

BORDER CURLING DEVELOPMENT GROUP

ACTING CHAIR'S REPORT FOR THE BIR CLUB AGM

Like everything else, the BCDG has been affected by the pandemic. The early closure of the Ice Rink and the lockdown meant that, as a group, we have been unable to review season 2019-20 and we have also not been able to hold an AGM. This report has to be seen against this background and is based on what happened when curling was actually taking place.

There were some successes for the BCDG which is good and a tribute to those who have been involved in our various activities. On the other hand there is some cause for concern about the future. One aspect of this is that, throughout the year, the BCDG has operated under significant financial constraints and these have impacted on what we have been able to do.

We have been successful in carrying out our main activities of coaching and development. Coaching sessions for juniors ran on Monday evenings and, for all curlers, on Saturday mornings as well as the Virtual Club and Try Curling sessions. We were, therefore, able to continue to provide the full pathway into curling recommended by Scottish Curling. In doing this we have benefited from the support of the Ice Rink management and the Directors.

Financial constraints meant that time on Monday evenings for juniors was reduced but we have had a good number of regular attenders, many of whom also came on Saturdays. Most were able to achieve Skills Awards and red, white and blue awards were earned. However, despite a good number of Try Curlers, there were few adult beginners which may affect the Virtual Club next season. This season the Virtual Club also had small numbers but its members are of a good standard and teams from the Virtual Club did well in national competitions. Thanks are due to all coaches who helped in these activities and to John Stevenson and Charles Brooker for organising the juniors and Virtual Club respectively. The lack of new curlers is one that affects the sport as a whole and there is perhaps a case for the BCDG and the Ice Rink management to work together on developing and funding a plan to attract new people.

The number of younger curlers is encouraging and thanks to the efforts of Josh Hogarth and Lewis McCran it has been possible to revive the Border Young Curlers by involving the younger curlers. This has given them a progression from the coaching and is a very positive development.

We have been successful in upskilling coaches. We have successfully encouraged most to complete PVG registration and were able to hold 2 CPD courses at Kelso. The result is that most of the coaches at the BIR have now met all the relevant requirements until 2023. We do need more coaches and it is good that there are people who are willing to embark on coaching awards.

There are other successes: Liz Cullen has once again organised Curling's Cool for Primary Schools and, despite not being fully completed, it has once again been a very worthwhile venture. Our thanks are due to Liz and all her helpers. Russet Fullarton has managed to develop 'inclusive curling' which enables people to curl who may not otherwise get the chance to do so. This demonstrates how we can involve the wider community and we must thank Russet and those who have assisted her. This, too, is perhaps something that can be extended.

We have maintained links with Scottish Curling and Live Borders. Fiona Harfield of Scottish Curling visited Kelso to speak to coaches and there have been preliminary discussions with Live Borders Disability Officer.

For the future we have been chosen as a beneficiary by the Co=op Community Fund and this will bring in some income although we will still depend on the generosity of the Ice Rink. We could not have done what we have done without the support of coaches and helpers. All are people who give up their own time for the benefit of others. It is hard to thank them enough for what they do.

As Acting Chair, I would also like to thank all members of the group for their contributions throughout the past season, especially Russet Fullarton for doing the minutes so well and so quickly and John Stevenson for looking after the finances.

Bob Robertson

Acting Chairperson - BCDG