

# **Irish Hockey Company Limited by Guarantee**

**Annual Report 2019-2020**

**26 November 2020**



# Hockey Ireland Board and Senior Managers

**Eric Brady**  
Chairperson

**Keith Morrow**  
Finance Officer

**Sharon Hutchinson**  
Director

**Paula Cunniffe**  
Director

**Trevor Watkins**  
Director

**Jonathan Steven Hiles**  
Director

**Aisling Keogh**  
Director

**Iain Kelly**  
Director

**William Pollock**  
Director

**Rosita Wolfe**  
Director

**Martin Canniffe**  
President

**Ann Rosa**  
Vice President

**John Dennis**  
Vice President

**Trevor Watkins**  
Leinster Chair

**William Pollock**  
Ulster Chair

**Cliona Fergey**  
Munster Chair

**Kevin Keane**  
Connacht Chair

**Jerome Pels**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Deirdre Noyes**  
Finance Manager

**Vivienne Clarke**  
Office Manager

**Adam Grainger**  
Director HP

**Mark Tumilty**  
Senior Men's Coach

**Sean Dancer**  
Senior Women's Coach

**Sue Haslam**  
National Development Manager

**Phil Oakley**  
Coach Education Manager

**Emma Porter**  
Marketing & Communications Manager

**Robert Kelly**  
Senior Men's Manager (temporary)

**Lisa Jacob**  
Senior Women's Manager

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## **Agenda Item (a)**

### **Chairperson's Address**

On behalf of the Board of Management of Hockey Ireland and its staff, I am delighted to present the 2019 - 2020 Hockey Ireland Annual Report. This year's report is somewhat unusual in that it covers an 18 as opposed to usual 12 month time period. As you all know the AGM has had to be postponed on two previous occasions due to the negative impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

With the current restrictions on people's movement and limitations on the number of people allowed to gather together, like many other governing bodies and clubs, we have been forced to hold this virtual meeting rather than host our usual late May annual gathering in Dublin.

While it is exciting to be leading out on the organisation's first ever online AGM, it still feels highly unusual to be addressing you from behind a computer screen.

I hope for those of you watching, your families and loved ones are staying safe and well.

Our Annual General Meeting is one of the most important events in the organisation's annual calendar as it affords you, the membership, the opportunity to engage directly with us. While the AGM does have a number of legal and regularity formalities that have to be attended to, the primary focus other than this is to give you the membership the opportunity to ask questions of the Board and organisation and for the Board, where necessary to provide context and rationale for decisions that it has taken since the last general meeting. We are looking forward to the opportunity to update you on development within the organisation, particularly given the extraordinary times in which we find ourselves.

The fact that we are having to hold the AGM online does pose some challenges as many of the procedures and processes used for a face to face AGM have had to be amended to accommodate the virtual environment. I would like to commend Pamela Bastable, Jerome Pels, Paula Cunniffe and the Hockey Ireland staff who have worked diligently over the past months and weeks to ensure we have as close to normal as possible meeting experience.

One of the big changes required was the need for individual members, clubs and branches to submit questions in advance of the meeting. It is our intention to address all the questions

we have received. We will also, in as much as possible, allow some questions from the floor. However, this may be somewhat difficult given the number of attendees and the limitations of the online meeting technology.

I am also very pleased that later in this report, you will find individual reports from each of the Board sub-Committees and standing working groups. These should give you all some great insights into all of the stellar work and activities at a more granular level. They also reflect the enormous amount of work that is continuing to be done in the background, much of it invisible to many.

I would like at this point to pay particular tribute to the Chairs of each the Board Sub-Committees and Working Groups, for their dedication and commitment to their various portfolios over the past 18 months.

Brain Caruth	Competitions
Steve Hiles	High Performance
Trevor Watkins	Coaching
Lisa Jacob	Coaching
Fiona Hanaphy	Participation & Development
Sharon Hutchinson	Participation & Development
Paula Cunniffe	Communications & Marketing Hockey Ireland Commercial Advisory Working Group (Liaison)
Stuart MacDonnell	Governance Welfare Working Group
Frank Byrne	Masters Integration Working Group
Peter Conway	Membership System Working Group
Eimear Grealy	Company Secretary/ Legal

I would like now to go through some of the highlights that come to mind when I think of the journey we have travelled since we met last year in the Talbot Hotel, Dublin. The past 18 months have been unprecedented in many ways with circumstances creating an environment where we were constantly having to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.

### **Ladies FIH Series Finals**

Starting back in June 2019, just a week after the current Board was elected, Hockey Ireland had the honour of hosting the Ladies FIH Series Finals. It was an important tournament for the Irish Women's team as they progressed towards what everyone hoped would be a home-based Olympic qualifier tournament. The event was a huge success both in terms of the results (Ireland finished 2<sup>nd</sup>) and the organising of the tournament in Banbridge Hockey Club at very short notice. Originally scheduled to be played at the National Stadium, UCD, renovation work to the pitch resulted in plans to move the tournament to the Sport Ireland Campus facility in Blanchardstown.

However, the new playing surface there was not completed in time requiring a third move at the eleventh hour to Banbridge. I would like to commend the organising committee, Banbridge Hockey Club and all of the staff of Hockey Ireland for ensuring we were able to fulfil our commitment to host the tournament, as a failure to do so would have brought significant reputational and financial damage to the organisation. In the midst of such formidable challenges, the hockey family rose up and provided a fabulous week of hockey excellence and entertainment for the Irish hockey community.

Unfortunately, the three unexpected changes of venue brought additional unbudgeted costs. FIH requirements, the building of temporary stands and the commercial reality of being outside of Dublin all ultimately led to us taking an unrecoverable financial loss. In addition, we lost vital sponsorship revenue which had been secured for the event.

While this loss is extremely disappointing, it should be counterbalanced by the success of the Women's team on the pitch, which set the scene for their Olympic Qualifier in November. The goodwill and excitement generated by the tournament, although not financial, was also a positive result of the tournament.

## **Men's Olympic Qualifier, Vancouver Canada**

The Men's team drew Canada away for their Olympic Qualifier tournament. Vancouver was the venue chosen by the Canadians to host the event. We knew that this qualifier was going to be an away one as the men's team world ranking was not sufficiently high to secure a home tournament. Nonetheless the challenge of organising the trip to Vancouver at such short notice was significant. The schedule of games that determined the final pairings was such that the FIH gave very little time to teams, selected to play away, to organise travel, accommodation and other ancillary supports.

At the start of the year when the budgets were set we had hoped for a home tournament or possible a European opponent and venue and, as such, had not anticipated the significant budget that would be required to send the Men's Team to effectively to the other side of the world for these key Olympic Qualifier games.

