RCCC Board meeting minutes

23rd March 2026 - online via Zoom
Adopted on: **Pending**
Last reviewed on: **2026/03/31**

Attendee	Initials	Role	Attendance
Fraser Montgomery	FM	Chair	Online
Janine Wilson	JW	Director	Online
Keith Prentice	KP	Director	Online
Mairi Milne	MM	Director	Online
Alan Hannah	AH	Co-opted Director	Online
Keith Wilson	KW	Director	Online
John Slater	JS	Senior Independent Director	Online
Lorna Hyslop	LH	Independent Director	Joined at 6pm
Wendy Loudon	WL	Director	Online
Vincent Bryson	VB	Observer, CEO	Online
Eilidh McCall-Lawrie	EML	Observer, Head of Sport & Communities	Online
Suzy Wakefield	SW	Observer, Head of Operations	Online
Fiona Lilley	FL	Observer, Sportscotland	Online
Ann Gibb	AG	Observer, Ladies Branch President	Online
Kyle Waddell	KW	Observer, Athlete Representative	Online
Robert Anderson	RA	Observer, RCCC Vice President	Online
Mekela McGowan	MMc	Observer, Central Development Manager	Online
Chloe Buchanan	CB	Observer, Governance Support	Online

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Lorna Hyslop in respect of the first half of the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

No updates to declarations of interest were noted.

3. Approval of previous minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January were approved.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Staff Presentation - Project update - Central Development Manager, Mekela McGowan

MMc presented an update in relation to the central rinks' activities over the last 6 months, highlighting the following:

- **Edinburgh:** A positive and collaborative relationship continues, with joint work on the rink's development project and summer school engagement programme.

- **Hamilton:** Close collaboration with the development group on outreach plans was ongoing. The rink delivers Try Curling sessions, hosts competitions, and has a strong junior section. The main challenge remains that the development project has not yet progressed, which is being addressed.

- **Borders:** Funding has been secured for a development project. Engagement with Scottish Curling is currently limited but presents an opportunity for growth. Challenges include a declining junior section and issues with the school programme. A lead contact within the junior school setting is required; Liz Cullen was recommended by KP. MMc has made initial contact and would copy KP into further correspondence.

- **East Kilbride:** Actively delivering Try Curling sessions, utilising five sheets of ice per month. There is currently no engagement with Scottish Curling. FM queried whether any Board members have contacts; AH will reach out to Jim Morrison. SW also recommended Jim Stewart for the Lanarkshire area.

- **Fife:** Highly active, delivering numerous Try Curling sessions, participating in the Curling's Cool programme, and running club sessions. However, access to ice time is very limited, with only two evenings and one morning available.

- **Stirling:** Continues to deliver a full range of activities. The primary challenge is the relationship with the local authority.

The Board noted no major concerns across the rinks overall. However, concerns were raised regarding ice quality at Kirkcaldy, alongside a year-on-year decline in participation. MMc highlighted a key risk around limited coaching capacity, with a small number of individuals leading activity; this creates vulnerability if those individuals are unavailable. Despite this, recent engagement has been encouraging, with over 100 participants attending two Try Curling sessions, approximately 50% of whom signed up for a follow-up session.

National Development Groups - The first national Development Groups meeting was delivered on Thursday, with representation from 16 rinks. The session was reported to be highly successful.

Off-Ice Curling - Progress of Off-Ice Curling was highlighted, including the launch of the floor curling playbook. This has been a well-received initiative, providing guidance for clubs on delivery. Engagement has been strong, with over 170 organisations delivering floor curling sessions and 25 schools utilising the playbook.

Equipment Hire - initiatives have also progressed, with equipment successfully loaned to Scottish Disability Sport.

External delivery activity - continues to expand, with the inflatable kit touring venues across Scotland and further bookings scheduled. Demand is increasing, particularly from schools.

The Board queried whether other home nations offer similar curling initiatives to Scottish Curling and whether resources could be shared if not. MMc would investigate the existing provision and opportunities to support.

A. MMc to establish what the other home nations offer in terms of curling initiatives and consider whether resources could be shared, or support offered if not.

Floor Curling - JS raised the question of next steps for floor curling, specifically whether to introduce competitions or maintain a participation-focused approach within schools. VB confirmed that this will be addressed within the wider strategy and noted existing demand for a floor curling championship. KP noted that as far as he was aware, English players had not been involved in promoting and delivering floor curling.

