee, it would be appreciated.

**Les Brown:** Dr Simpson made a point about disability. At the moment, we are upgrading from one to two ski slopes, and the smaller of the two will be a beginners slope with a travelator lift system that will give disabled people easier access to the facility.

**The Deputy Convener:** Mr Cunningham, is Broxburn doing anything about monitoring?

**Alan Cunningham:** Our two employees have their outcomes and targets, part of which is about monitoring. We also have six-monthly reviews from the Robertson Trust, and we do quarterly reviews with Rank. The targets for our two staff members are all itemised on sheets like the ones that I am holding up.

On the disability side, we hired one of our full-time employees from the SFA, where he had been responsible for disability football. He works on disability sport with three special needs schools in West Lothian. We also have a disability class on a Saturday morning. Parents bring their children in and we have a disability session. In one area we have the soccer school and in another we have disability activities at the same time.

**The Deputy Convener:** Thank you. Dr Gray, I went along to Celtic Park to see one of the football fans in training sessions in action—I was not referred, but perhaps I should have been. The people who were there came from a cross-section of communities. The SPL clubs all have that programme so it does not matter whether we talk about Aberdeen or wherever. Do they target one community or is it strictly GP referral? How does it work?

**Dr Gray:** The professional football clubs are a draw for people from across society. My role is to evaluate the programme, so I know that the football fans in training programme is closely evaluated. At the moment, we are running a randomised control trial, which is the gold-standard evaluation. What has been so good about our partnership working with the SPL trust and the clubs is that it has allowed that gold-standard evaluation, which is funded by the National Institute for Health Research's public health research programme, to take place.

We know exactly who is on our programme and we have found that we attract people from across the socioeconomic spectrum without doing any special targeting. I suggest that the attraction of football clubs should be recognised; perhaps they can be used to target the people from specific backgrounds with whom we want to engage. The clubs have a powerful reach.

12:00

**The Deputy Convener:** Would anyone like to talk about what is being done or could be done to encourage greater participation in sports among underrepresented groups or about the monitoring process? Now would be a good time to get some of that on the record.

**Graham Hunter:** In my report, I have tried to show how we are meeting the Government's national outcomes. I feel that we are meeting 11 out of the 16. As I said, I am happy to distribute

that report today if anyone would like to have a look at it.

**The Deputy Convener:** Thanks for that information. I wanted to have it because, although it is important to monitor things, we are conscious that the monitoring process can be too bureaucratic and burdensome, and the right balance needs to be struck.

**George Adam:** In Paisley, the football fans in training were a cross-section of people. In fact, most of the people were upset that some people got free kit and others did not. It was good, because they were a cross-section of the town.

People with disabilities need to have some form of fitness in their lives. My wife has multiple sclerosis and she now goes to the gym with a local group, which is similar to Dr Gray's programme, as it involves people who have similar abilities. It makes a big difference in their lives and has an impact on their day, apart from anything else. Little things like that can make a big difference. What are the groups that are represented here today doing in that regard?

**Graham Hunter:** Our development academies are open to everyone. Of the 30 or so young people who might take part on a Friday night in Cambuslang, there will be boys, girls, young people who have the potential to be elite athletes, children with disabilities, overweight children and so on. There is a good mix of people. Our ethos is that everyone can take part and that it is all about fun. There is a place for elite sport, but we feel that the grass-roots level should be about giving everyone a chance to take part. For example, in our academy league, there is a five-on, five-off rule to ensure that everyone gets an equal chance. That is important because young people develop at different ages, and that includes people with disabilities.

**Les Brown:** A while ago, we embarked on a programme in which we put our manager through a training programme to teach disabled skiers. We brought in some specialist equipment on loan, such as sit skis, to help guide the skiers down the hill. We have also had visits from blind people who want to use the facility. That area is not something that we have focused on too much recently, but we want to look at it again.

**Dr Gray:** When targeting underrepresented groups, rather than simply conducting a numbers evaluation, we need to speak to the people from the groups that we want to engage and find out what they want and need. That would be a good first step.

**Alan Cunningham:** We had a request to start walking football for members over the age of 60. The first session of that, this Thursday, will involve about 15 people and will start with a cup of tea.

