

Sports Clubs in Scotland

Research Report no. 75

Report on a
research study for **sportscotland**

by

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A summary version of the report has been published (**sportscotland** Research Digest no. 59) and is also available on the website.

Separate research digests have been prepared that provide the results of the questionnaire survey for clubs in each of the following ten sports where the sample sizes were considered large enough to justify individual analyses:

Angling
Bowls
Golf

Athletics
Cricket
Hockey
Tennis

Badminton
Football
Swimming

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- Mary Allison of the Centre for Leisure Research (now with the Health Education Board for Scotland) designed the questionnaire, analysed the data, undertook the interviews and wrote the report.
- The report was edited by Jon Best of **sportscotland**.

Mary Allison

FOREWORD

I welcome this report on a fascinating study of sports clubs in Scotland. The sheer scale of the study is unprecedented in the UK. Some 3,500 replies to a 12-page questionnaire with a good response rate of 36% provides solid information about the current state of play for sports clubs in Scotland. For the first time we have the facts to develop views on the structures and issues of sports clubs.

The report starts with detailed discussions of the apparently simple issues of identifying the sports clubs in Scotland and of defining what is a sports club. Definitive answers do not exist for either, but the researchers' thorough investigation adds to our understanding of the picture. The facts from the questionnaire survey are then laid out and discussed in Chapters 3-7, supported by qualitative information from in-depth interviews with a range of organisations. The concluding chapter draws on both the quantitative and qualitative information to tease out key issues for the future of sports clubs. It is interesting to learn, for example, that a third of the responding clubs are over 50 years old – older than any of the organisations they liaise with, other than some of the governing bodies themselves. The report expands on this to consider implications of autonomy, perceptions of fragility and issues for club development.

Like all good research the report answers questions but raises more. We need, for example, more detailed information on clubs not included in this study: those that did not survive. There should be lessons to be drawn from the reasons that clubs fail that will complement this report on existing clubs.

This report and the data that underpin it are a valuable information resource about sports clubs and will be used to inform debate and policy for some years to come. More immediately, the study will form the basis for consultations initiated by **sportscotland** on how clubs can shape themselves to contribute to the course of Scottish sport in the 21st century.

Alastair Dempster
Chairman, **sportscotland**

INTRODUCTION

In January 1999, the Centre for Leisure Research of Edinburgh University was contracted by **sportscotland** (then the Scottish Sports Council, SSC) to undertake a project to investigate and report on the nature of sports clubs in Scotland. This study of clubs was prompted by a recognition that “the issue of club development was identified consistently throughout the consultation process for *Sport 21* as an area in need of major attention” (SSC, 1998, p77). Further, and to address this issue of club development, *Sport 21* – the national strategy for sport in Scotland – established a target that by 2003 Scottish sport should “establish a national programme which will identify and promote new approaches to club development and deliver a strong and vibrant club structure in Scotland” (SSC, 1998, p23).

This research study is intended to provide a strong information base on which to build such a national club development programme. The specific aims of this research project (as set out in the client brief) were to:

- compile a census of sports clubs in Scotland; and
- obtain a detailed profile of current club structures and related issues.

In particular, **sportscotland** wished to obtain information about the following aspects of sports clubs in Scotland:

- Demographics – such as number of members and their age and sex.
- Resources – in particular club facilities and staff.
- Finances – for example, sources of income and financial management.
- Partnerships – links with other sports and non-sports organisations.

These aims and objectives were addressed in three stages:

- Identifying the universe of sports clubs in Scotland (January-April 1999).
- A postal survey of all identified sports clubs (May-September 1999).
- Interviews and case studies to explore issues arising from the postal survey (January-March 2000).

This report has the following structure: Chapter 1 contains details of the research approach; Chapter 2 explores issues around defining a sports club; Chapters 3-7 describe the results of the postal survey of clubs and in-depth interviews; and Chapter 8 comprises conclusions and recommendations. The qualitative findings from the interviews are integrated throughout with the quantitative survey results:

To distinguish between these two data sources in Chapters 2-7, the qualitative findings are in boxes.

Case study examples from the qualitative part of the study are highlighted through shading.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCH APPROACH

This chapter provides details of the approaches used to undertake the three elements that comprise the research:

- A search for the universe of sports clubs in Scotland.
- A postal survey of all identified clubs.
- Interviews to explore further the issues arising from the survey.

Identifying the Universe of Sports Clubs in Scotland

In the client brief, it was suggested that there may be in excess of 15,000 sports clubs in Scotland. This figure was based on a count of the number of clubs (that in many cases were in fact teams) affiliated to governing bodies of sport. It was recognised that this figure was an estimate as many governing body lists were out of date and the number of sports clubs not affiliated to governing bodies was unknown. Subject to a number of caveats discussed below, the revised estimate resulting from this study is around 13,000 sports clubs in Scotland.

Sources of Information

To provide as much information as possible about the existence of sports clubs in Scotland the following organisations were mailed with requests for contact names and addresses of clubs known to them:

- 102 national governing bodies of sport
- 46 league/area associations (where responsibilities for club management were delegated by the national governing body)
- 60 local sports councils
- 32 local authorities – education and recreation (or equivalent) departments
- 5 youth organisations
- 15 student unions
- 5 disability sports organisations
- 4 multi-sport organisations

The responses from these organisations are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Organisations Contacted for Club Details and Their Responses

Type of Organisation	Sent request	Replied with information	Replied without information	No reply
Number of organisations				
National governing bodies	102	63	31	8
League/Area associations	46	5	9	32
Local sport councils	60	37	22	1
Education departments	32	11	21	0
Recreation departments	32	16	16	0
Youth organisations	5	2	3	0
Student unions	15	13	0	2
Disability sports organisations	5	2	3	0
Multi-sport organisations	4	2	2	0
Total	301	151	107	43

Requests were sent to these organisations by the Centre for Leisure Research in mid-February 1999 and, following extensive postal and telephone reminders, it was agreed that the search for clubs would cease in June 1999. The initial request for information had allowed a period of five weeks for response but few organisations responded with information in this timescale. It is recognised that there are likely to be additional sports clubs in Scotland; however, after a period of 15 weeks of pursuing organisations and agencies that might know of clubs it was agreed that the search had been as comprehensive as reasonably possible.

In terms of the continuing development and management of club mailing lists, it is worth noting that most organisations held the information on disk. However, most were unwilling (due to a lack of understanding of the Data Protection Act) or unable (due to a general lack of staff or a lack of staff with database skills) to provide the addresses in this format, and most information was provided in hard copy lists that were then retyped. Whether held locally or nationally, there are considerable variations in the quality of such management information and this, in itself, is an issue that affects the potential of organisations to assist with club development.

In the interview stage it was identified that Scottish Judo is a good example of a governing body that has recently recognised the significance of computerised management information systems to support club development. Its computer systems have been redesigned to automate as many processes as possible and minimise the amount of work that clubs need to undertake when, for example, dealing with coach registration, affiliation of members and event management. The system, for example, pre-fills forms with information that the governing body already holds and guarantees a maximum turnaround time for affiliation and other registrations. Coach education materials, junior affiliation packs and other information are downloadable from their website.

With such a system, management information can also be more easily generated. For example, Scottish Judo is now readily able to calculate the turnover rate of individual member affiliations that provides an indication of trends in drop-out from clubs. Such knowledge places them in a better position to identify and manage club development issues.

While this process may be staff intensive initially, when set up it offers a more efficient and time-saving approach for staff in the longer term.

Type of Information Identified

In order to assist organisations in identifying clubs that might be known to them, the letter requesting information highlighted the following possible sources:

- Lists of sports clubs associated with their organisation (for example, through membership, representative teams, affiliation).
- Lists of sports clubs using their facilities (if relevant).
- Lists of sports clubs compiled for other purposes (directory, handbook, etc).

All contact information that organisations held for clubs was requested – names of clubs/teams, named contacts, addresses and any other information that could be provided easily (such as number of members).

Addresses Provided

A final list of 14,599 club contact names and addresses was assembled from the following sources (Table 2):

Table 2: Source of Club Information and Number of Clubs Identified

Source	Number of contact addresses
Governing bodies	6,757
Local sports councils	2,818
Local authority recreation departments	2,865
Local authority education departments	1,331
Universities/Colleges	424
Youth organisations	377
Disability organisations	<u>27</u>
Total no. of addresses obtained from all sources	14,599
Less no. of duplicate/unusable addresses identified	<u>4,395</u>
Total no. of addresses sent questionnaires	10,204
Less returned from the mailing as ineligible addresses	<u>561</u>
Total no. of apparently* valid club addresses	9,643

*However, questionnaires to other ineligible addresses may have been discarded rather than returned.

The lists were checked for possible duplicate entries, as information about the same club may have been provided by more than one organisation. A final list of 10,204 clubs was identified following checks with address formatting software to remove 4,395 entries that were either duplicates or ones where the address would not have been processed by the Royal Mail. In addition, a further 561 contacts were ruled out

when their questionnaires were returned from addresses that were in some way ineligible (such as undelivered or club folded – see Table 5 below), bringing the total number of apparently eligible addresses to 9,643.

Number of Clubs Identified and Responding by Sport

While the distribution of responding clubs by council area is given in Appendix 1 (Table 19), Tables 3 and 4 detail the distribution by sport. Around 80 sports were identified in the address database and clubs from 67 of these responded (of the sports for whom no responses were received, most only had either one or two clubs identified). Where organisations said that they could not provide information, reasons included lack of resources to assemble a list, data protection concerns and no club information held. Non-response or inability to respond within the timescale meant that five larger sports were under-represented in the distribution of questionnaires: football (2,500 clubs not available for the survey), curling (500), pool (400), snooker and billiards (83) and rugby (75). The numbers of clubs that were in fact surveyed for these sports are given in Table 3. One physical recreation not included in the survey was walking: there were, for example, 42 Scottish groups affiliated to the Ramblers' Association in 1999.

The third column of Table 4 indicates that half of all clubs identified for the postal survey were from four sports: football, bowls, golf and badminton. This table shows the number of clubs that actually responded, by sport, as a proportion of all responding clubs. It shows where some sports may be over- or under-represented among the responding clubs. For example, although football clubs formed around a fifth (19.8%) of the clubs that were sent questionnaires (the universe), they accounted for a smaller proportion of respondents (15.3%). If the number of football clubs that responded had accounted for an equal proportion of those included in the mail-out then the final column in Table 4 would have been 100 per cent. As football is 77 per cent, this indicates an under-representation (below 100%). However, the data cannot be weighted to allow for under- and over-represented sports as we do not know how representative the responding clubs are of sports clubs in Scotland.

The Universe: How Many Sports Clubs in Scotland?

A number (see Table 1 above) of organisations provided no reply to the request for information about clubs. However, it is likely that at least some of the clubs known to these non-responding organisations would have been identified by other organisations as around a third of the original list of 14,599 club contacts contained duplicated information. In addition, some organisations indicated that they held information about clubs but they were unable to provide this within the 15-week period. These clubs were not included in the postal survey but were subsequently included in a calculation of the possible total number of sports clubs in Scotland.

Table 3: Clubs Sent and Completing Questionnaires, by Sport

Sport	Sent	Replied	Sport	Sent	Replied
American football	12	4	Martial arts (other)	145	38
Angling	214	87	Motor-car sports	48	20
Archery	94	36	Mountaineering	120	57
Athletics	191	70	Netball	86	27
Badminton	498	196	Orienteering	37	18
Ballooning	1	0	Parachuting	6	1
Baseball	1	0	Pétanque	21	9
Basketball	167	53	Polo	5	1
Baton twirling	6	2	Pool	1	0
Bowls	1,931	654	Quoiting	2	0
Boxing	43	18	Roller hockey	55	12
Canoeing	92	35	Roller skating	4	2
Caving	1	0	Rowing	27	13
Cheerleading	1	0	Rugby	191	67
Climbing	5	1	Running	1	0
Cricket	240	92	Sailing	90	30
Croquet	11	5	Shinty	48	27
Curling	107	58	Shooting	210	64
Cycling	136	50	Skateboarding	1	0
Dance	67	26	Skiing	61	22
Diving	3	1	Snooker and billiards	17	0
Equestrian sports	98	37	Softball	1	0
Fencing	36	15	Squash	94	30
Fitness/Movement	114	8	Sub-aqua	120	40
Flying	2	0	Surfing	34	10
Football	2,015	517	Swimming	340	123
Frisbee	5	0	Table tennis	116	36
Gaelic football	11	2	Tai chi	1	1
Gliding	11	0	Tennis	302	97
Golf	652	268	Tenpin bowling	26	9
Gymnastics	139	52	Trampolining	24	9
Handball	4	2	Triathlon	26	11
Hang gliding	7	1	Tug-of-war	9	4
Hockey	223	78	Volleyball	78	29
Ice hockey	49	17	Water skiing	12	2
Ice skating	17	6	Water sports	4	0
Jet skiing	1	1	Weightlifting	32	8
Judo	145	54	Windsurfing	11	3
Karate	120	41	Wrestling	23	2
Keep fit	10	5			
Korfball	2	1	Not known	386	167
Lacrosse	6	3			
Land yachting	1	0	Total	10,204	3,485

Table 4: Number and Proportion of Club Respondents, by Sport

Respondents by Sport	No. of replies	Proportion of respondents	Proportion of total universe	Difference (% pts)	Percentage of difference
Bowls	654	19.31	18.92	0.39	102
Football	517	15.26	19.75	-4.49	77
Golf	268	7.69	6.39	1.30	120
Badminton	196	5.79	4.88	0.91	119
Swimming	123	3.63	3.33	0.30	109
Tennis	97	2.86	2.96	-0.10	97
Cricket	92	2.72	2.35	0.37	116
Angling	87	2.57	2.10	0.47	123
Hockey	78	2.30	2.19	0.11	105
Athletics	70	2.07	1.87	0.20	110
Rugby	67	1.98	1.87	0.11	106
Shooting	64	1.89	2.06	-0.17	92
Curling	58	1.71	1.05	0.66	163
Mountaineering	57	1.68	1.18	0.50	143
Judo	54	1.59	1.42	0.17	112
Basketball	53	1.56	1.64	-0.08	96
Gymnastics	52	1.54	1.36	0.18	113
Cycling	50	1.48	1.33	0.15	111
Karate	41	1.21	1.18	0.03	103
Sub-aqua	40	1.18	1.18	0	100
Martial arts (other)	38	1.12	1.42	-0.30	79
Equestrian sports	37	1.09	0.96	0.13	114
Table tennis	36	1.06	1.14	-0.08	94
Archery	36	1.06	0.92	0.14	115
Canoeing	35	1.03	0.90	0.13	115
Squash	30	0.89	0.92	-0.03	96
Sailing	30	0.89	0.88	0.01	101
Volleyball	29	0.86	0.76	0.10	112
Netball	27	0.80	0.84	-0.04	95
Shinty	27	0.80	0.47	0.33	170
Dance	26	0.77	0.66	0.11	117
Skiing	22	0.65	0.60	0.05	109
Motor car sports	20	0.59	0.47	0.12	126
Orienteering	18	0.53	0.36	0.17	147
Boxing	18	0.53	0.42	0.11	126
Ice hockey	17	0.50	0.48	0.02	105
Fencing	15	0.44	0.35	0.09	126
Rowing	13	0.38	0.26	0.12	145
Roller hockey	12	0.35	0.54	-0.18	66
Triathlon	11	0.32	0.25	0.07	128
Surfing	10	0.30	0.33	-0.03	89
Trampolining	9	0.27	0.24	0.03	113
Fitness/Movement	8	0.24	1.12	-0.88	21
Weightlifting	8	0.24	0.31	-0.07	75

Using membership information about the number of clubs affiliated to organisations that were unable to provide mailing lists within the 15-week period, it is estimated that there may be an additional 3,560 clubs (2,500 of which are football **teams** – see

'Defining a Sports Club' in Chap 2 below), bringing the total to an estimated 13,200. In addition there will be some non-affiliated clubs that were not identified and included in the postal survey but there is no method of estimating how many of these exist.

This figure has been estimated by using the governing body affiliation statistics available to **sportscotland** and then subtracting the number of clubs identified for that sport from other sources. For example, in the case of rugby the Scottish Rugby Union was unable to provide information on disk, but reported that it had some 265 affiliated clubs. This study identified 191 rugby clubs from sources other than the SRU and subtracted this number from the 265. Therefore a final figure of 74 was added to the total number of clubs in Scotland as a best guess of the number of rugby clubs that may have been missed from the postal survey. This exercise was repeated for sports where the governing body was unable to respond within the timescales for the survey.

These calculations mean that some unaffiliated clubs may have been excluded from the total and that a significant – but unknown – number of clubs included in the total are in practice simply teams. **The best guess that can be made of the total number of sports clubs in Scotland is around 13,000.**

Postal Survey

Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix 2) sought information about the following issues:

- **Club Background.** Sports provided, year club was established, involvement in competitive activity.
- **Club Membership.** Total number of members, age and sex of playing members, level of members' involvement, access and payment, trends in club membership numbers.
- **Club Values and Ethos.** Purpose of the club, steps taken to improve coaching, officiating etc, perceived club development issues.
- **Facilities Used by Clubs.** Playing, training, storage, changing and social.
- **Club Staffing, Management and Finance.** Nature of any remuneration for staff, type of club organisation, responsibility for decision-making, partnerships with other agencies, and financial and sports development planning.

The questionnaire was drafted by the Centre for Leisure Research and agreed by **sportscotland** staff. Following the incorporation of the client's comments the final version was reproduced in an easy to read, booklet format.

Pilot Study

The questionnaire was piloted in April 1999 using a sample of 200 clubs chosen to reflect the perceived diversity of sports clubs in Scotland. Fifty of these clubs responded (25%) and, based on their responses and additional comments, minor modifications were made to the questionnaire. The final version was mailed in late May and early June 1999.

Survey Approach

Questionnaires were mailed to named contacts in clubs. Where an individual contact name was not known, the questionnaire was addressed to 'the club secretary'. The questionnaires were mailed with two covering letters – one from **sportscotland** explaining the purpose of the survey and one from the research team providing details of how to complete and return the information. The research team provided a helpline telephone number for enquiries and a prepaid envelope was included for the return of the questionnaire.

Responses were tracked on a daily basis and, following a period of eight weeks, a reminder postcard was sent to all non-responding clubs. After 12 weeks, responses were scrutinised by the clients on a sport by sport basis and the research team undertook additional telephone reminders among non-responding clubs in ten sports that were considered to have lower than desired response rates.

In addition, governing bodies were asked by **sportscotland** to encourage their member clubs to respond to the survey. General press coverage was also used to raise awareness of the survey among clubs and to encourage responses.

Response Rate

From the 10,204 questionnaires mailed out, 3,485 were completed and returned. The number of responses for each sport is presented in Table 3 above. A total of 561 questionnaires were returned uncompleted where the addresses were ineligible for various reasons (Table 5), reducing the apparently valid addresses to 9,643.

Table 5: Reasons for Questionnaires Returned Uncompleted

	Number
Ineligible address: Undelivered	286
Ineligible address: Duplicate/Other contact received/completed questionnaire	90
Ineligible address: Club no longer exists	88
Ineligible address: Do not do any sport in club	55
Ineligible address: Contact no longer involved (no substitute given)	42
Refused	20
Total	581

Excluding the 561 'ineligible' addresses (but still including 20 that were returned as refusals), the final response rate was 36 per cent. This comprised:

Number of apparently valid club addresses	9,643
Less non-responses (6,138) and refusals (20)	<u>6,158</u>
Equals number of responses (response rate 36%)	3,485

Implications for Interpretation of Data

There are two major issues that should be taken into account in the interpretation of data within this report:

- First, despite considerable efforts, not all sports clubs in Scotland were offered the opportunity to be involved in the study and it is theoretically possible that the clubs that were not sent questionnaires could have different characteristics to those that were.
- Second, it is not possible to know whether the clubs that responded to the survey are truly representative of all clubs that were sent questionnaires.

Both of these factors mean that the interpretation of the data is limited to the **responding clubs** only. However, it should be acknowledged that the governing bodies of the seven sports included in the interview stage of the project were asked to comment on the range of respondents, and all interviewees believed that the responses for their sport provided a good cross-section of clubs.

Other Surveys of Sports Clubs

Following a comprehensive literature search using on-line sources such as Sportdiscus, BIDS (Bath Information and Data Services) and SOSIG (Social Science Information Gateway), no other substantive surveys of sports clubs were identified.

Letters were sent to all national sports organisations in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand requesting information about any surveys of sports clubs that might have been undertaken by them or by organisations known to them. No surveys of clubs were identified. A survey of sports clubs in Germany was identified subsequently through personal contacts, but was of limited use in this study.

Interviews

Following the survey phase of the project, seven sports were selected by **sportscotland** staff for further, in-depth study. The selected sports were:

Badminton Basketball Canoeing Football Judo Swimming Tennis

These sports were selected to reflect the varying types of sport and sports organisation, including: team, individual and partner sports; indoor and outdoor sports; formal and informal sports; public, commercial and voluntary traditions of management; and varying participant characteristics.

In addition, the role of the commercial sector in club development was explored through interviews with two providers:

- Next Generation, Newhaven Harbour, Edinburgh

- David Lloyd Club, Renfrew

Interviewees

Representatives from the following organisations were interviewed:

- Governing body representatives from the seven sports. The Governing Body Team of **sportscotland** was asked to recommend the governing body staff best placed to discuss issues of club development.
- A club in each of the seven sports. Clubs were selected in collaboration with the governing body as clubs that had addressed issues of club development – for example, clubs whose membership had grown due to development work, clubs that had sought new facilities in order to expand, clubs that had participated in new multi-club structures, or clubs that had developed partnership with others in order to strengthen their club. Although one club contact was provided by the governing body, the interviews generally involved more than one club representative.
- Representatives from eight local authorities. In six cases, face-to-face interviews were undertaken with local authority staff that were in some way involved with one of the club interviewees. The nature of their involvement varied and included staff involved in developing new facility leasing arrangements, staff involved in the development of multi-club structures for junior performance training and staff involved in the creation of new local authority-wide single sports clubs. A further two authorities were involved in telephone interviews. These were principally to identify club development issues that may be more significant in remote or rural areas.

Other organisations were consulted by **sportscotland** staff following the production of the draft report, including **sportscotland** board members and representative bodies such as the Scottish Sports Association, and their comments sought on the implications of the research findings.

Issues Addressed

The issues addressed in the interviews included discussion of the following:

- Key issues arising from the survey findings and confirmation that these were issues that interviewees also perceived as relevant.
- How clubs had developed, what aspects were strong and weak, and what factors had led to these strengths and weaknesses.
- Involvement in current or recent club development initiatives and issues involved in their implementation.
- Extent to which they are able to contribute to club development.
- Nature of support provided for club development.

- Perceptions of clubs' readiness, willingness and acceptance of the need for development.
- Factors that are most likely to act as catalysts for the development of club sport in Scotland and how development can be sustained.

In addition, some sport-specific issues were explored with individual interviewees.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT IS A SPORTS CLUB?

In estimating the number of sports clubs in Scotland and in assembling a mailing list for the postal survey, no criteria were established to define a club in order to include or exclude certain groups. If a group perceived themselves to be a sports club then they were able to return their response accordingly. This was agreed as being the most inclusive approach to ensuring that a broad picture of sports clubs in Scotland was achieved. It should also be acknowledged that some clubs that are involved in sport may not have included themselves on the basis that they did not regard themselves as a sports club. Equally, some very informal groups may have identified themselves as a club, as discussed below.

It is known that responding clubs did not have a shared definition of the concepts of 'club' and 'sport'. For example, it was clear that sections or teams within the same club may have replied with separate questionnaires as they regarded themselves as separate clubs, although to others they may have been regarded as the same club. Further, it is also known that club sections or teams have sometimes been listed as separate sports on the questionnaire (for example, men's bowls and women's bowls) although they may, by others, be regarded as a single sport.

These questions of 'what is a sports club' were further explored in the interview stage of the project and through a literature review.