Of course, the tournament itself and the manner in which our men's team were beaten in a sudden death shoot out generated a huge outpouring of disappointment, anger and scrutiny across the whole of the Hockey World. The fall out was immense with discussions about Television Match Official (TMO) competence, umpire decisions, number of camera positions and available angles for review widely discussed across the continents. The Board engaged, over a number of weeks, with the FIH President and CEO through a series of letters and email communications as we looked for explanations regarding the required number of cameras with respect to the rules and for a copy of the tapes made available to the TMO at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> match when the injustice occurred.

It eventually became clear that the FIH were not prepared to enter into any meaningful dialogue and as a consequence the men's team had to accept the bitter pill that they would not be travelling to the Tokyo Games. I would like to thank all of the hockey community in Ireland and beyond, Sport Ireland and the Olympic Federation of Ireland who offered help and support. Those who offered pro bono legal support, BBC NI and others for their expert technical knowledge in relation to tournament rules, camera positioning and lines of sight which all aided the construction of our case to the FIH.

Most of all I would like to thank the men's squad themselves who reacted to this hugely disappointing end to their Olympic dreams in such a professional manner. They were individually and collectively a credit to themselves, their families, their sport, and to Ireland. They are still champions and role models to us.

## **Women's Olympic Qualifier, Donnybrook**

Hosting the Women's Olympic Qualifier at the start of November 2019 was one of, if not the biggest project that the sport of hockey had ever taken on. The Board was very aware of the size and risks associated with this multifaceted challenge and spent a considerable amount of time over the course of a number of meetings discussing and analysing how to approach the tournament planning to ensure that an informed decision was taken by all in the best interests of the Women's Team and their qualification for the Olympics. Three viable options presented themselves, each with varying levels of risk, and all of which would, unfortunately, be loss making. Financial analysis and projections showed that the costs of running the tournament in any venue would far exceed potential revenue generation.

Following extensive consultation, we chose to build a temporary pitch in Donnybrook, arguably the riskiest option as it had never been done in this country before. However, financial projections showed that it was the only option that had the possibility of breaking even due to the potential revenues that the venue would allow us generate, if successful. As this was only the second time a 'drop in pitch' event of this scale had ever been attempted, it became the biggest event ever managed by the hockey community in Ireland. Collaboration and teamwork was essential, and this was a team effort from beginning to end.

We are aware that some disagreed with this choice, but the combination of the expertise of Big Stadium Hockey, our organising committee led by Inez Cooper and Joan Morgan, and a host of volunteers and friends such as Leinster Rugby, Dublin City Council, Donnybrook Fire Station and many more ensured we were on to a winner. Even then, the Board only agreed to go with the Donnybrook option after two philanthropic benefactors agreed to support the venture should it not be possible for us to reach a breakeven point.

The sport of hockey in Ireland should be forever grateful to Angela Cotter and Susan Spence for their financial support to get this over the start line; without them the event would have taken place at a much smaller venue with much more limited spectator space and facilities thereby denying the women's team the chance to present themselves in such courageous fashion to the home hockey community, many of whom had never seen our world silver medal winning team play on home soil.

I'm sure you will agree that the event itself was a huge success. The team became the first women's team from Ireland to ever qualify for an Olympic Games; the two matches provided a level of suspense and tension that imprinted the occasion in the minds of the all of the



people on the island of Ireland and beyond, adults and children alike; they did so live on national television and in front of the two largest home crowds ever to watch a women's international team play. On those two nights hockey, and in particular women's hockey, went mainstream. Non hockey people are still talking about it over twelve months on. In the view of the Board the platform on which to build the sport into one of the top four in the country was established and secured. All we have to do now is keep the momentum going.

Financially it was a challenge and even with all of the support and help we received we made a loss; not a huge loss but a loss nonetheless. You will hear more about our finances later in the meeting when we as an organisation have to sign off the 2019 accounts. You have already had an opportunity to pose questions around our financial position and have rightly asked the Board to explain the position in greater detail.

What I would say in advance of that is that the unique opportunity presented by the hosting of the Olympic qualifier event in Ireland, the opportunity to present our world silver medallists to our home crowd as they stepped onto the pitch to fulfil their – and our – dream of reaching an Olympic Games. The exposure and positivity that emerged from within and outside of the hockey community was a once in a lifetime opportunity for any sport. We were and are the envy of other sports and also have their admiration for matching the courage of our women's team on the pitch with an equally audacious event in keeping with their resilience and determination. Through its live broadcast on RTE, the event also brought hockey into the homes of potential new members, from school children to adults.

The event was attended by the Taoiseach, Minister for Sport, Chair of the Board of Sport Ireland, President of the European Hockey Federation, CEO of the European Hockey Federation and a host of other political, sporting and business dignitaries from across the island, all of whom were as thrilled and excited as we were. To hear very senior politicians attending their first ever hockey international shouting and screaming as the tense finale unfolded was a sight to behold. Hockey in Ireland came of age those two nights in Donnybrook. The establishment really sat up and noticed this time.

As a result, hockey was subsequently asked in December 2019 to attend and make representations before The Oireachtas Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport, another first. The members of the committee were extremely enthusiastic about the progress hockey has made and in particular the success of the women's team and offered to help hockey continue along its current trajectory in any way they could.

## **Covid-19 Pandemic**

The Covid-19 Pandemic has over the past nine months changed and disrupted life for everyone in this country and across the world. Unfortunately it is likely to continue for some time to come.

Firstly can I give a special message to all those in the hockey community who have suffered a loss as a result of the pandemic. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, your family and loved ones. Can I also extend the ongoing support of the Board and hockey community to those of you who are working in front line roles helping to manage and suppress this disease. Our best wishes also go to those in our hockey community who are elderly, vulnerable or supporting others who are.

I am aware of many initiatives that have been put in place in hockey clubs across the country to look after people, hockey or otherwise. I and the Board commend them for their sense of community and for doing the right thing.

As you know Hockey Ireland's core purpose is to provide support and services to play hockey on the Island of Ireland, and this commitment is now more important than ever.

While the outlook is challenging and uncertain, we are determined to play our part in helping to recover from this crisis, and we believe sport and in particular, hockey plays an important role in today's disrupted society.

At this stage we can't be sure how the situation will evolve. But we do know that the impact of Covid-19 on our society, sport and the way we go about our lives will be long-lasting and profound.

The challenges have been significant: The Board has had to deal with the onset of the crisis in March and make very difficult decisions on how best to deal with the completion of the 2019-2020 season. I know that many have been frustrated with aspects of our response to the crises and that some of the consequences of those decisions have been very difficult for some. I know that others have publicised their feelings and sought recourse through the appeals process.

