

wsa:

serving welsh sport
gwasanaethu chwaraeon cymru

**WSA Annual Report
2014/15**

Chair's Foreword

It has been a privilege to 'caretake' the Chair in recent months, following the departure of Paul Dancey. Paul had been a committed member of the WSA's board for a number of years and for this we owe him a debt of gratitude.

The WSA is evolving. Evolution brings with it change. We need to be ready for, and embrace, that change. As such, we have been committed to strengthening our board this year and I am delighted to welcome Jon Morgan (Executive Director for DSW), Ffion Lloyd (Assistant Director at WJEC and board member of RYA Wales), Suzanne Chisholm (Strategic Engagement Co-ordinator for the third sector within the Welsh Government and board member of the Cardiff YMCA Housing Association) and Kate Stokes-Davies (Head of Communications at BBC Wales). I am confident that the breadth of skill and experience our new directors will add to the board will have a positive impact on our business and, consequently, that of our members.

The missing link, in this every strengthening chain, is the appointment of a new independent Chair to lead the organisation into new and exciting uncharted waters. We will continue our search for a new Chair and, in the meantime, I am happy to keep the seat warm!

As you will see from this report, there are some exciting new developments happening within our business but also some challenging times ahead for our sector. Fighting for our sector is critically important to us all. We operate a permanent open-door policy for all member views and suggestions for taking this work forward - and indeed all future support - will be very gratefully welcomed. I am committed to working with you, our members, to capitalise on all new opportunities and protect against threats.

Philip Avery
WSA Chair

General Manager's Message

Since taking on the role of GM in November 2014, I think it would be fair to say that my "feet have not touched the ground"!

It has been a delight to work as part of a small, yet perfectly formed team, who work tirelessly towards our shared goal of supporting members to become stronger, more successful and sustainable businesses.

The first opportunity I was given within the business was to revise the WSA's four year strategy (2015-19). The strategy now embraces three key outcomes:

- *Advocacy for our members*
- *Supporting and promoting sustainability through good governance*
- *Leading collaborative & creative approaches to workforce and enterprise.*

This report has been structured to give a flavour of the progress being made under our strategic aims in recent times.

We have been busy making inroads in political circles to bestow the virtues of our manifesto in the lead up to the 2016 elections. Maintaining and enhancing our positive relationship with our third sector colleagues and working closely with Sport Wales as part of the stake-holder reference group in the development of the Community Sports Project.

A first for the sector has been the commissioning of a document to capture the unique position in the market of NGB's. The 'State of Play' project will look to outline and track this position in the years to come with the ambition of being used to challenge thinking, support funding bids and attract partnerships from outside of the sector.

For anyone operating within our industry, corporate governance needs to be high on the agenda. Recent high profile examples in the media of bad practice are a reminder to us all of its importance. The WSA is therefore pleased to have volunteered to be part of the sectors review of governance in the recently launched Governance and Leadership Framework and aims to provide a plethora of template documents and advisory services to support the work of its members in this field, which underpins the foundations of all our businesses.

We continue to provide a variety of shared services to the sector in Finance, Governance, Coaching and Training. These services continue to grow and provide valuable resources to many of our members, with plans to extend these services in the months to come.

None of us in our sector are strangers to needing to become more financially self-sufficient. It is hoped that the work we are undertaking in respect of business support services will contribute towards the future prosperity of our member organisations. Business consultants, helplines and links to many other services via our new website, which will be launched this winter, will act as a gateway to accessing a wide variety of support. Coupled with leading the field to develop and promote a range of shared and collaborative services, across Wales and the rest of the UK to drive down costs by flexing our collective commercial muscle.

We are confident, through consultation with members, that these three main business objectives will position us to service our members well, through the rapidly changing business environment in which we operate. And, most importantly, always at the forefront of our minds, is the fact that we are a membership organisation. It is therefore our main aim, to gain a clear mandate from the membership that there is support for our future direction of travel.