Defining a Sports Club

In the case of football, where it is estimated that there are 4,500 affiliated clubs (excluding soccer sevens and school clubs), the governing body indicated that many of these are individually-affiliated single age-group teams and not sports clubs as such. It is clear that this applies to a number of team sports in particular and it is likely that the overall estimate of around 13,000 sports clubs in Scotland would be reduced considerably were the number of clubs rather than teams known.

It is clear from the interviews that organisations use the term 'club' to describe a variety of groupings that form in order to participate in sport. These can be a single competitive team, a session in a sports centre led by a coach/instructor, a group of friends that maintain a regular booking in a sports facility, a single club with separate men's and women's or adult and junior sections, or a club with multiple activities.

Traditionally, using the term 'club' has had some advantages. Some governing bodies had targets to increase the number of clubs affiliated and therefore some sought to affiliate various types of informal groups. Also, there are groups that can only get a let or a lease of a facility or a grant from a local sports council if they are constituted as a club and therefore complete the necessary paperwork but in practice do not change. In other cases, sections or teams within a larger club have traditionally been run by a 'team coach' (or similar) and have taken care of their own needs fairly independently of any larger club identity.

In this context, some interviewees felt that it was timely to review what is meant by a club and what the key features of a club ought to be. They recognised that using the term 'club' as a means to obtain resources had led to a confused situation that on the one hand made claims about clubs as a coherent body of organisations and on the other hand in fact recognised that this included a wide range of groups with different structures, functions and, most significantly, different levels of commitment to and need for club development.

Theoretical Definitions: "A Loose and Baggy Monster"

Among published sports policies there was no agreed definition of a sports club. In various contexts, references were made to criteria for eligibility of organisations in accessing resources such as grants and awards – these are explored later in this chapter. There is a definition used by local authorities for the specific purpose of eligibility for discretionary rates relief, but applies only to sports clubs with property:

Land and heritages occupied exclusively or principally for athletic or sporting purposes by a members' club, association or company operated on a non-commercial basis where no profits are distributed in any way other than for the benefit of the membership and where the sale or supply of alcoholic liquor is merely a social adjunct to the said principal athletic or sporting purposes; and the income derived from such sale is used solely for the said purposes.

However, in general clubs were often referred to in policy documents as the voluntary sector in sport. To guide the search for a definition that could be employed usefully in sports development, literature was reviewed that explored definitional issues in the broader voluntary sector (Davis Smith et al, 1995; Billis and Harris, 1996; Saxon-Harrod and Kendall, 1994; Batsleer, 1991). This literature is perhaps more academically orientated than much of the rest of this report. However, it provides a vital context within which to understand that although sports clubs are widely referred to as a large component of the voluntary sector, the perceived focus of clubs on self-interests and enthusiasms rather than on mutual help/welfare (hence their difficulty to date in securing eligibility for charitable status) has relegated them to the sidelines of voluntary sector analysis and debate.

Although it was estimated in 1992 that sports clubs accounted for 40 per cent of all voluntary sector groups in Britain that could be counted reliably (6 and Fieldgrass, 1992), the voluntary groups that dominated the literature were concerned with service provision and campaigning in areas of health, community care, education and the environment.

Despite this marginal status of voluntary sports clubs, there are some generic issues and frameworks in the reviewed literature that provide a context for exploring possible definitions of sports clubs. For example, many of the attempts to define the "loose and baggy monster" (Davis Smith et al, 1995) of the voluntary sector have explored three basic criteria: 'function' (what organisations do), 'structure and resources' (how organisations are controlled/managed) and 'ideology' (values and ethos that underpin the organisation's purpose and activity). For each of these criteria, authors (Davis Smith et al, 1995; Billis and Harris, 1996) have indicated that voluntary organisations can overlap with the statutory and commercial sectors.

This overlap was found among the sports clubs in this study. For example, although most sports clubs fall within a common sense definition of the 'voluntary' sector, some also operate clearly within the 'statutory' sector (such as the recently launched 'Glasgow Club' that is a city-wide club operating from a range of local authority facilities) and a growing number within the commercial sector (such as David Lloyd, Next Generation).

Further, the literature suggests that the extent of overlap among sectors has varied historically as the public, commercial and voluntary sectors have been charged with varying responsibilities. These shifting overlaps are clear in sports provision in Scotland with, for example, the swing to more 'commercial' management structures that were introduced through Compulsory Competitive Tendering and now the swing towards the establishment of sports trusts where there is the potential in principle for greater community control of resources. Recent years have also witnessed the growth in sports opportunities provided by the commercial sector.

These types of changes in the structure of sports provision in Scotland mirror debates within the voluntary sector generally (such as changing structures of community care and housing provision). The literature in these other social service areas point towards a conclusion that the boundaries between the voluntary sector and others are fuzzy – that functions, structures and ideologies are not unique to any one sector but overlap in varying degrees and do change over time.

Given that sports clubs generally have been regarded as the 'voluntary sector' in sport it is useful to recognise that prescribing a definition of this sector (hence possibly defining a sports club) is unlikely to be possible. This clearly does not rule out the possibility of developing criteria that generally include or exclude certain organisations. However it should be recognised that these will be definitions born of administrative necessity rather than intellectual coherence.

For those working in sports development, whilst perhaps having to use certain administrative criteria (such as clubs with a written constitution), awareness of the broader issues that circumscribe the functions, structures and ideologies of sports clubs will be useful. Given the overlap with other forms of sports provision it is perhaps useful to consider further the relationship between the voluntary sports club sector and other sectors. This will perhaps highlight why clubs have a particular view of their own role and also where changes in the function, structure and ideology of some forms of sports provision have, often unintended, consequences for clubs.

Sports Clubs and the Statutory (Local Authority) Sector

In the first half of the 20th century and before, almost all sports provision in Scotland would have been through sports clubs and other voluntary organisations (including church and youth groups). Although many playing fields, bowling greens and tennis courts would have been provided by local authority parks services and swimming pools by the baths departments, the sports element of their use would have been controlled largely through 'amateur' sports clubs. The basic role of local authorities had been one of ensuring that outdoor areas were available for healthy recreation and baths were available for public hygiene. The promotion and development of 'sport' was almost entirely a voluntary activity undertaken by sports clubs.

By the 1960s, sport and recreation were seen to have a more central role in local authorities and the publication of the White Paper, *Sport and Recreation*, in 1975 signalled that provision for sport and recreation was to be seen as "part of the general fabric of the social services" (Dept of the Environment, 1975, p1). An extensive programme of indoor sports facility construction was undertaken that saw the number of sports facilities grow considerably. To direct and support this development, a new generation of sports planners and managers grew up in local authorities and in the newly established national Sports Councils. Further, and like other social services such as social work and community education, it was thought that if sport was to be used to address broader social issues such as rising unemployment and crime then trained sports development staff would be required. Sports development thus began to be professionalised.

These new sports facilities provided opportunities for new sports clubs to be established – in particular, indoor sports such as basketball, volleyball, gymnastics and martial arts – as well as a new home for some established clubs. Professional staff began to develop links with sports clubs, through facility planning, through placements from job creation programmes and through facility letting and leasing.

There is no documentation available to trace the precise impacts of the growth of the statutory sector in Scotland. However, it seems fairly likely that a number of changes would have happened among sports clubs: some would have moved closer to the statutory sector and perhaps have been almost incorporated into statutory provision (for example as sessions in sports centres), others may have developed partnerships that made them to some extent dependent on local authorities (for example giving up their own facilities to use new local authority facilities) and others may have had no relationship and remained entirely autonomous. Each of these scenarios was found among the clubs that were interviewed.

What is clear is that in some clubs, their functions, structures and ideologies changed as a result of developments in local authority provision. As Davis Smith et al (1995) have commented, "developments in the role of the state have been one of the determining factors in defining the tasks that voluntary agencies have carried out" (p63). Therefore, what sports clubs are and what they do has been shaped, to some extent, by the development of local authority sport and recreation services.

The dependency of sports clubs on local authority facilities and programmes may have increased with the expansion of the local authority sport and recreation sector throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. However, as local authority finances were put under pressure in the later 1980s and 1990s, this too affected what sports clubs were and what they were able to do. As Davis Smith et al (1995) commented on the involvement of voluntary groups with local authorities at this time, "it was equivalent to having a large stake in a bankrupt firm, and shares in professionalism were not trading at a very high value" (p55). Once again, the broader political pendulum had swung away from support for statutory sector provision towards traditional voluntary sector (community) values with commercial sector-like structures and management practices. This swing has prompted the development of a number of trusts to manage local authority sport and recreation facilities. However, among the club interviewees, the trusts were generally regarded as "private companies that need to run local authority facilities for profit" rather than as partners in sports development.

The interviews suggest that the variety of approaches to sports provision in local authorities means that it is difficult to say what the impacts will be for clubs. Generally though, where clubs are supported by local authorities there are now greater expectations of what they will be used to deliver and a more interventionist role by local authorities. As one local authority interviewee noted, "money used to be given to clubs in good faith – now we are more prescriptive about what we expect them to do with the money". Another said that this had become necessary "because we don't have enough to go round so we need some means of sorting clubs... basically we ask them what they can do for us in terms of delivering our objectives".

These changes conform with other areas of social services: "To the extent that there has been a consistent theme in government attitudes towards the voluntary sector, it has been the utility of voluntary provision in reducing the cost of provision – their agendas have come and gone – this one is eternal" (Davis Smith et al, 1995, p65).

In the interviews with clubs, there was an example of a club that had started its life in "a wee hut" with a highly qualified coach and a "great bunch of kids". When a major indoor facility opened they were offered the opportunity to relocate. The club continued with the coach, who was later employed by the local authority to run what the local authority referred to as 'the club' but what had changed to a sports session where anyone could participate on a pay and play basis (although it was possible to pay an annual subscription and receive a reduction in weekly entrance charges). The interviewee noted: "Everything slowly changed, you didn't know who would turn up each week and the kids could do as they please because you had to take anyone that turned up. If parents came along they had to pay to spectate. It wasn't like a club any more, the council changed everything."

Further, when the local authority changed to trust status, they looked for cost savings by asking 'club' coaches to become self employed. Thus the initial autonomy that was foregone by the coach and traded for the security of employment was once again changed. Further, charges for participants were to be increased, participation targets set, uniforms issued and codes of practice circulated (all indicators of increased professionalisation). The club leader/coach faced with having no employment security but increased responsibilities to meet targets and work within codes set down by the local authority decided that it would be better to try to return to the "old club of the past where the atmosphere was better and people were more committed". Premises were hired from a local church and the old club was re-launched. The move has been so successful that the coach/club leader has been able to make a living from participants' fees and expand into partnership with primary schools providing after-school sports sessions that have feeders into the club if children want to continue. Essentially the club is now commercial although run on a personal income basis.

This full circle from a voluntary club to a local authority club to a quasi-commercial club illustrates how changes in the statutory (local authority) sector impacted, perhaps unintentionally, on a sports club.

Sports Clubs and the Commercial Sector

The role of the commercial sector in providing opportunities for sports participation (as opposed to its role in the development of professional sport) has been largely uncharted. Numerous recent newspaper articles have highlighted the growth in commercial health and fitness and tennis centres – 'commercial clubs'. The impact of these facilities on voluntary sports clubs has not yet been researched but interviewees as part of this study highlighted a number of issues that may emerge.

As with the attractions of the new local authority facilities in the 1970s, the new commercial facilities developed in the late 1990s offer an attractive base for many established clubs that struggle to find suitable accommodation. While clubs may be unable to meet facility hire costs, it is clear that some commercial clubs can be flexible with charging and incentives can be offered to established clubs.

Further, the interviews identified that new sports clubs are being established within these facilities – in particular the clubs with multi-sport spaces and tennis facilities. Sometimes these 'sub-clubs' form from within the overarching health/fitness club and develop their own identity within the broader structure. In these cases, one interviewee noted that the sub-clubs are supported in kind by the commercial organisation but are largely organised and managed by the members that participate: "It's up to them, it's their club, it's not up to me to tell them what to do. If they ask we'll help but otherwise we assume that they want to get on with it themselves."

A further role that has emerged for this growing sector has been the provision of specialist sport-specific fitness conditioning for members of other sports clubs. In this context, the commercial sector clubs seek to offer fitness training to individuals that are members of voluntary sports clubs elsewhere.

Just as it would be misleading to regard the voluntary or the statutory sector provision as coherent and consistent, so too would it be wrong to portray the commercial sector as having a unified approach. The interviews indicated that there is a considerable difference between the ideologies of different clubs and this influences what they are able to provide. A key influencing factor appears to be whether the company is driven by shareholders' needs or whether it is driven by a company director/owner's personal interest in the business of the company. In the case of the latter it was clear that some commercial club owners are able to make a living (and a profit) but the business is driven primarily by their enthusiasm for sport/fitness. In this latter type of club, there appeared to be greater flexibility about what could be provided and more interest in developing partnerships with other sports clubs and governing bodies.

In general club interviewees regarded the new health and fitness commercial clubs as "too expensive" for most people and worried that if they located a club within such a facility "the profit motive would take over". They did not generally see these clubs as a threat to 'traditional' voluntary sector sports clubs and a number mentioned that their members were also members of these commercial clubs: "it's not a substitute for our club – it's an extra... somewhere to go on other nights when we don't meet".

From the interviews it seems clear that quasi-commercial sports clubs have been around for some time: individual coaches/leaders who are able to make a living from running a club and charging weekly fees. These are more prevalent in certain sports, often those with a high turnover of young people who receive coaching or instruction (for example, martial arts and gymnastics). The new larger-scale commercial operations are widely regarded as being mostly about health and fitness rather than sport, although some (such as Next Generation) clearly are involved in sports development.

How Sports Clubs Define Themselves

Clubs define themselves in largely subjective terms concerned with their history, location and how it feels to be part of the club: their club culture. Understanding this view is likely to be one of the most important factors in successful club development partnerships, as it goes to the core of what clubs value and seek to sustain.

History

A third of responding clubs were established in the first half of the twentieth century or earlier. For these and many other clubs there is a long tradition of what they do, how they do it and their perceived need to change any aspect of their club.

Most of the interviewees recalled a time when their club was "better than now". Generally this was characterised by more team spirit and willingness to "put up with inconvenience and make do". As with perhaps many other areas of life, it was clear that most interviewees regarded running their club as being simpler in the past and hoped that this simplicity could be rekindled. In general they wanted to preserve some continuity with the past and some feared that large-scale changes would break these ties once and for all and it would no longer be the same club.

Some clubs clearly have a number of defining moments in history that served to gel groups of club members at that time. These moments of coming together and developing a strong bond with others were times that were looked back on fondly and, for club members, seemed to define what the club meant to them. For other interviewees, notably in the more recently formed clubs, history was important but more from the perspective of tracking how much they had developed rather than providing a memory of when the club was at its peak. In general the newer clubs that were interviewed had a different attitude to change. They regarded it as fundamental to their successful development: "You have to keep up with what's available in your sport and be prepared to adapt all the time, it's the only way to survive. Ten years ago we had one team – now we have twelve and a waiting list."

A Sense of Place

What clubs do and what they are is to some extent prescribed by what the facilities they can access permit them to do. The facilities also 'set the tone' for the club in terms of having a certain ambience or not. This ambience need not be to do with the quality of the facility, it is more to do with the strength of association that the club is able to develop.

Most interviewees agreed that having "a facility base of some kind – somewhere that feels like a home for the club" (club interviewee) was part of defining their club. For a club that had been using facilities on a temporary basis for a period of time, there was a comment that "it just wasn't like our club anymore, you just didn't get the same atmosphere, there was no sense of it being your place".

The concept of place is not equated with a geographic neighbourhood for clubs. From the interviews, it seems that clubs have an allegiance to place as a location for their playing facilities rather than a town/village. For example, although Murieston Football Club is known as Murieston Community Club, participants from all over West Lothian may still have a strong association with the place (even although they have no other connection with the Murieston area). This may differ from area to area, but it is clear that it should not be assumed that because clubs feel a sense of place that they cater for local catchments.

Culture

Perhaps the most complex, yet understandable, way in which clubs define themselves is by their culture: "we're a really friendly club", "we're a real family club", "we're a strong club – we stick together and we support each other", "we have a good laugh and we don't take ourselves too seriously" were all ways in which interviewees defined their club. In part this is influenced by their history and their sense of place but is really more to do with what members feel about the club culture and atmosphere.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this way of defining their club is that without this culture, the club would not exist. It seems to be one of the most important aspects of ensuring that a club survives: "if it isn't a good atmosphere the rest of the hassle isn't worth it" (club interviewee).

Another comment by a club interviewee was "people that just turn up and play every week at the same time are not a club – there has to be more than that, there has to be a desire for development, for more opportunities for people and for more successes".

This subjective view that clubs have of themselves contrasts with the administrative view that local authorities and governing bodies have adopted.

Administrative Definitions

There is a wide range of criteria used to include or exclude sports clubs from affiliating to a range of organisations and applying for a range of grants and awards. These eligibility criteria reflect to some extent what the awarding organisations regard as 'acceptable minimum standards' for a club and are largely based around criteria that are relatively easy to administer and require a minimum of subjective evaluation.

Although some of these affiliation/accreditation/grant schemes have been in place for some time (often administered through local sports councils), the interviews revealed that many of these are being reviewed and new schemes launched. The

reviews seem to have been prompted by a number of factors: changing structures of local sports councils or local authorities, the allocation of resources for club development, and a general increase in concerns about child protection and public liability.

Governing Bodies

In general most governing bodies operate systems of affiliation for sports clubs and there are few criteria applied to affiliation. If a club says it is a club and wishes to be affiliated, in general the affiliation goes ahead. The governing bodies that were interviewed expressed the view that it is difficult to require clubs to conform to certain criteria as a condition of affiliation and to some extent this would go against the spirit of supporting volunteers: "We have limited resources and they have none. You can't impose conditions that take up their time and effort, you have to accept them as they are."

However, some interviewees also noted that "where clubs want to improve and develop we can offer them guidelines about the types of structures and activities that we think are good practice". In some governing bodies these have been developed into a formal programme for club development (Scottish Lawn Tennis Association) and in others it is a more informal system supported by development staff (Scottish Swimming). In both cases 'ideal types' of clubs are used to guide development, although there appears to be a good deal of flexibility within the broad frameworks.

The Scottish Lawn Tennis Association has launched in 2000 an LTA Club Vision initiative, part of which is a self-assessment 'health check' for clubs. This asks clubs to consider a range of issues and focuses on three areas: programmes, facilities and administration. The SLTA hopes that the initiative will encourage clubs to think more about what they are and what they do and it will also help to highlight examples of good practice in tennis clubs. While it is concerned that such initiatives can lead to branding or ranking of clubs, it is not the SLTA's intention that this should be pursued, rather that clubs themselves engage in a development process based around a general guiding framework. The initiative is supported by the community development officers and the existing regional networks and clubs that would perhaps struggle in some areas of the assessment are helped to develop.

Other governing bodies interviewed indicated that these types of club development programmes would be welcomed but unless they can be supported by local development staff, it was doubtful whether clubs would implement the good practice examples: "telling volunteers what to do and being unable to give any back-up to help them do it never goes down well" (governing body interviewee).

Some other governing bodies were trying out models of club development in local areas that they hoped to be able to use as a template for other areas. The development of these models/examples may have longer-term implications for defining what would be regarded as a good practice club.

Local Authorities/Local Sports Councils

Many local authorities and/or local sports councils have been involved in the production of club registers and directories. Often this has required a club to affiliate to a local sports council, that in some cases led to grant-aid or other support and often an assessment visit to ensure that the club was operating 'appropriately'. The precise approach varied from area to area but generally seems to have focused largely on administrative issues such as whether the club had a constitution, committee structure and a bank account. Other authorities attached conditions to their facility letting arrangements that excluded clubs that did not comply with certain conditions.

More recently, with the restructuring of many local authorities and local sports councils, these affiliation schemes and grant awarding systems have been reviewed. Although extensive consultation has been undertaken with clubs in reviewing these various initiatives, this has generally been led by the local authorities and has been developed within an – albeit fairly loose – agenda of how they believe clubs ought to be.

Two examples of recently launched initiatives are the Stirling Charter Club (launched May 2000) and the West Lothian Community Clubs Strategy (public consultation completed in 2000). The following descriptions are provided by the local authorities.

Stirling Sports Council, which has a service level agreement with Stirling Council to be the primary agent in club development, has recently launched a Charter Club initiative. The initiative grew from a previous accreditation scheme that had been prompted by the Dunblane tragedy as a way of keeping track of clubs in the area and ensuring that certain minimum standards with regard to vetting and club status were being implemented.

The Charter Club initiative has developed based on extensive consultation with clubs to identify the key criteria that should be used to identify a well-developed club. The following criteria emerged:

- Constitution (for example, are there mechanisms for the dissolution of its assets if the club folds?)
- Affiliation to the governing body
- Insurance (relevant public liability, travel, coach insurance)
- Structure (relevant committees, roles and remits for volunteers)
- Information (where do they operate; do they work with under-16s and if so are staff checked with the Scottish Criminal Records Office?)
- Bank accounts (do they have a minimum of two signatories, are audited accounts appropriate?)

The review of each area is in relation to the appropriateness for the club – its size, location, number of coaches, age groups of club members, etc. Clubs are required to submit a portfolio of evidence for each area and they can indicate the relevance of each area and explain their approach to its implementation.

The overall aim of the initiative is to "encourage the establishment and operation of structured, safe sports clubs, with the potential to develop and expand accordingly" (Stirling Sports Council documentation, 2000).

West Lothian Community Club Strategy was put out to public consultation in a discussion paper (April-May 2000). As with Stirling, the initiative is a development of the local authority and the local sport and recreation association membership databases. The initiative defines a community club as "a club which provides opportunities for the community to participate in their chosen activities and recognises its role in developing the potential of its members". It is recognised that the club can achieve this community objective through a wide variety of activities.

The club accreditation process is a part of the development plan and it is emphasised that it is the process of development towards accreditation that will be important. It is not intended to focus only on a set of criteria that clubs do and do not meet. There are three levels of accreditation: listed club (inclusion indirectly on completion of a pro forma), registered club and accredited club.

The latter two categories have a requirement for the following to be in place:

- membership of the local sports council
- procedures for child protection
- inclusive membership policy
- minimum number of committee members/coaches per membership

In addition, accredited clubs must have implemented:

- a development plan agreed in partnership with the Sports Unit

In return, clubs are given varying levels of support from the Sports Unit including:

- access to a resource centre
- quarterly newsletter
- access to a grant scheme
- assistance with lottery applications and other awards
- priority/subsidised facility use (for accredited clubs only)
- facility leases options (for accredited clubs only)

It is intended that a number of registered clubs may be given the support of a designated case officer to pilot development work towards achieving accreditation. This process would be evaluated and the initiative reviewed.

As with the other schemes described in this chapter, the intention is to promote positive change in clubs without having clubs fear the changes and withdraw from the process.

Like the governing bodies, a number of other local authorities that were interviewed were developing models of good practice for club development. In most cases this was happening on a sport-specific basis and was supported by sport-specific

development officers. Although this work is quite varied, a common rationale is a desire to consolidate a range of smaller clubs into a larger unit, largely, although not exclusively, to ease pressure on resources and create economies of scale.

Club Consolidation

In most cases local authority and governing body interviewees were keen to see a reduction in the number of sports clubs and an increase in the number of participants belonging to clubs in Scotland. The start of a trend to fewer but larger clubs was apparent in many of the sports included in the interview stage of this study. For example, the badminton, swimming and football clubs had each expanded their size considerably through different mechanisms: development of a multi-club facility run by one club but managed on behalf of others, multi-club performance squad shared with three clubs, and a city-wide club that brought together satellite clubs from eight sports centres. In the case of judo, the club moved from a 'session in a centre' approach to a new venue with a more identifiable club base (space for noticeboard, tuck shop etc) and increased participation in the club by volunteer parents as well as participants.

It was clear that as large numbers of small clubs compete for scarce facility time, fewer volunteers and for a share of participants' scarce leisure time, the incentives to collaborate with other smaller clubs to form stronger groupings will be obvious. However, all interviewees stressed that although this development is desirable, clubs remain largely voluntary organisations and those that do not wish to collaborate or perceive themselves to be sustainable without collaboration should be left to operate accordingly.