I would like to say to you all that every decision made by the Board has been debated and voted upon and that the safety and welfare of all in the hockey community has always been foremost in our minds on every occasion we have had to make these difficult 'Solomon like' decisions. I also want to thank all of those volunteers who have agreed to sit on our appeals

boards. These are part of the foundation on which we govern our sport. In these unprecedented times the increasing volume, challenge and complexity of the cases brought before you have been close to exponential in nature. Hockey Ireland value your contribution and will work to provide as much supports into the future as you need to continue these important roles.

Following the first lockdown, we had to deal with the return to sport and respond to the ever-changing guidelines from the Government. Our branches and clubs responded in exemplary fashion when implementing the protocols and restarting hockey after the first lockdown.

We recognise the tremendous work by volunteers in clubs and the reports we have received have been hugely positive with regard to the safe and compliant running of training sessions and games.

Let me say how deeply proud I am of how the hockey community have responded to this crisis. Many are going to exceptional lengths every day to serve our players and their clubs. Thank you to all of them

The Covid funding support that we are receiving from the government is crucial to the survival of the infrastructure of our sport and we are working hard behind the scenes to get hockey back to normal as soon as is possible.

Let me now turn to the more usual business of the meeting, starting with the Board. Since our 2019 AGM we have co-opted several new Directors to fill vacancies and later on the agenda these and others will be subject to a vote by the meeting to determine the final makeup of the Board for the coming year.

I am very pleased to introduce Pamela Bastable who recently joined the Board members as our new 'Company Secretary'. Eimear Grealy stepped down after last year's AGM having given many years of superb service to the Board and Hockey Ireland in general. Her contributions have been invaluable to me personally and to all of the Board members. I like to thank Eimear for her years of dedication and like to formally welcome Pamela to the team.

In addition, I'd like to thank all our Board Members for their contribution and commitment over the past year.

## Finances

Let me now turn to the financial affairs of the organisation and the issue of our unsatisfactory financial position at the end of 2019.

The circulated accounts summarise the detail of our financial performance over the course of the year and highlight the sources of the associated deficit we have reported to you.

Firstly let me say that to have to come before you, the membership, at an AGM and report any loss is both disappointing and unacceptable. The Board and I as part of our fiduciary duties are entrusted with looking after all aspects of our organisation. Maintaining financial stability is one of the essential keystones in this regard.

The members have every right to ask the Board to explain how we have arrived at this point and also to provide reassurances to you that a meaningful and viable plan is in place to rectify the situation and bring the organisation back into the black as soon as is possible. We have received a number of questions from member clubs and branches regarding our current financial position and have also been asked for clarification on the detail of our plan going forward. All of these important questions will be answered at the AGM and supported by a comprehensive presentation by our Finance Officer. This presentation will include detail and explanation of our financial forecasting process and will reassure you that the current financial position will be stabilised.

It has been a 'very big year' for Hockey Ireland and this is reflected in our accounts. I have in the earlier parts of this address illustrated and put into context the three key areas that have contributed to much of the incurred loss. All three of the big events mentioned earlier in this report, the FIH Series Finals in Banbridge, the Men's Olympic Qualifier tournament in Vancouver, Canada and the hosting of the Women's Olympic Qualifier tournament in Donnybrook, Dublin were extremely important for elevating and maintaining the upward trajectory of our sport and for securing the future of hockey on the island of Ireland. These very important investments for the future of our sport form the bedrock upon which the success of our members, players, clubs and provinces will be built upon for years to come.

The Donnybrook event in particular achieved the goals of helping the qualification of the Women's Team for the Tokyo Olympics, provided a stage for the Women's team to play in

front of the two largest home crowds to ever watch a hockey match on the island of Ireland, and also brought hockey and in particular women's hockey into the consciousness of every single person who attended, watched or read about the epic battle that took place in early November 2019; showcasing our sport in a hugely positive way. The fact that the team won out after two tense qualifier games that were so dramatic and close provided the additional cherry on top for us all and forever secured the event in the annals of the greatest Irish sporting events ever.

### **Strategic Direction and Planning**

I now would like to say a few words about our long term strategic aims and our recent progress in that regard. Significant time has been spent this past year on reviewing and reshaping our strategic plan. Lisa Jacob was engaged as a project manager to examine all of the disparate parts of our sport. The needs of beginners through schools, Colleges, Clubs, Provinces and High Performance JAG and Senior Squads were considered and woven together and distilled down into a series of key strategic pillars. Masters and Para Hockey were also included as was the re-emerging indoor and 5's hockey versions of the sport. At this juncture a final draft strategic plan has been completed. However current events have required us to put the formal launch of the new strategy on hold as the covid-19 crisis required us to re-direct all of our attention to dealing with the circumstances we now find ourselves in. However following the end of the current pandemic restrictions, we will be in a position to launch and implement the new strategy. Further development of our new membership system and a change in the way our members financially contribute to Hockey Ireland and the Branches will be key to the success of the plan. A working group with representation from all of the provinces has been set up to explore how we will move from our current database approach to membership to a fully functioning system that will include members insurance and bring a range of additional functionality that will benefit members, clubs and branches alike.

### **Volunteers, Staff and Sponsors**

I am immensely proud of the boundless energy and commitment of the many people who work within Hockey Ireland, our staff, our volunteer committee members, coaches, support staff and games officials. Thank you also to our sponsors, who we see as important partners

on our journey forward. Our main sponsors EY, Park Development and SoftCo, our support sponsor's Adidas, Saba, Queen B, Opro, STATSport, Sports Physio Supplies, Avenir, Dalata Hotels and Optimum Nutrition.

Finally a huge thank you to all of the Hockey Ireland staff who, under the leadership of our CEO Jerome Pels, work tirelessly every day to serve our hockey community.

## **Conclusion**

So to conclude, while the longer-term impact of the coronavirus remains unclear, Hockey Ireland will maintain its focus on supporting our branches, clubs, players and members and through our new strategy will work to transform and enhance the organisation and set it up for continued future success.

I am confident in our collective ability to do this and want to again express my gratitude to our volunteers and staff at this difficult time. I would like to thank all of our members for their continued support and hope that next year we will be able to gather for our AGM in the usual way. Meanwhile, I hope all of you, and your families, stay well and safe.

Finally can I pay tribute to your President Martin Canniffe who will be stepping down at this meeting, Vice President Ann Rosa and incoming Vice President John Dennis for their individual and combined wisdom and advice that they have shared with the Board, the CEO, I and others over the past 18 months.