Some of the people who are coming along are over 70. They played football when they were young but now they want to do walking football. I do not know how that is going to work, but they asked for it and we are trying to deliver it.

**The Deputy Convener:** Is that a good example of the need to do proper consultation and community planning in order to work out how to design ways of taking sports participation forward? Is that something that you do as a matter of course, Mr Matheson?

**Neil Matheson:** I am intrigued by the suggestion; I might do that when I go back up.

I love those kinds of things. Sometimes, we are too insistent on the need to play sport in a certain, narrow way. The reality is that we need to make it fun so that the young folk want to come back the following week. Graham Hunter does that kind of stuff, and others will do the same. I love that concept. It reminds me of when we first did our play sport programme, when we made it as affordable as possible—it cost £1 to come along to participate and be coached in any sport or discipline. We could do that only because we got funding. The Robertson Trust helped with that. It said, “It’s a great idea—we love it.” It thought that it would help to embed things. That was fantastic. It has left us a legacy—nearly 10 years later, play sport is still a massive part of what we are all about. It is the real engine of our organisation.

As far as handicapped folk are concerned, we do not have a lot of handicapped folk in the area, but we are huge on the fact that we are a community facility for all the community to use in every way. We are not there just for this, that or the next activity—we are a multidiscipline facility. We hugely encourage folk who have any kind of handicap or who have any issues at all to come to the centre and be helped.

In addition, we have just employed a full-time youth worker to work with young people and to train our staff to understand what youth is all about, so that they do not just help them to kick a ball but really understand their lifestyles. She has achieved fantastic results over the past few months by going to different areas and bringing young folk to the centre to get them involved in activities and to change their outlook. That has been hugely helpful.

**The Deputy Convener:** Jim Eadie has another question.

**Jim Eadie:** I want to raise an issue that was discussed with the previous panel, which follows on from what Mr Matheson has just said about encouraging participation among young people. What specific activities are your clubs and initiatives involved in that seek to engage young people—or, indeed, older people; I do not want to

be ageist—who are at risk of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour? What are you doing to target that sector of our community?

**Graham Hunter:** Last year, around 525 young people took part in our academy work. As some of the academies would not run over the summer holidays, we encouraged a lot of the young people to use the outdoor sports courts. In the discussion with the previous panel, mention was made of basketball courts not being used. We realised that we wanted to utilise the equipment that was there. Much of the feedback that we got from the young people was that they were not allowed to use the outdoor courts or were scared to use them, because that is where gangs hung out.

We wanted to design a project that was safe for them to take part in, that engaged with the young people who were causing trouble and which, at the end of a six-week process, filtered them back into a long-term pathway—either the academy structure or the coaching volunteer pathway. We wanted to give young people who say, “Nobody cares,” the chance to go on a pathway where people care, where there are no excuses and where we can help them to take the next step, wherever they are trying to go. That was funded through the Strathclyde Police community partnership fund, in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council.

**Jim Eadie:** What are you doing to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of those interventions? Are we building up the evidence to show what difference they are making?

**Graham Hunter:** We have our own evaluation tool in place. Just about every participant has responded to a questionnaire. We did not think that that would be possible, but we have done it. I will analyse all that information over the next two weeks. In addition, we are working in partnership with Strathclyde Police to look at how many incidents have been prevented in Greenhills in East Kilbride, which is one of our areas. It will see whether there has been a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour.

**The Deputy Convener:** Mr Cunningham, do you have such experience in Broxburn?

**Alan Cunningham:** We have been working with the local police and crime in our area has dropped. We have been open for two years. The police came with the statistics, which showed that crime and vandalism have dropped dramatically. We managed to get additional funding, which we used to buy five iPads and five laptops and smartboards. We are now running an after-school information technology class, which is being delivered by a member of our board who is a school IT teacher.

Although we have a 3G—third generation—pitch, during the summer's bad weather we bought four table tennis tables, which we put in the dressing rooms to bring kids off the street. As well as being a football-based sports club, we are trying to become a true community club. The police visit a lot of our events now: they come in, have a cup of tea and a pie and take part. There is a good atmosphere around the club, which is one of the big positives.