Further, in some sports, smaller clubs are necessary as safety can be compromised when larger numbers become involved. This issue was highlighted in the canoeing case study where although some large clubs exist, it can be an onerous task to divide the larger group into smaller units in order to comply with safety guidelines about the ratio of instructors to participants that can be on the water at one time.

These initiatives in governing bodies and local authorities do not in themselves define a 'sports club'. However, they point towards characteristics that are desirable to have in a sports club and as such provide some practical guidance about identifying good practice clubs. The point emphasised in each of these initiatives is that criteria need to be flexible and aspired to and clubs should not be in or out of a scheme based on a single application – it should be a process of change and development that is supported by professional staff from the local authority, governing body or the club itself.

However, it should be recognised that the club interviewees saw many of these types of initiatives as 'requirements' in order to access resources: "what we need for development are the resources; we don't need the structures and policies – they are just a means to an end" (club interviewee).

Summary

There can be no single definition of a sports club. There are a number of different ways of looking at clubs: theory focuses on club functions (what clubs do, what is their purpose); administration concentrates on defining clubs by structures (how clubs operate); and clubs define themselves in largely cultural/ideological terms (what they value). It is perhaps this latter view that is the most relevant for any club development programme. However, to put this view at the core of development will require a good deal of flexibility and a willingness to embrace clubs' differences and sometimes unique cultures.

It would be limiting to regard sports clubs as being the 'voluntary sector in sport' as most have a good deal of overlap with the local authority sector and some are located wholly within this sector or the commercial sector. Dependence on local authority facilities also alters their ability to operate like other voluntary groups. Further, given that clubs do not regard themselves as working in the voluntary sector, it might be useful to revisit and strengthen the concept of clubs as amateur sports organisations rather than voluntary sector organisations. The original derivation of amateur, 'to do something for the love of it', would seem to have more widespread relevance to clubs' own perceptions of what they do than definitions of the voluntary sector.

The diversity of functions, structures, resources, values and ideologies is perhaps the strength of sports clubs. Although individual clubs can be quite narrow in whom they cater for, collectively they provide a wide range of options for individuals to seek out the kind of atmosphere and activity that they enjoy. Whilst clubs that discriminate in terms of membership certainly should not be supported, it does not seem desirable that all clubs should be encouraged to cater for everyone's tastes.

This diversity is being recognised in a number of accreditation and affiliation schemes but it will be important that current schemes are monitored to ensure that clubs do not lose their unique characters in attempts to develop stronger structures across the board. Minimum standards should not lead to 'standard' clubs.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT DO SPORTS CLUBS PROVIDE?

In the postal survey, clubs were asked to provide information about the range of sports provided and the level at which these sports were played in their club. Where a club offered more than one sport, information was gathered for each sport mentioned. Clubs were also asked about the type of values that underpin the club (such as enjoyment, education, competitive success) as a guide to why certain types of activity might be provided. The issues raised from the survey were then further explored in the interviews.

In returning to a discussion of the survey findings, the limitations of the data should be repeated as the data reflect only those clubs that responded to the survey. It is theoretically possible that non-respondents and clubs that were not identified and

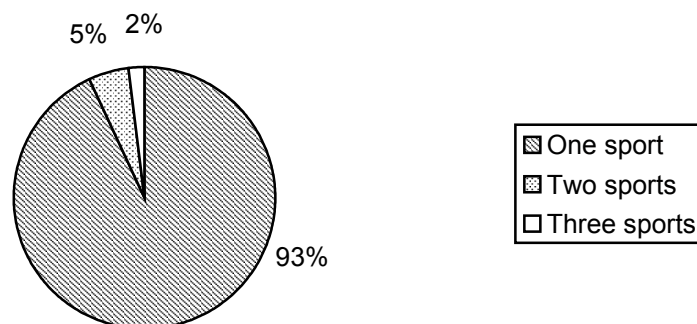
included in the questionnaire mailing have characteristics that differ from the respondents.

Sports Provided

The overwhelming majority (93%) of responding clubs regarded themselves as single-sport clubs and only 7% indicated that they offered more than one sport in their club (Fig 1). None of the responding clubs offered more than three sports.

Where more than one sport was offered, the combinations that seem to be most commonly mentioned included badminton and table tennis, cricket and hockey, tennis and squash. It was also evident that golf and football were added as second sports to a wide range of other types of sports, suggesting that golf societies and more ad hoc golf outings and 5-a-side football teams may be prevalent offshoots from other sports clubs.

Figure 1: Number of Sports for Which Responding Clubs Cater



Base number: 3,485

Some interviewees expressed aspirations to add other sports into their club but were hesitant to do so until they felt that they had more stable and well-resourced opportunities for participation in their own sport – in particular an adequate allocation of facility time. Further, although volunteers were confident about the needs of their own sport, they were sometimes uncertain about the needs of other sports: "we're not sure if tennis would be able to use our all-weather pitches" and "we have somebody in the club that plays hockey and they said that there might be a club looking for a pitch".

The general fear of one sport 'taking over' another sport in terms of dominating facility access or being more attractive to new participants was a general concern that underpinned a reluctance to add sports to existing clubs. Further, some interviewees believed that other sports would not want to join in with their club because historically it had been strong in a single sport and it would be difficult to

break that image. As one club interviewee said, "why would they come here and be the poor relation if they could have their own club somewhere else?".

However, a number of club interviewees noted: "It would be good to have more choice for the younger ones – they sometimes start playing football and find that it's not for them. It would be good if we had something else to offer them." The idea that multi-sport clubs would be good for young people was widespread, as was the general notion that if young people try out a number of sports they are likely to find one that they stay involved with.

Interestingly this multi-sport concept was not extended to adult participation. It seemed to be generally accepted that, in the case of adults, choices about sports and clubs were settled and movement between sports or the introduction of new sports was not regarded as being relevant.

From the interviews it was clear that clubs do not generally perceive themselves to be 'sports' clubs – rather they regard themselves as, for example, 'football' clubs, 'basketball' clubs and 'tennis' clubs. It was clear that moving from a specific sport to generic sports would require considerable changes in culture as well as structure.

Sports

Although responding clubs mentioned a wide range of sports – 67 in total – most sports were offered by a small proportion of clubs. With the exception of bowls (offered by 20% of responding clubs) and football (offered by 16%), all other sports were offered by fewer than one in ten responding clubs (Table 6).

Golf (offered by 8% of responding clubs) and badminton (offered by 6%) were the third and fourth most common sports available, with swimming (4%) the fifth most common.

A total of 26 sports (including 15 sports in Table 6) were each offered by between one and three per cent of responding clubs, including sports such as hockey (3%), cricket (3%), angling (3%), tennis (3%), rugby (2%), athletics (2%) and curling (2%).

Table 6: Top 20 Sports Offered by Responding Clubs

	Percentage of responding clubs
Bowls	20
Football	16
Golf	8
Badminton	6
Swimming	4
Hockey	3
Cricket	3
Tennis	3
Angling	3
Rugby	2
Athletics	2
Curling	2

Basketball	2
Shooting	2
Judo	2
Mountaineering	2
Cycling	2
Equestrian sports	1
Karate	1
Sailing	1

Base number: 3,485

Note: A further 47 sports were mentioned each by one per cent or fewer clubs

Thirty-six sports were each offered by fewer than one per cent of responding clubs. While these may be regarded as 'minority sports', in the sense that they were offered in a small proportion of responding clubs, they nonetheless include sports such as volleyball, netball, shinty, skiing and orienteering.

From the local authority interviews it was clear that having a large number of clubs providing a diverse range of sports has strengths as well as weaknesses. In their role as facility providers local authorities are faced with a large number of clubs competing for space and they are generally unable to cater for all demands.

Various approaches are being developed to address this issue, but "it isn't easy, there is no real answer and whatever we do will take some time to be accepted by the clubs" (local authority interviewee). The accreditation schemes described in the previous chapter are, in some cases, linked to priority use of services and facilities in an attempt to create a hierarchy of access in order to manage demand. Other initiatives encourage clubs to work together and to undertake some or all of their activities as a larger community club. Within the interviews there were a number of examples of these types of initiatives in a range of individual sports, but no examples of multi-sport integration.

The Scottish Football Association, in partnership with North Ayrshire Council, is currently supporting a pilot project in Kilwinning to bring together 27 football teams in the town into a single community football club. The local council has passed over day-to-day running of a large outdoor recreation area to the club (the council remains responsible for strategic maintenance) as an incentive to encourage the various teams to come together. With this carrot of 'their own' facility the clubs have met and agreed a management structure for the community club. A draft constitution has been agreed and plans are being drafted for the redevelopment of the area to alter the layout and maximise the number of pitches and create storage and training space. This pilot project will be monitored by the SFA and it is hoped that if successful other local authorities will adopt similar approaches.

Governing Body Affiliation

Whether a club is affiliated to a governing body affects to some extent what the club is able to do. For example, in all sports included in the interview stage of the project, affiliation to the governing body is a prerequisite for participation in competitive events. Further, affiliation can offer a range of benefits including insurance cover, access to coach education, advice about a range of issues and in some cases support from governing body development staff such as the SFA project described above. Clubs that are not affiliated to a governing body are potentially more difficult to include in development initiatives: they can be difficult to identify and in multi-agency development groups that include governing body staff, they are often left out.

Possibly because of these benefits, there were high levels of affiliation to governing bodies of sport with around nine out of ten (91%) responding clubs indicating that their first sport (in 93% of cases the only sport on offer) was affiliated to a governing body (Table 7). For the small proportion of responding clubs that offered more than one sport, the sports listed second and third had lower levels of governing body affiliation: two-thirds (67%) for the second sport and around half (47%) for the clubs listing a third sport. Given that over half of the initial contacts for clubs were provided by sources other than governing bodies, it has been assumed that the responses were not necessarily biased in favour of governing body affiliated clubs.

Table 7: Affiliation to Governing Bodies of Sport

	Sport 1	Sport 2	Sport 3
	Percentage of responding clubs		
Yes	91	67	47
No	9	33	53
<i>Base number:</i>	<i>(3,462)</i>	<i>(225)</i>	<i>(70)</i>

Among the interviewees it was clear that affiliation for clubs can result in considerable levels of support from governing body staff or it can be little more than returning a subscription and having an entry in a handbook every year. Club interviewees did not seem to expect a great deal of support from the governing body, although they referred to other clubs that they said were “always asking what they get for their money”.

The interviewees saw governing bodies as largely concerned with the elite level of their sport and acknowledged that the pressure to produce international success and the new Institutes of Sport had consumed more of the governing bodies’ time in recent years. Some indicated that they now felt that the “pendulum is swinging back to the grass roots again – probably because they recognise that success needs investment at every level”.

Affiliation and Sports

Given the high level of affiliation to governing bodies among responding clubs as a whole, it is not surprising that the levels of affiliation were also high on a sport-by-sport basis. Only among the racquet sports of squash (74% affiliated), badminton (75% affiliated) and tennis (81% affiliated) was the level of affiliation to governing bodies noticeably lower than that of the overall figure (91%). Water-skiing (50%), windsurfing (66%) and surfing (66%) were the only sports to have considerably lower levels of affiliation than these racquet sports, but as these sports were offered in a very small number of clubs, this finding should be treated with caution.

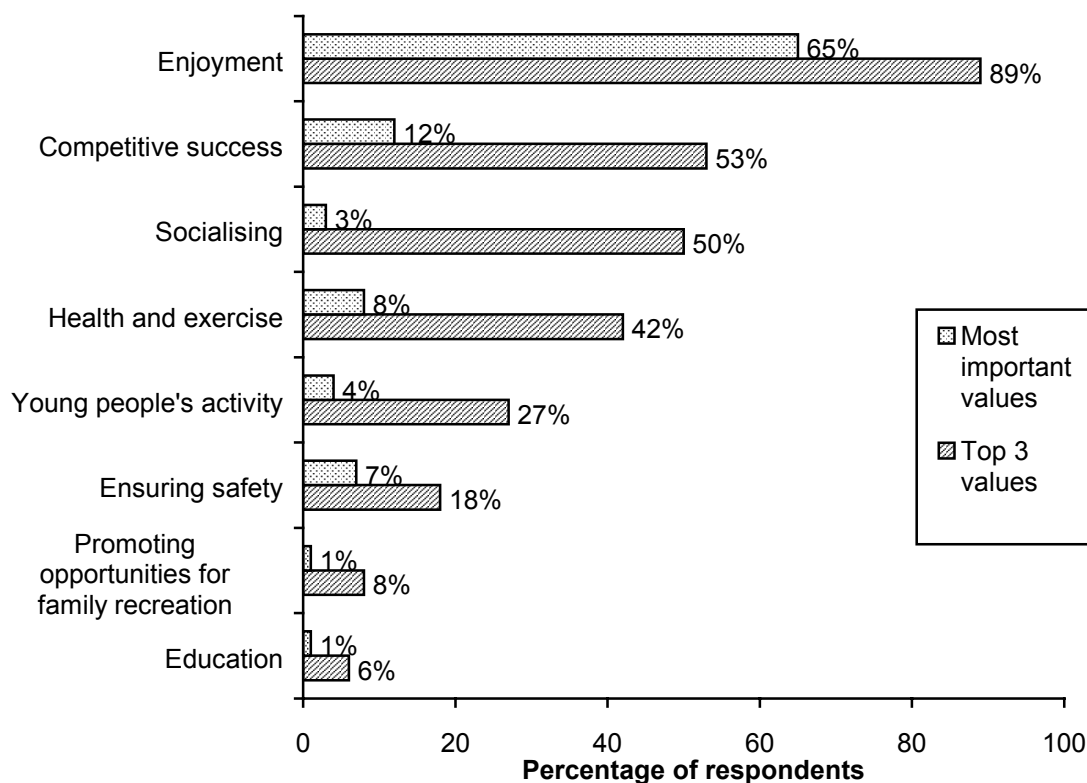
In the case of badminton, it was acknowledged by the governing body and by the sport-specific development officer in a local authority that there are a large number of badminton 'clubs' that are solely recreational and do not really have the usual characteristics of a club. For these clubs, there is a limited desire to develop or compete with others outside their club and therefore no perceived need to affiliate.

Club Values

As an indicator of why clubs might wish to provide certain opportunities, a question was asked about the values important to the club. The first part asked about three elements (from a list of eight supplied) that best reflected the club's values for the sports it provided, and the second part asked which of these was the most important value. In both cases, 'enjoyment' emerged as the most widespread value with 89 per cent of clubs mentioning that it was important and two-thirds (65%) stating that it was the most important value (Fig 2).

The concept of 'enjoyment' was not further defined in the questionnaire and respondents may have had quite different interpretations. For example, in the interviews it was clear that for some clubs enjoyment could apply to both competitive and recreational activity, but for others it implied a less competitive club culture. The interviewees indicated that there was a distinction in clubs between 'serious' competition and "just hoping that you might win occasionally".

Figure 2: Club Values



Base numbers: Top 3 values = 3,450 Most important value = 2,885

Although only one other value – competitive success – was agreed as the **most** important value by at least one in ten responding clubs (12%), a number of other values were regarded generally as important. In terms of sports-related outcomes, 53 per cent valued competitive success and 18 per cent valued the promotion of safety in their sport. In terms of more personal outcomes, 42 per cent valued the provision of opportunities for health and exercise, the opportunities afforded by sports clubs for socialising were valued by 50 per cent and some (8%) also commented on the opportunities for family recreation. The provision of activity for young people was valued by around a quarter of the clubs (27%) and the associated educational aspects of clubs were mentioned by 6 per cent of respondents.

There was little variation in the important values based on the sports offered. Only in relation to ensuring safety in their sport was there any real distinctions with 74 per cent of sub-aqua, 68 per cent of hang/paragliding, 60 per cent of American football and 44 per cent of shooting clubs stating that this was their most important value.

The interviews found that while some 'values' were given a lower priority than others, this was in relation to the overall ethos and rationale for the club. A number of club interviewees noted that at certain times safety is paramount but is not the club's rationale for existing. Also 'young people's activity' and 'education' have greater priorities among some sections of a club, but not necessarily the club as a whole.

Involvement in Competitive Activity

Competitive sports activity was defined in the questionnaire as that which involved competition external to the club. The activity ranged from locally-based matches or leagues through to national and international events.

Levels of involvement in competitive sport were high for most sports offered in the responding clubs. Almost all (88%) responding clubs were involved in competitive activity for the first sport listed (Table 8). For the small proportion of responding clubs that offered a second or third sport, these sports were also undertaken competitively although to a lesser extent than the first named sport.

Table 8: Involvement in External Competitions

	Sport 1	Sport 2	Sport 3
	Percentage of responding clubs		
Yes	88	70	61
No	12	30	39
<i>Base number:</i>	<i>(3,450)</i>	<i>(227)</i>	<i>(69)</i>

For clubs that were not affiliated to governing bodies (9% of respondents), the level of involvement in competitions was lower. Half (53%) of unaffiliated clubs were involved in competitive activity compared to 93 per cent of clubs that were affiliated. Given that governing body affiliation is a prerequisite for involvement in competition in most sports, this figure is perhaps not surprising – those with limited desire to compete with others are less likely to view affiliation as a benefit to them.

It is important to note from the interviews that while competitive success was rarely the *raison d'être* for a club it was nonetheless regarded as a central feature of a club and an aspect that distinguished a sports club from more casual sports sessions and classes. Competition was not regarded as a wholly 'serious' activity unless club members wanted it to be so. The notion of committing yourself to the level that suited your personal motivation and circumstances was mentioned in a number of interviews: "we like folk to do well in the club but they have to want it for themselves; if they don't enjoy it [competition] there's no point". The ethos of amateur sport strongly underpinned the competitive element of the clubs interviewed.

There were differences between the team and individual sports in the options for competition. In team sports a willingness to take part in competitions was almost inescapable, except in the larger clubs that could afford to support a wholly recreational section (this was also referred to as a rationale for having larger clubs). In individual activities competition was encouraged in clubs as a way of developing skills but when the level of competition increased it was up to the individual to decide whether they wanted to commit themselves to the training required for success.

Competitive Involvement and Sports

Perhaps not surprisingly, the sports with lower levels of involvement in competitive activity were expressive activities such as movement (30%) and dance (39%) and outdoor activities such as mountaineering (7%) and sub-aqua (2%). Some of the other outdoor activities including canoeing (47%) and skiing (69%) had higher levels of competitive activity than these, although still lower than that of the aggregate responses (88%).

Among indoor sports activities, martial arts and badminton were the only sports where the levels of involvement in external competition were noticeably lower than for the aggregate responses – 63 per cent for martial arts and 73 per cent for badminton compared to 88 per cent overall.

In the interviews there were general differences in attitude towards competition between the various sports with perhaps swimming clubs having the most 'serious' competitive outlook (reflected in the nature and intensity of training required from a relatively young age). It was explained by an interviewee that because there are so many opportunities for casual/recreational swimming without joining a club, then clubs do not need to accommodate individuals seeking this type of casual swimming activity.

Level of Competition

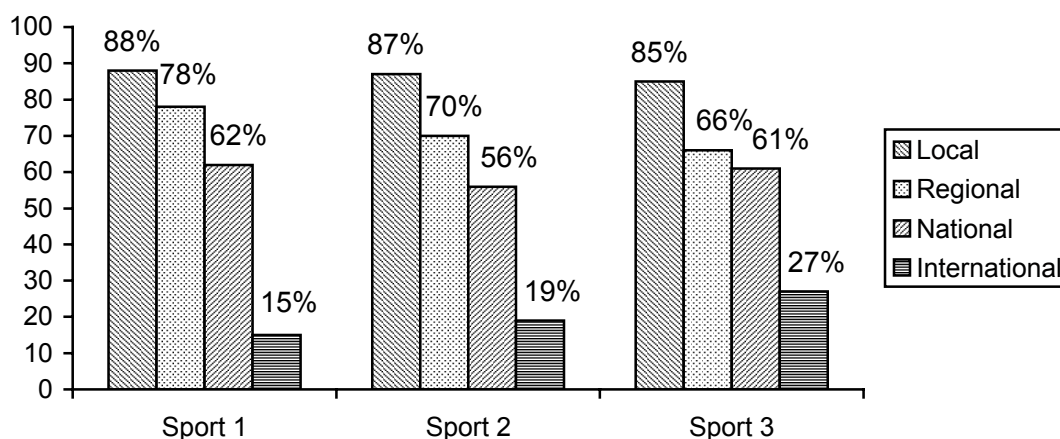
The level and nature of competition varied among sports – for example, national level activity may be Scottish level in some sports and British level in others. Further, although a league may be a national league, much of the activity may be organised on a fairly local level. The responses to this question are therefore intended to provide only a broad indication of the level of competitive activity in which clubs are involved.

Among the responding clubs that were involved in external competitive activity, nearly two-thirds (62%) were involved in competitive sport at national level for the first sport listed, with larger proportions involved at regional (78%) and local (88%) levels. Although a much smaller proportion of responding clubs were involved in international competitive activity for their first listed sport, they still accounted for 15 per cent of those clubs involved in any external competitive activity. (Fig 3)

The level of competitive activity for responding clubs with a second and third sport was broadly similar to that found for the first listed sport. Although the levels of involvement in international activity appear to be greater among the responding clubs with second and third sports, this may simply reflect much smaller sample sizes.

Also, for the small proportion of responding clubs that were not affiliated to governing bodies but were involved in external competitive activity (half of the 9% of respondents that were non-affiliated clubs) the level of activity was generally lower.

Figure 3: Level of External Competition by Clubs that Took Part in Any



Base numbers: 3,024

154

41

Base: Those responding clubs that took part in any external competition events, matches or leagues

with 45 per cent involved in regional competitions, 22 per cent involved in national level competitive activity and 10 per cent involved in international activity. In the case of the latter this can include, for example, athletics club members participating in overseas marathons.

Level of Competition and Sports

For most sports involved in any competitive activity, the level at which they engaged largely mirrored that of the aggregate responses. Where this differed was in relation to the involvement of some individual sports in international-level competition. For example, in wrestling (86% involved in international-level competition), boxing (86%) and weightlifting (70%), well over half of the responding clubs that offered any external competitive activity were involved in international competition. Similarly, clubs offering rowing (57%) and orienteering (58%) had higher levels of involvement in international competition. Among more widely provided sports, athletics (37%), swimming (31%) and gymnastics (28%) also had a greater proportion of responding clubs involved in international-level competition.

Interviews with governing bodies and clubs indicated that the levels of involvement in international competition reported in the postal survey were very high (in five of the seven sports where in-depth interviews were undertaken) and it was possible that responses were misinformed or exaggerated. For swimming and judo it was agreed that the opportunities to take part in international-level competition at various age groups meant that it was feasible for a large proportion of clubs to have at least one international-level participant. In these sports, having a club member achieve at these levels was regarded as an important role model for other, especially young, club members.

As there are some sports, such as swimming, where there are a number of opportunities to participate regularly at a high level, there is a demand for regular high quality training. To address this need – one that can rarely be met within every

small club that perhaps has only a few high-level participants – governing bodies and local authorities having been developing squad training sessions that link participants from a number of clubs.

In East Lothian a swim training squad has been set up to provide training and coaching for competitive swimmers that have minimum qualifying times – usually based on qualifying times for national events. Three swimming clubs have collaborated and share the management of the squad and support the squad coaching. They also share access to their allocated pool time that previously would have been used only by their own swimmers; this provides more access time overall. The squad is directed by a sport-specific development officer who coordinates a programme of coaching and liaises with the local council on facility access.

This sharing of facilities, coaches and management of competitive training and events reduces the onus on any one club and provides opportunities for talented swimmers to come together but still retain their own club identity. Club organisers also thought that to have the squad was an incentive for other swimmers to train more as they too wanted to join.

Summary

Almost all clubs in the postal survey were single-sport clubs. The possibilities for developing multi-sport clubs seem very limited without considerable structural and cultural changes in the way that facilities in particular are managed. Clubs do not seem unwilling to consider development of their clubs but fear that because of current resource constraints they may lose out – the same small cake would be divided among more interests.