Female Health Survey - A total of 700 responses was received in response to the Female Health Survey. Key barriers identified include knowledge gaps, cultural stigma, and limited visibility and access to menstrual and continence products.

Priority demographic groups were highlighted as follows:

- Under 22s: focus on recruitment, retention, and engagement within the junior pathway.
- Ages 22-40: addressing a notable participation gap.
- 60+: currently the majority within the membership base.

The Women and Girls in Curling programme will focus on several key areas, including internal education and CPD for coaches, wider community education, and the development of targeted initiatives for the 2026/27 season.

The importance of developing strong female role models was emphasised by the Board.

MMc left the meeting.

6. Items for Discussion and Approval

6.1 2029 Progress and Next Steps

FM presented a proposal to host the Men's, Women's, Wheelchair, and Wheelchair Mixed Doubles World Championships concurrently in 2029, within a single host country, in partnership with UK Events Limited (UKEL). This combined event would serve as a flagship centrepiece for the global curling calendar.

The Board was invited to approve progression of the project. The Board confirmed its understanding and approval of the proposed Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to be established with UKEL, should the bid be successful. UKEL will support the development and submission of the bid to World Curling. An additional £9k investment will be allocated from the 2025 World Wheelchair surplus, previously earmarked for future projects.

MM raised a query regarding scheduling, specifically whether hosting the Men's and Women's Championships simultaneously could dilute the fan base. A potential format was noted, with the Women's event in Week One, the Men's event in Week Two, and Para events integrated across the programme.

D. The Board voted unanimously in favour of progressing the proposal to host the Men's Women's, Wheelchair and Wheelchair Mixed Doubles event concurrently in 2029.

6.2 Family leave policy

VB presented a proposal to update the organisation's family leave policy as part of a broader commitment to inclusion. It was noted that the organisation is currently legally compliant, offering the statutory minimum, but aims to expand provision across all forms of leave. The six key leave types identified were maternity, paternity, adoption, surrogacy, shared parental leave and family-related wellbeing support, ensuring both compliance and a more inclusive framework.

The proposal positions this as the next step in strengthening the organisation's reputation as a positive and inclusive employer. Enhancements include an improved maternity leave offer, with 13 weeks at 100% salary followed by statutory entitlement.

JS highlighted that, in the absence of Sportscotland investment, funding would need to come from membership, sponsorship, and competition income, which are not guaranteed. FM noted that cost savings in other areas may be required and that the financial commitment would not necessarily be fixed.

It was confirmed that benchmarking had been undertaken against other governing bodies. VB also noted that Sportscotland is encouraging governing bodies to introduce alternative support mechanisms and will not require backfilling of roles during leave periods, however they would not fund these enhancements.

D. The Board voted by majority in favour of the proposal to enhance Scottish Curling's Family Leave policy.

7. Reports and Updates

7.1 CEO Flash Report - VB

VB noted his planned attendance at the upcoming UK Sport Partners Day, where there will be an opportunity to discuss the 2029 hosting bid, reflecting the Board's earlier decisions. Positive progress was highlighted, including successful funding secured for the Scottish Curling Academy and strong uptake of newly developed coaching courses. A wide range of competitions have recently been delivered. Strategy discussions are scheduled. The bid deadline for hosting the 2029 event is 30 April.

7.2 CEO Milano Cortina 2026 Report - VB

VB reported engagement with CEOs from other nations and discussions with World Curling regarding the 2029 bid during his recent trip. It was noted that the World Curling General Secretary was unfortunately unable to attend, however VB will follow up with him in due course.

7.3 Facilities Update - VB

Discussions regarding Perth have been a significant focus. VB is scheduled to meet with the Council Leader next week; no representatives from Perth Curling have been invited at this stage. The aim is to stimulate progress, with the expectation that discussions may centre on a further feasibility study, including consideration of an alternative or new-build venue.

VB confirmed that, aside from Elgin, there are currently no major financial concerns across facilities. However, ongoing issues relating to the Fife Flyers may impact the rink and curling activity in the area, and Kirkcaldy continues to present challenges.

7.4 Strategy and Structures Update - VB

VB presented an update on the organisational strategy, which remains in draft form and is expected to be near finalisation ahead of the AGM**.** Board members have contributed throughout the development process, and thanks were noted for their input. The work undertaken in January focused on evolving the current strategy toward a future state, with some objectives refined and others retained. Further development is now progressing.