**Eric Brady**

**Chair Hockey Ireland**

	2019								2020												
Current Directors	05/06	11/07	25/08	30/08	05/09	03/11	01/12	02/02	12/03	25/03	08/04	05/05	20/06	02/07	13/07	20/08	30/09	14/10	18/11		Total Meetings
1 Keith Morrow - Finance Officer	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	19/19	19
2 Eric Brady - Chairperson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	19/19	Attendance as a Director
3 Paula Cunniffe	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	A	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	A	13/19	Absence as a Director
4 Frank Byrne	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y		15/18	Attendance as Invitee
5 Sharon Hutchinson	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	19/19	
6 Trevor Watkins	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	17/19	
7 Jonathan Steven Hiles							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	13/13	
8 Aisling Keogh									Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y	3/3	
9 Iain Kelly																	Y	Y	Y	3/3	
10 William Pollock									Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y	3/3	
11 Rosita Wolfe																	Y	Y	Y	2/2	
12																					
<b>Former Directors</b>																					
Peter Conway	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	A	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	A	A	A				10/16	
Imelda Brennan	Y	A	A	Y	Y	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	A				10/16	
Fiona Hanaphy	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				15/16	
Stuart McDonnell	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				15/16	
Lisa Jacob	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y		Y						9/10	
Nancy Chillingworth	Y	A	Y	Y	A															3/5	
<b>Other Attendees</b>																					
Martin Cunniffe - President	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	17/19	Attendance in office
Ann Rosa - Vice & Incoming President	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	19/19	Absence in office
John Dennis - Incoming Vice President									Y								Y	Y	Y	3/3	Attendance as Invitee
Jerome Pels - CEO HI	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	18/19	
Eimear Grealy - Outgoing Co Secretary	Y	Y	Y																	3/3	
Vivienne Clarke - HI Staff							Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		12/12	
Pamela Bastable - Company Secretary																	Y	Y	Y	3/3	

## Agenda Item (e)

### Annual Report of the Board of Directors

#### Competitions Committee



We are delighted to provide the Hockey Ireland Annual General Meeting 2020 with an update from the Competitions Committee since the last AGM.

It has been an unprecedented year across the world with the Covid19 Pandemic which has taken its toll on the competition season for many sports including Hockey at all levels and stages. Before delving more deeply into the competition season since our last AGM the Competitions Committee would like to thank all the players, coaches, clubs, supporters, and volunteers who have worked so hard and tirelessly to keep the spirit of hockey going during this time.

Thank you to all our competition working groups and sub committees who have gone above and beyond in order to ensure that Hockey in Ireland is able to continue as per Government



and Public Health guidelines in both jurisdictions . Never, in taking up these volunteer positions, could any of them have anticipated the upheaval that came with the last 8 months and Hockey Ireland are so grateful for the extra time and effort they have put into our sport.

### **Competitions Report**

Hockey Ireland 2019/20 season opened with the U16/U18 Interprovincial competitions in September 2019. Ulster hosted the boy's competitions which saw Ulster win the U16 and Munster win the U18. The girl's competition was held in Munster with Ulster winning both the U16 and U18 competitions. Thank you to Ulster and Munster for hosting these competitions and to all the provinces who took part.

In October, the All Ireland Schoolboys Championship was held in 7 venues across Dublin (St Andrews College, High School, Kings Hospital, Wesley, Newpark, Three Rock Rovers and St. Columbus College). It was won by High School with St Andrews as runners up. Thank you to all our host schools and the Schools Committee for organising.

The Hockey Ireland Intervarsity Plate competitions took place at the end of October in Kilkenny College. The Mauritius Plate was won by CIT and the Chilean Plate was won by DCU. This was followed by the Hockey Ireland Intervarsity Cup competitions which took place at the start of November in St Andrews College. The Mauritius Cup and the Chilean Cup were both won by UCD. Thank you to St Andrews College and Kilkenny College for the use of the facilities and to the Intervarsity Sub Committee for organising.

The Hockey Ireland Indoor National Finals took place in the Kingfisher, NUIG, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February. The matches were live streamed with viewing figures for the day just shy of 4000 – with 49 countries tuning in. Railway Union won both the men's and women's competitions and will represent Ireland in the European competitions. Thank you to the Kingfisher NUIG for hosting the competition and to the Indoor competition committee for organising and running the Finals.

The Mixed Intervarsity's were next to take place in February in Queens University. TUD won the Mixed Indoor Cup, Queens University Belfast won the Mixed Plate and DCU won the Mixed Cup. Thank you to Queens University Belfast for hosting and the Intervarsity Sub Committee for organising.

In March 2020 Ireland was hit by the Covid19 pandemic and following careful monitoring and consultation with provincial branches on the 11<sup>th</sup> March Hockey Ireland announced that together with its four provincial branches that all hockey activity was suspended with immediate effect until the 29<sup>th</sup>.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> March Hockey Ireland announced that the 2019/20 hockey season for all league, cup and all other domestic hockey competitions in Ireland are deemed to have finished. The on the 9<sup>th</sup> April the EYHL 1 and Division 2 leagues were announced as null and void with no promotion or regulation.

The EYHL Champions Trophy, Junior Interprovincial, Kate Russell All Ireland Schoolgirls Championships, June Smith National Championship and John Waring All Ireland Schoolboys Championship, National U15 Girls and Boys Championship and the National U13 Championship were announced as cancelled.

Hockey Ireland Cups, Hockey Ireland Trophy and Hockey Ireland Challenge Finals and Semi Finals were announced as postponed with Hockey Ireland looking for an opportunity to play them early in the 2020/21 season. It was agreed that if no opportunity arose these competitions would be cancelled.

The Hockey Ireland Junior and Senior Cups, Trophy and Challenge finals took place across two weekends at the end of September hosted by Lisnagarvey Hockey Club and at the National Hockey Stadium in UCD Belfield.

ISC Men – Final – Lisnagarvey v UCD – won by Lisnagarvey

ISC Women – Final – Pegasus v UCD – won by UCD

IJC Men – Final - Lisnagarvey v Corinthian – won by Corinthian

IJC Women – Final – Old Alex v Pembroke – won by Pembroke

IHT Men – Final – Portrane v Belfast Harlequins – won by Portrane

IHT Women – Final – Lisnagarvey v North Kildare - won by Lisnagarvey

IHC Men – Final – Portrush v Antrim – won by Portrush

IHC Women – Final – NICS v Blackrock - postponed

The only outstanding 2019/20 Cup final is the Women's Irish Hockey Challenge Final. Due to be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> September the final did not take place but will be rearranged to be played once Covid19 Restrictions are lifted and Hockey Competitions at Senior Club Level are permitted to be played.

