

CAMANACHD ASSOCIATION

Annual Report 2021



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ASSOCIATION
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MOWI®

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President's Foreword

As I reflect on my first year as Camanachd Association President my two main thoughts are how quickly the time has passed and how much we have achieved. Any hopes of a "normal" season were quickly dispelled as we returned to lockdown early in 2021. We couldn't rush a return to action, but equally had to provide a sense of hope and optimism that shinty would return, so "cautiously optimistic" became our unofficial motto. To that end our staff and directors worked tirelessly to translate the government pronouncements into easily digestible guidelines to help and support our members prepare for the season ahead.

As restrictions finally started to ease the Board were unanimous that we had to be understanding to the challenges to bring everyone along at their own pace. Thankfully, there was a universal desire to return to shinty. The tricky part was that different communities were at various levels of COVID guidance which placed great pressure on those involved in coordinating competitions. So having just completed the 2021 season, on behalf of all in the shinty community my thanks to the individuals involved in supporting a return to shinty for everyone across the country. It is without doubt a remarkable achievement in the face of a global pandemic.

It has been heartening to speak to numerous people within and out with the game who have commented on how sure-footed the shinty community has been in comparison to many other organisations. Our clubs, associations and match officials deserve tremendous credit this year for observing the constantly changing guidelines and ensuring our communities had the opportunity to take part. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those involved with Shinty Memories as they have expanded their programme to reach out to those affected by isolation as a result of COVID. Similarly, our thanks go to the Shinty Chaplaincy programme which has continued to expand over the last year with some thirteen clubs now involved and offering pastoral care for those feeling vulnerable or facing mental health challenges as a result of the difficult two years everyone has endured.

We must also thank sportscotland for their assistance in providing general advice and ensuring our shinty specific guidelines were in accord with the Scottish Government rules. Indeed, the way different organisations have worked together has been one of the most encouraging aspects of the COVID response, and we have numerous examples of this within shinty where clubs have shared knowledge and good practice to get games restarted and then to allow spectators back. Similarly, our cup





sponsors - MOWI, Tulloch Homes, Highland Industrial Supplies, ALVANCE British Aluminium and cottages.com have been a joy to work with as they recognised the uncertain times in which we were operating. Our media partners at the BBC also faced similar problems due to the changes to our fixtures. As a result they had to reduce their shinty coverage to four games and move the Camanachd Cup Final to BBC ALBA however we did negotiate an additional highlights package that was a welcome development and one we'd like to continue. Despite these complications I'm proud to say that we delivered almost everything we set out. The one exception is the abbreviated leagues which proved impossible to complete. They did, however, provide the framework which made our

cup competitions viable and everyone within shinty should be clear of the debt we owe MOWI for their support over the last two years. With hindsight, August, September and October were intense months for the staff with semi-finals and finals dominating the fixture calendar and stretching the staff to the limit. It's not something I think we'll repeat but they deserve our thanks for delivering very well-run events under the most testing of circumstances. For those who attended the finals I'm sure they'll agree there was a palpable sense of excitement to be back at live events, and all had crowds that were larger than pre-COVID suggesting a pent-up demand amongst the shinty community. Of course, the Camanachd Association cannot run events in isolation so my thanks to all host clubs and indeed it should be recognised that Argyll and Bute Council stepped up to the mark when it was decided to roll over "The Final Fling" in Kingussie to 2022. My congratulations also, to this year's cup winners Kinlochshiel, Skye, Newtonmore, Kingussie, Kyles Athletic and Lovat on their success.

While it is important to celebrate our success, we also recognise the game continues to face challenges and we want to work closely with clubs to overcome these. Youth competition continues to be impacted by access to schools as well as transport problems, referee numbers continue to be a concern, while camans – or the lack of them – highlighted that we cannot take the dedication and skill of the small number of caman-makers for granted. To that end I am delighted that the Association have signed a memorandum of understanding with the University of the Highlands & Islands and these two areas as well as connecting teacher training to shinty will be prioritised. This will help identify new officials, connect schools in our area with shinty and look at ways to reduce costs and increase co-operation and learning amongst caman-makers.



The journey to restarting our sport was an integral part of retaining as many participants within the game as possible. There was an all too real fear amongst the Directors that a second season without competition would see members drift away to other sports as they became used to a life without shinty but the decisive actions taken by our board (Past and Present), our staff, and leaders within the club associations allowed us to ready our clubs, subsidise membership costs and be ready to restart at the first opportunity in 2021.

Facilities and Communications has seen considerable progress in Inverness and Oban in 2021, as well as some changes in Glasgow that required support. This work is time consuming and largely unseen however the biggest breakthrough this year has been the announcement that The Highland Council have been awarded £20 million to develop Inverness Castle, the Northern Meeting Park and the Bught Park as part of the levelling up fund. The Bught Park is a much-loved venue with a playing surface second to none, but the associated facilities need considerable investment to bring them up to the standards expected from a modern sporting facility. This investment would not have materialised were it not for the Bught Park Users Group and associated feasibility study driven by the Camanachd Association.

This year we also took some important steps toward developing our website and I'm sure you'll agree this was a welcome evolution with much improved visuals and more intuitive navigation bars making for a much more professional and appealing experience. Credit for this lies with our Communications team who not only sourced the funding but worked closely with our design friends at Lateral North to deliver the website for the start of the 2021 season. Additionally, our communications took another step forward with the Half Swing podcast. It provides an entertaining take on the latest results and fixtures and features a range of individuals from across our sport.

An important part of our sustainability during the past two years has been thanks to the Finance committee. They protect the future viability of the association through careful stewardship of our expenditure but also source funds to ensure we have the appropriate support in place to drive the agenda for shinty and support our clubs moving forward. This approach has allowed us to secure the appointment of Les Kinvig in Argyll and Bute as Regional Development Officer and of Iain Robinson on a part-time post to concentrate on areas of high population that have the potential to start and sustain shinty. Please welcome Les Kinvig and Iain Robinson to our team and we look forward to their endeavours bearing fruit.