When we built the new facility, I was really worried about vandalism, but nothing like that has happened—outside or inside—in the two years since it opened. It has been great, and the kids treat it as their place now and not just the club members: we have 650 club members, but the doors are open to everybody.

**Jim Eadie:** That is encouraging.

**Alan Cunningham:** I can get the police statistics to you—the police are really impressed with what is happening.

**Jim Eadie:** You have a good example of partnership working and buy-in from the local community, and you are beginning to amass some evidence that supports the value of that intervention.

**Alan Cunningham:** That is correct.

**The Deputy Convener:** Do other witnesses have examples? Mr Brown—has your organisation done anything to reach out to those who might otherwise get involved in antisocial behaviour? That is a big ask, but it is one of the key areas in which the committee is interested.

**Les Brown:** That was one of the key areas that we looked at when we were building our mountain bike park. We involved the police, and they came to a number of meetings. We considered who the target audience was for that type of facility, and we were thinking specifically about giving kids who would normally hang about on the street corners something to do instead. That was a big issue for us.

**Jim Eadie:** I presume that the entry costs for participation in mountain biking are quite high. Even if you buy a second-hand bike, you will not get much change from £100. How do you engage with young people who are at risk of antisocial behaviour and perhaps come from more deprived backgrounds?

**Les Brown:** We would need to provide them with equipment. We have not got to that stage in the bike section of our complex, but we have considered that. The initial costs can certainly be quite prohibitive for a number of people, so we would need to have a range of bikes of different sizes and quality to be able to give them the step

up that they would need to get into the sport in the first place.

**Jim Eadie:** Perhaps you could allow people who cannot afford to purchase a bike to hire one instead.

**Les Brown:** Yes—it would mostly involve bike hire, but we would probably bundle that in with the price. We would set our prices so that if you come with your own bike you pay one price, and if you do not you pay a different price.

**Jim Eadie:** So there are some barriers, but they are not insurmountable, given the willingness to tackle and address that issue.

**Les Brown:** No.

**Dr Gray:** Although the football fans in training programme targets middle-aged men, the SPL clubs run a number of other initiatives that target disadvantaged youth. Those initiatives have shown that the sports clubs are a real hub and a draw for people. People do not come in necessarily to do sports programmes; for example, there is a music box project that specifically targets at-risk vulnerable youth to come in of an evening and do something to get them off the streets. There are also schemes to support employment. The club can be used as somewhere for the kids to come and play pool or snooker or just sit around and talk to people and feel part of something.

**Neil Matheson:** We are very much a community facility, and we try to encourage all parts of the community to become involved. We run an event called Friday freestyle, in which the whole centre is taken over and becomes a massive youth club. A host of activities are put on for three hours on a Friday night, which has encouraged between 70 and 120 young folks to come in and get involved. A lot of those young folks would never walk into a sports centre, so that is one of the interesting things that we are trying to do with our centre. We are trying to get people to perceive it not as a sports centre, but as a community centre that does a lot of sport. That work has been really interesting.

Our partners include youth charities, school nurses, doctors, the police—all sorts. They deliver in the evenings programmes giving advice on stopping smoking or about alcohol. The police are very enthusiastic about it because they say that the young folks would normally be on the pub door on Friday nights.

One of our more interesting activities is called an overnight lock-in. We lock approximately 150 kids into the centre from 10 o'clock at night and we let them out at 8 o'clock in the morning. These are first-year kids who are exposed to all levels of activity at the centre. They spend the whole night

doing all sorts of sports and they are then sent off, exhausted, in the morning—half dead, so to speak. However, that means they have all been in the centre—they have been through the doors—and have had an experience they will never forget. These are significant methods for drawing in these young folks.

12:15

**The Deputy Convener:** I should point out that I noticed a knowing wink from Dr Simpson when you used the expression, “lock-in”. Given our previous discussions on minimum pricing it is perhaps best not to go there, at this time.

