

Cross Party Group for Sport – Scottish Active Students: A Cross-Cutting Agenda

Minutes from 16th May 2017 2017 17.30-19.30

Committee Room 5, Scottish Parliament

PRESENT	
Kim Atkinson	Scottish Sports Association
Graham Baker	University of Edinburgh
Tom Bishop	Scottish Cycling
Douglas Bryce	JudoScotland
Sharon Clough	The University of Edinburgh
Malcolm Dingwall-Smith	sportscotland
Stew Fowlie	Scottish Student Sport
Grant Jarvie	University of Edinburgh
Alan Johnston	SenScot
Alison Johnstone	MSP
Rick Kenney	SALSC
David Laing	Borders Disability Sport
Julie Mason	Uni. of West of the Scotland
Louise McIntyre	Scottish Sports Association
Chris Oliver	University Edinburgh PAHRC
Jonny Pearson	Edinburgh College
Dr Geoffrey Platt	Scottish Masters Weightlifting Assoc.
Gail Prince	SALSC
Chris Sellar	Oriam
Liz Smith	MSP
Ronald Sutherland	RM Sutherland
Carole Sutherland	RM Sutherland
Ian White	Canalside C.S.H
Brian Whittle	MSP
Mark Woods	Britball Media

APOLOGIES	
Clare Adamson	MSP
Neil Champion	Scottish Football Association
Malcolm Cannon	Cricket Scotland
James Dornan	MSP
Flora Jackson	NHS Health Scotland
Johann Lamont	MSP
Walter Macadam	GMB Scotland
Linda Macdonald	The Robertson Trust
Lewis Macdonald	MSP
Roddy Mackenzie	SportsAid Scotland
Maureen McGonigle	Scottish Women In Sport
Jim McIntosh	STS/SSRA
Jim Moyes	Live Active Leisure
Nanette Mutrie	University of Edinburgh
Karen Nichol	Live Active Leisure
Brian Robinson	UK Compliance & Scot. Portfolios
Tavish Scott	MSP
Ronnie Sloan	SportsAid Scotland
Shirley-Anne Somerville	MSP
Richard Yule	Table Tennis Scotland

Introduction to Cross Party Group on Sport

Alison Johnstone MSP welcomed all attendees and speakers to the meeting.

Apologies were noted and those in the room were reminded to mark their attendance on the register being passed round.

Minutes of the previous meeting (14th March) were approved; there were no other matters arising.

AGM Business

A statement was read out saying that this meeting would also act as the group's AGM.

Appointment of Office Bearers were confirmed as:

- **Convener(s):** Alison Johnstone MSP (Greens), Liz Smith MSP (Conservative)
- **Deputy Conveners:** Clare Adamson MSP (SNP), James Kelly MSP (Labour), Tavish Scott MSP (Liberal Democrats)
- **Group Officers:** Brian Whittle MSP (Conservative)
- **Secretariat:** Joint secretariat between Co-Conveners' Offices and the SSA

End of AGM Business

Presentations & Discussion

Stew Fowle – Scottish Student Sport (SSS)

Stew started by telling everyone that SSS is at the heart of over 35 institutions, over 100k students and are constantly striving to be part of a world class sporting system by supporting student club activity.

Most of the delivery is by way of 120 events p/a and a wider influence around being physically active. They have three main outcomes focused around a Robust, Integrated and Valued system.

Stew talked about the intrinsic values of sport going beyond being just the fun and competitive aspects. There is the wider student experience to take into account including: employability, personal development, health and wellbeing, social inclusion and attainment. The benefits of sport go beyond the individual but also affect the college/university and the community. Sport can often be a good news generator and promote the person and the institution.

SSS carried out a review of evidence to support the benefits of sport and the impact on student and as part of this carried out a student survey (almost 5000 responses) asking how sport impacted their life, asking how active they are and what sport they do. The overall result was simple, it's better to be active! The more active ones were more positive about themselves and life in general.

The next steps for SSS are to ensure their events grow, club membership increases, there is an increase in female participation, introduce college awards, and enhanced volunteering and leadership opportunities. There needs to be a lot of collaboration to make sure these goals happen and a better system to harvest useful insights, to help support sports development

Jonny Pearson – Edinburgh College

Jonny talked about the role of Edinburgh College in getting and keeping students active. He noted the three main reason students drop out of playing sport as being; finance; poor learning and teaching; and not having a sense of belonging.

They have 20k students who spend a maximum of 18hrs a week in the college so they needed to work with the sports union to look at ways to get sport and physical activity into students' lives. They looked at the clubs and the low membership retention and decided to introduce a dedicated Sport & Activity Co-Ordinator (S.A.C) to work with students and get them involved in sport. They saw that overall retention increased and that by opening access to facilities at no cost they didn't lose a single student. Students noted that by having a S.A.C supporting them they had a sense of belonging.

The next steps are to encourage a student life built around sport and physical activity, encouraging the implementation of these co-ordinators across all colleges in Scotland.

Key Discussion Points

- Sharon Clough from Edinburgh University informed the group of a piece of research she was undertaking to look at the tensions of increased professionalism of university sport. Her research looks at the high level of importance placed on winning and podium places and the concern that not enough is done to advertise the wide range of activities on offer beyond the performance side of sport.
- A question asked if the focus was too much on universities and that more should be done to support colleges and the smaller institutions which can often be over looked. It was accepted that there are only a handful of colleges who have a dedicated S.A.C but more is being done to encourage the colleges to engage in events and raise the profile of college sport.
- A point raised was how important a role SSS play in developing athletes and sport in colleges/universities. The importance of sport in these institutions can provide strong social lessons that can apply to wider society, but the question was how can that model be used to help social cohesion? The response was that students are the future and if we can build into them a sense of comradeship and kinship at an early stage, both features developed through sport, then there is hope that they will take those lessons into later life and we will have a more developed society.
- A question was raised about what sports were SSS encourage people to get involved in. The answer was they didn't care as long as they were being active and happy being involved. SSS will help support anyone and help support the links between SGBs and other partners to make sure people can play at whatever level they want to. This includes working with Winning Scotland to ensure high performance athletes are noticed and supported.
- The success of Edinburgh College and getting more people playing sport is through the support they offer. Having a dedicated S.A.C they are able to really drive forward development of sporting activities. More investment needs to be offered to support these kinds of roles to make sure that the interest goes beyond fresher's week where there are lots of offerings, to making sure students stay involved in sport.
- The speakers agree the key opportunities available to sport in Scotland is to push for a full time person in each of these institutions to encourage and increase participation. There needs to be one plan that ties it all together, one which includes, management, the dedicated sport staff and the student. Once that plan is in place colleges/university sport will really thrive and have long term impacts on the population.

AOCB

- Date of next meeting was TBC – later agreed it would be 1st November 2017
- Alison Johnston MSP thanked everyone for their input and brought the meeting to a close.

*The Cross Party Group on Sport is co-convened by Alison Johnstone MSP & Liz Smith MSP.
It is jointly administered by the offices of these MSPs and the Scottish Sports Association.*