On top of all the activity outlined in the following report we have also been consulting with members on how to develop our sport over the next four years. Shinty is extremely fortunate that we have so many competent individuals with an affection for the sport and who were willing to give up their valuable time to help us progress strategic priorities in line with feedback from clubs and associations. In fact, many larger sports would be envious of attracting individuals of the calibre of Ian Roberts (MOWI), Garry MacKintosh (Highland Industrial Supplies), Steve Walsh (CEO Highlife Highland), Kevin Anderson (CEO Live Argyll), Kate Bradley (student and former Shinty Ambassador), Dr Iain

Morrison (Dean of Students, UHI), Maggie Cunningham (Ofcom), Jimmy Robertson (Chief Executive, RBS) and Keith Loades (Past President). My thanks to you all. The staff will be largely responsible for delivering our new strategy and we are extremely fortunate to have the talented and enthusiastic individuals working for our organisation that we do. My thanks to you all for your efforts this year.

It would be remiss of me not to pass on my thanks to our board for their incredible efforts and support this year. Special thanks to Ross Brown for his work on development and equality issues this year. Sadly, Ross will be stepping down at the 2021 AGM but I'm delighted that Lyndsay Bradley has agreed to stand for re-election for a second term and would recommend that you give her your support. My final thanks go to our National Development Officer, Graham Cormack, who will be retiring in early January after nearly fifteen years. Graham has done much valuable working in improving our coaching pathway and aligning it with national standards. His legacy will live on with the Association as many of the standards and policies we have in place are Graham's work. We wish him well for the future and hope he won't be a stranger.

All that's left is to look forward with enthusiasm and hope the 2022 season lives up to the excitement of 2021.

Camanachd gu bràth!

Steven MacKenzie, President

STRUCTURE

The Camanachd Association is a not-for-profit member led organisation led by a board elected at our Annual General Meeting by our member clubs and associations.

BOARD

Steven MacKenzie

President

Burton Morrison

Competitions

Lyndsay Bradley

Officials

Kirsty Deans

Volunteering, Safeguarding & UK Anti-Doping

Willie MacDonald

Youth Player Pathway

John Finlayson

Communications and Facilities (Highland)

Roddy McCuish

Communications and Facilities (West and Central)

Daniel Palombo

Finance

Ross Brown (Resigned)

Coaching and Development (Equality and Inclusion)

John MacKenzie

Chieftain

Richard Gall

Vice Chief

STAFF

Derek Kelr

Chief Executive Officer

Graham Cormack

National Development Manager

Astle Cameron

Operations & Events Manager

Deborah MacPherson

Finance and Administration Manager

Ronald Ross

Regional Development Manager - East

Paul MacArthur

Regional Development Officer - Central

Katie Drain

Regional Development Officer – North

Les Klinvig

Regional Development Officer - West

Aarron Duncan-MacLeod

Marketing and Communications Officer

Iain Robinson

Regional Development Officer - Growth

Executive Summary

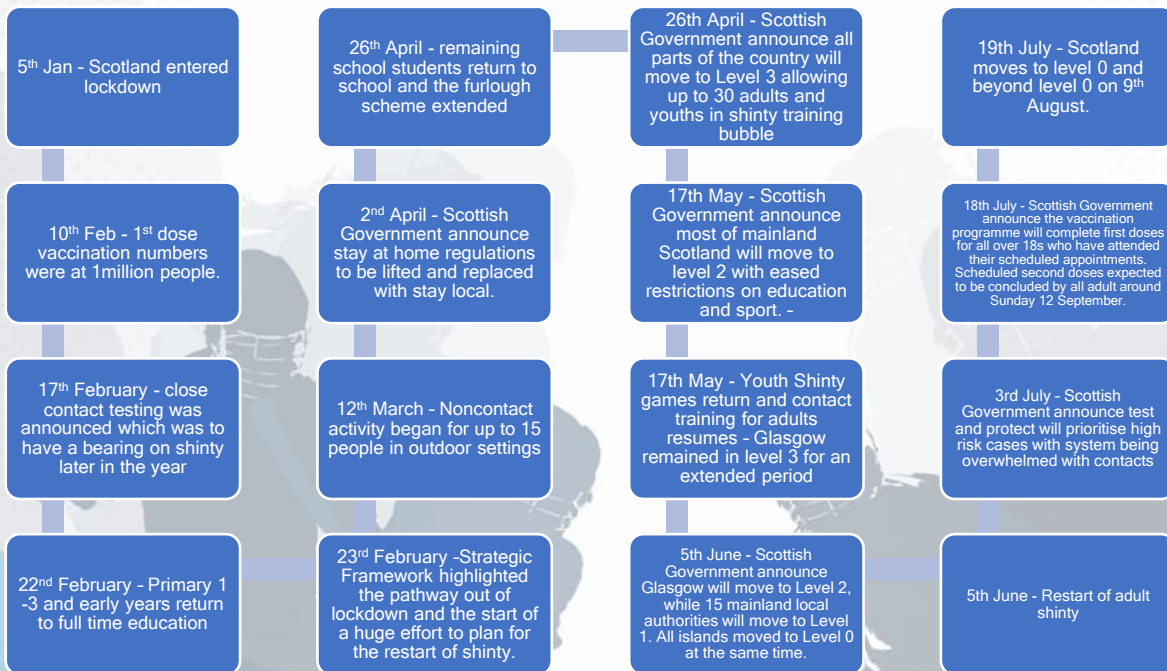
The unprecedented challenges in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, unsurprisingly, have had a significant impact on the Camanachd Association. Over the course of 2020-21 seven out of our eight association staff (at the time) were furloughed on full and part time basis to mitigate the financial risk caused by the pandemic. We would like to place on record our thanks to all members in our clubs and associations that showed understanding, leadership and support during this period and to all our sponsors for their continued support at such a crucial time in our history.



COVID -19 prevented shinty participation for the first six months of 2021 thus placing intense pressure on the second half of the year to deliver participation in an abbreviated season or risk facing a two-year layoff and losing many participants. Our focus from the outset in January 2021 was on three priority areas of business:

1. Restarting shinty in line with government guidance
2. Provide opportunities for our entire shinty community
3. The return of safe and well organised activity in shinty

We focused our energies on preparing clubs and communities for a restart when guidance allowed and I am delighted to report that the extraordinary efforts and expertise in clubs and associations combined with expertise and leadership in the Association delivered an incredibly meaningful return to shinty. The following charts some of the key changes in 2021 that led us to shinty participation.



