NESC SCIO Chairman’s Report - 2021

For the North East Scotland Cricket SCIO, this year focus has been on restoring cricket in the region after a heavily affected 2020 season, where the COVID-19 pandemic halted all competitive cricket. This placed significant financial pressure on clubs, and this presented a worrying risk that clubs may not survive until this season. For the 2021 season, the SCIO was able to complete all its competitions with limited disruption from COVID-19 or the weather.

The 2021 senior league season saw a reduction in active teams to 25, but we hope that the contraction of cricket locally may have bottomed out as the trustees have had to consider applications from 4 new teams for the 2022 season, one of which we may have to decline due to the lack of available playing facilities. Whilst the latter is a concern, ongoing discussions with Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council suggest possibilities exist to resolve this situation if capital funding can be secured. It was encouraging that our local clubs continue to qualify for all the national junior age group finals days ahead of established Eastern Premier League clubs like Forfarshire and Arbroath. It is also pleasing to see plans in place for a Wee Bash as we hope women and girls’ cricket can get established in the area. The availability of courses for umpiring, child protection and table cricket (specifically designed for young people with disabilities) show that cricket is emerging from the Covid pandemic.

For the SCIO, its financial position remains strong, with all clubs and associate members supporting the SCIO. This led to a trustee decision to reduce 2021 subscriptions to support the clubs’ recovery. New trustees joined over the year and these members provide further expertise in cricket development across the women, junior and men’s cricket. The SCIO also refined its strategy – focusing on supporting the development of the game and work is underway to identify a new facility to function as a base for all NESC SCIO activities.

The SCIO was proud to support the Cricket charity Chance to Shine, who in partnership with Cricket Scotland took cricket into 18 schools in Aberdeenshire through it its ‘Schools’ cricket programme. This gave all children the opportunity to play, learn and develop through cricket, teaching key life skills and supporting their physical, social, and mental wellbeing. Cricket Scotland coaches have started working in Peterhead schools to bring cricket to more kids than ever before.

The Aberdeenshire programme is the first time that Chance to Shine has worked in Scotland. The initiative has been made possible thanks to financial support from Inverurie-based butcher Donald Russell and their parent company Vestey Foods Group (Vestey). The SCIO was pleased to see this support grow with further plans in place for the upcoming season.

Following recent high-profile allegations, an independent review is currently being carried out into racism and racial inequalities within Scottish cricket. Scotland’s national agency for sport, **sport**scotland, has appointed global equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) expert, Plan4Sport, to lead this wholly independent process, with a full report and associated recommendations to be published in July 2022. The NESC SCIO fully supports this independent review.

Finally, as Chairman, I would like to thank all the trustees for all their time and work over the last year. Particular thanks go to the SCIO’s administrator - Paul Gray, whose tireless work has been instrumental in organising the fixtures, managing cup matches and supporting the SCIO and its sub- committees in its work.

I would also like to thank Martin Auld, who has remained as a trustee to represent SCIO on the Cricket Scotland Board and associated Management Groups.

Andrew Win

Chair – NESC SCIO (Charity Number SC048890)