The proposed strategy will be entitled *“Growing the Game.”*

- **Purpose:** Updated to *“to lead, promote and develop curling in Scotland.”*
- **Vision:** Retained from the 2023 strategy - *“to foster a nationwide network of thriving curling communities.”*
- **Mission:** *“to grow the game by strengthening clubs, rinks, volunteers and pathways.”*

A refreshed set of organisational values has also been proposed, intended to guide behaviours and decision-making:

- **Progressive:** Committed to advancing the sport in a modern and inclusive way.
- **Integrity:** Leading responsibly, with high standards, openness, accountability, and transparency.
- **Inclusive:** Ensuring curling is welcoming and accessible, with all individuals respected and valued.
- **Evidence-led:** Making decisions informed by data, insight, and measurable impact

VB explained the proposed shift from “pillars” to “strategic priorities,” reflecting a more action-oriented framework. The five strategic priorities are:

- Build Partnerships
- Grow Participation
- Empower People
- Enhance Places
- Compete and Perform

Cross-cutting themes of Engagement, Operations, and Organisation will be embedded across all priorities.

By 2031, the organisation will deliver against the following commitments:

- **Build Partnerships:**
  Establish new partnerships and strengthen existing relationships, including with rink providers. Leverage commercial partnerships to enhance financial sustainability.
- **Grow Participation:**
  Increase participation and retention, strengthen grassroots delivery, and position the organisation as a sector leader in female health and participation programmes. Advance equality, diversity, and inclusion across the sport.
- **Empower People:**
  Grow and diversify the workforce, improve the quality and consistency of training and support, and provide development opportunities for leaders. Expand off-ice initiatives and support a broad range of club development pathways.
- **Enhance Places:**
  Strengthen local clubs, improve connectivity between clubs and rinks, and maintain advocacy with local, national, and UK partners. Expand opportunities for off-ice curling.
- **Compete and Perform:**
  Provide inclusive competitive opportunities across all ages, stages, and formats. Develop

a high-performing academy to support long-term talent development, maintain full compliance with UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) requirements, and sustain Scotland's position as a leading international host nation.

- **Operations, Organisation and Engagement:**
  Maintain best-in-class safeguarding standards and embed an inclusive framework across all activities. Continue to enhance digital platforms and deliver a high-quality online and social experience. Strengthen the organisation's position as a credible and investable funding partner, embed data-driven decision-making, ensure financial sustainability, uphold strong and transparent governance, and deliver a sustainable membership system.

The Board noted the importance of progressing this work at this stage of the season, particularly in anticipation of forthcoming Scottish Government funding opportunities. VB highlighted that few curling nations currently exceed the 10,000-membership threshold, and this benchmark may be subject to review. In the meantime, the ambition remains to grow membership beyond 10,000, with evidence indicating strong potential to achieve this.

VB outlined the "three horizons" categories of membership and community development:

- **Core membership:** approximately 8,500 active curlers.
- **Pathway participation membership:** through initiatives such as Try Curling, supporting transition into the sport.
- **Reach membership:** high-volume, via non-ice participation (e.g. floor curling), engaging a broader audience.

AH queried the organisation's longer-term vision in relation to Scottish ice sports, specifically whether a leadership role across the wider ice sports landscape is reflected within the strategy. VB confirmed this ambition and would return to the Board with options outlining how it could be progressed. LH raised the importance of ensuring sufficient flexibility within the strategy to allow for future growth while meeting current needs.

A. VB to present vision in terms of Scottish Curling's ambition to become a leader across the wider ice sports landscape.

VB noted that Sportscotland's view of the organisation has evolved positively in recent years, with increased credibility now established. There is a recognised opportunity to play a role in protecting and supporting the ice rink estate, potentially through a leadership and advocacy role across ice sports. Previous interest from the Cross-Party Ice Group was acknowledged, with improved organisational credibility now strengthening the likelihood of success.

Structures Update

JW provided an update on the Structures Group, noting that the first meeting focused on how to progress the work. The group intends to take a "bottom-up" approach, considering what a governing body would look like if designed from scratch. This will involve a layered approach, initially focusing on core requirements for compliance with the Code for Sports Governance, followed by identifying additional elements to enhance the structure.