With continued restrictions on all sports for travel, spectating, participant numbers, self-isolation and changing facilities it says a lot about the commitment across our sport that our community found the energy to overcome these new and additional challenges to ensure the return of shinty in 2021. Throughout the year the Camanachd Association worked closely with local and national partners to provide up to date COVID guidance and support for our members to restart shinty. Every club in shinty (With one exception) progressed with readiness guidance and returned to participation in

2021 and I would like to say a special thanks to all involved in that process (in clubs and associations) and to our staff that showed continued passion and commitment to this task. You have all protected our sport and deserve eternal gratitude for your efforts in making the restart possible.

Furthermore no restart would have been possible without the continued commitment of match officials. We must all protect this vital area of our game as it continues to be an area that we need help in recruiting greater depth in numbers. Our return was also dependent on clubs providing the traditional safe, well organised activity and connecting that to meaningful opportunities to participate. With 3115 members returning to shinty this year from rural communities across Scotland to the bigger cities and beyond we believe once again shinty has demonstrated a resilience that we should all be extremely proud of.

Summary of Highlights

- **Shinty restarted in 2021**
- The Camanachd Association led the establishment of Bught Park user group and completed feasibility study at the Bught Park in partnership with Highland Council, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Highlife Highland. This project was recently confirmed as part of the levelling up bid submitted by Highland Council which is due to receive up to £20 million of levelling up funding.
- Camanachd Association represented on Mossfield Stadium Users Group which has now become a community interest company with view to developing facilities
- Secured further funding grant from sportscotland to provide important security to our work and turnover allowing us to recruit two new Regional Development Officers (**Protecting our sport**)
- Established 8 Schools of Shinty (**Growing our sport**)
- Secured next three years of sponsorship for Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup (**Sustaining our sport**)
- Entered the third year of the Shinty Ambassadors Programme with more schools this year than ever before delivering opportunities to more than 600 young people. (**Targeted interventions to engage more teenagers in our sport**)
- Secured partnership with University of Highlands and Islands that will allow for enhanced partnership working and support for newly qualified teachers, teacher training, caman makers receiving support in Shinty. (**Partnerships to sustain our activity**)
- 52 teams participated in meaningful competition in 2021
- 3115 people participated in meaningful shinty activity in 2021 (This does not include primary school participation due to COVID restrictions)
- Delivered introduction to sport inclusion training to club presidents with Scottish Disability Sport to explore how we can develop opportunities for participants with physical, sensory or learning disabilities to take part and progress in shinty.

Finally, I would like to extend my appreciation to our President and Board for their leadership and resilience in managing some of the most difficult challenges in our recent history. I would like to express my thanks to all our employees, our clubs, our members, our supporters and other associates, including sponsors and community partners for their continued support. Notwithstanding the uncertainty and individual hardships we have all faced, the unwavering support for our game this past year can only be described as shinty's most important asset, a community. We cannot thank you all enough for your efforts in restarting our sport. This level of commitment is what makes the future bright for shinty, it will be challenging but it will ensure shinty continues as a vibrant part of our national culture and recognised as Scotland's iconic community sport

Derek Keir, Chief Executive Officer

Finance

The Camanachd Association's 2020 Annual Accounts report a turnover of £352,819, a decrease of £261,749 from 2019 and a surplus for the year of £16,440 down from £26,910 in 2019. The associations reserves have increased to £172,852 as at the 31st of December 2020.

Due to the COVID pandemic the Association's financial target for 2020 was to minimise any potential financial loss. The COVID pandemic put a halt to all competitions and leagues for 2020. Our aim was therefore to minimise costs where possible and secure funding where available in order to balance the books for 2020.

We were truly fortunate to have ongoing support from the majority of our sponsors. MOWI our longest serving supporter of shinty and sponsor showed incredible commitment for our work with their continued support during this difficult period. Tulloch Homes also continued their sponsorship and 2020 would have been their fourth year as title sponsor on the Camanachd Cup. Although the event did not happen in 2020 Tullochs fully committed to their sponsorship for the year and have also agreed to extend their sponsorship to 2024. cottages.com agreed to carry forward their sponsorship of the MacTavish Cup in 2020 to 2021 to support us through the COVID Pandemic. Liberty British Aluminium, now ALVANCE British Aluminium Group Ltd sponsor also agreed to sponsor the Balliemore Cup in 2021. Highland Industrial Supplies generously agreed to sponsor the Sutherland Cup in 2020 although the event was unable to go ahead. The business club was deferred in 2020 and will continue in 2022.

The 2020 Annual Accounts show our Grant funding decreased by £17,461 from the figure in 2019. Sportscotland continued to be our largest contributor and we have a funding package secured through to March 2022 with plans already progressed for continued support beyond this time.

With the funding received through the government Job Retention Scheme we were able to continue to keep all staff jobs within the association safe.

Sponsorship income decreased in 2020 by £60,975, this was largely attributable to the pandemic with no income from the business club and the postponement of all our competitions and leagues.

We only had partial membership in 2020, mainly for youth level who were able to start training as the COVID restrictions eased. Membership income therefore decreased by £26,875.

Total expenditure in 2020 was £363,078 a decrease of £228,183 on 2019. Due to the pandemic, expenditure on development and competition decreased significantly as did office costs and travel expenditure. The main cost for the year being wages remained at the same level as 2019 however the £31,207 of government Job Retention Scheme funding helped to cover some of these costs. We remained under the VAT de minimis this year which has been a saving and corporation tax has reduced to £4,508 for the year.

Due to the uncertainty that arose from the COVID pandemic and the uncertainty over whether any shinty would be able to be played, we faced a situation of damage limitation for 2020 with a hope that if shinty restarted we may be able to balance the books for the year. In last year's report we had projected a loss of £30,000 for 2020, however with the generosity of our sponsors together with the government financial assistance through the JRS grants we have managed to report a surplus for the year of £16,440. If it hadn't been for this support, we would have been faced with a large deficit for the year.

Our current financial forecast for 2021 is a surplus of £16,000 best case and £14,000 in the worst case, again this has only been achieved through the continued support from our sponsors, sportscotland, a return to shinty and a huge effort across our staff to maximise efficiencies and support for our sport.

Daniel Palombo, CA Finance Director

Competitions – Adult

The 2021 Season was a “Year Like No Other”, the fact that all eight Cup Competitions were completed and nearly 150 league fixtures played despite all the challenges which arose is truly amazing. Thanks must go to all teams that took the field and to the Clubs for the acceptance when some fixtures were postponed due to COVID Restrictions.