It has been a strange and eventful year, but Hockey Ireland Competitions Committee would like to thank the Hockey Clubs, teams, players, supporters, and volunteers for working with us during the Covid19 Pandemic. Working together and under the guidance of the Government, the HSE and the NI Health Executive we will endeavour to continue to play hockey in a safe and enjoyable environment.

**Brian Caruth**

**Chair of Competitions Committee**

	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>EY Hockey League</b>	League Null and Void due to Covid 19	League Null and Void due to Covid 19
<b>EY Champions Trophy</b>	Cancelled due to Covid 19	Cancelled due to Covid 19
<b>EYHL 2 9<sup>th</sup> Place Playoffs</b>	Cancelled due to Covid 19 – no promotion/relegation	Cancelled due to Covid 19 – no promotion/relegation
<b>EYHL 10<sup>th</sup> Place relegations</b>	Cancelled due to Covid 19 – no promotion/relegation	Cancelled due to Covid 19 – no promotion/relegation
<b>EY 2</b>	League Null and Void due to Covid 19	League Null and Void due to Covid 19
<b>Irish Senior Cup</b>	Semi Finals and Final were postponed to Sept Winner – Lisnagarvey Runner up - UCD	Final postponed to Sept Winner – UCD Runner up - Pegasus
<b>Irish Junior Cup</b>	Final postponed to Sept Winner – Corinthian Runner up – Lisnagarvey	Final postponed to Sept Winner - Pembroke Runner up - Old Alex
<b>Irish Hockey Trophy</b>	Semi Finals and Final were postponed to Sept Winner – Portrane Runner up – Belfast Harlequins	Semi Finals and Final were postponed to Sept Winner – Lisnagarvey Runner up – North Kildare
<b>Irish Hockey Challenge</b>	Final postponed to Sept Winner – Portrush Runner up - Antrim	Final postponed to Sept but still unplayed NICS v Blackrock
<b>Indoors</b>	Railway Union	Railway Union

<b>U18 Interpros</b>	Munster	Ulster
<b>U16 Interpros</b>	Ulster	Ulster
<b>Junior Interpros</b>	Cancelled due to Covid 19	Cancelled due to Covid 19
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Intervarsity's</b>	Mauritius Cup – UCD Mauritius Plate – CIT	Chilean Cup – UCD Chilean Plate – DCU
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Level Mixed Intervarsity's</b>	Mixed Cup – DCU Hockey Mixed Plate – Queens Hockey Mixed Indoor Cup – Trinity University Dublin	
<b>Kate Russell</b>	N/A	Cancelled due to Covid 19
<b>June Smith</b>	N/A	Cancelled due to Covid 19
<b>All Ireland Schoolboys</b>	High School	N/A
<b>John Waring</b>	Cancelled due to Covid 19	N/A

**High Performance**

2 Senior International Teams  
57 Capped International Matches  
22 Nations played  
63 Senior International Capped Players  
2 EuroHockey Championships  
2 FIH Series Finals  
2 Olympic Qualifiers

**1 Olympic Qualification**

**Women**

**85 GOALS SCORED**

Home - 16  
Won 11  
Lost 3  
Draw 2

Away - 16  
Won 4  
Lost 5  
Draw 7

**63 GOALS SCORED**

**Men**

Ireland's leading goal scorer:  
Shane O'Donoghue passes 100  
Goals for Ireland

Home - 4  
Won 3  
Lost 0  
Draw 1

Away - 21  
Won 8  
Lost 9  
Draw 4

**Shirley McCay becomes  
Ireland's most capped  
female player ever  
with over 300 caps**

**Hockey  
Ireland**

It is my pleasure to provide the Hockey Ireland Annual General Meeting 2020 with an update for the High Performance Committee since the last AGM.

I was appointed as Chair of the High Performance Committee (HPC) in October 2019, taking over from Nancy Chillingworth who had to step down due to her role with the Olympic Federation of Ireland.

### **Hockey Ireland High Performance structure**

As background, the Hockey Ireland High Performance structure is under the remit of the High Performance Committee (HPC) comprising of myself as Chairperson, Jerome Pels (CEO), Adam Grainger (Performance Director) and other committee members who provide knowledge and expertise covering HP coaching, senior international player perspective, provincial development programmes and HP administration.

The HPC report to the Board with regular updates and all key decisions are brought to the Board for discussion and approval from a governance perspective.

Most of the hockey community will be more aware of our international senior Head Coaches and Team Managers Sean Dancer and Arlene Boyles (recently stepped down) with the senior women and Mark Tumilty and Rob Kelly (interim basis currently) on the senior men's team. We also have several support staff assistant coaches, physios, sport psychology who work with the teams some on a voluntary basis and others in remunerated positions.

Our junior age programmes (u21s, u18s, u16s) all have Head coaches, assistant coaches and managers who operate on a fully voluntary basis and they are supported from the Hockey Ireland High Performance team headed by Adam Grainger as Performance Director, Rob Kelly and Leah Spillane.

### **Senior Mens AGM update**

The senior mens team experienced a difficult international year on and off the pitch. They started the year (2019) ranked 11th in the world but a poor display at the European A division resulting in 8th place finish and this relegation impacted on the world rankings as they fell two places to 13<sup>th</sup>, this will likely fall further as they will now compete in European B division in 2021.

After this tournament Alexander Cox was replaced as Head Coach and ex-Irish international Mark Tumilty put in place on an interim basis to prepare the squad for their vitally important Olympic qualifier against Canada in Vancouver. As most will be aware, the scores finished level after the two matches and the men lost the subsequent penalty 1v1 shoot out. The match was over shadowed by a Television Match Official (TMO) decision at the end the second match and in particular the poor video quality and the technical failings in the lower than the required number of angles made available to the TMO to decide whether to overturn the on-field decision.

Mark Tumilty's position as Head Coach was extended for 12 months to continue the re-building work that he had initiated and it was planned that Hockey Ireland would advertise the Head coach position internationally and domestically in August 2020 which was expected to be at the completion of the Tokyo Olympics. It was decided to remain with the original timescale and we have just recently completed the interview process which attracted strong

interest within Ireland and coaches with international experience. After the conclusion of the interview process Mark Tumilty was recommended for appointment by the interview panel and the Board of Hockey Ireland approved this at their October meeting.

COVID-19 has obviously had a significant impact on the 2020 programme and all Hockey Ireland decisions in relation to this have followed Government and Public Health advice in relation to travel, matches and training. In recent weeks following the Sport Ireland return to play protocols the senior team has been able to return to play with national regional sessions, any further extension of activities will be made with safety of players and staff at the forefront of all decisions.

