



Good morning ladies and gentleman. I welcome you all today to Scotland's National Stadium to look back at our work in 2017 and to conduct our General and Annual General Meetings.

I would like to offer a special welcome to Kelty Hearts who are attending their first Scottish FA AGM following their admittance last year, as our 89th member club. Welcome also to Noel Mooney from UEFA's National Association Division.

I would like to place on record, my appreciation to everyone who invests in and supports Scottish football. This investment takes many forms: time, energy, commitment, passion, ticketing revenue, commercial fees and funding grants. It all adds up and fuels the work that we do from the grassroots to our international squads.

While we will discuss some of that work here today, I would encourage you all to read our annual review which you will have received today. I was immensely proud when I read it. So much good work goes on within the game and the document gives a good flavour of what we do. I'd like to thank all the staff involved who pulled it together.

Financially, it was a good year for the Scottish FA. £38.4 million in revenue was generated across the Group, a 7.5% increase year on year, driven by our portfolio of commercial and funding partners, our broadcasting deals and a strong competitive match schedule including a home game against England in June here at the National Stadium.

This enabled us to redistribute £10.4 million back to the member clubs, through participation in the Scottish Cup, Club Academy Scotland and club licensing investment. The Affiliated National Associations meanwhile were awarded almost £300,000 last year.

There have been many highlights across what has been another eventful 12 months. I am immensely proud to have witnessed the development of the women's game in this country over the last decade which culminated in our qualification, under Anna Signuel's guidance, to the UEFA Women's EURO. Every player wore the Scotland shirt with pride and are now inspiring the next generation of young female footballers in this country.

We bid farewell to Anna after the tournament as she moved on to a new challenge and welcomed back Shelley Kerr to the Scottish FA who will now lead our women's national side. Shelley is an impressive coach, inspired leader and powerful role model for our players and staff. We are thrilled that she is with us and driving the women's game forward in Scotland and I wish her and the team good luck for tomorrow night's FIFA World Cup qualifier against Belarus.

Moving to the men's national side, while our disappointment at not qualifying for the play-offs for the FIFA World Cup 2018 is, and was, understandable, it was nevertheless a mark of Gordon Strachan's capabilities – and the squad's belief in the coaching team – that we recovered from a poor first half of the campaign to get back into contention for a play-off place.

Notwithstanding our unbeaten run in the group throughout 2017, with the emergence of a younger generation of players it was, however, agreed that a new national coach should be recruited to provide fresh impetus as we prepare for the UEFA EURO 2020 qualifying campaign and also the forthcoming UEFA Nations League. We are grateful to Gordon and his staff for the passion, professionalism and commitment demonstrated since his appointment in January 2013.

Our new Head Coach, Alex McLeish, his backroom team and the players have returned this week from their summer tour of Peru and Mexico. We offer our best wishes and support as they get ready for the next challenge, the UEFA Nations League, later this year.

Our U21s, under the guidance of Scot Gemmill, are also in action this week in the Toulon tournament. For the second year in a row we have reached the last four of the competition after coming out on top of Group B. They play England today for a place in the final. Good luck to the squad over in France.

Scotland's National Stadium, Hampden Park will play host to three Group Stage matches and a Round of 16 game for the UEFA EURO 2020. Our planning and stadium development work is rapidly gaining pace as we get ready for the tournament. Our colleagues in the UEFA EURO 2020 project team, led by Andrew Niven, and Peter Dallas' staff, at Hampden Park Limited, are working hard to put detailed plans in place for what will be a historic event. We are determined to not only qualify but to also be terrific hosts at the tournament.

Over the weekend we received good news that our UEFA EURO 2020 ambassador, Sir Alex Ferguson, has been released from hospital. He is a true legend of our game and we wish him well with his ongoing recovery.

Our future beyond 2020 is also in our minds. Hampden or Murrayfield? A simple question but a hugely complex decision which the Scottish FA is facing into the pending expiry of the existing lease for the use of the National Stadium, in 2020. A huge amount of work has been undertaken to consider the options open to us and review the the social, economic and emotional impact of any final decision. We are now nearing the completion of our work and are moving towards a decision that will provide clarity and will be crucial to determining our path for the future.