Due to the Lockdown at the start of 2021, the Board of Directors agreed a proposal from the Competitions Committee in January to defer the start of the 2021 Season. Depending on when restrictions would ease Fixtures were drawn up with an April, May or June start.

It was also agreed that there would be abbreviated Leagues of six teams, and these would be on an Area basis against opposition of a similar standing. The Competitions Committee also recommended that the early rounds of the National Cup Competitions be played in a regionalised basis.

Prior to the season all Clubs were required to have various COVID Risk Assessments and Club Readiness documentation completed and signed off by their Development Officer as well as each Club having a COVID Officer.

An added complication this year was that initially not all areas were in the same Tier Level resulting in some clubs having additional restrictions imposed. Also, the Travel Limitations imposed resulted in some teams not being able to travel as they did not have enough car drivers, whilst the use of Minibuses was not an option. To meet the guidelines, Lewis agreed to play all games away from home and to travel to matches by Coach only to find Foot Passenger numbers were restricted on the ferries and consequently they were unable to play until September.

The 2021 Season commenced on 5th June with 17 games played and 8 cancelled for COVID reasons. This pattern continued throughout the Season.

Due to the condensed season the emphasis was on ensuring the Cup Competitions progressed. This resulted in six Cup Finals being played in a four-week spell in October.

Both Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Semi Finals were broadcast live on BBC ALBA as were the Finals of the Artemis Macaulay Cup and Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup.

Norman Strachan recorded the Finals of the Glasgow Celtic Society Cup, the ALVANCE British Aluminium Balliemore Cup, The Highland Industrial Supplies Sutherland Cup and the cottages.com MacTavish Cup. They were all added to our YouTube Channel. Indeed the cottages.com MacTavish Cup was broadcast live on Facebook.

Kinlochshiel won the 2021 Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup for the first-time defeating Lovat by three goals to one in the final, which was played at Mossfield Park, Oban. The match billed as “Shinty’s Big Day Out” attracted a large crowd, it was broadcast live on BBC ALBA and Radio Nan Gaidheal, with highlights on BBC Scotland on the night of the match. Kinlochshiel defender Conor Cormack, won the Albert Smith Medal for Man of the Match.

Kingussie retained the 2021 Artemis Macaulay Cup Final in Oban defeating Kyles Athletic by four goals to one in a thrilling match which was played in heavy rain throughout.

Kyles Athletic defeated Oban Camanachd on four – three on penalties in the Final of the Glasgow Celtic Society Cup at Taynuilt after the match finished one goal each at Full Time.

A memorable season for Kinlochshiel was guaranteed although they required extra time to defeat Kingussie by three goals to two after extra time in the Cottages.com MacTavish Cup Final at Bught Park, Inverness. This match was also played in front of a large crowd.

The ALVANCE British Aluminium Balliemore Cup Final was held at An Aird, Fort William where Skye defeated Beaulby by three goals to one, in a match where the outcome of the trophy was in doubt until a late goal for Skye

Newtonmore avenged their defeat by Lovat in the Strathdearn Cup Final to win The Highland Industrial Supplies Sutherland Cup Final by five goals to one at Blairbeg, Drumnadrochit. This match was much closer than the score line suggests

One of the most thrilling Junior matches in years was witnessed at Balgate in the Final of the Strathdearn Cup. After 90 goal-less minutes Newtonmore raced to a 4 – 0 interval lead only to be pegged back to 4-4 by Full Time. Lovat went on to prevail by three goals to two in the penalty shoot out

In the Bullough Cup final Kyles Athletic defeated Lochside Rovers on penalties by three goals to one after the match had finished three goals each. Kyles Athletic have defeated their Oban rivals on penalties in two Cup Competitions this year.

52 Teams participated in the MOWI Leagues in 2021, unfortunately Boleskine advised just as the leagues were commencing that they were withdrawing from competition this year. The teams from the MOWI Premiership & MOWI National Division took part in the MOWI Senior Leagues, there were three leagues of six Teams. There were three MOWI North Area Leagues and two MOWI South Area Leagues as well as a MOWI Central League for developing Teams. Due to only five teams taking part in a couple of leagues a third round of fixtures was introduced to give these teams more games.

When the fixture calendar was drawn up the Competitions Committee recognised that the total number of games would be a challenge for clubs and it was agreed if any team won their league outright, they would be recognised. It was also agreed there would be no Promotion or Relegation in any League and the Byelaws were amended for this year only so that no team would be penalised for not fulfilling a league fixture.

In summary 442 fixtures were scheduled in 2021, of these 251 went ahead this equates to 57%. 191 fixtures were cancelled, and one fixture was abandoned. Of the 191 cancelled fixtures, 97 were because of COVID therefore 51% of cancelled fixtures were COVID Related.

| To 28 th Oct | 2021 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Fixtures Scheduled | 442 | 639 | 655 | 689 |
| Fixtures Played | 251 | 514 | 531 | 526 |
| Cancelled | 191 | 110 | 121 | 125 |
| Abandoned | 1 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Walkovers | 11 | 11 | 23 | 21 |
| Unplayable Field | 4 | 63 | 53 | 108 |
| Team Raising | 37 | 21 | 29 | 39 |
| Bereavements | 0 | 13 | 8 | 13 |
| Reversed / Transferred | 19 | 15 | 12 | 3 |

Competitions - Youth

After meetings of the Youth and Schools Development Group a comprehensive Youth and Schools competition programme was developed with the initial focus on localised competition. Coach workshops were held to explain and discuss the Schools and Club competition structure.

- MacKay Cup open draw - 14 teams - final played on 18th June. Virgin Money sponsored this year's competition. The winners were Newtonmore Primary School.
- Tulloch Cup - Local area festivals -leading to National finals day. Final took place on Wednesday 8th September. The winners were Newtonmore Primary School.
- CA Club competition 14 teams entered. Final took place on Tuesday 14th September. The winners were Newtonmore Camanachd Club
- The U14 MacMaster Cup - 11 teams - final took place on Saturday 18th September. Winners were Skye Camanachd Club
- The U14 leagues and development competitions are scheduled to conclude incomplete due to COVID restrictions.
- The MacQuisten Cup final is scheduled to take place on the 21st November
- The MacTavish U17 Cup final is scheduled for the 13th November.

