

INTRODUCING... ANDY REED, CHAIR, SPORT AND RECREATION ALLIANCE

Andy Reed takes over as chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance. Here he shares his thoughts on the challenges of representing over 320 bodies and grassroots clubs

I am delighted to say that, as of 20 July, I will be the new chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance - the umbrella body for the governing bodies of sport. Many of you will know this organisation as CCPR or the Central Council of Physical Recreation. Some others (those of an older generation perhaps) will know it for its work with its offspring, the British Sports Trust. But however you know us - and even if you don't - I hope that our work will become more and more a reflection of what's important to you - our grassroots clubs - than ever before.

My election as chair will bring the end to a successful six-year era overseen by the outgoing chair Brigid Simmonds OBE, who has served a maximum of three two-year terms. During her time at the helm she transformed the Sport and Recreation Alliance, bringing in a new chief executive (Tim Lamb) and a welcome new strategy focusing on the things which could make most difference to the sector.

The Sport and Recreation Alliance today is the undisputed independent voice of British sport and recreation. As a 'CBI for sport and recreation' it represents more than 320 governing and representative bodies - from organisations like The FA, the RFU and the ECB to British Cycling, The Pony Club and Surf Life Saving GB.

Our mission is to protect, promote and provide for national governing bodies, for their 150,000 members - sport and recreation clubs - and for the 10 million regular participants across the country. We take up an issue, from the bureaucracy around child protection to a legacy from the Olympics, and we talk to the people who matter to try to persuade them to make the changes you want.

In short, we are advocates, particularly in Westminster and Whitehall, for you and for your club, for what you do and what you work for. If your club offers sport, you may not know about it but we are working to support you.

So what does that mean in practice? Well, most clubs, when they have a problem - a new regulation or law that is impossible to implement, difficulty with a local authority, a government agency which is making a nuisance of itself - will talk to their governing body first. And if the governing body can't fix it, or if it's obvious that the problem is becoming widespread, they will often bring it to us. And that's when we get to work...

We employ all our powers of persuasion, all of our experience and all of our contacts to try to get the right result for sport. Over the past couple of years we have saved

“Over the past couple of years we have saved tens of millions of pounds for the sector by getting ministers, civil servants and quangos to look again at their regulations or to make the changes which our members want.”

tens of millions of pounds for the sector by getting ministers, civil servants and quangos to look again at their regulations or to make the changes which our members want.

In the last year alone we can point to savings of up to £24m thanks to changes we have managed to make on water drainage charges. We are leading the charge on getting music and liquor licensing charges for sports club reduced. We conduct the biggest survey of sports clubs in the UK to underpin our arguments. And our campaigning at the last General Election saw us secure no fewer than 11 separate manifesto pledges relating to our campaigns.

But so much for the recent past. What does the future hold for the Sport and Recreation Alliance with me as chair?

Well, I was MP for arguably the country's sportiest constituency - Loughborough - for 13 years, so I think it's fair to say I understand both sport and sports politics. I am chair of a county sports partnership, have been an adviser to several NGBs and continue to play rugby for my local club. And I will now be putting all those skills and that experience to good use from the other side of the fence.

The future holds lots of challenges for our sector, but I hope that I am as well equipped as anybody can be to protect your interests.



Over the coming months Andy Reed will be writing a column for Club Mirror, updating readers on the work the Sports and Recreation Alliance is undertaking on behalf of sports clubs. He encourages readers to contact him with comments, queries and feedback, so please contact info@clubmirror.com with your thoughts and questions.