The possibilities for clubs with the same sport to work together on all or some aspects of what they offer would seem a much more realistic intermediate step. Given that clubs see themselves as a **sport** club and not a **sports** club, this type of single-sport development would require less of a cultural and more of a structural change.

It is possible to speculate that adults in clubs are wary of adding other sports for fear of losing their identity (as club leaders/organisers) and their ability to control the limited resources available to them. Even where joint working has been approached slowly and sensitively, an interviewee reported that "it hasn't been without a few barneys along the way".

It is likely that many single-sport clubs would acknowledge a need for multi-sport clubs for children – places where children could try out a range of sports activities without any pressure to commit to regular training for any one sport. However, it would be important to create links between these children's multi-sport clubs and more adult-orientated single-sport clubs, where young people may gravitate if they find a particular activity they enjoy and wish to continue.

However, this should not lead to the conclusion that single-sport clubs are for adults only. Many clubs cater well for children and are prepared to deal with a high turnover of children experimenting with involvement in that sport.

Although competition is important to clubs it would generally come second place to enjoyment and fun: "if you don't enjoy the competition then don't compete". Those that want to train and compete 'seriously' are supported and encouraged to do so in as far as clubs can accommodate this. However, in recognition of the difficulties that clubs can have in supporting perhaps only a few talented performers, initiatives have been developed to support clubs to work together to provide more intensive training opportunities.

CHAPTER 4: WHO ARE SPORTS CLUBS' MEMBERS?

Clubs are what they are and do what they do in part as a result of the people that join them. The size and scale of clubs as well as the age structure, gender mix and playing abilities of members all influence what a club is and what a club does.

In the postal survey, clubs were asked a series of questions about the total membership of their club, the number of playing and non-playing members and, for the playing members only, a breakdown was requested of the age and sex of members. Other indicators such as trends in membership over the past five years and the existence of waiting lists were also used to provide an impression of changes in club membership.

Club Size

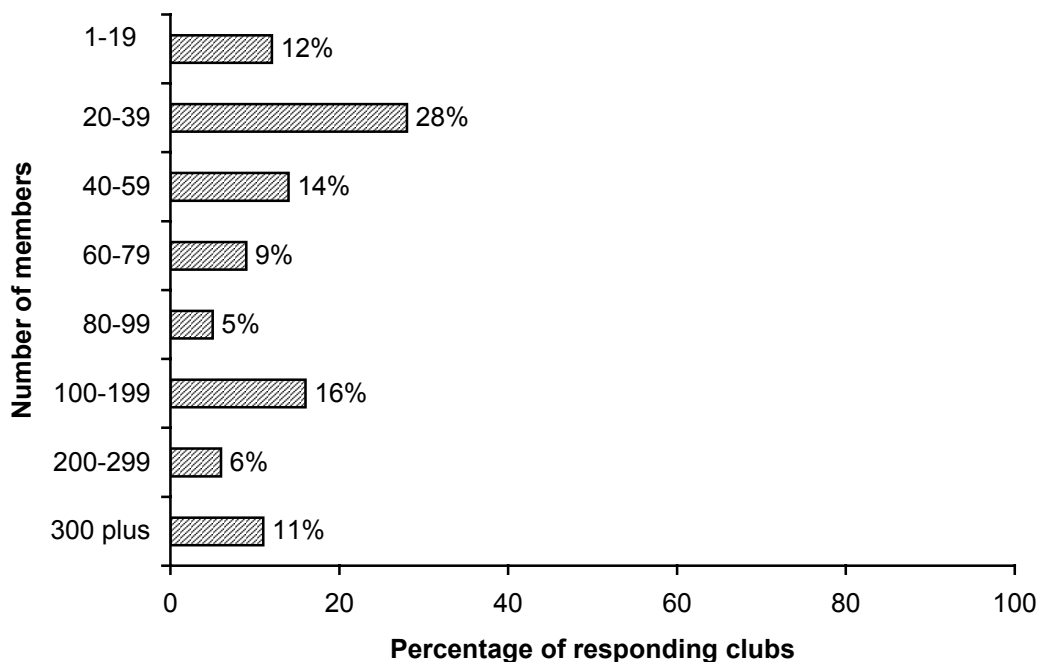
Responding clubs varied considerably in size from the smallest with four members to the largest with 1,920 members. The average total number of members in a club was 133, although this figure is skewed by a small proportion of very large clubs. For example, over half the responding clubs (54%) had fewer than 60 members and two-thirds (68%) fewer than 100 members. However, around one in ten clubs (11%) had 300 or more members, thus increasing the overall average membership. (Fig 4)

One sport in particular stood out in terms of the high number of members per club: golf with an average of over 500. It was also the third largest sport in the sample, as the main sport for 7½ per cent of the responding clubs. If golf were to be excluded from the calculation, the average club size would be nearer to 100.

Interviewees indicated that the absolute number of members in a club was not of real concern to them, except if the number ever dropped to a level where the club was no longer sustainable. To some extent club interviewees had perceptions of the club as busy or quiet but these perceptions related to the sport in question, the location for the activity (too crowded or comfortable) and the trends in membership over the years (more or less than in the past). In the canoeing club, the number of members was also affected by safety issues and ratios of coaches/leaders to participants on the water. Again there were perceptual issues about safety and crowding: "sometimes you think, I hope no one else joins for a while because the water just seems too crowded" (club interviewee).

It was acknowledged in the team sports that absolute numbers in the club were important in being able to offer activity at a variety of levels – for example, a recreational team or an over-35s team rather than just a single adult competitive team. However, where clubs grew to the extent that they could offer more sections within the club this appeared to be a fairly organic process rather than being driven by a development plan. As one club interviewee commented: "We started off with just the kids and then a few fathers got involved and started their own team. As the kids got older they became our youth section and more younger kids joined."

Figure 4: Club Membership Numbers



Base number: 3,396 Average mean number of members: 133

Club Size and Sports

The total number of members in a club varied considerably by sport. The sports with the largest average membership appear to have at least one of two characteristics: a large social element to the sport (golf, rugby, bowls and tennis) or a specialist facility requirement that limits the number of clubs that can operate (hence a greater demand for membership): sailing, ice skating, parachuting, rowing and weightlifting. Each of these sports had an average membership of more than 100: golf (average 535), rugby (240), sailing (187), bowls (165), parachuting (150), tennis (130), weightlifting (118), ice skating (117) and rowing (103).

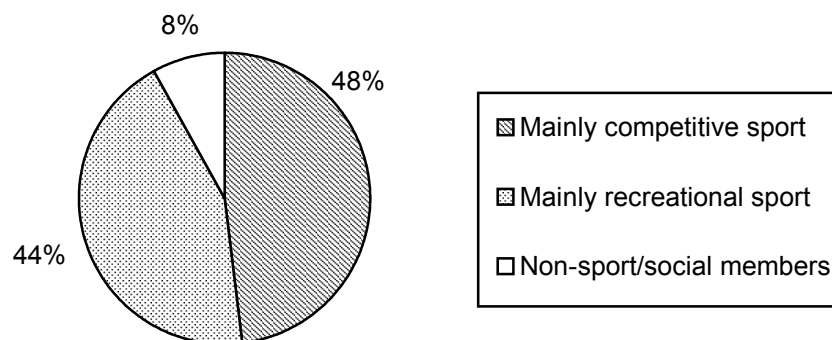
Sports with an average membership of fewer than 50 included the indoor team sports of basketball (41), netball (33) and volleyball (30) and the individual indoor activities of badminton (31), trampolining (30) and fencing (27).

The frequency of participation at clubs was highlighted as an issue by interviewees in relation to the overall number of club members. For example, members of team sports are usually expected to participate in the club at least every week, therefore the number of members often reflects the at one time capacity of the club: "if more people turned up then more people would find themselves sitting on the bench". In contrast members of tennis clubs sometimes renew their membership but hardly ever play – in this context membership numbers do not reflect the number of regular participants at the club.

Playing and Non-playing Members

The total membership of the clubs included all members and the sports with the highest average membership were those believed to have a strong social element and also perhaps a less frequent participation profile. A further question asked respondents about the type of activities undertaken by members (including solely social members). Overall, it was estimated by the responding clubs that around 8% of their members were social members only. Among the other members, just under half (48%) were thought to be members involved mainly in competitive activity and slightly fewer (44%) were regarded as mainly recreational participants. (Fig 5)

Figure 5: Club Members' Nature of Involvement in Responding Clubs



Base number: 3,002 Where club calculations did not sum to 100%, the data were coded as 'missing'

Among the interviewees there did not seem to be much scope for social membership of their clubs. It was recognised that few clubs can offer the types of social facilities that would attract social members. This was the case even for clubs that had their own clubhouses: "They are so run down these days, people wouldn't come to a place like here just to have a drink and a chat." However, some interviewees noted that they have members that come along to the club to play only infrequently and largely for social reasons of keeping in touch with the club. It was explained that sometimes members' family circumstances change or they move house or they get a bit older and although they want to stay in touch with the club, in practice they cannot make the same level of commitment. However, they often pay their subscription annually and on paper appear to be full members of the club.

In the commercial clubs, individuals' frequency of participation is monitored and used as a guide to when waiting lists should be used or when special incentives to join the club should be withdrawn. It is accepted that often more than half the membership will participate infrequently which means that the clubs can have a larger membership than would be the case if everyone attended more frequently. Therefore, facility (often a gym) capacity is explicitly what drives the scale and nature of membership in these clubs, similar to the much less explicit and more intuitive facility crowding that informs other types of sports clubs.

Nature of Involvement and Sports

The sports with a higher than average proportion of social members also had a higher than average proportion of competitive members (and consequently a lower proportion of recreational members). This suggests that in these sports (cricket, rugby and rowing in particular) it may be difficult to have a recreational involvement following the end of a competitive 'career' – hence competitive members move to being social members.

In contrast, in sports where there is often assumed to be a large element of socialising (golf and tennis in particular), there were lower levels of social membership as well as lower than average numbers of competitive members. However, there was a much higher than average proportion of recreational members. This suggests that in some sports members may have long sports careers as 'recreational **participants**' rather than a transition from competitor to non-participant social member. However, interviews did suggest that the social facilities provided in clubhouses are generally quite poor and often people would "rather play a game than sit inside a dismal room doing nothing".

Among a number of team sports there was a distinctive pattern of high proportions of competitive members and few recreational or social members. This applied especially to football, hockey, netball, volleyball and basketball and in part may be explained by these sports having a smaller proportion of clubs owning their own facilities than found among the aggregate responses. In these cases interviewees confirmed that facility hire limits the nature and extent of socialising and the availability of space for recreational activity.

Age and Gender of 'Playing' Club Members

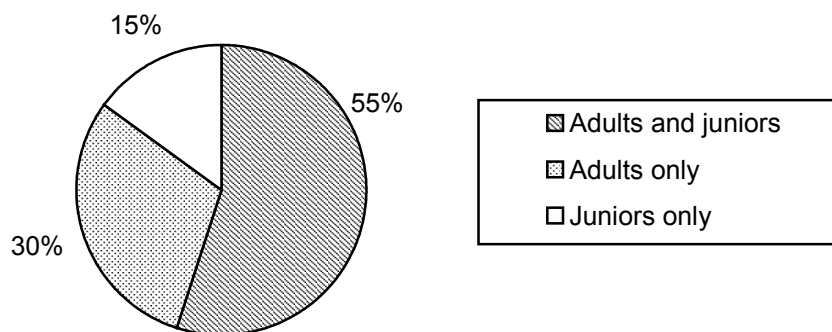
In the postal survey, clubs were asked for details of the age and sex of the playing members only. These data were pre-coded into the following age groups: under 12 (primary school ages), 12-17 (secondary school ages), 18-34 (young adults), 35-54 (adults), 55 years and over (older adults). In some cases this information was unknown to the clubs – particularly in the case of adult members – and the data should therefore be interpreted cautiously.

Age Group of Playing Members

Just over half the responding clubs (55%) had both adult (defined as aged 18 and over) and junior playing members. Among the remaining responding clubs, 30 per cent had adults only and 15 per cent juniors only. (Fig 6)

The sports offered by the clubs with the highest levels of adult-only playing membership were broadly those that would be regarded as having a high risk/safety factor (mountaineering 70% adult only and sub-aqua 50%). Other sports offered in clubs with a higher level of adult-only members included those with requirements for a high level of technical ability, strength, endurance or stamina (weightlifting 72%, rowing 64% and triathlon 58%).

Figure 6: Adult and Junior Playing Members in Responding Clubs



Base number: 3,217

Perhaps surprisingly, 48 per cent of responding cycling clubs had adult-only members although safety may be an issue. The sports offered by the clubs with the highest levels of junior-only membership were gymnastics (57% junior members only), swimming (31%) and football (29%).

It was clear from the interviews that clubs often cater largely for adults (although there may be a small number of 'older juniors') or for young people. Although 55 per cent of responding clubs commented that they had adult and junior members, interviewees noted that there tends to be a bias towards one or the other or there will be two sections – adults and juniors – often kept quite separate in terms of when they meet and who organises the activities.

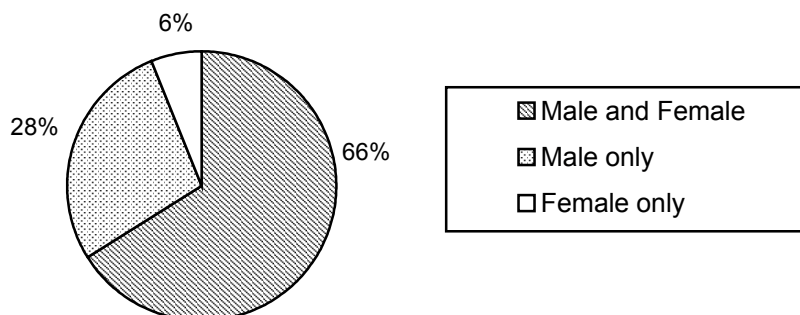
Further, the adult participants and junior participants do not always mix well – the adults often want a quieter atmosphere where they can get on with their sport without interruption. Similarly the juniors want to be around other juniors and, as one interviewee noted, "they don't want their mum and dad and their next door neighbour watching their every move – they often come here to get away from the house and play at being more grown up".

In this context it is perhaps not surprising that their activities are generally separated in clubs or in fact provided in different clubs. An interviewee commented: "It's very difficult to manage teenagers – you have to recognise that they enjoy just messing about and actually that's mostly how they learn. If you try to get them to listen and be quiet, they just leave." It would appear that catering well for a teenage market may require broader youth development skills as well as sports development skills.

Gender

Two-thirds (66%) of the responding clubs had both male and female playing members. Just over a quarter (28%) had male members only, but clubs with female-only members were much less common (6%). (Fig 7)

Figure 7: Gender of Playing Members in Responding Clubs



Base number: 3,217

The sports offered by the clubs with the greatest proportion of male-only playing members were mostly team sports, including football (79% male-only clubs), cricket (69%), rugby (58%) and basketball (47%). In these team sports, the females that were involved in 'mixed' clubs were generally school-aged or young adults. There were distinctive male-only clubs among some non-team sports including table tennis (47%), angling (47%) and cycling (39%).

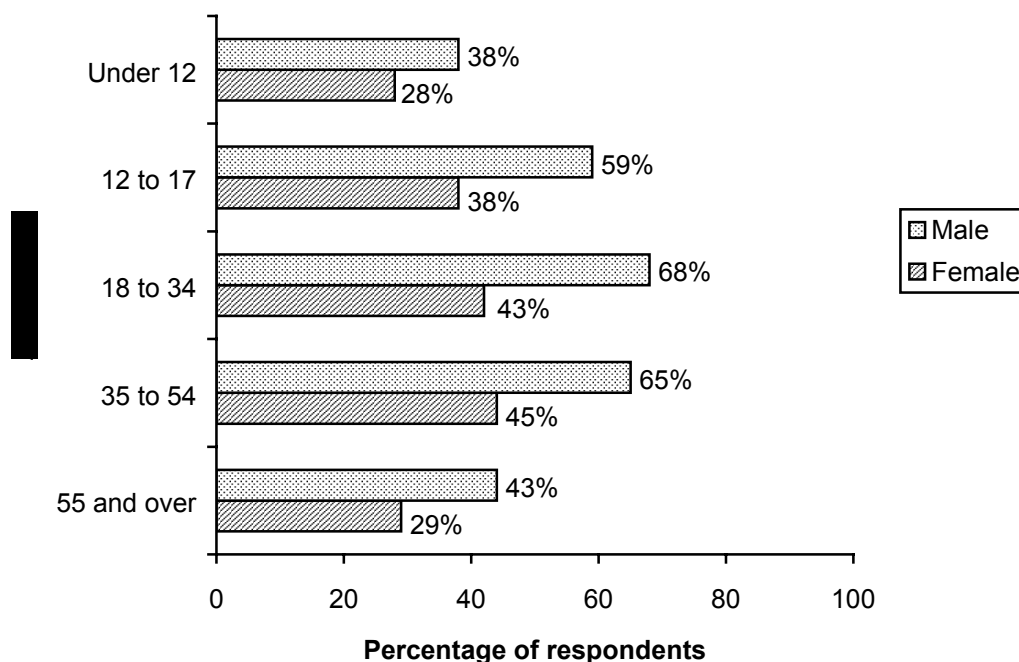
The sports with the greatest proportions of female-only playing membership were, perhaps predictably, netball (95% female-only clubs), hockey (37%) and gymnastics (29%).

In the case of mixed clubs, there were rarely equal proportions of male/female members. An interviewee noted that "there are rarely enough girls to have a girls section so we have a couple play with the boys if they are keen". However, as another interviewee pointed out, school-aged girls "really need to be determined to be good at the sport" or else the boys of the same age "make life so difficult for them that they just leave". It was thought that from the ages of around 11-16 it was very difficult to have boys and girls in the same session: "They just bicker with each other all the time then at the magical age of 16 they quieten down and it's much easier to manage."

Age and Gender

Figure 8 indicates the proportion of responding clubs with playing members in each age/sex group. Overall, responding clubs had a greater proportion of males than females in each of the age groups. This was especially the case in the 12-17, 18-34 and 35-54 age groups where the proportion of clubs that had females was around two-thirds that of clubs with males. Around 60 per cent and over of responding clubs reported that they had male members in each of these age groups but only around 40 per cent of clubs reported having female members in these age groups.

Figure 8: Responding Clubs with Male/Female Playing Members, by Age Group



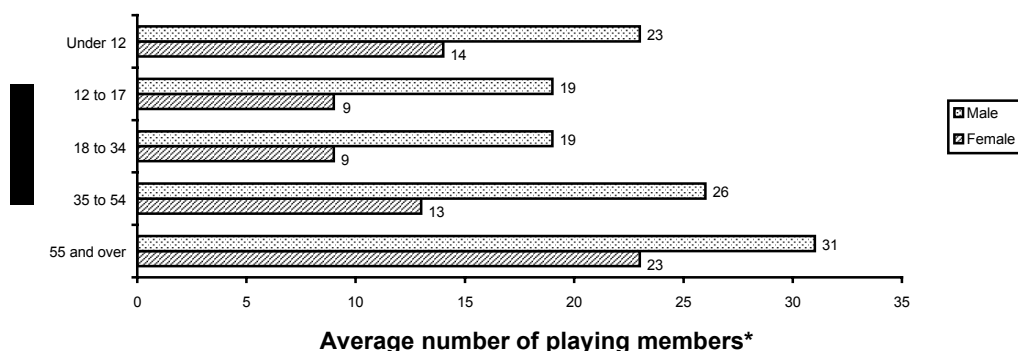
Base number: 3,240

The differences between the proportion of males and females in clubs was not as great among the youngest and oldest age groups. For example, around 40% of responding clubs had males in the youngest and oldest age groups and 30% had females in these groups.

It is important to recognise the relationship between the proportion of clubs having **any** playing members in an age/sex group and the **average number** of playing members in the group. For example, although a greater proportion of clubs had some playing members in the three male age groups between 12 and 54 years, the average number of playing members in these categories was smaller than for the youngest and oldest age groups. Young children and older adults are therefore concentrated into fewer clubs. Interviewees suggested that this was because there were so few clubs that offered a good atmosphere for young children or for older people. As one interviewee commented, "sport has never really been very child or pensioner friendly".

Among the responding clubs that had playing members in these age/sex categories, the greatest average number for both males and females was found in the aged 55 and over category (Fig 9). For both males and females, the lowest average numbers of playing members were found in the 12-17 and 18-34 age groups (although a greater proportion of clubs cater for these age groups – see Fig 8).

Figure 9: Average Number of Male/Female Playing Members, by Age Group



Base number: 3,240 * This is an average based only on clubs that indicated that they had playing members in these age categories (see Fig 8)

The range of commitments of younger adults – education, work, family, home-building – means that fewer can participate. However, given that these 12-34 age groups are regarded as the time when people will be most physically active (and most competitively successful), a wide range of sports have their teams and events structured around them. It is therefore likely that there are more participation opportunities to cater for age groups most constrained by time commitments.

Age/Gender and Sports

The average number of males and females, of various ages, involved as playing members of clubs varied according to sport. Among the youngest group of boys (under 12), football (clubs that had playing members who were boys under 12 had an average of 58), martial arts (53) and rugby (47) attracted much greater numbers than clubs generally (23) who had any members in this age/sex group. Similarly, for girls under 12, gymnastics (average of 54), swimming (31) and ice skating (31) attracted greater numbers than the aggregate responses (14) from clubs who had any girls aged under 12 who were playing members.

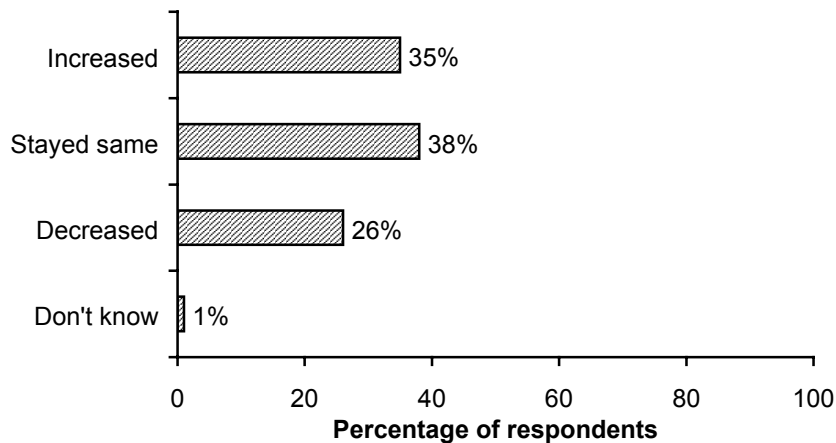
Among adult age groups there were fewer distinctive sports, although rugby attracted more men aged 18-34 (an average of 48) than clubs generally (19) with any playing members in this age/sex group. For the 55+ age group, golf and bowls attracted the greatest average number of playing members for males and females.

Among the club interviewees it was observed that they get a “few” more young girls than in previous times and “at the top end” some young people stay on for longer in the club. It was thought that young people do not get into employment as quickly as in past times and tend to maintain involvement in clubs a bit longer until they get a steady job or move away. Further, with changes in PE in schools, clubs believed that girls had a different outlook about some sports activities. In particular, it was common to have some girls turn up to join in with boys at an early age whereas in the past they would have thought of some sports as “boys’ sports”.

Trends in Membership

Responding clubs varied in the extent to which their club membership numbers had changed over the past five years. Although a quarter (26%) reported a decrease in membership, a third (35%) reported an increase and over a third (38%) stated that their membership had remained the same (Fig 10).