A second meeting is being scheduled to further develop this approach. The work will continue over the summer, with a strong emphasis on gathering data and evidence to inform structural discussions, including alignment with the wider organisational strategy.

VB highlighted the need to consider potential proposals for the upcoming AGM, referencing options outlined in the guidance document previously shared with Board members. It was noted that there may ultimately be no proposals brought forward this year; however, timelines are tight, and both short and long-term objectives require further clarification. VB also acknowledged that some facilities may be apprehensive about potential changes but emphasised the importance of initiating these discussions.

JW noted the importance of timing, highlighting that engagement should be informed by robust, data driven evidence, while agreeing that early dialogue with stakeholders is necessary.

7.5 Technical Development Update - AH

A meeting took place on 11th March. The committee would progress the various technical matters raised during some of the recent championships.

7.6 Project 2026 Update - EML

EML provided an update on ongoing participation and engagement activity, noting that following the National Lottery event in early February, local engagement in Stirling was strong, with an excellent turnout. As part of Paralympic-related activity, seven rinks delivered 13 Try Curling sessions, attracting around 100 participants free of charge.

Digital engagement remained positive. Since early February, the Try Curling website has recorded over 1,000 bookings and 805 visits. Work is ongoing to better engage individuals registered through the platform. Rinks are encouraged to schedule future Try Curling sessions and begin planning for the next season.

Workshops and club development activity continue to progress. Development groups have been consulted on workshop needs, with positive feedback received on delivery to date. Membership survey responses also indicate strong engagement and activity levels throughout the current season. Rink participation data is currently being collected and is expected to provide a clearer picture of overall participation by mid-April.

EML highlighted the importance of converting participants into membership. Some participants have joined individual rink memberships rather than the national body, emphasising the importance of rinks delivering a positive experience to support retention and progression.

7.7 ASC Update - KP

KP noted the ASC and board joint meeting will take place on Wednesday.

7.8 World Women's, Men's and Mixed Doubles Selection Report - MM

FM summarised that the report documented that the appropriate procedures were followed in the recent World Women's, Men's and Mixed Doubles competition.

8. Governance

8.1 Finance Report - JW / JS

JW presented a financial update, noting the current forecast indicates a small surplus, projected at approximately £9k, with no expectation of a year-end loss. While some budget variances were noted, the overall financial position remained stable and may improve further. An updated budget is expected to be presented at the next meeting.

8.2 EDI Update - EML

A date has been agreed for mandatory EDI training for staff. An additional EDI working group meeting is also scheduled to take place in the near future.

8.3 Safeguarding Update - EML

Three concerns have been raised in recent weeks: two were assessed as low-level and have been concluded, and on remains under review.

8.4 UKAD - AH

AH explained a query had been raised by British Curling regarding compliance and whether it has been addressed. A short report on UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) has also been received from British Curling, which SW will circulate in due course.

8.5 Nominations Update - FM / JS

FM provided an update on Board appointments. For the elected director position, following the completion of terms by KP and JW, one application was received in response to the advertisement. The Nominations Committee had reviewed this application and deemed it credible and compliant. As only one application was received, no election is required. Details of the appointed director will be circulated in due course.

For the Vice President role, one application was also received in response to its advertisement. The Nominations Committee had reviewed and approved the application, confirming it met the required criteria. No further process is required, and details will be shared in due course.

JS provided an update on the Chair position. The role was advertised online, and an application had been received. A paper would be presented to the Board at the next meeting for consideration.

8.6 Risks Update - VB

VB provided an update on the revised PVG process, noting that it requires a significant level of internal expertise and resource. Safeguarding cases, in particular, can take staff offline for extended periods, impacting capacity. It was confirmed that the organisation remains compliant and is taking appropriate steps to mitigate risk further. This area could now be moved from red to amber on the risk register.

9. AOB

There being no further business, FM closed the meeting.

A. Action Summary

A. MMc to establish what the other home nations offer in terms of curling initiatives and consider whether resources could be shared, or support offered if not.

A. VB to present vision in terms of Scottish Curling's ambition to become a leader across the wider ice sports landscape.

D. Decision Summary

D. The Board voted unanimously in favour of progressing the proposal to host the Men's Women's, Wheelchair and Wheelchair Mixed Doubles event concurrently in 2029.

D. The Board voted by majority in favour of the proposal to enhance Scottish Curling's Family Leave policy.