



Chairman's Report

November 2018

It was a pleasure to be appointed as Archery NI Chairman in May 2018 and the few months since my appointment have been busy, varied and a bit of a whirlwind. If I were to self-reflect on this period, I would readily admit that communicating the work which has been ongoing by myself and the Board has not been as effective as it could have been but we remain committed to improving on this.

Having worked for Sport Northern Ireland in the governance field for a number of years, I had a reasonable knowledge of Archery NI, its recent history and some of the challenges faced not only by this sport but by the sector in general. These are challenges which the Board and I wish to meet head on. We won't always get things right, but everything the Board does, and every decision we make is done so in the best interests of the sport and with the best possible intentions. I commit to all members that the Board will continue to act at all times in the best interests of our members whilst ensuring the integrity of the organisation and its rules and governance are maintained.

I do not wish to focus on the past issues which the organisation has faced, however it is testament to the good work of the current Board that, with the support of Archery GB, a number of ongoing complaints and disputes have been resolved. While disputes rarely reach a conclusion which is pleasing to all parties involved, the outcomes have been arrived at through the implementation of the policies and processes in place. The Board will continue to review all issues of this nature and work to identify where there are lessons that can be learnt and improvements can be made to the organisation and its operations.

The recent members' forum at the NICVA Offices provided an excellent opportunity for me to meet a number of members of the archery family and also provided the Board with an opportunity to feed back some of the good work which has been ongoing behind the scenes. I hope over the coming months to get out and around the clubs and meet more of you.

The members' forum was also a good opportunity for the Board to outline some of our aspirations for taking the sport forwards. While the changes in the performance/academy structures and some developments regarding the competitions and development of the sport are covered in other reports, I am keen to highlight some key priorities for the Board:

- The sport has not had a clear strategy for a number of years. To date we have undertaken a consultation of members views to form the strategy and present the higher level objectives to you. The next step as a priority of the Board is to develop a robust and detailed strategy against which we can report back to you, our members, how we are progressing as a Board;
- The Board is reviewing its policies and procedures to develop a new suite of policies which will be posted on the website in the coming months;
- The website is under review and being developed to improve our communication platforms with members. While we are improving in this area, we still need to continue to review our communications and we are keen to further develop this area.
- The Board are looking at ways to increase the profile of the sport and initiatives to do so encompass a review of competitions, communication platforms - we are represented on the NICVA Media Connect initiative and developing external relationships. In this regard Archery NI is now a member of NICVA, the NI Sports Forum, has re-engaged the Commonwealth Games Council and is both a member of Volunteer Now and represented on the Volunteer Now Board through my role as a Trustee.

The priorities outlined above are just a flavour of the work being undertaken by the Board and the way forward. We have ambitions to see more members, a better engaged membership and for members to see and understand the value of their membership fees. While we are making significant progress with the talent and performance pathways, I am keen to see all aspects of the pathways strengthened including grass roots and club development.

With the Board's aspirations to improve the sport comes a significant amount of commitment. At this point it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the passionate and hard work of the Board members and support provided to me to date. Kim, Hazel and Susan put endless hours of work in delivering the sport locally such as ensuring the competitions run, that coaches are in place, that the squads run effectively, that the website is up to date, that the organisation continues to function effectively and your membership contributions and all finances are managed effectively. The list is endless. In addition, none of this is possible without the guidance, support and experience of Muriel and Neil who bring a very welcome external oversight to the Board. Archery GB has stood by the sport in Northern Ireland over the last few years and continues to provide a significant level of support to the region and I wish to personally acknowledge this support from Neil and his team in Lilleshall.

I also wish to acknowledge the hard work of our volunteers without whom the sport would not operate – the judges, the coaches, the tournament organisers and to those who work tirelessly to ensure their clubs function and deliver opportunities in their communities. The sport is truly blessed with a small yet committed band of members who willingly give up their time to make the sport happen. I was encouraged by the recent NI Field Championships where I had the opportunity to see first-hand the effort being made to provide a competitive opportunity to all archers and the hard work of the volunteers to make competitions happen.

On behalf of Archery NI I also wish to thank Sport NI for the support provided to the sport both financial and in terms of guidance and while the funding is currently provided to Archery GB the impact on the sport in NI is significant. Special mention goes to Christine Rae for governance support, Richard Archibald for performance systems support and Des Jennings who is recently engaged with the sport to look at the culture in the coaching systems and help us make things better in that area. Finally I wish to acknowledge and thank the past Chair, Steven Beacom, past Performance Directors John Kane and Damien Lennon and past Membership Secretary Ian McAuley for their commitment to the sport and contribution to the progress which is benefitting us all.

To conclude, if we wish to keep moving forwards in a positive direction and fulfil our aspirations of developing a sport with structures we can all be proud of and that the passionate and committed membership deserves, we need to strengthen the Board and volunteer structure. From that perspective, I urge our members to think about what skills they can bring to the Board and join with us, whether that is in a formal Board role or whether it is providing your skills and guidance in a less formal manner. The Board are also looking to look outside the sport to bring key business and technical skills to compliment the current skill set.

This sport has significant potential – and this can be exciting times for the sport. Let's all pull together, drive it in the right direction and fulfil that potential.

Marc Scott
Chairman

Archery NI | Lilleshall National Sports & Conferencing Centre | Newport | Shropshire
| TF10 9AT

Web: www.archeryni.org.uk

Social Media: facebook.com/ArcheryNI

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