Victoria Ward
General Manager

STRATEGIC AIM ONE:
ADVOCACY FOR OUR MEMBERS

Political Lobbying:

- 1.1 We have spent the year lobbying Welsh Government hard for the maintenance of resources for Sport Wales and the sector generally - arguing forcefully that sport/physical activity is critically important in regard to other Welsh Government agendas - such as health, social inclusion/equality, education and the economy etc.
- 1.2 We have proposed a range of detailed measures to improve the sporting landscape as per our manifesto launched last autumn – a copy of which can be found in appendix one. This has been of course circulated to a wide range of decision makers.
- 1.3 In regard to health we have met Minister Mark Drakeford and focussed particularly on the importance of physical activity in combating the obesity crisis - and the positive individual health outcomes and massive potential financial savings which would follow were activity levels to improve. In strategic terms the Welsh Government is generally wedded to the concept of preventative (as opposed to curative) action and accordingly this will be a key pressure area going forward.
- 1.4 In regard to inclusion/equality (again a key over-arching issue for Welsh Government) we have emphasised the fact that sport can be a key tool for addressing these issues. We are involved with Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) and others in the early stages of examining the possibility of delivering a substantive plan for increasing sporting participation within BME communities
- 1.5 We have met with the Education Minister Huw Lewis to both support implementation of the Tanni Grey-Thompson report and to promote our own ideas regarding school sport - including help for local sports clubs to themselves better support schools, enhanced opening of school facilities to the broader community and Estyn measurement of school-club links. The Minister has agreed to examine all these ideas as the government formulates its detailed plans following on from the recent Donaldson report.
- 1.6 We have naturally met with the sports Deputy Minister Ken Skates and pressed our manifesto ideas with particular reference to those ideas which would not cost great amounts of money - and the Minister has welcomed the constructive nature of our engagement.
- 1.7 In regard to greater access to the environment we have met Minister Carl Sergeant and expressed our disappointment that a planned bill was shelved for the current legislative term -and we intend to renew our lobbying after the next elections.
- 1.8 We have met with Finance Minister Jane Hutt and extolled the importance of investment in sport/physical activity as means of both saving money on health/social care spending and in terms of the positive role which it can play in boosting the Welsh economy.
- 1.9 The Finance Minister is also in charge of public sector procurement policy. We have called for greater incentives for SMEs to support local good causes (including clearly sports clubs) by giving them greater credit when applying for public contracts (utilising community benefits policies). She was interested in this idea and has indicated her officials would be looking at the subject.

Sport Wales Consultancy / Community Sports Project:

- 1.10 We have represented members on the stake-holders reference group, set up by Sport Wales, as a consultative body to comment on the work of the Community Sports Project (CSP). The CSP will bring about the biggest changes to the way in which community sport is funded in Wales for a generation. In partnership with the CEO forum, a formal response to Sport Wales, ahead of their board meeting to gain a mandate to

progress with this restructure, was presented to the lead officer. This response gave full support for the need to change the way it funds community sport so that it is more cost efficient (leading to more money being invested in the end user) and results driven. However, it was felt that full support at this time could not be given for the way in which the restructure may affect NGB's, due to the lack of detail available at that time. This has had a positive effect, resulting in the WSA and CEO forum being invited to be further involved with the process, which is a welcome result for which we are grateful to Sport Wales.

Third Sector Influencing:

1.11 As well as being a board member of WCVA, during the year we have been appointed to some highly influential Third Sector working groups - including the Third Sector Partnership Council (TSPC) working group. The TSPC is the recognised mechanism for managing the relationship between the Third Sector and Welsh Government. There has been fundamental change in this relationship over the last year or so following a Welsh Government/WCVA review. It is henceforth intended that high-level strategic items be agreed and then form part of an agreed programme for action between the sector and government.

The idea is that once a list of these high-level topics have been agreed, there will then be on-going joint working on them between the sector and officials with the aim of arriving at real positive outcomes. Amongst other things we have argued forcefully that prevention investment - including on physical activity/sport - should be one such high-level strategic discussion topic and it appears that this is going to be the case. We have met with Minister Lesley Griffiths who leads on the Welsh Government relationship with the Third Sector.