### **Senior Womens AGM update**

The senior womens team competed in the European A division finishing third in the group stage after drawing with Germany, a defeat to England consigned the team to the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> playoffs but carrying their win against Belarus through. A win against hosts Belgium and Russia ensured relegation was saved and earned Ireland a creditable 5<sup>th</sup> place in Europe, this has maintained the womens 8<sup>th</sup> place world ranking.

The womens squad were also handed a two-match head to head against Canada to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics with the matches staged at the Donnybrook stadium using a drop-in synthetic pitch. Over 6,000 supporters were captivated each as the two teams fought against each other and the inclement weather conditions and as most are aware Ireland won through on 1v1s in the most dramatic of shoot outs.

The Donnybrook decision was one taken factoring many on and off pitch considerations but with an overriding objective to use the Olympic qualifiers to showcase womens sport and in particular hockey in Ireland maximising the viewing audience in the stadium and on television. This was made very cognisant of the 2020 womens sport initiative and what Hockey Ireland and its senior womens team could start in advance of 2020. Whilst the costs associated, the impact on players playing on a less familiar surface and stadium were all factored in, it was outweighed by the positive impact and the public awareness generated for the sport of hockey in allowing the senior womens squad perform in front of one of the largest crowds and TV audiences. The exposure our sponsors received from the evening and allowing the



Irish sporting audience to again see what fantastic role models our senior women's team are particularly to the many younger players watching in the stand and at home.

The Tokyo Olympics scheduled for July 2020 have been postponed by 12 months and the 2021 European Championships moved earlier to before the Olympics. The 2020 programme has been significantly impacted and amended to deal with the new timelines and its impact on players, their employers / studies and management team contracts. Hockey Ireland have been working closely with Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland on all of these matters and availing of the support and expert advice provided including from the Irish Sports Institute and Sport's Institute of Northern Ireland.

### **Funding support and commercial sponsors**

The High Performance national squads are indebted to our commercial sponsors and government funding that is provided that allows us to operate national programmes and without this we would not be able to compete and succeed on the international stage.

Our senior teams programme costs take the largest percentage of the HP performance budget but they also remain our biggest asset in providing opportunity for direct financial commercial sponsorship and non-financial benefit in promoting the sport and inspiring the next generation of hockey players.

Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland provide significant programme funding, subsidising of management team salaries and direct funding to players. This allows them to operate on a part-time basis and provides some remuneration to support this, albeit the nations we are now competing with at the top tier of international hockey are on full time contracts and this does represent an ongoing challenge to our athletes.

The Irish Institute of Sport at Abbottstown and the Sport Institute of Northern Ireland at Jordanstown provide invaluable direct support through availability of staff and facilities to our national teams. Importantly they provide environments for the High Performance athletes across many sports to meet, train together and learn from each other and the creation of the HP culture is vitally important for our hockey athletes to succeed internationally. We are grateful for the funding and the staff in these organisations for their ongoing support.

The National Sports Campus and the new synthetic pitch is officially the home of the national squads and Hockey Ireland HP team has offices at the Irish Institute of Sport. The hockey pitch

and ancillary facilities are still a work in progress in terms of getting pitch side storage, better dedicated changing and meeting facilities are among the more immediate priorities.

Our junior age group (JAG) national teams at u16, u18 and u21 receive HP administrative support, pitch access and other central coaching and development support from Hockey Ireland. However, Hockey Ireland is not currently able to provide the financial support to fund the national programmes at their current level. The HP team and Hockey Ireland Board (HIB) are acutely aware that this shortfall is met with squad driven fundraising and direct parental funding which is currently at a level that we do not feel is sustainable on a long term basis. The HIB have requested the HP Committee to review this and will also provide increased financial support enhancing and leveraging the commercial opportunities as part of the HI Strategic plan role out.

### **Next 12 months and High Performance Committee priorities**

#### **Player welfare**

A key priority for the HP Committee is player welfare and in particular the over playing of younger players. Research of players workload (matches and training) has shown quite alarming level of overplaying which would be borne out by our anecdotal evidence. The HP committee along with input from the provinces has recently issued a Player Welfare document and organised a series of video calls with the key stakeholders parents, players, schools, clubs and provinces to talk through the implications and listen to feedback. This is most acute at the 16 to 18 year old age group who play both school and club and the more talented will also be part of Irish Hockey League (IHL) squads both in Division 1 and 2.

#### **Regional Development Programmes & Hooked For Life (H4L)**

The High Performance Committee have been working very closely with the HP Leads in the provinces / regions in relation to their provincial teams and player pathways. This has been led by Ann Ronan who chairs the Interprovincial Working Group and sits on the High Performance Committee. The HPC are keen to work with the provincial HP leads to put together a regional development programme at u15, u17 and u19 that integrates in and complements the national programmes.

It is envisaged that the regional programme coaching curriculums would follow the recently updated Hooked For Life technical coaching syllabus that outlines the technical competencies required for players to improve and potentially develop into future international players. It is planned that provinces would work with more than the current one team and potentially divide into 2 or 3 regional squads. Once established this will increase the number of players who will be receiving additional performance coaching and widening the player base across the four provinces and diversify the range of clubs who have players in development programmes.

Increased number of bi-lateral matches particularly at less congested time periods throughout the year culminating in an end of season tournament would replace the current September interprovincial tournament enabling coaches to develop the players over a longer time period learning from increased match experience.

These discussions are well progressed but the finer detail and scheduling is still being worked through particularly in this difficult COVID-19 impacted start of season but all HP leads in the provinces are in agreement in principle that a more integrated and holistic approach would benefit the development of our players over the longer term. I would like to thank all the HP Leads in each province for their commitment during the year and working together as the one HP hockey community and this is something we believe will continue next year and beyond.

### **National programmes & Management appointments**

As referenced previously the impact of COVID-19 and subsequent FIH and EHF decisions around Olympics, Europeans championships and moving the essentially postponing the u18 European championships in 2020 to an u19 Europeans in 2021.

Consequently, our u18 programme in 2020 will become an u19 programme preparing for the Europeans in Kazan, Russia 2021. We will still retain our u16 national programme but we will also look to put in place a shortened national u18 programme to enable the national development of those players particularly born in 2004 and 2003 who may not make it into the u19 panel but will still be provided with some international match experience. In 2022 the EHF have indicated they will return to an u18 European aged tournament.

The High Performance Committee have re-appointed the 2020 Head Coaches for 2021 national programme, after which we will then be moving to a two year appointment cycle with all Head Coach and Team Manager positions advertised openly.

It is hoped that with the re-development of the Hockey Ireland website additional effort will be made to use this as a portal for information on our national teams including information on our management teams and the JAG programmes. There is a strong desire to better connect our national JAG teams to the clubs and schools who do so much work attracting players to the sport of hockey and development talent at grass roots level.

