

CAMANACHD ASSOCIATION

(FORTH DRAFT) FACILITIES STRATEGY 2012 – 2022

Introduction.

The CA recognise that adequate playing facilities are fundamental to the continuing success of shinty and in terms of the 2010 Investment Agreement with sportscotland, has agreed to review the present facility provision within shinty and develop a Facilities Strategy for the sport. The CA recognise that adequate playing facilities are fundamental to the continuing success of shinty and in terms of the 2010 Investment Agreement with sportscotland, has agreed to review the present facility provision within shinty and develop a Facilities Strategy for the sport.

Shinty, like all team sports, faces new challenges as lifestyles and leisure preferences change, with increased pressure on time. In this environment, the ability of shinty to attract, educate and retain players, coaches, match officials and volunteers is crucially important and demands the provision of facilities that are fit for purpose.

Why a Facilities Strategy is Required.

Its purpose is to provide a framework to ensure shinty has the correct facilities in the right places, for the right reasons, thereby encouraging and sustaining growth in participation. The Facilities Strategy will be used to support clubs and facility development at all levels enabling clubs and the CA, through funding partners, to prioritise future investment and maximise opportunities for development by meeting funding criteria.

As a totally amateur sport, governed by a Board with no capital budget, it must be recognised that shinty is increasingly dependent on other agencies for the funding of significant projects and an approved Facilities Strategy within that particular environment is essential if investment is to be directed to agreed priorities.

Overview of Existing Facilities

The standard of pitch and additional facilities vary widely across the country reflecting the many factors that influence the nature of each existing shinty ground. These factors include location, climate, ownership, management and maintenance responsibility, community support, history and success of the club. The varied nature of the existing facilities is shown in the attached Audit Summary. (Appendix 1)

While many clubs must be commended for the standard of their facilities, others, for whatever reason still operate with inadequate pitches and no changing facilities. The issue of adequacy of facilities must be seen in a contemporary context. This is set by a number of parameters, which include the following:

- The majority of shinty clubs do not own or have security of tenure in the facilities in which they train and play.
- The majority is therefore, to some extent, unable to control directly the quality, specification or development of the facilities which they use.
- Meanwhile other new leisure-time choices, which don't require a shinty pitch size space, are available, well organised and benefiting from sophisticated sports promotion.
- With experience of other leisure attractions, in 2012 players are less prepared to accept the standard of facility considered adequate by players in the recent past.
- Toilets and modest refreshment facilities are now a reasonable expectation if our sport is to be spectator/family friendly.

Strategy Focus

In order to achieve the objectives in the Shinty Strategic Plan for 2011-2014 and beyond, the focus of the Facilities Strategy for 2012 – 2022 will be:

- Effective and long-term strategic partnerships at national, regional and local levels to ensure the sustainable development of facilities to support the game of shinty at all levels.
- Prioritised local investment needs in order to enhance and support existing local facility provision, steering additional resources to the areas with the greatest facility development need.
- Clubs and other providers supported in making a case for the development of facilities with provision for shinty.
- A framework for the effective and efficient distribution of any capital funding made available to shinty through grant-aid or other funding streams.

The principal outcomes of the above will be:

- A strategy focussed on clear development need which optimises strategic partnerships and development opportunities.
- A strategy which clearly identifies the funding and resource requirements necessary to meet the overall facility needs of the game.
- A strategy that will pursue the provision of facilities of an appropriate standard in the optimum locations for shinty to thrive and develop.

Shinty Facilities – Where We Are.

An audit of all facilities used by shinty clubs was completed in February 2012. The response from the clubs is collated in Appendix 2. Drawing from the results of that exercise and the well documented problems experienced by shinty in recent seasons, the following issues have been identified as needing to be considered in preparing a Facilities Strategy.

1. While it is recognised that some clubs have developed more than adequate facilities, others struggle on with facilities below the desirable standard.
2. As the standard of playing surface improves at the better pitches, there is an understandable demand for better playing surfaces generally, with matches now being postponed where in the past they would have gone ahead.
3. Geography and climate continue to present major challenges to shinty, played as it is across the country. This is illustrated in the rainfall map at Appendix 3 which also shows the location of our recognised shinty pitches, some enjoying as little as 25 inches of rain, while others have to contend with up to 90 inches and a later growing season. This has a significant effect on maintenance and usage of the different grounds.
4. Although we have moved to 'summer shinty' our season can still be interrupted by unplayable pitches due to heavy rain or even snow.
5. Clubs are making use of alternative training bases, often to save their pitch but also to take advantage of all weather facilities with lights at pre and early season stage.
6. Community Schools now provide some of these alternative facilities and it is critical that reasonable access outwith school hours is available.
7. Significant use is now being made by youth shinty of smaller/football size all weather facilities.
8. No all weather facility of regulation senior shinty pitch size is currently available.
9. Particularly in the south/west, in periods of wet weather there is very limited opportunity to shift scheduled matches to other south venues.