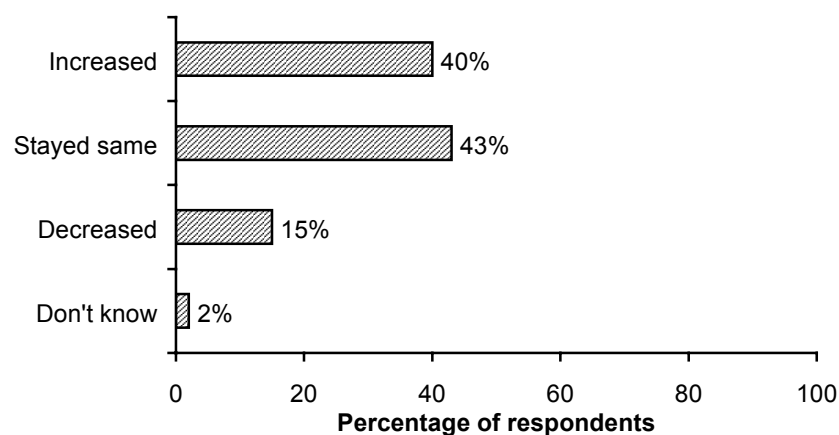
Figure 10: Trends in Membership Numbers over Past Five Years



Base number: 3,353

Although almost three-quarters (73%) of responding clubs reported that their membership had increased or remained the same over the past five years, a greater proportion (83%) indicated the average age of club members had increased or stayed the same (Fig 11). This suggests that where club membership had grown it was among older age groups. Further, the average age of members had decreased in only 15% of responding clubs.

Figure 11: Trends in Average Age of Members over Past Five Years



Base number: 3,359

Trends in Membership and Sports

In the 35% of responding clubs where the trend was towards an increase in membership numbers over the past five years, the sports offered were largely team sports. Around a half or more of the clubs that reported an increase in membership offered basketball (increase in membership for 64%), shinty (64%), ice hockey (63%), hockey (51%), rugby (48%) and netball (47%). Further, more than half the responding clubs that offered basketball and shinty reported that the average age of members had declined, suggesting an intake of younger participants.

Where responding clubs noted a greater than average decline in membership numbers over the past five years, they offered sports such as squash (decline in 51% of clubs), shooting (49%), badminton (47%), bowls (43%) and curling (42%). Clubs that offered these sports also noted a greater than average increase in the age profile of members over the past five years.

In sports such as football and swimming, responding clubs noted that although membership numbers had been relatively static, the age profile of members was decreasing. This suggests that these sports have a large turnover of young people that do not always remain within the clubs. The interviews confirmed this analysis and, for example, in swimming it was recognised that clubs do not really cater for older recreational swimmers – it is thought that there are adequate opportunities for this activity outside the club structures.

In football, some of the recent club developments may provide more opportunities for young people to stay in the sport – either as recreational players or as leaders or coaches. For example, at Murieston Community Football Club in West Lothian (where the local council has leased the club a large outdoor playing area) the club has expanded from one under-12 team nearly ten years ago to a range of competitive and recreational opportunities for a variety of age groups. The club believes this was possible because of a desire to "keep developing opportunities to keep the kids in the club because there wasn't much else for them to do". As the club has grown it has become more attractive to young people as "a place where something goes on". They now find it is possible to support a recreational team for young people who may never get selected for a match at a club but continue to want to play football. They are aware that many young people leave clubs "because they never get off the bench". They are now able to retain some of these young people.

Waiting Lists

A large majority (87%) of responding clubs reported that they did not have a waiting list for playing membership. Although the overall proportion that had a waiting list was 13 per cent, this was higher in golf (50%) and angling (22%) as well as in sports with larger proportions of junior participants – gymnastics (65%), trampolining (50%) and swimming (38%). In the case of golf, the clubs with a waiting list had an average membership of 788 members compared to 535 for all responding golf clubs.

Among those interviewed, only the swimming club had a general waiting list; some other sports had waiting lists for certain elements of their club, for example, their summer coaching school or a junior activity camp.

In the case of a swimming club in East Lothian, the coaching squad structures described earlier had allowed the club to clear its waiting list. Sharing pool space with two other clubs for elite training freed some 'home' pool time that was then used to bring more newcomers into the club.

Summary

Clubs consider the relevance of their size in relation to the facilities/areas that are used: if the facility is too crowded then they have too many members. Concerns with having too few members emerge if this threatens the viability of the club or of sections within the club, although the latter seems to be less important.

In almost all cases, growing the club requires more facility access and this is generally regarded as "a real struggle". Often growth or other changes in membership take place very slowly and this makes the changes easier for clubs to manage.

The possibilities for social membership of sports clubs seems to be very limited even for clubs that own their own facilities. However, perhaps influenced by the growth in early retirement and improved health to a longer age, there appears to be a large proportion of recreational participants in clubs. This recreational element has not been evident to the same extent in team sports, perhaps because of the difficulties of keeping a team together following a competitive focus but also because limited access to facilities means that competitive activity is generally given priority.

A greater proportion of clubs have members in age groups 12-17 and 18-34 years than from any other age group. However, where clubs do cater for older and younger age groups they attract a greater average number of participants from these older and younger age groups. This is perhaps not surprising given that most competitive sport is undertaken during teenage years and young adulthood, but it is the age group least likely to have time for recreational participation or the ability to take up a new activity. It should not be assumed that people who do not wish to be involved in competitive sport would therefore not join a club – many can and do.

Club sport for teenagers in particular may need to be supported with broader youth development expertise than that found in many clubs. Their need to try out a range of sports, have largely unstructured activity and relatively unsupervised spaces for socialising and to experiment with a range of adult roles (managing, organising) suggests that special provision may need to be developed to support what is already on offer in clubs. It is possible that this type of provision is being made through schools and youth organisations and in this context the emphasis would be on ensuring that appropriate links between these more generalist environments to more adult-orientated sports clubs are developed.

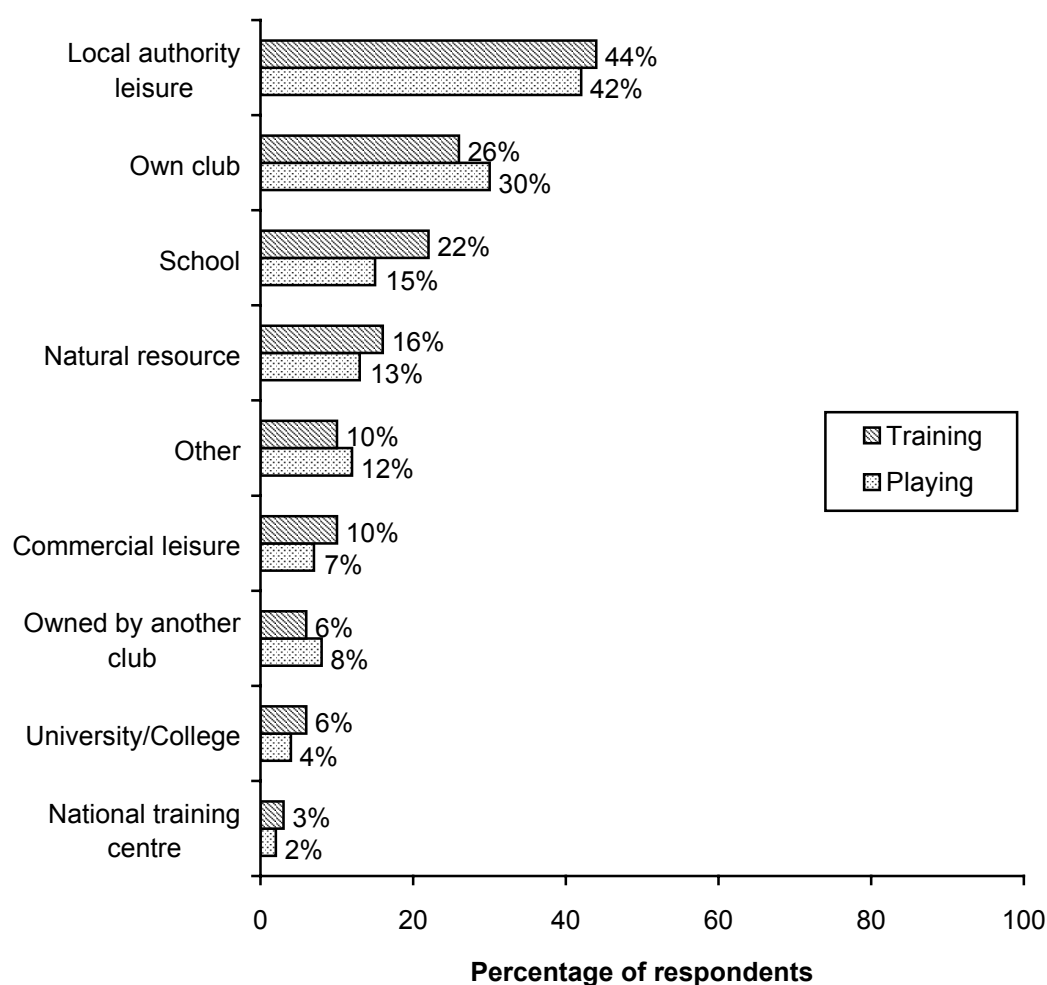
CHAPTER 5: WHERE DO SPORTS CLUBS OPERATE?

Clubs use a wide variety of facilities for a range of purposes associated with the sports that they offer. These include facilities for competitive activity and for training as well as facilities for socialising, storage and changing. The survey gathered data about the nature and extent of facility use and identified facility-related issues that constrain club development. The interviews explored these issues in greater depth.

Facilities Used

Nearly a third (30%) of responding clubs used facilities they owned for playing (matches, events, competitions, major activity) and 26 per cent used their own facilities for training. Only a few used facilities owned by other clubs: 8 per cent for playing and 6 per cent for training. Similarly, use of commercial leisure facilities, that may be managed on a club-like membership basis, was not widespread, being used by 7 per cent of responding clubs for playing and 10 per cent for training. (Fig 12)

Figure 12: Ownership of Facilities Used by Clubs for Training and Playing



Base numbers: 2,046 (training), 3,320 (playing). Multiple responses; figures add to more than 100%.

Use of facilities owned by organisations other than clubs was much more widespread with the use of local authority leisure service facilities being the most common. Forty-two per cent of responding clubs used local authority leisure service facilities for playing and 44 per cent used them for training. Use of other facilities owned by local authorities (through the education departments) was also evident through schools where 15 per cent of responding clubs played and 22 per cent trained (although an unknown proportion of this activity may be in private schools).

These figures emphasise the importance of local authority provision for the two key roles of clubs, playing and training. Even allowing for double counting of clubs that used both leisure service and school facilities, over half the responding clubs used facilities provided by local authorities for their playing and training.

Use of further and higher education facilities was much less common with 4 per cent of responding clubs using these facilities for playing and 6 per cent for training. Given that students in higher education are one of the highest sports participating groups, it is likely that higher education facilities are already well used for student activities and therefore possibly unavailable to many outside clubs.

Natural resources such as rivers, the sea and unmanaged open land were used by 13 per cent of responding clubs for playing and 16 per cent for training.

The clubs interviewed used a variety of indoor and outdoor facilities owned by a range of local authority recreation and education departments and private landlords, with one owning its own facility. As was pointed out by both a local authority interviewee and a governing body interviewee, clubs have often let the same facility for such a long time that they believe it to be 'their' facility. This association with a particular place, as discussed in a previous chapter, becomes central to the club's identity. In this context, when changes are made at such facilities the impact on clubs can be much greater than intended. For this reason also, governing bodies thought that the proportion of clubs in the postal survey that said they owned their own facility was high: some may think they own it simply because they have played there for so long.

Facility Use and Sports

There were variations in the pattern of facility use based on the sports offered in responding clubs. Although local authority leisure facilities were the most commonly used facilities for playing, their use was greater among responding clubs offering swimming (88% used local authority leisure facilities), football (73%), athletics (69%) and hockey (67%). Although this survey did not collect further details about the precise nature of the facilities used, it is likely that they were more specialist facilities (such as pools, tracks and outdoor all-weather facilities) that may not be offered by many other facility providers.

For sports where the majority of clubs use local authority leisure facilities, there appears to be more potential to influence club development programmes. Facility

management plans for clubs can be developed that help to rationalise space for which individual clubs compete. Often this is achieved by defining elements of club activity that can be undertaken jointly with other clubs (for example, elite squad training). It is likely that this will be easier to achieve with clubs that use single-sport provision (such as pools) rather than clubs that use multi-sport provision, although a volleyball development plan has been developed in Aberdeen in response to the frustrations of local clubs about difficulties in accessing facilities.

Swim squads have been developed in a number of cities and towns that have more than one swimming club, each needing access to local authority pools and often at similar times. To manage this competition and rationalise the use of facilities, authority-wide management plans for club swimming have been developed such as the City of Aberdeen Water Management Plan.

A similar process is under way in West Lothian to rationalise the use of football pitches throughout the authority by bringing clubs together to explore the possibility of greater collaboration.

There was a greater proportion of respondents who played at their own facility among the clubs that offered bowls (69% played at their own club), golf (67%) and tennis (63%).

Interviewees noted that having their own facility did not necessarily put a club in an advantageous position relative to other clubs, as often repairs and maintenance were impossible to keep up with and the facilities were of poor quality. Where these clubs sometimes benefited was in accessing finance from a bank – the facility could be used as an asset to borrow against.

The responding clubs that had greater proportions of school use largely offered indoor team sports such as volleyball (53% school use), basketball (53%), netball (50%) and badminton (37%). Some outdoor team sports also had a higher than average use of school facilities, although not to the same extent as the indoor sports. These included rugby (28% school use for playing), hockey (28%) and football (22%).

Interviewees noted that for the sports that were highly dependent on school facilities, development potential was extremely constrained. Schools' playing facilities were often sub-optimal, although were charged at similar rates to recreation facilities. The time available in schools was limited to times when janitors were willing to work, although a number of authorities have recently undertaken reviews of their janitorial service and have been able to improve the flexibility by having a single janitor paid to be responsible for a pool of schools. The further constraint of schools is the lack of any social space. As one club interviewee commented, "we often have meetings to plan events in the car park... we get thrown out bang on time".

For clubs that offered ice sports such as ice skating and curling, there was a higher than average use of commercial facilities: 59 per cent of ice skating and 57 per cent of curling clubs. Just over a third (37%) of clubs offering equestrian sports used commercial facilities. What is meant by 'commercial' should be interpreted loosely

as it is likely that many curling clubs that use 'commercial' facilities in fact own and operate this facility on a commercial basis (although not necessarily a profit-making basis). This would differ from some equestrian clubs that may operate as a profit-making source of livelihood for an individual.

The nature of facilities used for sports training was very similar to the pattern for playing with the exception of some outdoor activities (mountaineering and canoeing/kayaking) where indoor training took place in schools and local authority leisure facilities. As the canoeing club interviewee noted, often this indoor training over the winter is just to keep the club members in touch with each other.

Ancillary Facilities

While 30 per cent of responding clubs owned their own facilities for playing and 26 per cent for training, slightly greater proportions had ancillary facilities such as equipment storage (37%), changing (34%) and social facilities (36%) (Table 9).

The use of ancillary facilities owned by others was largely confined to storage and changing facilities owned by local authority leisure services and schools. Over a quarter of responding clubs used local authority leisure facilities for storage (29%) and a third (35%) for changing with 11 per cent using schools for storage and 15 per cent for changing. Fourteen per cent of responding clubs used local authority leisure facilities for socialising.

Table 9: Ownership of Ancillary Facilities Used by Responding Clubs

	Equipment storage	Changing facilities	Social facilities
	Percentage of responding clubs		
Own club	37	34	36
Local authority leisure	29	35	14
School	11	15	5
Owned by another club	4	6	7
University/College	4	4	3
Commercial leisure	4	5	7
National training centre	1	1	1
Other	11	5	11
Not applicable	11	11	22
<i>Base numbers:</i>	3,186	2,446	2,077

Note: Multiple response question; figures add to more than 100 per cent

There was fairly limited use of ancillary facilities owned by any other type of organisation, with the 11 per cent of 'other' storage being largely private landlords. As the canoeing club interviewee indicated, "we pay the farmer for use of an old cowshed and we store the boats and other equipment there – it's fine really, we have our own locks and it is quite secure".

The patterns found in relation to sports reflected those found for the use of facilities for playing and training. Thus, for example, the use of schools for storage was higher among the team sports that had higher use of schools for playing and training. Similarly a greater proportion of clubs that owned their own facilities for playing and training also owned their own social facilities – particularly golf and bowls.

The clubs that were interviewed emphasised the importance of having some small ancillary space that 'belonged' to the club. Facilities for socialising were seen as desirable but this was on a fairly limited scale such as a small area with a vending machine or a cupboard in which they could lock up various record books and other resources, or even a wall where a club noticeboard could be put up. Clubs did not really aspire to large-scale clubhouses with a bar and other social spaces. In a context where getting an additional 30-minute hall hire for a junior section was not feasible, this was perhaps seen as too idealistic.

As one club described, "it has taken us ten years of constant hard work and battles with the council to get this wee room – we would love a big sports facility and it might happen one day... but not in our lifetime".

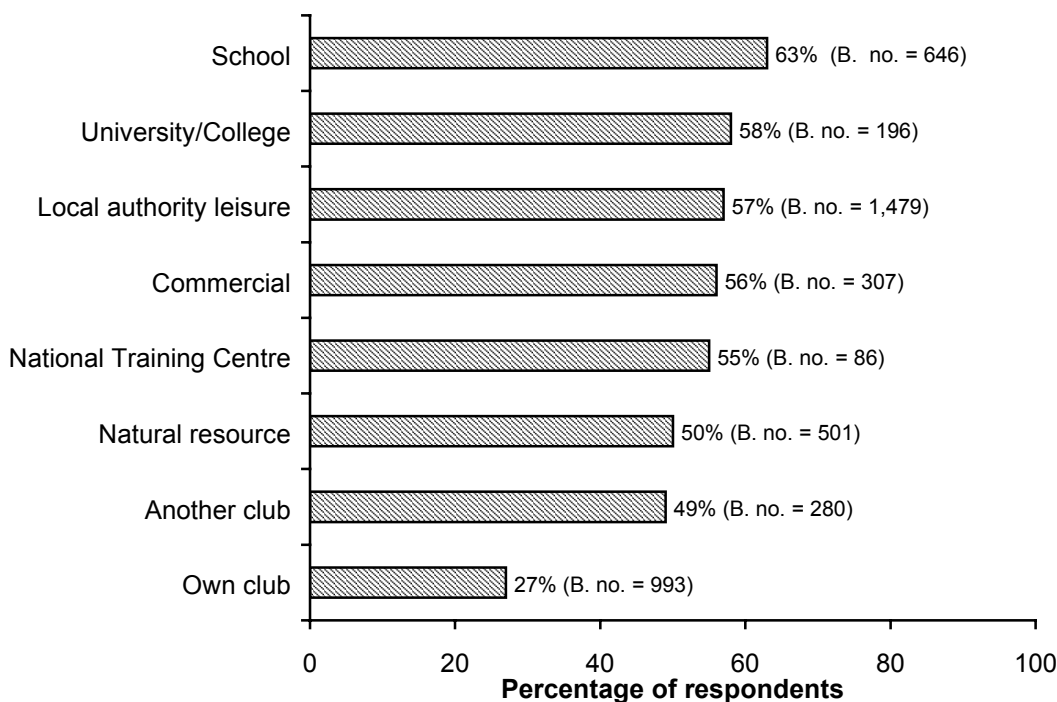
Facility Issues Affecting Club Development

Overall, just under half (43%) of the responding clubs reported that the development of their club's playing/training had been held back due to a facility-related problem. The clubs that reported higher levels of facility-related problems were largely those that offered team sports such as volleyball (70%), shinty (69%), football (67%), basketball (60%) and hockey (60%). In addition to these team sports, some two-thirds (65%) of the clubs that offered gymnastics reported a problem with facilities.

A smaller proportion of clubs that played or trained at their own venue reported facility-related constraints to their club's development. Around a quarter (27%) of the responding clubs that used their own venues for playing and/or training reported facility constraints compared to around a half or more of clubs using facilities owned by others (Fig 13).

Almost two-thirds (63%) of the clubs using school facilities and 58 per cent of the clubs using the other education facilities of universities/colleges reported facility-related constraints. Given that these facilities were used to a greater extent by indoor team sports, it is worth noting that these sports may be facing greater facility-related constraints than some other activities.

Figure 13: Experience of Facility-related Constraints to Club Development



Base numbers are all responding clubs that used the facility for playing and/or training

About half of the clubs using local authority leisure facilities, commercial facilities and national training centres said that their club's playing/training development had been held back in some way by problems with facilities.

The interviews portrayed a very different scale of facility-related issues and it became evident that facility constraints were perhaps so prevalent that to some extent they are overlooked. If there was a single issue in the study that united every interviewee it was either facility access, cost or quality. As one local authority interviewee noted (and club interviewees confirmed): "You only ever get two of the three – if it's affordable at a time you want then it's probably a rubbish venue. The best places either cost too much or never have a free slot."

However, some of the clubs would prioritise cost and access above quality. Their view seemed to be that if you could get access to somewhere affordable on a regular and long-term basis then the quality could be compromised. As one club noted: "We moved to our new place from a fairly modern leisure centre. This place isn't so great really but it has ten times the atmosphere because it feels more like **our** club. The kids run a tuck shop and their parents can come in and watch – there were so many rules about these things in the leisure centre... They would have seen the tuck shop as competition for their café and charged parents to spectate."

Nature of Facility Constraints

For those respondents who reported a facility-related problem that affected their club's playing/training development, further details were sought on the nature of this problem. Nearly half (43%) of all respondents specified that they had some problem with facilities; and around a fifth of all respondents found that the facilities were too expensive (22%), of poor quality (20%) or not available when needed (19%). Other issues identified by about a tenth of all respondents were that the facilities were not available locally (13%) or had inflexible management (10%). (Table 10)

Table 11 shows the nature of the problems for users of each facility type. It is important to emphasise that the results reported in this table are based on those users of facilities **who stated that the development of their club's playing/training was held back by problems with facilities** and is not therefore based on all responding clubs using the facilities. The level of facility-related constraints did not vary greatly among the users of various facility types (with the exception of clubs owning their own venues); however the nature of the constraints experienced was quite distinct.

Although a smaller proportion of clubs experienced issues with their own facilities than those clubs using facilities owned by others, those that expressed some constraint were largely constrained by the poor quality of their own facilities. This was confirmed by club and governing body interviewees. While the **sportscotland** Lottery Fund has been able to support some clubs in upgrading their own facilities, the interviewees commented that this process was perhaps easier for stronger and more financially secure clubs.

Forty-four per cent of clubs (with playing/training development held back by any facility problems) that used their own venues mentioned their poor quality compared to 34 per cent of those that used local authority leisure facilities and 28 per cent of those that used school facilities (Table 11).

Table 10: Nature of Problems with Facilities

Problem	Percentage of respondents
*Too expensive	22
*Poor quality	20
*Not available when needed	19
*Not available locally	13
*Inflexible management	10
Total: any problems with facilities	43
*Multiple responses	<i>Base no. (all respondents): 3,365</i>

Table 11: Nature of Facility Problems by Type of Facility Used

Facility Problem	Type of Facility Used							
	Own club	Other club	School	University/ college	LA leisure facility	Commercial facility	National centre	Natural resource
Percentage of respondents using each facility type and with development held back by any facility problems								
Poor quality	44	15	28	20	34	7	9	14
Not available locally	8	17	6	4	14	12	30	11
Too expensive	7	17	41	25	45	47	23	6
Not available when needed	6	24	43	43	39	27	17	11
Inflexible management	2	6	20	20	21	10	4	3
<i>Base numbers:</i>	264	136	410	113	841	173	47	248
<i>Base: Responding clubs that use each facility type and have had the development of their playing/training held back by any problems with facilities</i>								

For those that used schools and local authority leisure facilities, the cost and lack of availability at required times were regarded as greater facility constraints. Forty-five per cent of clubs with facility problems that used local authority leisure facilities found the cost a constraint as did 41 per cent of those that used schools. In addition, 20 per cent that used schools and local authority leisure facilities (and had a facility-related constraint to development) found the facility management inflexible. For clubs that used and had a problem with commercial facilities, the biggest constraint (mentioned by 47% of these clubs) was that they were too expensive.