### **High Performance staff and volunteer recognition**

In closing I would like to formally put on record an enormous thanks to all staff who work in the High Performance programmes nationally and provincially both those in paid positions and those who volunteer.

We are indebted to those who make every effort to assist the players to be in a position to perform at their best when they step onto the pitch. From the senior teams to our junior age group programmes, our administrators behind the scenes at Hockey Ireland and within the provinces that ensure provincial tournaments and international matches are staged to high levels of organisation. This includes the members of the High Performance Committee who commit their time and energy towards the behind the scene work support our HP programmes namely Ann Ronan, Mick McKinnon, Lisa Jacob, Leah Spillane, Rob Kelly, Jerome Pels and Adam Grainger.

A special mention in this regard to Arlene Boyles as all of you will know she has decided to step down from her position as Senior Womens Team Manager. Most will be aware Arlene had an illustrious playing career at club and international level amassing 123 caps over a long international playing career culminating in the 2002 World Cup in Perth, Australia. For her club Pegasus she won every domestic honour possible including 8 Irish senior cups, 4 All-Ireland leagues, multiple Ulster titles and represented Ireland at European club competitions on many occasions as a player and coach.

Arlene was regarded as an important member of the management team that achieved the unprecedented success at the 2018 World Cup in London winning the silver medal and after the heart break of missing out on Rio 2016 she and the squad returned to give us those memorable nights at Donnybrook and qualify for the Tokyo Olympics for the first time in Irish history.

Arlene has been a fantastic role model for women in hockey particularly those aspiring to achieve at the highest level and on behalf of the High Performance Committee we sincerely thank her for everything she has contributed to Irish Hockey.

### **Closing**

In closing I hope the report has provided both an update and an insight into the Hockey Ireland High Performance structure that reaches from our national players on the international stage right down to every player who picks up a hockey stick for the first time. Every player is a potential future international and we are indebted to every grass roots club junior coach and schools coach who deliver hockey coaches day in day out and inspire the next generation.

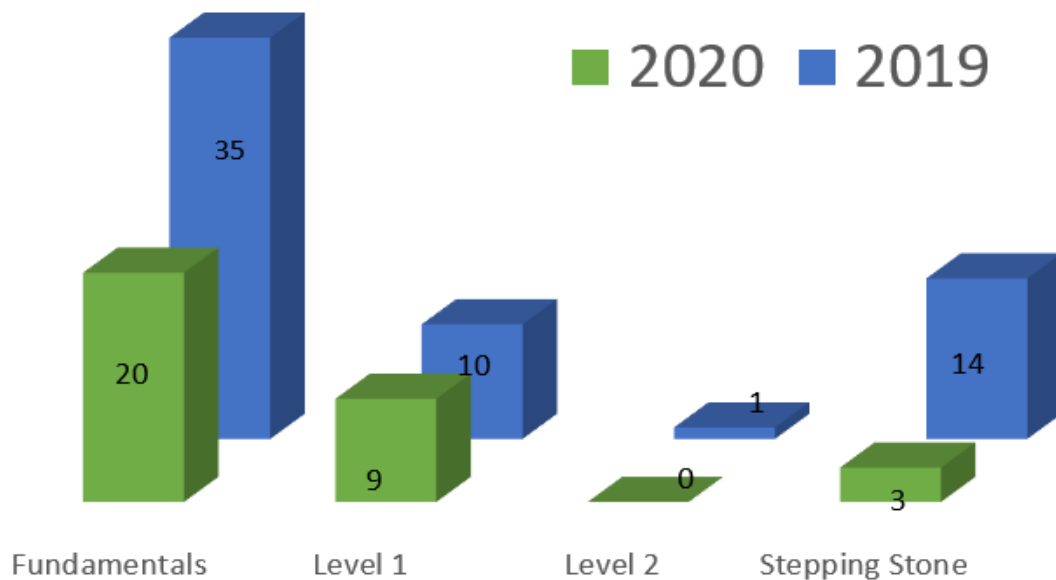
**Steve Hiles**

**Chairperson, High Performance Committee**

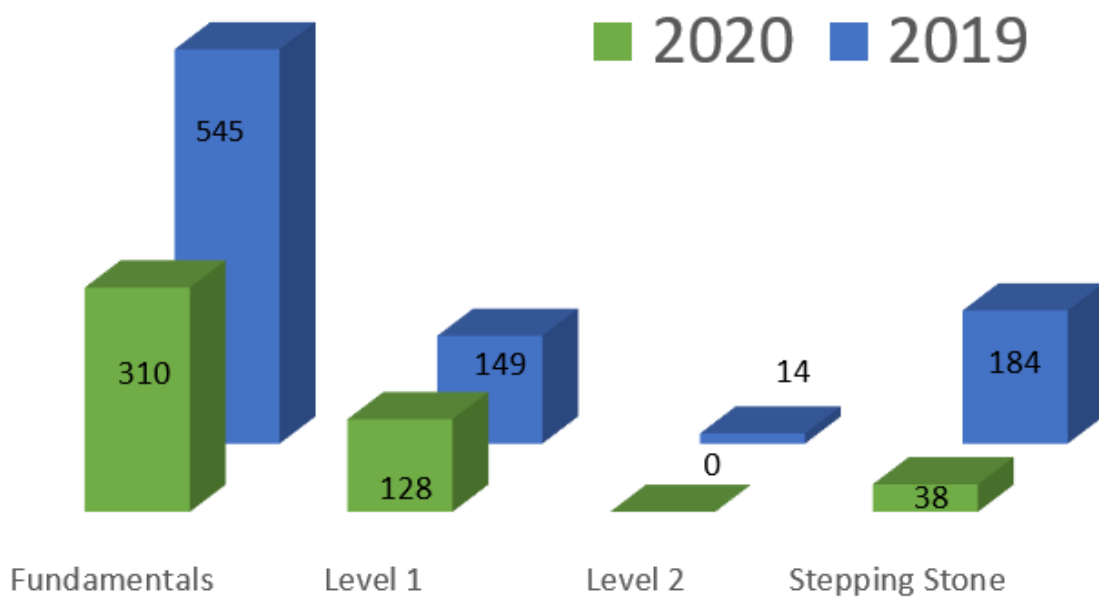
## Hockey Ireland Coach Education Report

### Coaching Courses:

#### Number of courses:



#### Number of Coaches produced:



## Notes:

- Scheduled courses postponed for 2020: 5 x Fundamentals; 2 x Level 1.
- Level 2 was due to run in June and July 2020 but was not scheduled due to Covid-19.
- Expected demand for further courses: 4 x Fundamentals and 2 x Level 1.