I thank you for that interesting account. I do not see any bids from my MSP colleagues for supplementary questions. As there is a wee bit of time remaining, now is the time to catch my eye if anyone has a supplementary question. Nobody has—members have talked themselves to a standstill, which is very unusual for them. If witnesses wish to speak about any area that has not been covered and which you think is important, or if you have a message for the committee’s inquiry into community sports, now is a good time for any comments or observations to be put on the record.

**Les Brown:** I have nothing further to add at this stage.

**Graham Hunter:** I have said enough and I have nothing else to say.

**Alan Cunningham:** Our club seems to be getting drawn into providing many activities that would normally be covered by schools but which are not being covered. Our two full-time staff spend most of their week delivering programmes to schools. Our club really comes to life in the evenings, from 5 o’clock to 10 o’clock and at the weekends. The two full-time employees work a 37-hour week and during the day they are out running courses, so the volunteer workers are left to do everything at night and at the weekends. We seem to be delivering lots of services that are not being delivered by other departments or areas. It has been left to the community to do them.

**The Deputy Convener:** You have done the committee a service by mentioning schools. We have not really pressed anyone about their engagement with local schools, although the active schools network has been referred to. Has the relationship been positive?

**Alan Cunningham:** Yes. We run after-school football clubs. We organise West Lothian football programmes because we have a 3G facility—one of the few in West Lothian—so our pitch is always playable. West Lothian schools play on Fridays. We also have activities for secondary and primary

schools in Uphall, Broxburn, Winchburgh and Bridgend, near Linlithgow. Our people are out and about organising those activities, which are funded through the Rank Foundation and the Robertson Trust—which are brilliant funders, by the way. However, I am secretary of the community club and my role is to try to keep the community club going in the area, but in order to access the funding we tend to get dragged into different areas. That is my observation.

**The Deputy Convener:** You have said something very helpful. The national governing bodies were saying that schools should be doing more. We asked the national governing bodies whether they were talking to schools and to teachers. We were asking them to co-ordinate with the schools, but they seem to be of the view that it is up to the schools to do that at grass-roots level. However, on scratching beneath the surface we see that there is quite a good productive relationship on the ground between community sports clubs and schools. That is good news to put on the record and it is helpful to the committee.

**Neil Matheson:** I think that we all understand the massive benefit of sport in the community and in people’s lives. We need to get that message out to a wider audience. I find it quite amusing—and sad, in a way—that we have to try to educate people about what to us is blatantly obvious. We need to ensure that our activities are fun and innovative; it cannot be done the same way as it was in the past—as it was always done.

The challenge for Government bodies and funders—and, indeed, for us—is to act the same way. Frankly, if it were not for the Rank Foundation and the Robertson Trust, both of which have been mentioned a lot this morning, none of us would be sitting in this room. Their work has been significant in allowing us to be creative and to produce the outcomes our way, and not the way some piece of paper says they should be produced.

**The Deputy Convener:** Thank you for that well-made point. I give the last word to Dr Gray.

**Dr Gray:** I want to leave the committee with a point that has already been mentioned: sport and activity should not happen only in one particular part of our lives. Although there are great initiatives for children and young people, to me the real challenge is how we engage people in physical activity throughout their lifetimes. Accessibility is not just about affordability of or closeness to an activity; it is also about allowing people who are entering their working lives, and beyond that, to find time in their day to take part in sport.

We also need to give older people the confidence to do the activities and we must get

over the message that this is not necessarily about sport per se. I think that there is a misconception that sport is an elite activity, so we must encourage people to be physically active in ways that suit them. Quite often, when people exercise or do sport, they push themselves too far and do not have a fun experience and, as has been said, we need to get across the message that physical activity in any form, whether it be sport or something that people do in their daily lives, is good for you, should be fun and will improve your life and your health.

**The Deputy Convener:** Thank you for that. I thank all our witnesses for taking the time to put their experiences on record. I hope that this will not be the end of your interaction with the committee on this inquiry—indeed, I know that a few of you want to provide additional information—and I plead with you to follow our forthcoming evidence sessions and read what people say. If you see something you agree or disagree with, please write to or e-mail the clerks. We will certainly consider any additional evidence that you might want to give us.