University Shinty

- 2021/22 University leagues restarted successfully
- Cup competitions scheduled for February 2022
- One new University club formed - Stirling University
- SSS and Camanachd association partnership agreement agreed and produced

Schools of Shinty

The Camanachd Association recognise the crucial role Secondary Schools can play, in increasing participation, providing opportunities and developing performance by providing quality opportunities for children of all ages. The School of Shinty initiative is all about connecting more young people with more shinty throughout the academic year with support from the local shinty clubs, and the Camanachd Association Regional Development Officers. Since our first school of shinty was established on the 10th October 2018, we have established 8 schools of shinty.

- Lochaber High
- Kingussie High
- Oban High
- Ardnamurchan High
- Charleston Academy
- Grantown Grammar
- Uddingston Grammar
- Kilchuimen Academy. We are targeting many more schools in 2022.

A new School of Shinty Accreditation Scheme has been developed to encourage greater participation and progression after schools sign up. **Schools of Shinty**

As a specific example Charleston Academy have signed up to be a school of shinty and are already delivering curriculum time shinty sessions as well as an after-school club. They are also planning to qualify their young leaders in both coaching and refereeing as well as hosting a S1/2 festival in December 2021. Furthermore, we are working closely with several other clubs and schools to explore developing more partnerships that help deliver enhanced opportunities in shinty.

Safeguarding

In conjunction with Volunteer Scotland, we have organised online training courses for all our Club Child Protection Officers on the new online process for processing PVG's. 35 Child Protection Officers attended the safeguarding training workshop.

- The Camanachd Association continue to process club coaches PVG's on a weekly basis.
- An online Child Protection awareness video was developed to highlight the vital role we all must play in the safeguarding of young players.
- 3 Clubs took part in Children's 1st club pilot of the new standards for child wellbeing and protection in sport
- An online training workshop was held for all Child Protection Officers.
- 3 Child Wellbeing and Protection in sport workshops were rolled out to all our club coaches. The courses were 3 hours long plus an online eLearning module had to be completed pre course. 70 coaches attended.
- A Young Persons Disciplinary panel has been developed to deal with any youth related cases. The committee will come into effect from season 2022.

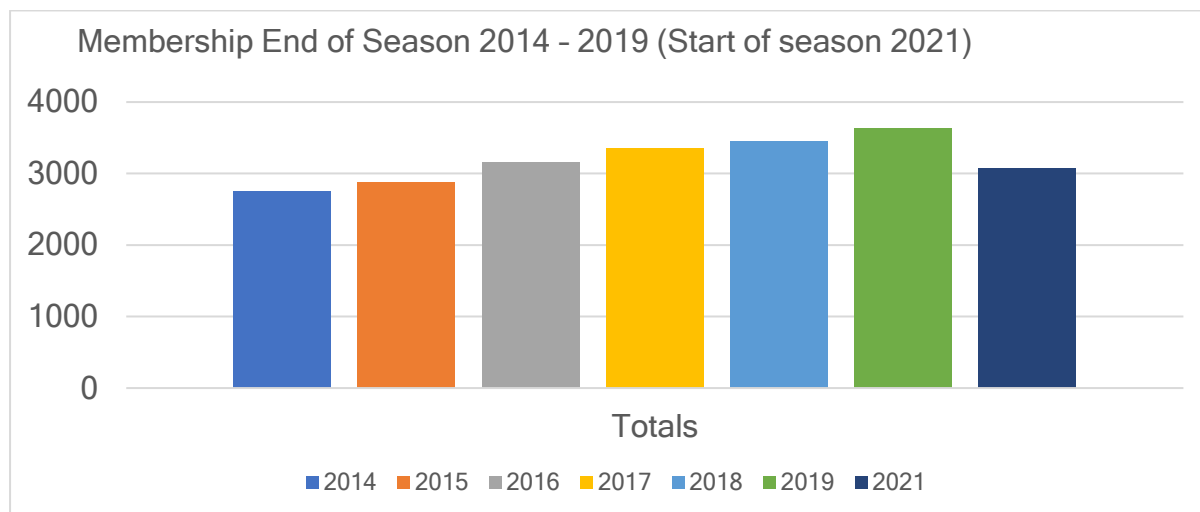
Funding

Awards for All Funding Lewis Camanachd and Kinlochshiel Shinty Club to support them with new planned activity for young people.

MOWI Young Persons Development Fund - 11 member clubs received funding support from the MOWI Young Persons Development Fund. The panel all agreed to award £450 to each of the 11 clubs from the £5000 fund.

Development

Participation in Shinty in 2021 reached 3115 participants from youth through adult participation (not including school based participation due to COVID restrictions).



| Year | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2021 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Adult Male | 1300 | 1330 | 1408 | 1437 | 1306 | 1332 | 1341 |
| Youth Male | 1150 | 1200 | 1078 | 1157 | 1220 | 1375 | 1056 |
| Adult Female | 200 | 224 | 399 | 423 | 394 | 480 | 351 |
| Youth Female | 100 | 122 | 267 | 337 | 528 | 450 | 367 |
| Totals | 2750 | 2876 | 3152 | 3354 | 3448 | 3637 | 3115 |

Direct Club Investment

Fort William Shinty Club and Strathspey Camanachd have appointed part-time Club Development Officers on 4 years contracts. The funding support came from 'sportscotland' Direct Club Investment (DCI) fund, targeted at supporting clubs who have a sharp vision of how they can make a positive impact on their local communities by delivering more and better opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. This is a major investment into shinty and it is hoped that further clubs will be applying in 2022.

Summer Camps Programme

In conjunction with Active Schools summer shinty camps were offered in Badenoch and Strathspey and Lochaber as well as in Edinburgh, Dunoon, Lochgilphead, Oban and Glasgow. A girl only camp was also promoted and run through the school in service day in September. This attracted 21 young girls from 6 clubs, all travelling to take part in the day's activity. Coaches from various clubs also volunteered, as did 3 Shinty Ambassadors.