The local authority interviewees acknowledged that facilities were an important issue in club development, but there were differing perceptions of the issues between operation/facility managers and sports development staff. In the case of the facility staff, it was generally believed that clubs make unreasonable demands for access at peak times and want "access on the cheap". In the case of sports development staff it was recognised that clubs are demanding and will want to minimise costs but also that facility managers are not aware of how clubs operate or why they need access. The sports development officers, as well as clubs, found that facility managers could not be flexible with programming and charges and did not understand why flexibility was important.

Commercial club interviewees recognised that their facilities could be expensive for users compared to local authority sports centres, and commented: "We do not get large subsidies from the council... We have to make money to stay open." However, these clubs were able to negotiate charges for user groups (rather than individual health and fitness memberships) and they had been involved in discussions with governing bodies about how they could work in partnership with individual sports for which their facilities can cater.

Summary

Access to facilities is perhaps the single greatest issue in ensuring both the sustainability and growth of sports clubs in Scotland. This needs to be seen in the context of nearly half of facilities used by clubs being in local authority ownership. Sports development interviewees believe that there may not be a shortage of facilities, simply a need to plan and manage better the use of existing facilities and educate facility managers about the needs of clubs. A general failure to see sports facility management as a central aspect of sports development planning was commented on by a number of interviewees.

Quality of facilities will, to some extent, be compromised by clubs if the facility suits their needs in terms of access and cost. However, this compromise will tend to be in terms of the quality of the decor and size of the space and not for facilities that require fundamental repairs. Facilities owned by clubs themselves face major issues when such structural or large-scale repairs are required – at these times clubs consider closure as an option. A facility base that "feels like a home" is a central element of how clubs define themselves and small features such as a storage cupboard or noticeboard can make a major difference to clubs' sense of security and ownership.

CHAPTER 6: HOW ARE CLUBS MANAGED?

The questionnaire sought information about a range of staffing and management issues, including: the nature of staff and their remuneration; the nature of decision-making with regard to financial and sports development decisions; the type of organisation that best reflected the clubs' management practices; and the nature and sources of clubs' finance. The interviews further explored these issues.

Staffing

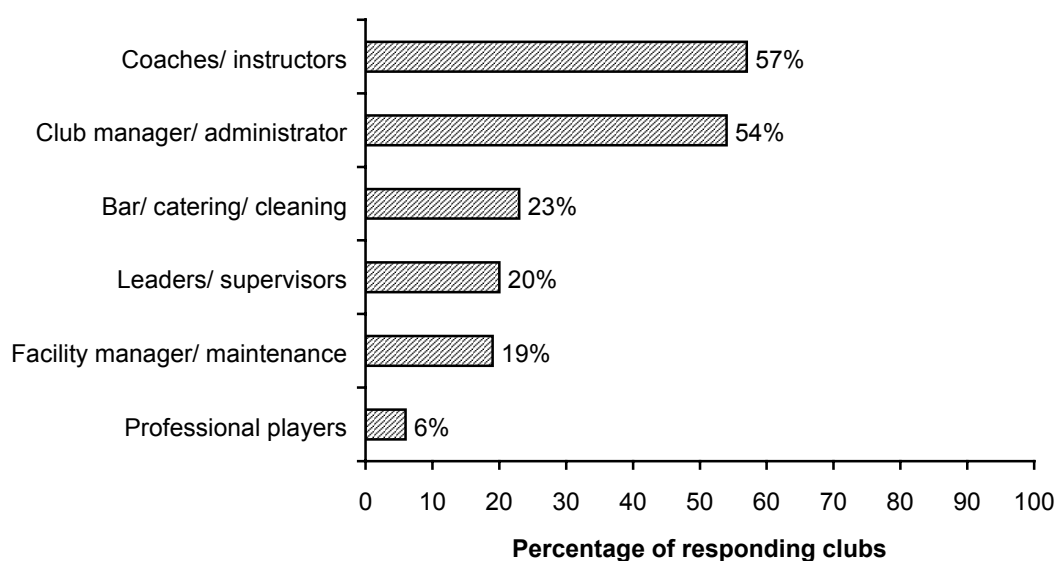
Type of Staff

Clubs had a range of coaching, administration and facility-related roles (irrespective of whether the roles were paid or voluntary positions). Over half (57%) of the responding clubs had coaches and/or instructors and a fifth (20%) reported that they had the less performance-orientated leaders and/or supervisors (Fig 14). Six per cent of responding clubs identified professional players within their club staff profile.

In terms of general club administration, over half (54%) said that they had a club manager/administrator (most of whom will be volunteers).

Less than a quarter of responding clubs had bar/catering/cleaning staff (23%) or facility managers and/or maintenance staff (19%). Clearly, as only between a quarter and a third of clubs used their own facilities for playing (30%) and for training (26%), the use of facility-related staff (paid or unpaid) would not be widespread.

Figure 14: Type of Staff, Paid and Voluntary



Base number: 3,485 Note: Multiple response question; percentages add to more than 100%

Interviewees explained that staff who undertake coaching and supervisory roles tend to be the same people from year to year but that administrative roles are often elected posts that are agreed annually at club AGMs. However, as one interviewee noted, "the same people tend to shift chairs, we don't get people queuing up to be the treasurer or match secretary".

Professional Staff and Sports

While 6 per cent of responding clubs had 'professional players' this varied by sport with a quarter (25%) of cricket clubs having professionals, a fifth (20%) of golf clubs and 13 per cent of football clubs. It is clear that the concept of 'professional player' can vary considerably within and between sports and for this reason we are unable to be certain about whether professional players are employed primarily in a coaching function (as possibly in golf) or there to play (as in football).

Further, the status of professional can vary from someone who is paid to play in a single match (and has another full-time job) to someone for whom playing is a full-time occupation.

Number of Staff

The number of staff undertaking these roles varied widely among responding clubs thus making 'average' figures, to some extent, questionable. For this reason the answer most commonly given by respondents (excluding clubs who had none) – the mode – is presented. For example, responding clubs who had any managers/administrators mentioned having between one and 72 with the mode being three. Similarly, responding clubs who had any coaches/instructors mentioned having between one and 97 with the mode being two. Although a smaller proportion of clubs had leaders/supervisors, among those that did the modal average was also two. (Table 12)

Although only a small proportion of responding clubs had any facility-related staff, among those that did the modal average was one. Among the small proportion of clubs that employed professional players, most employed only one.

These variations were to some extent explained in the interviews where clubs indicated that normally they have a small number of 'regular' staff but on occasions, such as special events, matches and galas, they can require much greater numbers of staff.

Clubs often have a number of qualified coaches, but this does not necessarily mean that they all undertake coaching in the club. For example, one club interviewee said that all the adults in the club (around 20) had undertaken the basic level coaching awards but only two of them were involved in coaching. The opportunity to undertake awards was given to the club and it was seen as useful that as many people as possible took advantage of the opportunity.

Table 12: Average Number of Staff by Type

Staff type	Average no. (mode*)	Base
Professional players	1	175
Club managers/administrators	3	1,440
Leaders/supervisors	2	497
Bar/catering/cleaning	1	607
Coaches/instructors	2	1,560
Facility manager/maintenance	1	515

*The mode is based on the clubs that have any staff of that type, not on all responding clubs.

There is also a good deal of variation by sport concerning how many coaches/instructors or leaders/supervisors are required but this usually reflects whether the sports have a large proportion of young participants. For example, in swimming and judo the clubs need a large number of 'helpers' at events, mostly because of the need to supervise numbers of young people. In both sports, it was common to recruit parents for this type of role.

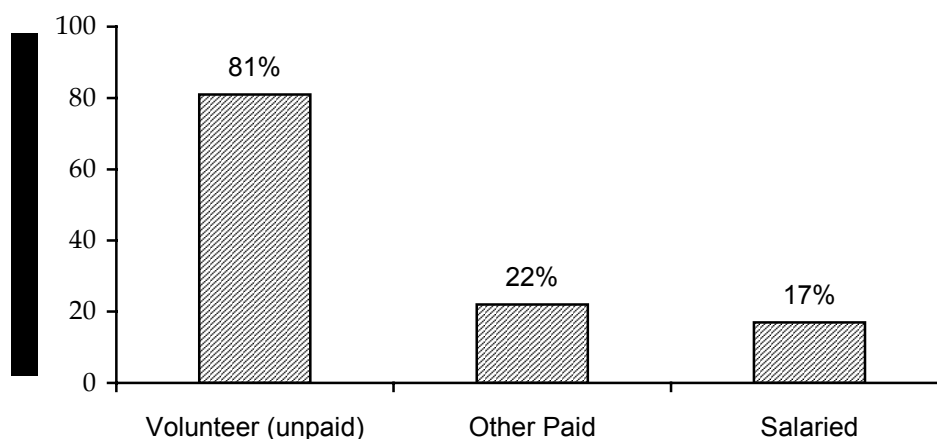
Staff Remuneration

Perhaps not surprisingly, a greater proportion of responding clubs had unpaid volunteer staff than salaried or other paid staff. Eight out of ten clubs (81%) had volunteers with just under two in ten (17%) having salaried staff and just over two in ten (22%) having other paid staff. (Fig 15)

As with the calculation for the average number of types of staff, the calculations of the average number of volunteer and remunerated staff need to be treated cautiously and for this reason the mode (most commonly given answer) is again presented. The number of volunteers among the responding clubs who had volunteers ranged from one to 160 staff, with the modal average being two. The range of numbers of salaried and other paid staff was not as extreme and the modal average for both was one. (Table 13)

It is important to note that included in the average numbers of salaried and other paid staff was likely to be a large proportion of part-time and seasonal staff.

Figure 15: Staff Status of Responding Clubs



Base number: 3,485 Note: Multiple response question; figures add to more than 100 per cent

Table 13: Average Number of Staff by Status

Staff status	Average no. (mode*)	Base
Volunteers (unpaid)	2	2,146
Salaried	1	488
Other paid	1	647

*The mode is based solely on the clubs that have any staff of that status, not on all responding clubs.

Table 14 reflects a combination of the data about the type and remuneration status of staff and illustrates that the greatest proportions of staff are coaches/instructors and club administrators/managers engaged on a voluntary basis. Almost half the responding clubs engaged each of these types of staff as unpaid volunteers. Only 5 per cent of clubs had salaried and 8 per cent had otherwise paid coaches and/or instructors.

Around one in ten clubs had salaried (9%) or otherwise paid (10%) bar/catering/cleaning staff making this the most common type of remunerated staff among the responding clubs. Just over one in twenty (6%) clubs had remunerated facility managers and/or maintenance staff. Other than the paid coaching staff, these various facility-related roles were the most likely to be remunerated.

Table 14: Staff Remuneration Status by Type of Staff

Staff type	Salaried	Other paid	Volunteers
	Percentage of responding clubs		
Bar/catering/cleaning staff	9	10	9
Facility manager/maintenance	6	6	10
Club manager/administrator	6	4	48
Coaches and instructors	5	8	49
Professional players	2	2	2
Leaders and supervisors	1	*	19

Base: 3,464 *Less than 0.5%

Staffing and Sports

Generally, the sports offered in clubs with their own facilities had greater proportions of salaried and other paid staff than sports in clubs using facilities owned by others. For example, among the responding clubs that offered golf, 70 per cent had salaried staff and 54 per cent had other paid staff compared with 17 and 22 per cent respectively of all clubs; and among tennis clubs 47 per cent had other paid staff.

Management

Type of Organisation

Two-thirds (68%) of responding clubs identified themselves as clubs with a formal constitution with 6 per cent being charities or friendly societies. A fifth (20%) said that they had no formal legal status but their organisers met regularly. For half (52%) of the clubs any profits were retained and reinvested in the club, and only 1 per cent of clubs distributed profits among their shareholders or owners. (Table 15)

Table 15: Type of Club Organisation

	Percentage of responding clubs
Club with formal constitution	68
Profits retained and reinvested in club	52
No formal legal status but organisers meet regularly	20
Charity or friendly society	6
Other	5
Profits distributed among shareholders or owners	1

Base number: 3,484 Note: Multiple response question; figures add to more than 100 per cent

The types of organisation of clubs varied among sports especially in relation to whether the clubs had any legal status. Those that offered football, badminton and

table tennis were less likely to have a constitution and more likely to have no formal legal status. For example, although two-thirds (68%) of all responding clubs had a formal constitution, only a third (35%) of clubs that offered table tennis did so and around a half of badminton (47%) and football (50%) clubs. This suggests that for these sports in particular, the organisation is more casual and informal.

The interviewees indicated that in the case of football, many clubs would probably have a constitution but it would be so old that team or section coaches were probably not aware of it. In the case of badminton, interviewees indicated that because so many clubs were "just a groups of friends that have played together for years", a constitution would not be regarded as relevant.

For some club interviewees, drafting a constitution was more of a requirement to be 'ticked off a list' than something that they felt was an important framework for the management of their club. Although constitutions make reference to operating guidelines for the club – for example, codes of practice or job descriptions for volunteers – clubs did not seem to believe that these could be used on a day-to-day basis. They felt clubs needed greater flexibility to react to individual situations as they arose and not to check what the procedure was first.

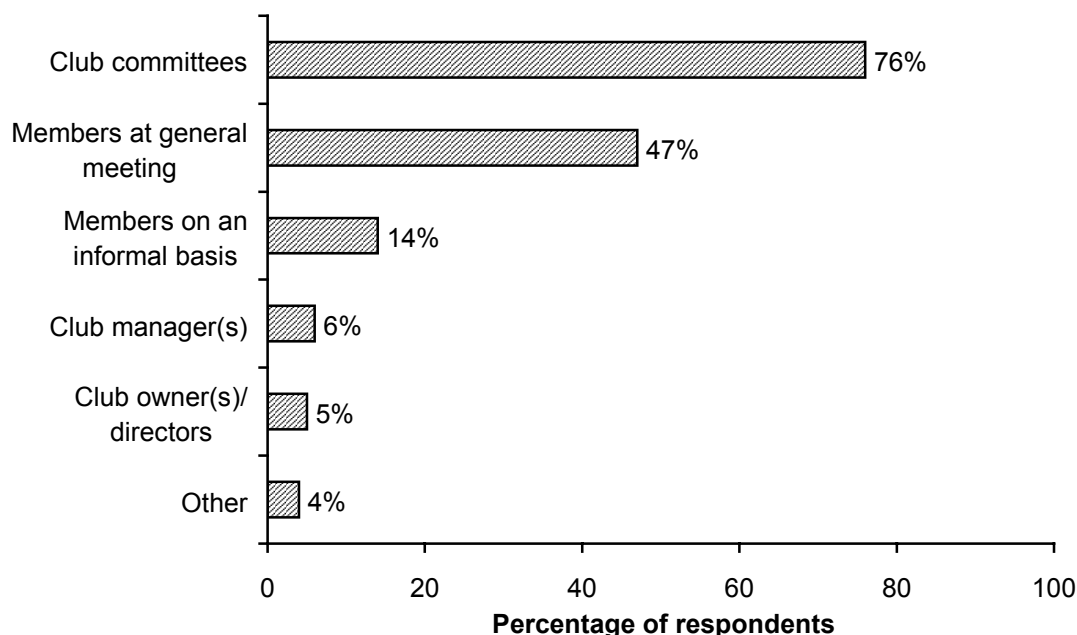
The governing body interviewees regarded club constitutions as important features of a club, largely because they provided some form of security that basic codes of practice or financial procedures would be laid down for the club. However, it was thought that clubs needed to be asked to review their constitutions fairly regularly. This was thought to be important not only because they may need to address issues such as codes of practice for child protection, but also because there can be changeovers of staff and committee members and some people may not be aware of the constitution's existence or of its content.

It was clear that many of the club development initiatives coming from governing bodies and local authorities either require or encourage clubs to revisit and update their constitutions. In addition, some have encouraged clubs to draft job descriptions for volunteers.

Decision-making

Major decisions about the financial management of clubs appear to take place through reasonably formal and representative mechanisms. Three-quarters (76%) of the responding clubs had given the responsibility for major financial decision-making to club committees and half (47%) broadened this responsibility to club members at general meetings. A smaller proportion (14%) made financial decisions through members on an informal basis, although this proportion was higher among the clubs that did not have any formal legal status – for example, 50 per cent of table tennis clubs and 29 per cent of badminton clubs made financial decisions informally among members. (Fig 16)

Figure 16: Responsibility for Major Decisions on Financial Management



Base number: 3,485

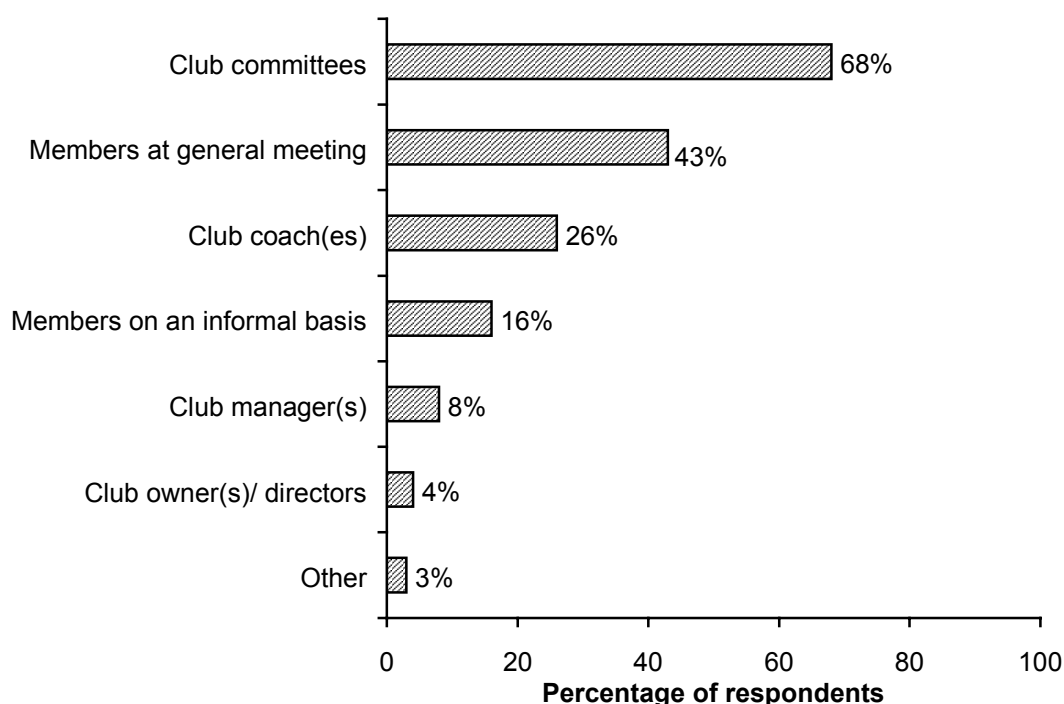
Figure 17 shows that the pattern of responsibility for financial decision-making was similar to that for sports development, with most of the major decisions about sports development issues in clubs taking place in club committees (68%) and at general meetings of club members (43%). However, in a quarter of clubs (26%) club coaches were involved in making the major decisions about sports development and in 8 per cent of clubs, the club manager/s had this responsibility. In the case of football clubs (30%) and martial arts clubs (29%) nearly a third of respondents noted that major sports development decisions were taken by club managers.

The interviews with clubs indicated that fairly formal procedures are set out for their clubs and the possibilities for financial irregularities are quite limited unless a number of people are prepared to collaborate. However, the day-to-day finances of clubs generally involve quite small sums of money and income/expenditure is monitored "every time we need to spend a fiver".

Less than one in five (16%) clubs made major sports development decisions through members on an informal basis, although this proportion was greater among clubs that offered table tennis (54%), badminton (35%) and basketball (32%).

In the clubs interviewed, decisions about sports development focused on planning a programme of training for the season and agreeing what events would be hosted and attended. Requests from governing bodies or local authorities to nominate staff for coach education courses or to be involved in club development initiatives were opportunities to which clubs react – there was limited evidence that clubs proactively seek out opportunities for development (although individuals in clubs may do so).

Figure 17: Responsibility for Major Decisions on Sports Development



Base number: 3,484

Links with Other Organisations

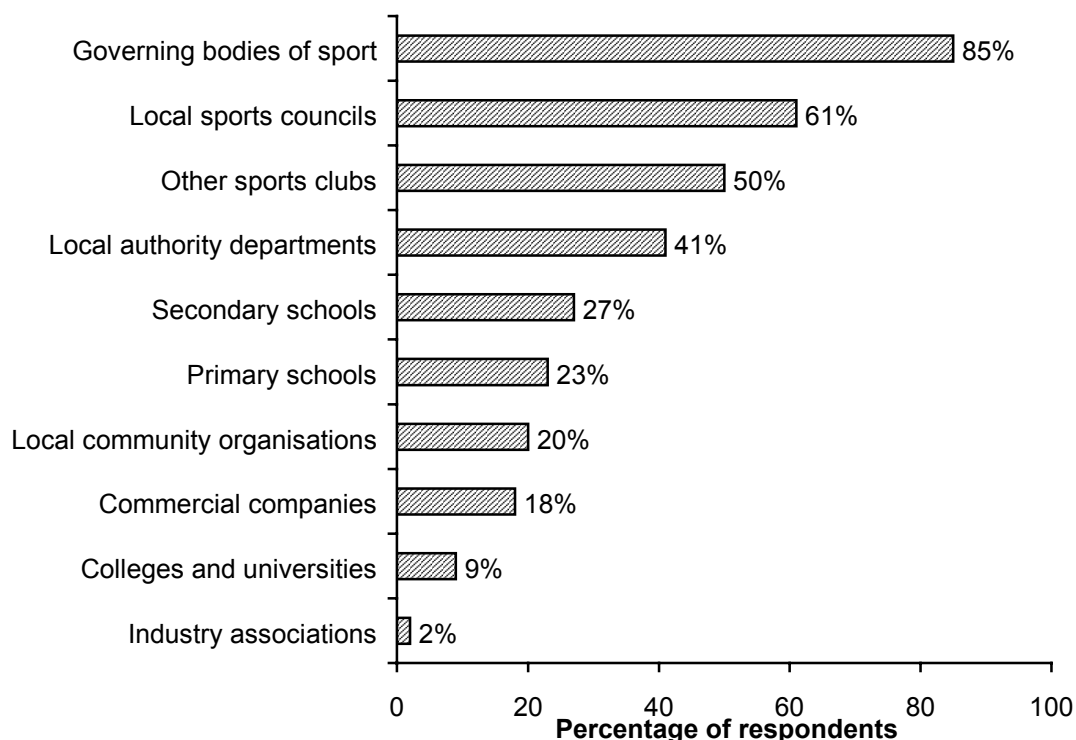
In the postal survey, clubs were asked to indicate whether they had a link with a range of organisation types. The nature of the link was not defined in order that clubs could be as inclusive as possible. As such, it is important to note that some links may be strong collaborations and others may represent more casual connections.

Overall, a greater proportion of responding clubs had links with sports organisations than with the more general public sector and community organisations. Where links with more generic organisations were made, the comments on the questionnaire indicated that these links were largely made in relation to facility use.

Almost all (85%) the clubs had some links with national governing bodies of sport making this the most common type of 'partner' agency for clubs. Interestingly, given that 91 per cent of the responding clubs were affiliated to governing bodies, some clubs did not see affiliation as a 'link'. Just under two-thirds of clubs (61%) had links with local sports councils and half (50%) had links with other sports clubs. (Fig 18)

Links with public sector organisations were slightly less widespread than the links with sports organisations. Forty-one per cent of clubs reported links with local authority departments generally. Around a quarter reported links with secondary schools (27%) and primary schools (23%) with less than half this proportion (9%) having links with colleges or universities.

Figure 18: Club Links with Other Organisations



Base number: 3,332

Around one in five clubs had links with more general community organisations (20%) and commercial companies (18%). In the case of the latter, it was clear from written comments that much of this contact concerned commercial sponsorship.

From the interviews with clubs it was clear that links are not generally related to sports development partnerships but are required for the club to operate. For example, links with governing bodies are required for affiliation and for registering players/events, etc. Similarly, schools and local authority leisure departments are often contacted when facilities are required. Occasionally, there are some spin-offs from this contact such as a head teacher asking if the club would be able to accommodate some juniors or a local authority offering an invitation to, for example, a sports festival.