I suspend the meeting briefly before we move on to the last item on our agenda.

12:22

*Meeting suspended.*

12:27

*On resuming—*

**The Deputy Convener:** Okay, everyone—we are nearly there. We move on to item 5, which the committee has agreed to take in public.

The committee will recall that at last week's meeting members looked at and agreed the programme of oral evidence and visits to be undertaken as part of our inquiry into support for community sport. It was also suggested that the inquiry might usefully seek to address what could be called outdoor pursuits or physical activity rather than sport per se, and look at the relationship between sport and business. The clerk's paper seeks to address points that were raised by members at last week's meeting and suggests organisations that the committee might wish to contact for written evidence.

Does everyone have their papers in front of them?

**Dr Simpson:** For some reason, I did not get any papers this week. It could be something to do with my e-mail.

**The Deputy Convener:** We will get you a copy. As we do so, I will highlight one or two matters in the paper. With regard to outdoor activities, we

agreed last week to take evidence from the Scottish Canoe Association, from whom we heard earlier this morning, from Scottish Swimming and from Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex. We have engaged with some organisations, but other suggestions were made about organisations that we might wish to approach and it might be helpful if I read them out before we reach any decision on the matter.

It was suggested that we call for written evidence from Active Communities in Paisley, which recently gave a presentation to the cross-party group on sport, the Scottish centre for healthy working lives, the Lochgoilhead Centre, Scottish Outdoor Education Centres, Active Outdoor Pursuit, and Glenmore Lodge, which is a national outdoor training centre. Do members agree that we should contact those organisations to ask for written evidence, given the concerns that were raised last week?

**Gil Paterson:** I certainly agree.

12:30

**Richard Lyle:** We have heard about how much money the Big Lottery Fund gives to sports clubs and other clubs. Would it be possible to bring the Big Lottery Fund back into the discussion to find out about its plan for sport funding in the next few years? Obviously, that depends on sales, which we hope will keep up. It would be interesting to know what the funding will be in Scotland, how the Big Lottery Fund intends to disburse the money and the mix of that. A point was made earlier about cashback for communities. We might also want to ask those further questions about cashback.

**The Deputy Convener:** That is helpful. We might want to write to the Big Lottery Fund to ask what investment it has made and what its strategy is for sports and greater participation. We can certainly also ask the Government about its strategic priorities for cashback.

I see that Drew Smith wants to come in. Is it on that point?

**Drew Smith:** It is not specifically on Richard Lyle's point, but it is about the suggested list of additional organisations from which to seek evidence. We need to be careful that we maintain the distinction between sport and physical activity and that we do not mix up outdoor activity and physical activity more widely, because those are quite different. If we are getting into the realm of physical activity, which I thought we had agreed at the start of the inquiry not to do, we should go to a much wider group of organisations. A range of organisations work to encourage people into health-enhancing physical activities, but they do not have a particular connection with sport.

I am cautious about taking as an example a programme on increasing physical activity in a particular part of Scotland and hearing what it has to say. We have not taken evidence on the national strategy on physical activity, and a range of organisations are involved in walking, jogging and swimming. Richard Simpson made legitimate points about the Scottish centre for healthy working lives, but those points were not about how the centre promotes physical activity, but were about how the centre supports volunteering and people's involvement in sport.

We need to keep the terms of the inquiry fairly tight—otherwise, we could end up with a wide-ranging set of evidence that is not particularly co-ordinated and it would not be clear where it will take us. The reason why we talked about outdoor activity was that some people raised with us the issue that, because of cuts, there are now fewer opportunities through outdoor activity centres. That is an important but separate issue.

We could, at the end of the inquiry and depending on our conclusions, write to the Education and Culture Committee and other people on the issues about schools that have been talked about today. Local authority outdoor activity centres are the responsibility of education departments, not leisure departments, so we need to keep the issues separate.

**Gil Paterson:** I know where Drew Smith is coming from and I agree with him in some respects. However, if we look at Scotland as a whole, it has four big cities and not a lot in between. Therefore, in some respects, an inquiry into support for community sport must include outdoor activity because, in certain parts of Scotland, that is it. All my life, I have climbed or skied or done something outdoors. There are not a lot of community halls in many parts of Scotland. I understand Drew Smith's point that we need to be focused, but I would like to have some people come in to explain the volunteering that is involved at that level, too. That is a big part of engagement in activity, sport and leisure. To me, it is almost the same thing.