Pitch and Facilities

- **Bught Park Users Group (BPUG)** - The Bught Park Partnership Working Group, which includes representatives from the BPUG & Highland Council, completed a Feasibility Study of the Bught Park. Highland Council used the study as part of their recently successful application for UK Government 'Levelling Up' funding. This should lead to a major upgrade of the facility with the possibility of an interactive Shinty Museum.
- **Mossfield Stadium, Oban** - The Camanachd Association is a member of the Mossfield Stadium Users Group and is represented by Les Kinvig RDO - West. A Steering Group (MOSES) has been set up and a Feasibility Study continues to be targeted. The MOSES Group is a Community Interest Company who are working in partnership with Argyll and Bute Council to enhance and improve the current outdoor sporting facilities in Oban.
- **Glasgow Life:** The CA contributed to the Facilities Strategy Review with a focus on Peterson Park, Yoker.
- **CA Pitches & Facilities Support Group** to place to share best practice and ideas during information sharing and on-line meeting 06/04/21.
- **CA Artificial Pitch Guidelines** were Developed and drafted in association with Niall MacPhee of Sports Labs & sportscotland Facilities department.

New Pitches & Facilities:

- Kinlochshiel Grass Pitch - Fort William Youth Grass Pitch - Newtonmore 2nd Grass Pitch - North Connel Grass Pitch - Caberfeidh Grass Training area. Tayforth move to Edinburgh University. Lovat are planning a Grass Training area.

Upgraded Pitches & Facilities

- Kingussie - Skye Camanachd - Kyles Athletic - Mossfield.
- Inverness 2nd Grass Pitch moved.

Partnerships with Highland Council and A&B Council Active Schools Managers to establish projects that complement the implementation and development of Strategic objectives for the CA.

- Bi-Annual management meetings.
- Active Schools activity and normal Schools activity are developing slowly following COVID restrictions. Outside personnel are now able to visit schools again in a less limited way.
- Ongoing monitoring is always in place.

Coach Education Online: Brightspace

- Foundation Coaching Course: Theory modules now live on Brightspace. First Pilot Group completed modules and online video meeting in June.
- Pilot Module is being reviewed.
- Development of the CA Level 1 & 2 Courses as they are accredited within the new Scottish Coaching Certificate.
- Communications & Marketing module
- Match Officials Foundation Course Theory module.

Coach Education - East Region

- A Level 1 Coaching Course was delivered.
- A Foundation coaching course was delivered in Fort William.
- CPD teacher training for Kingussie HS and Grantown Grammar has been delivered.
- A series of Psychology workshops were delivered for club coaches.

Annual calendar of events for Officiating and Coach Education.

- Coach workshops were held on-line: 20/01 - 08/02 - 24/02 - 05/04 - 19/04
- CA Coaching Level 1 on-line: 28/02
- CA Foundation Coaching on-line workshop: 03/06
- Match Officials workshops on-line: 27/01 - 16/02 - 12/05 - 13/05
- Match Officials Foundation Course on-line: 21/04
- Match Officials Support Groups on-line: 04/02 - 10/02 - 31/05 - 02/06
- Promotion and Recruitment is ongoing through website, social media and direct with Clubs and members through the Development Team.

Evolution of Referee Working Groups

- Match Officials Working Groups established
- Meetings: CA leads: 01/03 - Training: 30/03 - Rules: 01/04 - Recruitment & promotion: 20/04

National COVID Guidance:

- CA COVID Working Group met to consider options and actions.
- National COVID workshop delivered on-line. 10/03/21
- Regional COVID workshops delivered on-line. 29/03 /21 and 2 workshops on 31/03/21.
- Facilities & Pitches COVID workshop delivered on-line. 26/05/21.
- Weekly COVID Development Team meetings.
- Regular circulation of updates to Club COVID Officers were provided throughout the year.
- All clubs developed comprehensive Risk Assessments.
- Development Team supported clubs working towards Event Documentation - allowing a return of spectators.
- All Club COVID Coordinators completed the Sportscotland eLearning module.
- All clubs were regularly updated on the latest guidance.

Club Mark Accreditation

- Evolution of the CA Club Mark Accreditation Scheme to reflect evolving approaches. 2021 update.
- Development Team working closely with Clubs using the scheme as a framework and using all the support information available.
- One Gold Level Club: Fort William SC
- Seven Silver Level Clubs
- Six Bronze Level Clubs
- Twenty-six Foundation Level Clubs.
- Forty Clubs engaged

Equality and Inclusion in Shinty

- The Camanachd Association achieved accreditation at the Intermediate Level for equality in February 2021 ahead of schedule. The Equality Working group progressed several internal policies and procedures and developed an action plan for equality. In addition, the Camanachd Association have prioritised focused interventions to grow girls and women's shinty.
- Staff (& Board) training completed as part of Equality Standard and included staff update from SGB (Scottish Governing Body) Equality Group, session with Gavin MacLeod CEO - Scottish Disability Sport, Lee Duff Drummond Special School, Inverness and Chris Gibbons from Inside Inclusion
- Staff updated on all demographic data when available and they integrate this into discussions/developments through Club Mark Accreditation Scheme

- With support from Katie Drain, Lovat Shinty Club have launched their first ever girls only primary coaching session. This session was identified as a gap in their club and since launching has become hugely popular and engaged other clubs with girls only competitions and matches.
- Ronald Ross has been working with Fort William Shinty Club to develop opportunities with Lochaber High School Learning Support Unit.

Medical (First Aid)

- Ongoing promotion of Heartstart Camanachd/Lucky2Bhere ELS (Emergency Life Saving) & Defibrillator training. Current discussions with: Ballachulish - Glasgow Mid Argyll - Ardnamurchan - Oban Celtic.
- CA accredited with the British Heart Foundation.
- Ongoing promotion of First Aid Courses.
- Ongoing promotion of Scottish Sport Concussion Guidelines in which the CA were a founding sport.

Anti-Doping

- As part of our commitment to best practice the Camanachd Association are currently working towards accreditation in the new Anti-Doping Assurance Framework. This forms part of our criteria for investment with sportscotland and the deadline for compliance is August 2022. Currently 88% of content has been approved with the remaining 12% submitted and awaiting approval.

Shinty equipment

- Helmet and Shinty Faceguard plus ball standards confirmed at previous CA AGMs.
- Caman tests have been developed with Napier University (with Innovation Voucher funding) and were approved by the CA Board.
- The Caman Support Group was formed and held its first workshop on-line. 07/10/21.
- A project with UHI Inverness on business support for Caman makers/suppliers (with Innovation Voucher funding) has been agreed and commenced at the end of September.
- A UHI Advancing Manufacturing within the Highlands proposal is being developed.
- The Development Team is informed and upskilled in an ongoing process.