## **Coach Education Webinars 2020:**

- Series of four webinars run in April/May 2020 in lieu of being able to deliver courses.
- 850 attendees across the series.

## **Course Developments 2019/2020:**

- New Stepping Stones course 'Introduction to Tactics' under development. Will be available in early 2021.
- Level 3 proposal submitted to Sport Ireland Coaching.
- Level 2 reviewed.
- Fundamentals and Level 1 due to be reviewed in Q4 2020/Q1 2021 for roll out in Q2 2021.

## **Hockey Ireland Coaching Committee (HICC):**

- The HICC (November 2020) consists of Trevor Watkins (chair, Leinster), Mick McKinnon, Elayne McDermott (Connacht), Donal Doyle (Leinster/South East) Jonathan McMeekin (UHU), Denis Pritchard (Munster) and Phil Oakley (Hockey Ireland).
- The committee met 4 times in 2020.

## **EHF Coaching Programmes:**

- 3 coaches on the EHF Top Coaches Programme (TCP)
- 2 coaches on EHF Coaching 4 Europe Programme (C4E)

## **Women in Sport Performance Coach Development Programme (WIS PCD):**

- 27 female applicants for the WIS PCD programme.
- Six coaching mentors were also confirmed.
- Programme was due to begin September 2020, however due to Covid-19, this has been postponed until Q1 2021.

### **Hooked for Life (Long Term Player Development (LTPD) model):**

- Hockey Ireland's LTPD model 'Hooked for Life' is currently being reviewed and updated.
- A working group with representation from each province is currently being established to undertake the task.

**Trevor Watkins, on behalf the Coach Education Committee**



## **Participation and Development**

2019/2020 Highlights:

- Over **800** young people trained in **57** clubs / schools as part of the Hockey Ireland Young Hockey Leaders Award
- Over **60000** children has taken part in the Hockey Skills Challenge since its launch in 2015
- **8100** children introduced to hockey through a club-led programme - 27 clubs and 90 schools took part in Tricks 4 Sticks
- **4** new clubs set up, 1 more in pilot phase
  - Thurles, Co Tipperary
  - Castletroy, Co Limerick
  - Ennis, Co Clare
  - Nenagh, Co Tipperary
- **17** Stepping Stones courses delivered for over 200 coaches
- Over **€70,000** funding secured for Hockey4All Parahockey programme
- Employment of a part-time Development Officer in Connacht (in partnership with NUIG)

### **Launch of 'Leaders in Hockey' programme as part of Women in Sport Funding**

- Youth Panel set up with 10 members
- Launch of E-Learning Hub and online umpire test
- 30 clubs signed up for Club Umpire Programme with 9 umpire coaches
- 150 Young Umpire trained
- 16 participants on the Elite Umpire Development Programme - 2 of these accepted onto EHF programme
- 4 female leaders trained on WIS leadership programme in partnership with Swim Ireland

- 15 ambassador visits
- 36 attendees at Leaders in Hockey conference

**Sharon Hutchinson, on behalf of the Development and Participation Committee**

## **Communications/Commercial**

2019 – 2020 Highlights:

- Two engaging campaigns for Olympic Qualifiers
  - 2.7 million social impressions over 8 week period.
- New Irish record for attendance at International Women’s Match in Ireland with 6,137 people attending Women’s Olympic Qualifier
- Peak TV Viewership of 379,300 for Women’s Sunday Qualifier
- New website
- Employment of a part-time Communications Officer
- Successful content strategy throughout first lockdown
- Streaming of ISC and IJC finals, with over 100,000 people viewing the ISC matches on Pundit Arena.
- New sponsors approached and contracted

### **Commercial Advisory Group**

The Commercial Advisory Working Group was tasked with defining Hockey Ireland’s commercial assets, building centralised systems for sponsorship and defining the resources required to successfully manage commercial relationships.

The group comprised experts working in sport, business, sponsorship, and communications, as well as two Directors from the HI Board and met virtually 3 times over a 6-week period during lockdown. A broad range of issues was discussed focused on the conditions required to successfully develop and implement a commercial strategy for Hockey Ireland, as well as short, medium, and long-term actions required to make the project a success.

The group made several recommendations to Hockey Ireland Board related to conducting market research, commercial opportunities with the membership system, and emphasised

the value of proactive communications. A number of structural challenges were identified, which the group believe will be critical to building a sustainable, long-term commercial success outside of Government funding.

**Paula Cunniffe, on behalf of the Commercial Advisory Group**

## **Governance**

- The Board reviewed and monitored the Risk Register
- Policies and Procedures reviewed
- Bank mandates reviewed and amended reflecting current staff and Board
- Sport Ireland Governance Audit completed
- Sport Northern Ireland: Following the fieldwork on 23 June 2020 and the meeting of the Moderation Panel on 22 July 2020, Sport Northern Ireland has confirmed that Hockey Ireland has been assessed as being ROBUST. Future Sport NI grant vouching terms and conditions will reflect this rating. Sport NI will also update the Government Funding Database to reflect this assessment
- Internal payment/invoice authorisation system has been implemented and is now operational following recommendations from Sport Ireland and Sport Northern Ireland.
- Hockey Ireland working on attaining full compliance with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland by year end 2021. As a result and following of the Deloitte Report, the following has been achieved:
  - IT and Health and Safety Policies and Procedures have been enhanced to document all relevant processes to ensure effective controls are applied within Hockey Ireland.
  - Payment approval system has been updated and now attached to the accounts management software.
  - Board members have allocated roles and responsibilities to provide a sense of direction and purpose to each individual.
  - Further work needs doing in the area of making the governance processes used by hockey clubs and provinces across Ireland consistent, interchangeable and equally applicable across all jurisdictions.

**Jerome Pels, on behalf of the Governance Committee**

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Report**

Hockey Ireland are now in a position to offer clubs and members Safeguarding levels 1,2 & 3 via face to face and due to Covid via Zoom.

163 coaches, volunteers have completed Safeguarding Level 1 since the last AGM with Hockey Ireland and these courses will be promoted more in the next year.

1,044 people have been submitted for vetting through the National Vetting Bureau since the last AGM in May 2019.

The new membership system will assist the National Children's Officer to monitor members Safeguarding & Vetting needs and also to ensure that clubs are compliant with Children's First Act.

Work has also been carried out alongside the Development team to make sure that the Clubmark section is relevant to the Sport Ireland Safeguarding & Guidance for Young People document.

Hockey Ireland also completed Sport Irelands Safeguarding Audit for NGBs.

Thanks should be mentioned to Laura Cullen for her hard work in bringing the policies and procedures in line with the Children's First Act 2015.

**Dwyne Hill, Interim Childrens Officer**



**SoftCo**

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