It was clear that clubs will make links when they have to and when they are seeking some form of support for the club. However, given their voluntary status and general lack of a facility base, most of the clubs interviewed did not feel able to seek out partnerships that might lead to growth or development of the club, but welcomed support from organisations when approached.

Links and Sports

There were sport-specific patterns in the type of organisations with whom clubs linked. For example, there were greater links with local authority departments for clubs with athletics (76%) and swimming (72%) than among all respondents (41%). This possibly reflects the fact that clubs that offered swimming and athletics were among the greatest users of local authority facilities. Similarly, a greater proportion of the clubs that offered some team sports (rugby, hockey, volleyball, shinty and netball) had links with schools, both primary and secondary. This may reflect an association with sports traditionally used in the curriculum and extended curriculum.

Finance

Financial Planning

The large majority (85%) of responding clubs had no financial business plan beyond an annual budget. Nine per cent stated that they did have a financial business plan and a further 7 per cent that they had one in preparation.

From the interviews with clubs it is clear that club finance is driven by a plan of: 'What do we need to pay for this year?' 'Will the membership fees cover this?' 'How much fundraising do we need to do?' Clubs do not generally seek to maximise their income in order to give a range of options about what they can do. They generally seek to pay only for what they need and minimise the amount of income required.

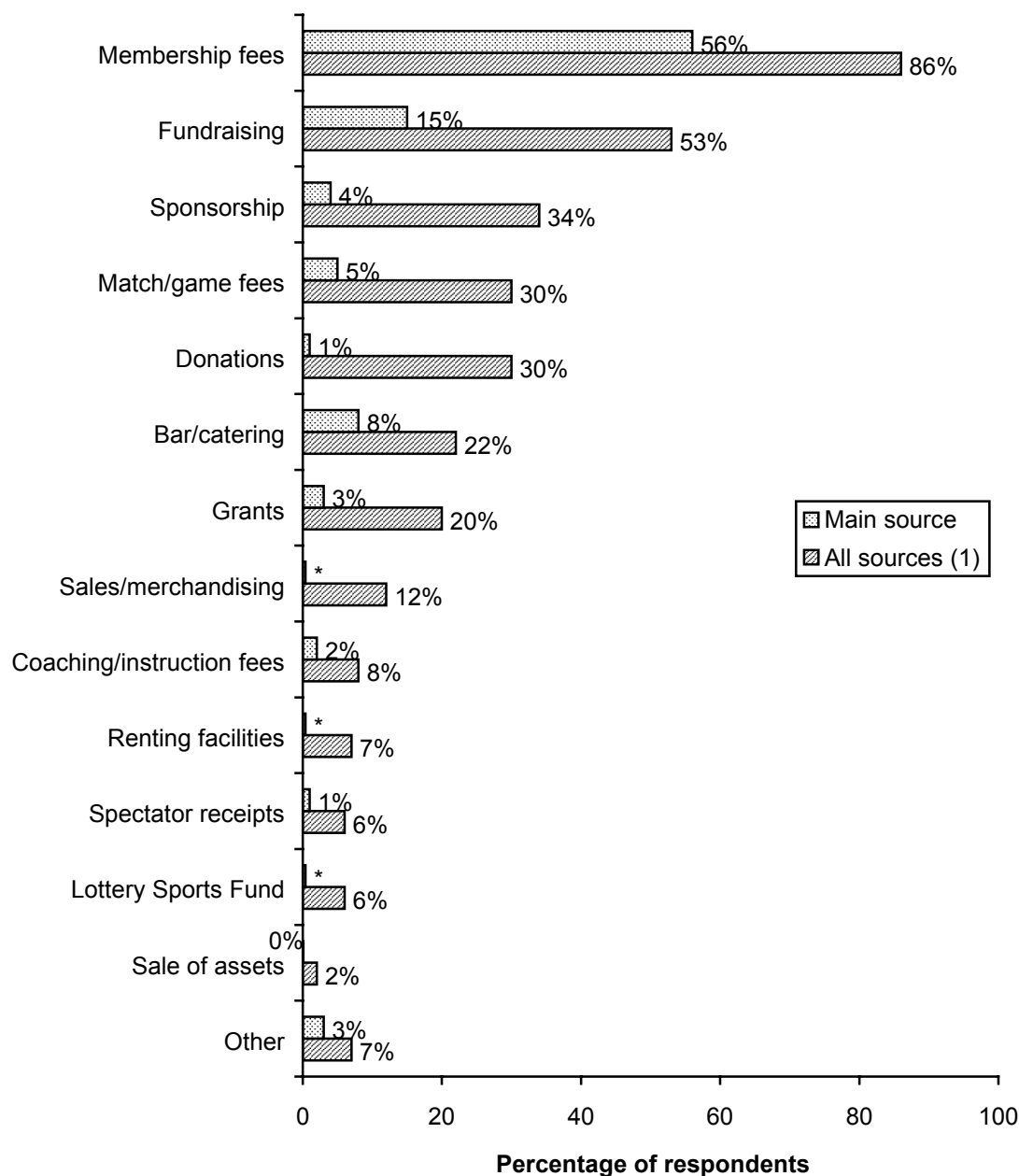
Sources of Income

Responding clubs received income from a wide range of sources, although income directly from club members as a combination of membership fees, match and game fees and coaching/instruction fees was an important source for many clubs. These activities taken together accounted for the one main source of income in nearly two-thirds (63%) of clubs: membership fees in 56 per cent of clubs, match and game fees in 5 per cent and coaching/instruction fees in 2 per cent (Fig 19).

Another significant main source of income was made up of the related activities of fundraising (in 15% of responding clubs), sponsorship (4%), grants (3%) and donations (1%). Taken together these accounted for the main income in almost a quarter (23%) of clubs. A greater proportion of clubs that offered junior-only activity identified 'fundraising' as their main source of income: 22 per cent of junior clubs compared to 15 per cent of all club respondents. As an interviewee pointed out, "the wee kiddies have no problem getting sponsor money from families but that gets much harder as the kids get older and they are asking for money for a whole load of things".

Bar/catering was one source of income for around a fifth (22%) of clubs and the main source for 8 per cent. A third (36%) of clubs that offered bowls and a fifth (22%) of rugby clubs reported that bar/catering was their main source of income.

Figure 19: Sources of Club Income



Base numbers: All – 3,485 Main – 3,025

(1) Multiple responses, summing to more than 100%

*Greater than zero but less than 0.5%

Although two-thirds (66%) of golf clubs had bar/catering income, this was the main source for only 5 per cent. From the club interviews it was clear that catering could in fact mean a club tuck shop and that realistically this could be a challenge for some clubs to keep stocked and managed. Other sales, merchandising and promotional activities generated income in 12 per cent of clubs, but formed the main source of income for less than half a per cent.

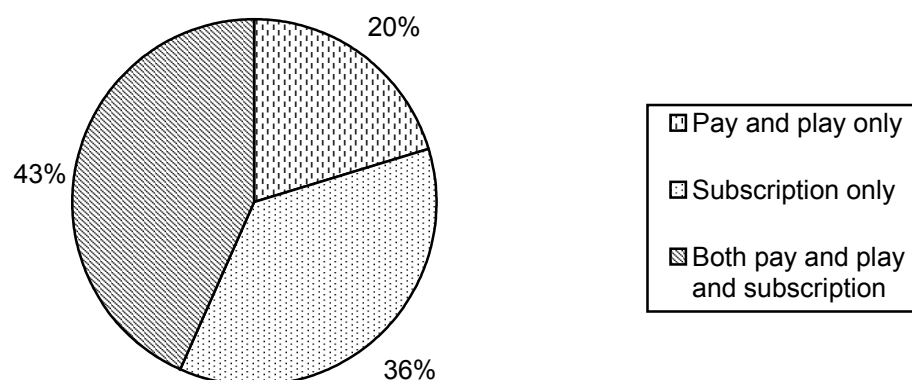
If additional resources are available they are often used for one-off purchases such as equipment, or events such as a training camp or overseas exchange visit. A number of interviewees mentioned how the Awards for All and Millennium lottery funds had been used to replace fairly major items (such as a safety boat) and to build up a stock of new equipment. However, clubs can often think small when it comes to development, as one development officer said: "You ask them if they need anything and they say a few hockey sticks. Then you find out that they could have used 20." The mentality of 'getting by' seems ingrained in some club cultures.

Type of Membership Payments

Given the significance of membership payments as a main source of income for clubs it was useful to have data about the type of membership that clubs offered (supporters' club membership was excluded from the analysis). Nearly half (43%) offered both the more casual pay and play access as well as membership through subscription (Fig 20). Just over a third (36%) of clubs were accessible on a subscription-only basis and a fifth (20%) as casual pay and play only.

There were some considerable differences in the types of membership available based on the sports offered in the responding clubs. In golf (57%) and bowls (54%) a greater proportion of responding clubs offered membership both by pay and play and by subscription. Subscription-only membership was higher generally among outdoor and adventurous activities: mountaineering (74%), canoeing (73%), skiing (70%), sub-aqua (63%) and sailing (61%). It is likely that membership by subscription in at least some of these outdoor sports offers some form of collective benefits such as insurance and safety cover that may not be available to individuals taking part on a more casual basis.

Figure 20: Type of Club Membership Available



Base number: 2,943

The more casual pay and play membership was found to a slightly greater extent in clubs that offered sports where there was a higher level of junior activity provided on a quasi-commercial basis: football (54% offered pay and play), judo (54%), other martial arts (47%), ice skating (40%) and gymnastics (33%).

Interviewees noted that in a range of sports the annual part of members' fees was usually put towards the governing body affiliation charges and the weekly element was used for general club running costs.

Concessions Offered

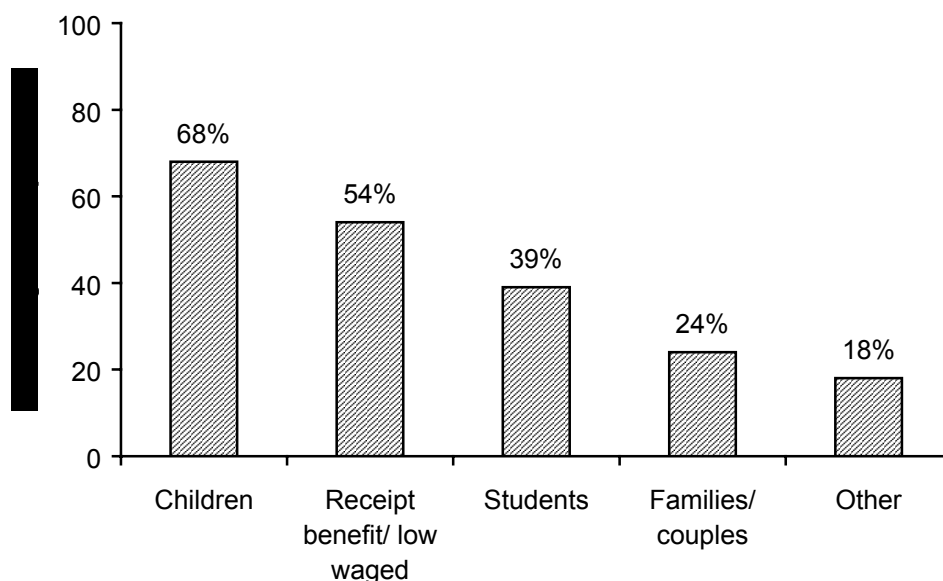
Overall, 60 per cent of responding clubs offered some form of concessionary rate to members. This proportion was greater among clubs that offered sports such as tennis (85%), sailing (81%) and cricket (81%) but lower among clubs that offered football (30%), gymnastics (40%) and ice skating (43%).

In terms of the groups to whom concessions were offered, two-thirds (68%) of clubs that offered any concessionary rates offered these to children, over a third (39%) to students and around a quarter (24%) to families or couples (Fig 21). It is interesting to note that among clubs that regarded attracting family members as an issue (see Table 18 in the next chapter), a greater proportion (41%) offered family concessions. In just over half (54%) of the clubs that offered any concessions, these were offered to those in receipt of benefit or on a low wage (including senior citizens).

There were differences in the groups to whom concessions were offered based on sports. Swimming (32% of clubs) and gymnastics (20%) were much less likely to offer child concessions because, as interviewees explained, their 'main' price was set at a level appropriate to their largely junior participants. A greater proportion of clubs that offered angling, boxing and weightlifting (characterised by a participation profile that includes a higher than average proportion of lower socio-economic groups) gave concessions to those in receipt of benefit or on a low wage. The sports that were most likely to offer concessions for families included skiing (88%), orienteering (88%), tennis (85%) and sailing (77%). In each of these sports, the proportion that offered concessions to families was at least three times the proportion found among all respondents.

Based on these data it is possible to gain the impression that concessions are being targeted at where clubs believe they are most likely to recruit from. Certainly in setting annual and weekly fees, the clubs interviewed had an intuitive understanding of the 'market' for which they cater: they know where people live, what types of jobs they do and therefore have a feel for what people can pay. Further, some interviewees commented that they have arrangements for people that perhaps find themselves unable to pay either annual or weekly fees. This applied in particular to children.

Figure 21: Recipients of Concessionary Rates from Clubs Offering Any



Base (all responding clubs that offered any concessionary rates for members): 2,035

In one club a proportion of the club income is budgeted each year to cover costs of young people that perhaps would not be able to attend a competition or training event because they are aware that they would be unable to meet the costs. In another club, forms are sent home to parents and if their children are in receipt of free school meals then they are asked to return a lower annual subscription – this information is only used by the treasurer and is kept confidential within the club.

Summary

Clubs seem to operate largely on a 'need-to' basis with minimum staffing, structures, income and expenditure. This is possibly because clubs are almost entirely staffed by two or three people who are not paid for the work they do. These people generally regard themselves as office-bearers or people with a relatively formal role in the club. Although they are unpaid, they do not necessarily regard themselves as volunteers – volunteers are generally thought of as a broader pool of people who undertake more casual activities such as driving teams and helping at events.

In some sports it is common practice to pay coaches, and clubs with their own facilities generally pay staff for maintenance/cleaning work. Coaches tend to remain the same from year to year, but administration is undertaken by club committee members who are elected.

Written guidelines for the operation of clubs – such as constitutions, job descriptions, development plans – were favoured by governing bodies and local authority interviewees as mechanisms to raise awareness and standards of management in clubs. However, although clubs acknowledged the importance of having written documentation, they were regarded as a useful safety net rather than

a framework that guided day-to-day practice. Management in the clubs was generally seen as a much more organic and intuitive process based on trust and experience rather than formal contracts, codes of practice and financial business plans.

In terms of how clubs are financed, for almost two-thirds (63%) their main source of income comes from participants themselves. This relative lack of dependence on others for direct financial support makes clubs much more autonomous than many organisations in both the statutory and voluntary sectors. Further, the fact that almost two-thirds (63%) of clubs offer membership on a pay and play basis indicates both that they provide a service to the general public and that they have a means for generating income that can perhaps subsidise subscribers to the club.

However, the interviews indicated that clubs are generally quite under-developed in terms of their finance and operate on a very basic income and expenditure account. Few have cash reserves or other assets that could be used for matching funding or for longer-term investment in and development of the club. In this context it was suggested by an interviewee that clubs ought to be able to use other assets such as their time that is given freely for coaching and other work as collateral in matched funding bids.

CHAPTER 7: DO CLUBS NEED DEVELOPMENT?

The types of issues facing the development of clubs in Scotland were mostly addressed in the case study element of the research; however, some background information was gathered in the questionnaire survey. This background information included issues such as when the club was established, what they regarded as an issue in their club and what types of development they have undertaken in their club in the past year.

Year Club was Established in its Present Form

Given the importance of culture and history (even very recent history) to clubs it is worth starting with some background about when clubs were established in their present form. This question provided a picture of when responding clubs that existed in 1999 were originally established. It should be remembered that many more clubs may have been established during certain periods but have since ceased to operate. It is not therefore a complete picture of the establishment of Scottish sports clubs (only those that have survived and responded to the survey).

Over half (54%) of the responding clubs were established in their current form during the past 30 years, with almost a quarter (23%) established in the past decade (Table 16). Given the level of investment during this period in public leisure services and facilities, this perhaps would have been expected. However, a third (34%) of the responding clubs were established in the first half of the twentieth century or earlier, suggesting a long and possibly well-established structure/culture.

Table 16: Year Club was Established in its Present Form

	Percentage of respondents
Pre-1900	15
1900-1949	19
1950-1969	12
1970-1979	14
1980-1989	17
1990-1999	23

Base number: 3,038

The interviews with clubs highlighted, as discussed on page 26, how clubs regard their history (even recent) as significant in their perception of what the club is and does. It could be speculated that because volunteers have to make considerable efforts to achieve success, as participants as well as organisers, the outcomes are more valued and are remembered. In terms of external bodies (such as governing bodies and local authorities) that seek to promote development in clubs, these treasured club memories need to be taken into account sensitively. This means either very intense support on a one-to-one basis or a broad development framework that allows clubs maximum flexibility.

Year Established and Sports

There were clear patterns in when clubs were established and the sports that they offered. Although 15 per cent of clubs were established prior to 1900, just over half (55%) of the clubs offering curling had this long history as well as almost half of the clubs that offered shinty (48%) and golf (47%). Around a third of the clubs for cricket (37%), rowing (31%) and bowls (31%) were also established over a century ago.

In the first half of the twentieth century (1900-49) 42 per cent of the clubs that offered shooting were established and 36 per cent of the clubs that offered tennis. In the two decades following the war years (1950-69) 12 per cent of responding clubs overall were established but 41 per cent of clubs that offered sailing, 33 per cent of sub-aqua clubs and 28 per cent of angling clubs.

In the next two decades of the 1970s and 1980s a greater proportion of clubs that provided indoor sports were established, encouraged by the development of public sports facilities. During this period three-quarters (74%) of the responding netball clubs were established, two-thirds of the volleyball (67%) and gymnastics (64%) clubs and over half of the athletics (56%) and swimming (55%) clubs. Although a number of clubs that offered water sports were developed in the 50s and 60s, clubs that offered outdoor activities were also established in the 70s and 80s: 94 per cent of orienteering clubs, 61 per cent of canoeing clubs and 57 per cent of skiing clubs.

In the 1990s a combination of sports clubs were established. For some long-established sports such as hockey (31% established in the 1990s) and football (40%) substantial proportions of the clubs that offered these activities were established in the past ten years – greater than the average of 23 per cent of all clubs. However, among other more 'modern' sports, such as triathlon (92% of clubs established in the 1990s), tenpin bowling (71%), martial arts (71%) and basketball (55%), over half the clubs offering these sports were established in the past decade.

Recent Club Development

A fifth (19%) of responding clubs reported that they had a written club development plan and this proportion did not vary greatly across different club types such as those with a formal constitution or those that catered mostly for juniors or adults. Further, a far greater proportion of clubs had been involved in specific club development activities in the past year.

Most clubs (89%) had taken at least one development measure over the previous twelve months. Measures to improve player performance was the most common development activity, undertaken by 81 per cent of those responding clubs who had taken any development measures (Table 17). In the interviews, player performance was seen as the main reason for clubs' existence. It was widely thought that if people want to get better at a sport then a club is the place to encourage this. Related to this issue of player development, half (50%) of the clubs that undertook any development measures in the previous year had addressed issues of improving the range of opportunities for involvement in competition.

Table 17: Development Measures Undertaken by Clubs in Past 12 Months

Percentage of responding clubs that had taken any measures	
Improve player performance	81
Ensure safety in the sport	57
Increase opportunities for coach education	53
Improve range of opportunities for competition	50
Increase number of officials	30
Improve standard of officiating	29
Attract and include members with a disability	20

Base number (clubs that took any measures): 2,999. Multiple responses, summing to over 100%

From the governing body and club interviewees, it was felt that there are in fact too many opportunities for participation in competitions and clubs can feel pressurised to stretch their resources and be more involved than they would wish. It was said by interviewees in at least two of the sports: "you could take part in an event every weekend if you wanted to – that's too much really". The travel to events and the time spent doing this was thought to be a reason why some volunteers give up: "it's not the weekly training, it's travelling up and down the country every weekend – it puts a strain on every area of your life".

In general, opportunities for improving coaches, through coach education, were more widely addressed than issues regarding officials. Around half (53%) of the clubs that took any measures had taken measures to increase opportunities for club members to undertake coach education and about a third addressed the recruitment (30%) and standard (29%) of officials. Interviewees believed that in many cases governing bodies, local authorities and **sportscotland** had invested heavily in coach education and that clubs were possibly at a point where they had a surplus of qualified (but not necessarily experienced) coaches and leaders.

For over half (57%) the clubs that took any measures, ensuring safety in the sport had been addressed in the past year. This included, for example, attending first aid courses and purchasing new equipment, safety equipment or insurance.

Further, interviewees raised the issue of child safety/protection as an issue that had become more prominent in clubs. While clubs believed that it was fundamentally about individual and collective integrity and trust, most accepted that this was no longer enough and that formal documented procedures should be developed. Scottish Criminal Records Office checking was an area that clubs thought was important and believed that it would not deter individuals from volunteering. However, they were concerned about the cost of these checks and believed that this may deter people.

A specific question was asked about whether clubs had taken any measures to attract and include members with a disability to their club and one in five (20%) clubs that took any measures in the previous year stated that they had done so.

Development Action and Sports

Regarding the extent of written development plans based on the sports offered in clubs, rugby was the only distinctively different sport. Two-thirds (67%) of the rugby clubs had a written development plan compared to 19 per cent of the clubs overall. Rugby clubs with development plans are given additional support from their governing body, thus acting as an incentive for their production. Clubs that offered curling and badminton were least likely to have written development plans with only 2 per cent of curling clubs and 6 per cent of badminton clubs having written development plans.

However, the clubs differed in the nature of the development that they had undertaken in the past year based on the sports they offered. In particular, increases in the number and standard of officials and improving opportunities for coach education were much more widespread among clubs that offered team sports, although increasing the number and standard of officials was also more common in wrestling and boxing clubs.

Increasing the range of opportunities for competition was prevalent throughout most clubs but was lower among badminton (39%) and table tennis (24%) clubs than among responding clubs overall (50%). These were the sports with the least formal management and decision-making structures, and this was thought by interviewees to be a result of the largely recreational culture of these clubs.

Not surprisingly, developing measures to ensure safety was addressed among a greater proportion of clubs that offered outdoor activities such as sailing (90%) and sub-aqua (88%) and activities with a perceived greater risk of physical injury such as rugby (82%) and gymnastics (85%).

Club Development Issues

Facility-related issues were the most significant that emerged from the in-depth interviews, and 43 per cent of the questionnaire survey respondents stated that the development of their club's playing/training was held back by a facility problem.

In another section of the questionnaire, clubs were asked about other issues that faced their club – recruitment and retention of members and staff, and more general financial issues – and 94 per cent of those who responded identified at least one. Attracting new junior members was the most prevalent issue facing the clubs and it applied to two-thirds (68%) of the respondents who identified any issues. Just over half the clubs who identified any issues noted that they faced issues in recruiting senior members (55%) and in the general retention of their existing membership (54%). In addition, clubs considered that attracting new women (41%) and family (25%) members were issues. (Table 18)

Table 18: Non-facility Issues for Clubs

Issue	Percentage of respondents who identified any issues
Attracting new junior members	68
Attracting new senior members	55
Retaining existing members	54
General shortage of volunteers	50
Attracting women members	41
Financial difficulties or uncertainties	41
Shortage of volunteers/staff with technical skills	33
Shortage of volunteers/staff with management skills	29
Attracting family members	25
Recruiting paid staff (eg, managers, coaches)	10
Other issues	10

Multiple responses, summing to over 100%. *Base number (clubs that identified any issues): 3,199*

In the interviews, clubs expressed mixed views about membership – some had no recruitment difficulties at all and attributed this to the lively club atmosphere; others did not wish to attract more members because they felt that their club had reached capacity; and another considered recruitment and retention as part of the ongoing issues that clubs have to deal with because they compete with other activities.