Health & Wellbeing:

- Shinty Chaplaincy: Following the pilot project with Kyles Athletic additional appointments have been made with Skye, Glen Urquhart, Fort William, Kilmallie, Lovat, Beaulay, Caberfeidh, Bute and Inveraray. Talks are in progress with Aberdour - Inverness - Lochaber - Kinlochshiel.
- Club Health & Wellbeing Ambassadors continue to be encouraged.
- A Concussion Guidelines relaunch promotion is planned.

Match Official's

Throughout January and February, the Camanachd Association conducted a full consultation on match officials. The consultation was conducted in 3 separate ways.

1. An online survey, accessible to anyone.
2. Club leader consultation - a series of zoom meetings with set agenda and questions.
3. Match official's consultation - a series of zoom meetings with set agenda and questions.

Once all the information was collected a development plan for recruitment was then produced and implemented, based on the findings. In total the project managed to recruit 2 new referees who officiated regularly during the main season, and 3 new referees who were introduced to woman's and youth games.

Match Officials Profile

Throughout the season the Camanachd Association highlighted several events including a dedicated fortnight of events on;

- Recruiting match officials - open days, recruitment events.
- Social for current Match officials.
- Match official's education.
- Player and coach education.
- Recruitment of match officials.

Online officials training

Regular online facilitated workshops were delivered for match officials and focused on the following

- Supporting match officials
- Building a team culture for match officials to reduce isolation in the role
- Self reviewing performance and interpretation of rules.
- Opportunities to share and learn from their peers.
- Work on topics highlighted in match assessors' reports.

Localised officiating opportunities

Trialled introducing new refs to local/home club games - Reserve games and lower leagues.

- Gentle introduction for new officials, to gain experience.
- Eliminates barriers in terms of travel and time constraints.
- Opportunity for new officials to recruit extra support locally (goal judges).
- Support from local/home club, whilst taking first steps in to officiating.

Increase profile of match officials and the official's pathway

- Prominent placing on website.
- Targeted recruitment drive.
- Enquiry form to supplement information on website.
- Videos of current officials - positive stories.

UHI - Officials partnership

- Partnership formed with UHI, who have agreed to work with us with officials recruitment.
- Courses arranged for 23rd and 24th November and 3rd and 4th February.
- Students who complete the training will be offered the opportunity to be deployed in the 2022 season.

CASE STUDY - Pilot project in Nairn

The primary focus of this project is to develop new shinty participation and grow interest with a view to establishing a club. Nairn is one of the largest towns in the Highlands and sits geographically close to two established shinty communities in Strathspey and Inverness. The aim is to develop a shinty club that can be sustained by itself with reduced assistance from the Camanachd Association.

The first activity planned was a summer camp where we had 43 pupils from the local community attend the session, giving an early indication of the strong interest. The taster session provided the participants with an understanding of some basic shinty skills. At the taster session a local volunteer was recruited who was keen for shinty to continue within Nairn.

Shinty in Nairn - Following on from the taster session an afterschool shinty club was organised for Gaelic students in the first instance and then it was extended to the wider school roll thanks to the recruitment of volunteers. 17 participants signed up to take part in the Gaelic sessions and 22 for additional sessions P1-4. These sessions focused on fundamental skill development. The sessions were capped by a visit from BBC Alba's tv cameras as they did a feature on the Gaelic news promoting the children's use of Gaelic within a different setting as well as the new club developing in Nairn. Curriculum time Shinty began in Millbank and Rosebank Primary schools in Nairn at the end of September. Both sessions are set up to connect students to the sport and the afterschool club that is starting in November in partnership with local parents and active schools.

On the 23rd of October, Nairn Camanachd Club (name tbc) attended the Mike Macleod 6s hosted by Inverness Shinty Club. This was a massively positive step for shinty in Nairn as they competed in a festival for the first time. The children did very well in the tournament winning 4 matches, drawing 1 and losing 1. As Nairn develops their interest in shinty we aim to ensure young people get a high-quality experience in our sport focused on fun and building a community spirit. The parents / guardians for all participants are already looking forward to their first coach education training to help support the club moving forward

Volunteering

Club Leadership, Volunteers and Young People

Volunteers - Foundation Course Pilot (Online)/ CPT

Following on from the fantastic work developing the course by Graham Cormack, the new online course was piloted by finding a group of coaches willing to take part for the first time. 15 coaches from 5 clubs attended the pilot which comprised of independent work by each candidate on the Brightspace platform followed by a 1-hour online meeting (2 of these were delivered) and a practical session (2 of these were delivered).

Coaches liked the online platform as they could complete the work at their own pace. A few suggestions to make it a bit more user friendly were fed back.

We have also worked with clubs this year to engage active coaches in the CPT which the CA were offering thanks to Ronald Ross. There was a big uptake in this free training opportunity, and all found it worthwhile.

Shinty Ambassadors (Young People)

2020-21 Ambassadors all completed a coaching children workshop delivered online by Active Advantage. Much of their time as Ambassadors was unfortunately spent in lockdown so delivering sessions and having an impact in local primary schools wasn't an option for these young people. Having said that, they all attended 2 National Ambassador meetings, were upskilled and all delivered some shinty within their own High School which was a fantastic achievement given the restrictions that were presented.

We also were able to launch the programme under its new sponsorship with Royal Bank of Scotland, profiling some of the ambassadors and allowing the programme some media attention.

All 2020-21 Ambassadors attended an online meeting with their local club where they looked at what could be delivered to promote shinty in the school but also what would link well to the local club and strengthen the pathway from school to clubs shinty.

For 2021-22, the ambassador programme has gained huge traction with 15 schools signing up to be a part of the process. A training weekend took place on the 13th and 14th November with 30 ambassadors in attendance throughout the two days and delivery in person by Active Advantage was a bit part of their leadership training. We are looking forward to seeing how these young people progress in 2022.

Club Leadership - Workshop Opportunities and Events

A workshop programme detailing training opportunities from November 2021-April 2022 has been added to the shinty.com website. The training opportunities available are for club volunteers across a range of groups and based on feedback given the volunteer training survey that was distributed in July 2021.