10. The increased participation we are currently experiencing in Youth and Ladies shinty will increase usage of our existing facilities.
11. Similar increased participation in non-traditional areas will lead to new facilities being required.
12. Currently there is no facility identified in the Central Belt suitable for a Camanachd Cup Final or other major shinty event.
13. Space requirements for filming platforms can rule out venues otherwise acceptable for a non-major final event, if it is to be televised.

Shinty Facilities – Where We Want To Be.

1. Shinty needs the right facilities in the right places for the right reasons, recognising the demands of a changing society and encouraging the participation which will sustain clubs.
2. We require facilities for both training and playing that will allow full development of players and our sport.
3. In the short term we want all senior clubs playing on a regulation sized pitch with adequate changing, and toilet facilities for players and spectators.
4. Appendix 4 contains the template for an acceptable senior club facility.
5. In the medium term we want all other clubs aspiring to achieve the standard expected of senior clubs.
6. All pitches maintained to a level that would allow scheduled games to proceed except in very exceptional circumstances.
7. At least four recognised venues across the country suitable as venues for a Camanachd Cup Final or other major shinty event.
8. At least five venues in the North and five in the South suitable for non major Finals.
9. In our wetter west playing areas, access to three all weather facilities capable of accommodating a regulation size shinty pitch.

Shinty Facilities – How We Get There

1. The solutions will be different for clubs and districts recognising the varied needs and environments of the areas where shinty is or could be played.
2. It is anticipated that the development/improvement of existing facilities, not in Local Authority ownership, will normally be led by the club with or without funding support from partners. Subject to the work being consistent with this Facilities Strategy the CA would be likely to support any application to a funding body.
3. The development of new facilities in rural areas is more likely to be led by a Community, encouraged by sportscotland and other parties, to provide for shinty as well as other sporting activities. Subject to it being consistent with this Facilities Strategy, the CA would be likely to support an application to a funding body.
4. In the foreseeable future it is accepted that shinty will continue to be played predominately on the preferred natural grass surface and this Facilities Strategy will build on the existing facilities which include those with good changing rooms and a well maintained pitch, to those that fall short on both counts.
5. It is also recognised by the CA, with the decision to approve 'Shinty Turf' for the playing of all matches, that all weather surfaces could have an important place in the development of shinty, providing for more intensive use in both summer and winter.
6. The availability of all weather pitches in our high rainfall playing areas would be considered transformational in terms of the development of shinty. The CA is committed to a target of three such pitches being available within 10 years, strategically located in Lochaber, Skye and Lochalsh, and Argyll.
7. While perhaps aspirational, such an objective is considered achievable by working with our

- partners. It is anticipated any full size all weather shinty pitch would be within a multi sports complex, possibly linked to a school or other public sector project, the surface time being shared with other sports, or included in a multi sports facility or 'Regional Sports Hub'.
8. Any major proposal that includes provision for shinty would be expected to have significant involvement of both the Local Authority and sportscotland. This is consistent with sportscotland's desire to encourage partnership and maximise potential amongst interested parties with innovative ideas that increase participation and possibly funding, being welcome. Partnerships with education agencies in particular can offer access to a significantly larger base from which to draw participants into the game. They also offer a greater opportunity for developing a sustainable and successfully managed sports facility.
 9. The CA will engage with Local Authorities and ensure that any sports pitch strategy makes appropriate provision for shinty and that the CA is consulted on any significant sports proposal in their area.
 10. To assist with development the CA will provide access to 'Best Practice' with the creation of a platform to exchange information with club contacts for recently completed projects.
 11. The CA will maintain a record of all known current sources of funding for shinty projects.

Strategic Partnerships:

The successful implementation of the CA's Facilities Strategy is dependent on the development of strategic working partnerships with the following:

- sportscotland
- Local Authorities/School Building Partnerships
- Local primary and secondary schools/youth organisations
- Higher Education/colleges/universities
- Local area community sports groups
- Other National Governing Bodies
- Regional Development Agencies
- Fields in Trust Scotland
- Potential private sponsors

Funding

In addition to the support of our strategic partners we would also ensure that all other avenues of potential funding are pursued, including Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Rural Development Programme, and the Lottery Fund.

Facility Strategy Impact

Improved facilities by a combination of upgrading existing and developing new all weather pitches, will reduce the weather related problems, will build on the attractiveness of our game, resulting in increased participation and retention of players, creating a pool of senior players more interested in becoming coaches and referees, all contributing to shinty playing it's part in making Scotland's population healthier.

Conclusion

This Facilities Strategy will be used to support and direct the development of the quality facilities required by shinty to ensure a successful future at all levels of the sport. It will be reviewed in 2017.