Moving on to domestic football, I would like to congratulate all the clubs across the country who achieved success and silverware from the top flight to the regional leagues and cup competitions.

One of our top referees, Craig Thomson, also merits a mention. Craig recently stepped down from the International List of Referees after 15 years. He has been and is a tremendous role model for our young referees.

2017 was another successful year for Hampden Park Ltd.

Over the course of the year, work continued on improvements to the stadium with Hampden's status as a host city of UEFA Euro 2020 in mind including two new giant videoboards incorporating the very latest smart audio-visual technology which have improved spectator experience with stunning clarity and colour.

Away from football, another capacity crowd bore witness to what has been widely reported as being the last ever concert by the Stone Roses, while the stadium has continued to make improvements in the key conferencing and banqueting sector with catering partner, Sodexo.

The Scottish Football Museum has enjoyed a successful and busy year promoting the rich and unique heritage of football in Scotland. The museum has engaged with its audiences through a variety of exciting and informative exhibitions and seminars. With the official build up to UEFA Euro 2020 just around the

corner the museum has already embraced Glasgow and Scotland's key role within the tournament.

The Football Memories Project goes from strength to strength. There are now 200 groups operating throughout Scotland, in football clubs, community centres, libraries and care homes. The project has established good links with the Scottish FA's Para Football programme and has also expanded into rugby, golf, cricket and shinty. The relevant national bodies have come together to form a Sports Heritage Scotland network in order to develop and expand the memories project.

The Sports Medicine Centre continues to provide expert Sport & Exercise Medicine services to the wider football family and in particular to Scottish FA departments and staff.

The Centre runs the National Sports First Aid course; with 2017 seeing the launch of a new e-learning module and 1 day on-site practical course in part funded by The Scottish Football Partnership to ensure a standard of first aid across all levels of the game.

It provides cardiac screening for all SPFL players, identifying underlying heart problems. It works with PFA Scotland to provide the Support Within Sport programme which, through funding from William Hill allows players and coaches immediate access to mental health support.

Looking ahead, the Scottish FA faces a range of challenges as the sports, broadcasting and digital landscapes evolve. We need to be ready for those changes and with that in mind, Ana Stewart, with her background in marketing, retail and technology, was appointed as an independent non-executive director, taking the place of Barrie Jackson, whom we thank for his input and service. Her advice and fresh ideas will challenge and shape our plans and policies going forward.

Ana will also chair our Equality & Advisory Diversity Board. Formed in 2017, bringing together a range of excellent members, the group's role is to advise the Scottish FA on equality issues and ensure that we help ensure that football in Scotland is open to all. We want to make the game more inclusive and to do that we are aiming to secure the Advanced Level Equality Standard for Sport. This is an important target for us to reach.

Following the turn of the year our Chief Executive, Stewart Regan and Andrew McKinlay, our Chief Operating Officer resigned from their posts. They worked tirelessly for the organisation and I would like to place on record my thanks and appreciation to both of them for their commitment to Scottish football.

Ian Maxwell has now taken the reigns as our new Chief Executive. He joins Director of Finance & IT, Andrew Charters and Commercial Director, Chris Rawlings both of whom joined the Scottish FA within the last 12 months. I look forward to working closely with the new management team and our staff, as we face into the challenges affecting our game. I am sure you will join me in wishing them every success in the months and years ahead.

As I close, I would, of course, like to thank all of the staff of the Scottish FA for their hard work.

I also record grateful thanks to all our sponsors for their continued support of the work of the Scottish FA.

I envisage an equally busy and challenging year ahead and am grateful for the support of the members of the Boards and Congress.

As a group of clubs, associations, leagues and as individuals involved in Scottish football, our mission remains simple – to inspire a nation to love football.

Rest assured, the Office Bearers and the Board will continue to do that on your behalf and in the overall interests of Scottish Football.