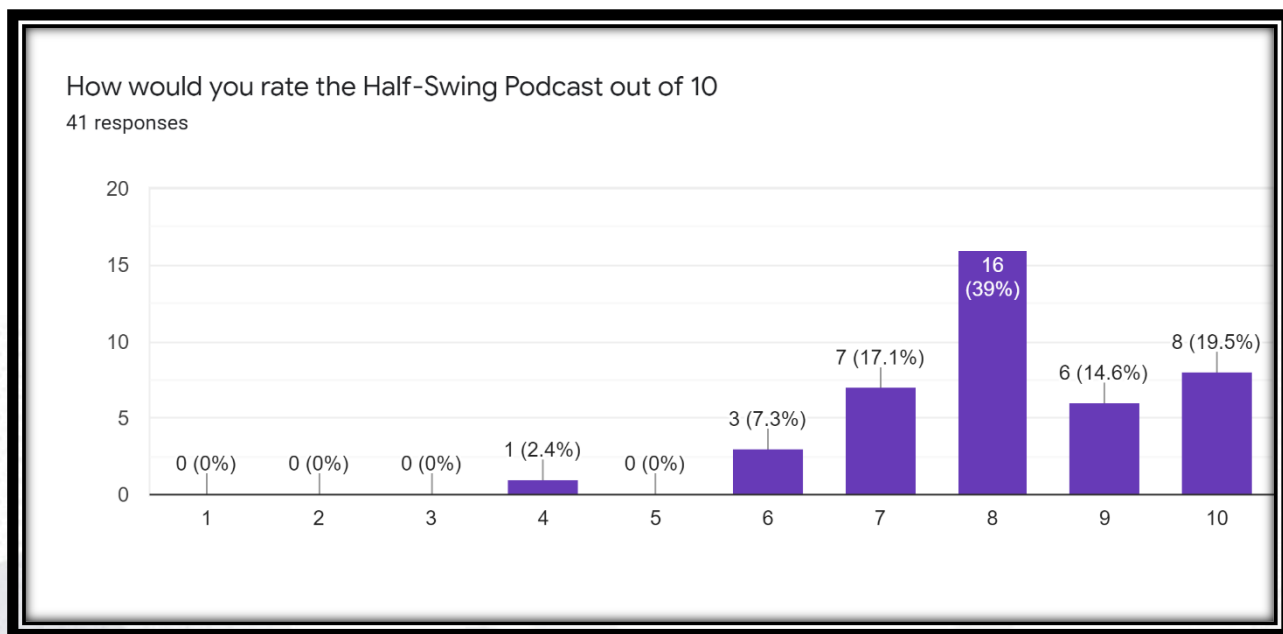
Training opportunities include coach refresher workshops, information around tactics and stat collecting, how to best use social media, engaging with your community and much more.

The Royal Bank Donella Crawford Schools Competition also ran in November with 15 teams attending. This was a huge uptake considering the year shinty has had and it has been great to see the ambassadors taking a lead in arranging teams for a variety of schools.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

The marketing of a sport as historic, unique and entertaining as shinty would seem a simple task and despite some challenges this year - not least of which the pandemic preventing a full season - there has been much to celebrate.

One of the most exciting developments this year has been the introduction of the Half-Swing Shinty Podcast. The podcast brings the stars of our sport together to discuss the weekly games as well as to delve a bit more into their personalities, giving our players the profile, they deserve. It started out as an experiment more than anything, but we are delighted to report that 5,500 listens and 18 hours of content later the first season was a success. So much so that it is now broadcast on Radio Skye, Oban FM and Nevis Radio every week. We surveyed members about the podcast - the early results (as this is being written) - of which are presented below:



The rescheduled season meant that we were unable to boast our usual 9 televised games this season due to clashes with existing schedules. However, we were delighted to see the Artemis Macaulay Cup Final as well as both Tulloch Homes Camanachd Cup Semis and of course, the Final on BBC ALBA. This was supplemented by a 30-minute highlight package on BBC Scotland which we are hopeful will pull in interested newcomers who aren't willing to watch a full match. We continued to receive strong coverage in local newspapers as well as appearing in national newspapers sporadically, including, The National, The Herald, The Times and The Scotsman. In addition, we must give thanks to The Oban Times, Press & Journal, WHFP, Highland News, Ross-Shire Journal, Inverness Courier, Strathspey and Badenoch Herald, Fife Today, Dunfermline Press, Stornoway Gazette, Edinburgh Reporter & John O'Groats Herald. These newspapers help us to deliver shinty to communities right across Scotland and we are, as ever, grateful for their coverage of our sport.

The contribution of journalists and photographers is vital to the continued promotion and coverage of our sport and for that we thank them. Norman Strachan who has volunteered tirelessly for the Camanachd Association has informed us that he intends to retire after the 2022 Lovat Cup. His voluntary service over the past 11 years has been nothing short of incredible - in this year alone he has brought at least one game a week to thousands of people across the country we cannot thank him enough for all he has done to profile the sport we love and we are certain everyone will join us in recognising his commitment and wishing him the best for the future.

Rudimentary social media figures for 2021 compared to the past 3 years are presented below.

| | Twitter | Facebook | YouTube |
|----------------|---------|----------|---------|
| Followers 2018 | 4966 | 7591 | 1265 |
| Followers 2019 | 5318 | 8321 | 1511 |
| Followers 2020 | 5553 | 8725 | 1650 |
| Followers 2021 | 5847 | 9052 | 1860 |

As you can see from the above, we have continued to grow at a steady rate and we hope that we can improve on the growth rate with a more traditional season in 2022. Highlights this year included our Women & Girls in Sport Week, Cup Final Previews, Norman Strachan's weekly game, MOWI Game of the Week, Return of Fans, WCA's March in March Challenge, Steps for SAMH (Scottish Association for Mental Health), Diversity & Inclusion work.

At the start of the year funding was accessed through the Digital Boost Grant to improve the website, we would like to thank Lateral North for their work on the website which has enhanced the functionality and aesthetics of the website. One of the most exciting functions of the new website is the ClubHub - this allows our member clubs to post to their section of our website any news or information about the club that they so desire, free of charge. This means that clubs need not fork out for their own website but can have it housed on www.shinty.com for free with support from CA staff year-round. We have already seen many clubs take up this exciting opportunity and hope to grow this function in 2022.

All in all, a frantic (8 cup finals in 10 weeks), but exciting season - with many new developments which should stand us in good stead for 2022. The return of promotion and relegation will mean that every game has the intensity that we have come to expect from Scotland's proud community sport.