There was a general, but unsubstantiated, belief that young people were put off sports clubs because other activities were more attractive, commercial and glamorous. However, there were examples of clubs that were “bursting at the seams with kids” and operated in fairly basic facilities and often required young people to “muck in and help”. In these clubs, interviewees thought that ‘atmosphere’ was more important than the quality of facilities on offer.

In general the recruitment of staff and volunteers was not as prevalent an issue as the recruitment of members, although half (50%) of these respondents expressed some concern about the general shortage of volunteers. This shortage applied almost equally to volunteers with technical skills such as umpiring and judging (33%) and management skills such as finance, reporting and planning (29%). Recruiting paid staff such as managers and coaches was an issue in only 10 per cent of clubs.

Surprisingly, clubs that were interviewed did not have any issues with attracting volunteers for their regular weekly activities. They noted that people sometimes “moan a lot” but that they had stayed with the clubs in volunteer capacities longer than they had stayed in their paid jobs. Occasionally when competitions or other events are involved, clubs sometimes struggle to find enough helpers. As one interviewee noted, “usually people to drive kids are scarce, but we somehow manage”. From the interviews it was clear that it is this latter group of individuals that clubs regard as ‘the real volunteers’. Others are usually thought of as office-bearers or those with a more specific job to do than being a general helper – for example, coaches and club leaders.

Other than these issues about membership and recruiting staff or volunteers, general financial difficulties or uncertainties were an issue for 41 per cent of clubs.

Development Issues and Sports

There were four issues in particular where there was a good deal of variation in the responses from clubs based on the sports offered: attracting new junior members; attracting women members; a general shortage of volunteers; and financial difficulties or uncertainties.

While two-thirds (68%) of clubs found that they had difficulties in **recruiting junior members**, this was more of an issue for the clubs that offered cycling (94%), bowls (86%), angling (81%) and hockey (79%).

Attracting women members was an issue for 41 per cent of clubs overall but a greater proportion of clubs that offered table tennis (93%), martial arts (84%), fencing (83%), shooting (80%) and cycling (75%) reported that this was an issue.

Half (50%) of the clubs overall reported a **general shortage of volunteers** as an issue, but for clubs that offered some sports the issue was significantly more widespread. For example, 95 per cent of clubs that offered car sports found a shortage of volunteers an issue, as did 87 per cent of shinty, 81 per cent of rugby, 74 per cent of swimming and 71 per cent of football clubs. In the case of the latter two sports, club interviewees noted that this was especially the case for them because there were so many matches and galas to attend and their members were mostly children that required higher levels of supervision and transport provision.

Clubs that offered team sports had greater concerns about **financial difficulties or uncertainties** than clubs generally (41%). Half or more of the volleyball (78%), basketball (78%), football (63%), shinty (59%), rugby (57%), cricket (51%) and hockey (49%) clubs found that this was an issue.

Summary

The answer to the question posed in the chapter title – do clubs need development? – is arguably ‘yes’. This is because virtually all clubs are actively involved in various club development measures. The clubs themselves perceive a need for development, based on the requirements of their members. In addition – though from the clubs’ perspective less central than the clubs’ own needs – other organisations such as governing bodies and local authorities see a need for club development based on sports development agendas.

The issues facing clubs that impact on their development relate to attracting and retaining members; a shortage of volunteers generally and volunteers/staff with technical and managerial skills in particular; and financial difficulties or uncertainties.

Any club development programme would need to relate to the range of development measures currently undertaken by clubs, and seek to support clubs in dealing with the key issues that many of them face.

CHAPTER 8: THE CONTEXT FOR CLUB DEVELOPMENT

They make us plan to improve 'our sport', 'sport in Scotland' or even worse they want us to address social inclusion and the activity levels of kids. Our interest though has got to be in our own club – that's why we're here... If we help some other issue, then great. (Club interviewee)

Development and Survival

From the interviews with governing bodies and local authorities it is clear that they believe that club development needs to be put firmly on an agenda. These interviewees indicated that clubs are widely regarded as vulnerable and fragile organisations that need to be made more secure if they are to survive. However, despite this perception of clubs as fragile, clubs display a remarkable ability for survival that has carried significant numbers of them more or less intact through years of local authority and governing body changes as well as more general social change. Many sports clubs in Scotland have had a greater degree of continuity than their statutory and core-funded partners.

This ability to survive appears to be underpinned by three interrelated factors:

- Autonomy
- Planning for the club
- Meeting members' needs

Autonomy

For sports clubs that responded to the survey, their main sources of income remain their members' fees and personal fundraising. Although many clubs are dependent on the availability of others' facilities, the fact that they pay for this and most other aspects of their activity themselves, means that a good deal of clubs' activity is self directed.

This ability to control the direction of their clubs (albeit in most cases with limited resources) has allowed them to make autonomous decisions in relation to the needs of their members.

Planning for the Club

From the interviews it is clear that most clubs plan their activities for one season at most. A fifth (19%) of the clubs that responded to the postal survey had a written development plan and from the interviewees it seems likely that many of these are completed as a requirement for funding from others. Most club management is decision-making focused on short-term needs – such as how they will pay for a training camp or new safety boat, deal with the increased letting charges, find three more 12-year-olds for a team, or arrange someone to drive children to an event.

This is not to say that clubs have no aspirations for future development, simply that from experience they know their survival depends on "making sure the small stuff gets done" because that is what is important to club members. In some cases, with limited time and financial resources to run the club, longer-term development

planning (for example that supported by governing bodies) is seen by clubs as a requirement in order to get short-term resources.

In general, clubs see meeting the needs of their members as the priority and the use of written plans is generally being introduced by other agencies to meet broader needs.

Meeting Members' Needs

Sports clubs are members' organisations that form to meet needs expressed by those who join them. Unlike many other voluntary organisations (for example, in areas of community care, housing support, citizen's advice) clubs are not generally set up and funded to provide a service to a particular group or section of the community identified by others as having needs that are not being met from elsewhere.

It has been said by a number of interviewees that "sports clubs are the people who join them". While this may appear to be a rather obvious truism, it is nonetheless why clubs continue to survive – if clubs did not meet the felt needs of members then they would not have members. If clubs fold, then one of the major reasons is that members become dissatisfied as the club no longer meets their personal needs.

Given that sport can fulfil a wide range of needs (sociability, achievement, self-esteem, security) and that people's needs change at different times in their life, it is to be expected that clubs will be diverse and that they may change as their membership comes and goes. However, if they are to survive at all then they have to respond to the people in them and balance this with the desires of others who wish to use clubs for broader agendas for society's goals such as sports development, social inclusion or health.

It needs to be acknowledged that clubs survive because they 'do something right'. While many aspects of clubs could perhaps be enhanced, these aspects need to be relevant to club members.

Fundamental Principle

The importance of these three interrelated factors – autonomy, planning and meeting users' needs – leads to a fundamental principle:

Any programme for club development needs to focus on the areas that constrain clubs from being able to meet the needs of their users.

It follows therefore that any national club development programme that is taken forward needs to have a broad framework that seeks to support clubs in areas where **they** perceive certain weaknesses and threats.

Key Issues

Any national club development programme will also have to address four key issues, some of which will also have funding implications for the club:

- Facility access

- Standards of conduct
- Partnerships
- Responsibilities and structures

Background to the Issues

Clubs have successfully maintained a good deal of continuity by focusing on the day-to-day issues necessary to address the needs of their members. Further, they are able to maintain their autonomy by finding most of the human and financial resources they require from their club members. Interviewees highlighted a number of issues that they perceived threaten the future of their clubs (in particular, facility access and standards of conduct). However, it is important to note that these issues are barriers that prevent clubs from addressing their primary concern – that of attracting and retaining club members (see Table 18 above). As such, the issues set out in the remainder of this chapter are, for clubs, a means to an end with the end being a strong and healthy membership that will provide the resources for their continued autonomy.

Where others such as governing bodies and local government wish to develop links with clubs for broader sports development purposes, it will be important to have a respectful appreciation of the clubs' aspirations for themselves. It was evident from the club interviewees that developing plans and proposals that could compromise their continuity and ability to prioritise and meet the needs of their members must be avoided.

Club Development: Threats to Continuity and Growth

In terms of **club** development priorities, there are two main factors (discussed below) that clubs currently perceive as a threat to their continued success and their potential to attract more members:

- Facility access
- Concerns about public standards of conduct, including child protection

The latter issue is perhaps seen as a slightly less pressing concern for clubs than the immediate constraints posed by limited access to facilities.

Sports Development: A View from the Clubs

From the perspective of individual clubs, the world of **sports** development is of limited relevance and concern, except where it supports or constrains their ability to meet the needs of their members. However, from the perspective of those given the responsibility of developing sport, clubs are widely regarded as a vital resource in the provision of opportunities for sports participation and performance. In this context, it is perhaps understandable that a number of governing body and local authority interviewees wished to have plans for club development as, from their perspective, these could perhaps assist in the delivery of broader sports development policies such as raising participation levels, creating more inclusive

sports communities and developing pathways from early involvement in sport through to performance/excellence.

However, this perceived need to plan the development of clubs as part of a broader sports development strategy is likely to be regarded as irrelevant by clubs unless it is based on a process of education about each others' needs and the development of mutual respect for each others' work.

There are examples of where clubs have willingly and productively made links with others that have broader sports development interests. Based on findings from the interviews, the hallmarks of this successful development work include:

- Establishing equal partnerships
- Willingness to review responsibilities and structures

These are discussed further below, as is the need to take account of the implications of these for funding within the club.

Facility Access

If clubs are to continue to serve existing members, attract new members and develop new sections (as required by many funding partners), then it is **recommended** that:

AS A PRIORITY, LOCAL FACILITY STUDIES ARE UNDERTAKEN SPECIFICALLY FOR CLUB SPORT

Within this general recommendation there are a number of suggested priorities and proposals for how this might be approached:

- The pressing requirement identified in this study is a review of space for indoor hall sports that are almost wholly dependent on local authority multi-sport facilities.
- Given that local authorities have slightly different arrangements for the management of facilities and policies for access by clubs it seems likely that this would be best undertaken as sports-specific studies on a local authority wide basis.
- Some sport-specific local authority studies on provision for clubs have already been completed or are under way (for example, volleyball and swimming in Edinburgh, swimming in East Lothian, football in West Lothian) and these perhaps could inform other areas.
- It is essential that facility managers are involved in any reviews and that this is not regarded as a problem for sports development officers alone. The process of reviews will be as important as the outcome in term of improved communication and understanding of mutual needs and constraints.

- Reviews should address facility programming and club access as a priority but ancillary services should also be considered – noticeboards, storage areas, club base and social area.

Standards of Conduct

Although sports clubs provide for the needs of their members, interviewees accepted that the public's, and especially parents', confidence in them is vital to their continued success and represents a serious threat to their future operation if not dealt with. While most believed that codes of practice do not solve problems, they nonetheless were keen to send out a signal that standards are taken seriously within the club and that the club has nothing to hide.

Individual governing bodies and local authorities have developed codes of practice for various aspects of clubs' activity – most notably child protection (for example, the 'Safe and Sound Clubs' programme in Perth and Kinross). These specific codes should be encouraged and more general guidelines promoted.

The principles of public life* identified by the Committee on Standards in Public Life presents a relevant framework within which clubs might wish to consider their activities. A good deal of work (see Ashby, 1997) already exists in this area that could perhaps be developed for use in clubs.

Ashby emphasises that the concept of proportionality needs to be used in developing any code for a voluntary organisation. The code needs to be relevant to the scale of club that is operated, and it is the process of discussing and developing a code that might make club members more sensitive to areas where standards could be improved.

It is **recommended** that:

CLUBS SHOULD REVIEW THEIR STANDARDS AND WHERE RELEVANT MAKE CHANGES TO HOW THEY OPERATE

Partnerships

The fact that this study was commissioned by **sportscotland** and included interviews with local authorities and governing bodies indicates that club development is regarded as a broader sports development issue and one that will involve a range of partners. However, as was mentioned in Chapter 2 that explored the definition of a sports club, partners can operate in different environments – statutory, voluntary and commercial – with different functions, structures and values.

Although partnership with others undoubtedly offers the potential for developing the best of both worlds, if the partnership is not genuinely equal then there is the potential for the weaker partner to become dependent on the stronger. In many

*Seven principles are outlined under the headings of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Details are contained in the committee's latest annual report, available on: www.public-standards.gov.uk

partnerships, clubs would be regarded as the weaker partner as they have fewer resources and have management practices that are relevant to amateur rather than professional organisations. However, there is a contradictory element to this common sense conclusion because the stronger partners (those core-funded by government) may in fact be the weak link in the chain as they cannot be certain of continued political support for their work. However, if clubs concede some autonomy in order to access resources, ironically they may weaken rather than strengthen their ability to be sustained.

Generally, partnerships between clubs and others have been limited to little more than facility letting and this has led to quite negative perceptions about the potential for partnership working. The examples of where this perception has been successfully changed are generally characterised by quite small-scale projects that bring together a club or clubs with others to address a specific issue. In almost every case, a period of time to allow negative perceptions to be explored (often heatedly) was necessary in order that trust could be developed.

In some cases partners may require a good deal of change from clubs in order to deliver their agenda and in some cases this would be better achieved through the establishment of entirely new structures. This will not only be fairer on existing clubs that may wish to retain their autonomy but may also represent better value for money for partners.

To achieve greater success, it is **recommended** that:

CLUB DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS SHOULD BE BASED ON A GRADUAL PROCESS OF MUTUAL EDUCATION AND SMALL CHANGES

Responsibilities and Structures

Many issues that constrain the ability of clubs to meet their members' needs could perhaps be addressed better by some reorganisation of responsibilities and structures between the club and other partners. In particular, clubs need to consider what functions the club currently tries to fulfil and whether, given the resources available to them, their current structure is the optimal approach. For example, it is common for clubs to struggle with facility access for areas where they have considerable demand (for example, recreational sessions) while at the same time run sessions where demand is quite small (for example, elite-level training).

In considering how they organise themselves, clubs need to focus on what the club is really about (its fundamental *raison d'être*) and in this context identify:

- Activities that could be resourced and delivered by others.
- Activities that could be resourced and delivered through collaboration with other clubs.
- Activities that could be resourced and delivered through collaboration with other agencies (voluntary, statutory or commercial).

The function of a club, hence its best structure, will vary from club to club depending on the needs of the majority of members. For example, some swimming clubs may feel that a learn to swim programme is a central element of their work. However, it may be the case that this need could be met by the local authority, thus releasing coach time and pool time for squad training.

Interviewees indicated that in general clubs are often reluctant to give up or to share any aspect of their work and often keep expanding functions to meet demands. However, it is likely that there are aspects of work undertaken in clubs that they would concede in order to deliver better other work regarded as more fundamental. In this context, clubs need to be supported to understand what **they** might gain by changing (as well as what they might lose). Based on comments from those interviewed, this process of understanding the possible need for change must be a very open process that is given adequate time.

Collaboration with other clubs was reported as having a number of advantages: smaller clubs can feel part of a bigger structure if they work with other clubs in even a very small part of their work (for example, an annual sports festival); small collaborations often open up a dialogue and provide an opportunity to develop the trust required to take on further collaborative work; a collaboration of small clubs provides a stronger voice in any partnership with core-funded agencies. Finally, if clubs work together in areas, members have the best of both worlds: access to the resources released by collaboration and an association and identity with their own smaller club.

It is **recommended** that:

CLUBS SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER THE WAY IN WHICH THEY ARE ORGANISED IS THE OPTIMAL WAY TO MEET MEMBERS' NEEDS WITH THE RESOURCES THEY HAVE AVAILABLE TO THEM

Funding Implications

Unlike facility access and standards of conduct, the clubs interviewed did not suggest that money was a major issue that threatened the ability of clubs to meet the needs of their members. However, if clubs were to engage in a broader development programme this may have implications for funding within the club. Club finance is managed as a balance between members' fees and day-to-day expenditure. If expenditure were to increase (due to development work) then other sources of funding may need to be sought – unless members felt that they benefited sufficiently to accept an increase in subscriptions. If the latter were not the case, the clubs would then be answerable to external funding partners and this could pose tensions between members' needs and the needs of other parties – their autonomous position may to some extent be compromised.

This situation was evident among the interviewees where it was noted that small grants that had been received in the past were now more commonly constructed as small 'contracts'. The general awareness that "everybody wants something more for their money" made clubs to some extent less willing to take money and therefore slightly more reliant on their own ability to raise funds. For example, in the case of

the Stirling Sports Charter, clubs made it clear to the local authority that achieving Charter status should not be linked to any financial reward system.

In this context the following are **recommended**:

- It seems likely that larger-scale direct funding to clubs (with specified outcomes) will be more successful where discrete projects, additional to the clubs' core business, are identified and supported.
- Where funding is relatively small scale (to each club) awarding bodies need to be realistic about the required outcomes. Clubs may feel, as a few interviewees noted, "it is not worth the money".
- Where funding is to be 'matched' by a club, volunteers' time should be considered as collateral in the same way that paid development staff are regarded as a financial investment in a sport.

Conclusions

Given that nearly half of the clubs that responded to the postal survey had been in existence in their present form for at least 30 years including a third for 50 years and over, there is good reason to acknowledge and respect their view of what is required to make clubs sustainable. Many clubs have demonstrated a remarkable ability for continuity in the face of considerable social change; however, this view of clubs runs contrary to the view of them as fragile organisations that require development if they are to continue. The success of clubs appears to be attributable to three factors:

- A focus on the needs of their members as an absolute priority.
- The ability to raise adequate finances to meet these needs from within the club (autonomy).
- A focus on short-term planning.

In this context, club development from the perspective of clubs means addressing the barriers and threats to meeting current members' needs and attracting new members. Currently, the priorities in this area are improving facility access and addressing concerns about standards of conduct including child protection.

From a club's perspective, broader and generally longer-term sports development planning is not widely regarded as relevant to their needs. This is not to say in any respect that clubs are short-sighted, merely that they believe their long-term success depends on taking care of the day-to-day business of the club. However, in some cases it is clear that the needs of clubs and broader sports development needs can coincide and development can be mutually beneficial.

This mutually agreed and beneficial sports development work seems to be characterised by three factors:

- **a process of developing equal partnerships based on mutual respect;**

- a willingness to review structures and responsibilities; and
- a willingness to consider the financial implications of development.

In taking forward a club development programme, clubs would welcome support to address the barriers and threats to retaining and attracting members. Beyond this, it is clear that clubs have considerable potential to be part of collaborations that address broader sports development issues. However, these must be underpinned by a willingness to understand and respect the values of amateur sports organisations.

APPENDIX 1: GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF CLUBS

Table 19 has been placed in an appendix rather than integrated into the text as it requires more of a health warning than the other data and should be seen as indicative only. The section on 'Implications for interpretation of data' on page 17 explains why the postal survey sample of clubs, although very large, cannot be assumed to be rigorously representative of all the estimated 13,000 sports clubs in Scotland. There are, however, additional factors that should be taken into account when interpreting these data on distribution by council area:

- Table 1 on page 10 shows that geographically-based organisations such as local authority departments and local sports councils were nearly as important in providing club lists as non-geographically specific bodies such as national governing bodies. Thus if there were any shortfalls in information from national sports bodies that were not filled by local sources, then the sample for those particular council areas could be lower than expected. The sample on which the geographical distribution is based is 3,309 clubs – roughly a quarter of the approximate total figure of 13,000 clubs believed to be in Scotland. Accordingly, if the figures in the first column of Table 19 are multiplied by four, they will give a very rough indication of the likely total number of clubs in each council area. If this differs substantially from any known estimate of club numbers for the area, then this could indicate some geographic sampling bias.
- Clubs are allocated to council area according to the location of the address of the club contact. Although it will be generally the case, it cannot be assumed that invariably (a) most of the club's members or (b) most of the club's activities will be located in the same council area as the club contact. An example of the latter being different is where the bulk of a city-based mountaineering club's activities take place in mountains elsewhere.

Broadly, the club distribution figures in Table 19 reflect the distribution of the overall Scottish population. However, council areas where there are marked differences include the following:

- Higher proportions of clubs than of the Scottish population: Aberdeenshire, Dumfries & Galloway, East Lothian, Highland, Perth & Kinross and Shetland Islands. In Shetland the proportion was particularly high, three times their proportion of the Scottish population, and a sample of 42 would suggest of the order of over 160 clubs in the Islands. A check with the local authority confirmed that this is about right – they estimate some 150 clubs there.
- Lower proportions of clubs than of the Scottish population: Eilean Siar, Glasgow City, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire. In Eilean Siar the proportion seemed particularly low – a sample of six would suggest the total number of clubs in the isles was around the mid-twenties. A check with the local authority confirmed that the sample was low, as the actual number is at least 35 and probably in the forties. In this case, there was likely to be some geographic sample bias.

Table 19: Distribution of Responding Clubs by Council Area

Council Area	Responding Clubs ¹		Clubs/ Members ²	Scottish Population ³
	no.	%	%	%
Aberdeen City	133	4.0	5.4	4.2
Aberdeenshire	235	7.1	6.4	4.4
Angus	85	2.6	2.5	2.1
Argyll & Bute	64	1.9	2.0	1.8
Clackmannanshire	32	1.0	1.2	0.9
Dumfries & Galloway	192	5.8	4.4	2.9
Dundee City	110	3.3	1.8	2.8
East Ayrshire	83	2.5	2.1	2.4
East Dunbartonshire	64	1.9	3.1	2.2
East Lothian	86	2.6	3.4	1.8
East Renfrewshire	33	1.0	1.7	1.7
Edinburgh City	299	9.0	9.6	8.8
Eilean Siar (W Isles)	6	0.2	0.1	0.5
Falkirk	59	1.8	2.7	2.8
Fife	231	7.0	6.7	6.8
Glasgow City	142	4.3	5.6	11.9
Highland	259	7.8	6.5	4.1
Inverclyde	45	1.4	1.3	1.7
Midlothian	62	1.9	1.9	1.6
Moray	101	3.1	2.4	1.7
North Ayrshire	96	2.9	2.9	2.7
North Lanarkshire	142	4.3	4.1	6.4
Orkney Islands	16	0.5	0.3	0.4
Perth & Kinross	145	4.4	3.3	2.6
Renfrewshire	72	2.2	2.3	3.5
Scottish Borders	104	3.1	3.7	2.1
Shetland Islands	42	1.3	0.6	0.4
South Ayrshire	72	2.2	3.4	2.2
South Lanarkshire	108	3.3	3.1	6.0
Stirling	85	2.6	2.0	1.7
West Dunbartonshire	31	0.9	1.0	1.9
West Lothian	75	2.3	2.8	3.0
<i>Base numbers:</i>	3,309			5.12m

¹These two columns list the number and percentage of responding clubs in each council area. This is based on the location of the address of the club contact.

²The distribution of responding clubs has been weighted in this column to take account of the average number of members of the clubs in each council area. It therefore shows the distribution of the membership numbers of the responding clubs.

³Distribution of the estimated Scottish population for 1999. Source: Registrar General for Scotland, 2000.

Excluding Eilean Siar, a pattern does emerge of higher levels of clubs in rural areas and lower levels in urban areas, reflecting the need in dispersed locations for more clubs relative to the population. One would expect this to be accompanied by lower numbers of members per club in rural compared with urban areas, and this is borne out in broad terms by comparing the third column of Table 19 – distribution of clubs weighted by average membership – with the second column that lists the straight distribution of clubs. Generally the proportions for distribution of clubs are higher in more rural council areas, and proportions for distribution of clubs weighted by average membership numbers are higher in more urban council areas (Dundee is a notable exception).

These different patterns for dispersed rural and concentrated urban populations indicate that Table 19 should not be read as any kind of 'league table' with high proportions of clubs leading over low proportions. Indeed, in any area where high proportions of clubs are combined with low membership numbers, an apparently healthy situation could hide problems of fragility where the sustainability of each club is dependent on the continuing efforts of only one or two key individuals.

This Appendix was written by the Editor on the basis of analyses prepared by the Planning Data Management Service of Edinburgh University.

APPENDIX 2: CLUB QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire survey took place during May-September 1999. A total of 3,485 completed questionnaires were received.

The questionnaire can be accessed here:

<http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/contents/publications/questionnaire/qnr1.htm>

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