**The Deputy Convener:** Are there any other comments on that?

**Nanette Milne:** There is a grey area between physical activity and sport, so I take the points that both members made. I was wondering whether there is an organisation or group that represents the older age group in relation to participation in sport or physical activity, which might be able to contribute something to our inquiry. I do not know whether there is such an organisation. Of course, there would be quite an overlap between sport and physical activity in that regard, so such input might not be relevant.

**The Deputy Convener:** I am keen to allow the conversation to continue, before we come to a conclusion.

**Drew Smith:** The key organisation would be the Paths for All Partnership. There is also a Scottish Government-funded programme that is trying to increase activity among older people, in particular. I declare an interest: I used to work for Paths for All. I would be fascinated if Parliament were to examine some of the issues, but I think that doing that would take us quite far away from the community sport remit of the inquiry.

**Jim Eadie:** Drew Smith has made a fair point about the scope and remit of the inquiry. I am sure that none of us would object in principle to receiving written evidence from such organisations, but I do not know whether the committee can do justice to the issues with proper investigation and evaluation.

**Dr Simpson:** I like the idea of completing this inquiry on community sport in a relatively focused way and maybe following it up at some point with a short session in which we could look specifically at the relationship between community sport, physical activity and outdoor sport, as a separate issue.

**Jim Eadie:** May I make a second point, convener?

**The Deputy Convener:** Is it in relation to—

**Jim Eadie:** It relates to Richard Lyle's second point.

**Dr Simpson:** I want to make another point, too.

**The Deputy Convener:** Hang on, everyone. Let us discuss who to write to for further evidence, so that we can make a decision on that.

**Gil Paterson:** Before we get to that stage, I want to say that I take on board Drew Smith's comments. Richard Simpson's suggestion was helpful. I would be happy not to write to those organisations if we keep the matter on our agenda, or at least—giving no guarantees—have the prospect of looking at it. I would accept that.

**The Deputy Convener:** The thing is, Gil, that there is always the prospect of doing something else in the future. We have to look at all the available slots in our work programme, which covers more than just community sport, of course. Are there any more comments about who we should write to?

**Dr Simpson:** Have we got anything in from the Robertson Trust, which was mentioned a lot today? The clerks are indicating that we have had a submission. I wonder whether the trust will want to make further comments after today's meeting.

**The Deputy Convener:** The Robertson Trust is going to be here at a future evidence session.

**Dr Simpson:** Oh—it is on our list, is it? The Rank Foundation was mentioned, too. I do not know whether we have had anything from Rank.

**The Deputy Convener:** It might be worth our while to check whether funding providers that have been mentioned in oral evidence have made written submissions to the inquiry, and if they have not, to contact them to say that we would appreciate any information that they want to give us. Would that be helpful?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Deputy Convener:** I am loth to say that we should not write to organisations on our list. As Drew Smith said—I think that I said the same thing at last week's meeting—we should not dilute the focus of our inquiry into community sport. The committee paper mentions swimming, cycling, walking, jogging, running—those are sports. Last week, the point came up about how we use the outdoors as a facility. Today we talked a lot about facilities and infrastructure in Scotland; witnesses last week made the point that the countryside is a wonderful facility for community sport. Are members content to write to organisations on the basis that we make it clear that we are looking for information that is specifically about how they use facilities to facilitate community sport?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Deputy Convener:** Okay. Thanks.

**Richard Lyle:** Jim Eadie wanted to say something.

**Jim Eadie:** My point was covered by Richard Simpson's comments. I think that the Bank of Scotland Foundation was mentioned, so we should write to it, too.

**The Deputy Convener:** Thank you. I think we are there—it just remains for me to say that next week's meeting will be at 9.30 am and will be a round-table session on the approval process for newly licensed medicines and the system of individual patient treatment requests in Scotland.

*Meeting closed at 12:40.*



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