1.12 We have also been appointed to the small WCVA Public Affairs panel - which is looking at the drafting of the WCVA manifesto in readiness for next year's elections. This of course affords us a unique opportunity to have influence upon the agenda.

2016 Elections:

1.13 Next year we have Assembly elections in Wales and we have already been in touch with all main parties to promote the importance of the physical activity/sport sector generally and our manifesto ideas in particular. This work will clearly continue apace as the elections approach.

We conduct our advocacy in the main:

- A) By meetings with ministers, other key decision-makers and officials
- B) By representation on key working groups facilitated by WCVA as above
- C) By submission of papers on appropriate topics where necessary
- D) By responding to all relevant consultations
- E) By alliances with other third sector groups
- F) By meetings with political parties
- G) By working with the CEO group to try to ensure our messages are right and that the sector is as united and consistent as possible

Collaborative Positioning – The State of Play:

1.15 The WSA are leading the development of a document known as, 'The State of Play', to articulate the valuable and unique contribution that NGB's make to the sports sector in Wales. The aim of this document is for it to be used as a tool for the collective, or by individual members, to further funding and influencing objectives.

1.16 'State of Play' will be an independently created document, for the sector, by the sector, and has been funded by contributions from many of the larger NGB's, with match funding support provided by the WSA.

The WSA would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that has contributed to the content and finances of this document. It is anticipated that the document will be completed by November 2015.

Member Communications

- 1.17 A programme to modernise communication with members is in progress. Social media platforms have been established. A new website filled with valuable resources, is under construction as too is an e-bulletin news service.

STRATEGIC AIM TWO

SUPPORTING & PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH GOOD GOVERNANCE

Governance and Leadership Framework

- 2.1 The WSA has wholeheartedly signed up to the sectors Governance and Leadership Framework. We encourage all member bodies to embrace the framework as part of their commitment to the development of more robust governance structures, resulting in more robust businesses.
- 2.2 As part of its commitment to the framework, the WSA has also volunteered to be one of the first, as part of a pilot project, to undergo a comprehensive governance review. We will work with a specialist to check and challenge all aspects of our governance procedures and behaviours.

Governance Support to Members

- 2.3 As part of our new website, we've been keeping our governance consultant busy collating, producing and developing signposting facilities to an entirely new range of templates, required by all our businesses. All documents will be closely aligned to the corresponding governance principle, within the framework. For example, a template for the creation of an induction pack for new directors, would sit under Principle 2 – "Defining and evaluating the role of your board". An example of reference information that links to Principle 5 – "Standards, systems and controls" is about Health & Safety for sport.
- 2.4 Additionally, our consultant has also maintained a high level of support for NGB's on a one-to-one basis. All eight member organisations requesting support have been supported and the nature of the support provided has been varied. Including, but not limited to, developing new constitutions, changing the legal status of the NGB, creating new Byelaws, codes of conduct, committee terms of reference, social media policies, helping to resolve NGB member disputes and change management within an organisation.

Helpline Services

- 2.5 An agreement with the Sport & Recreation Alliance (SRA), has recently been reached, which will see a comprehensive range of new Business Support helpline services being made available to all WSA members and, most excitingly, to all clubs, affiliated to WSA NGB members in Wales. This is the first time in the UK where such a service has been offered at a club level. It will be available from September 2015. The demand for this service will be reviewed quarterly along with any commercial arrangements which will be required to support volume usage of the service. Helpline services, provided by professionals in their field, will include Health & Safety, HR and Commercial Law.

STRATEGIC AIM THREE:

LEADING COLLABORATIVE & CREATIVE APPROACHES TO WORKFORCE AND ENTERPRISE

Shared Services Consultation:

- 3.1 The WSA has recently commissioned a piece of work, via its Financial Consultant, which carries out preliminary research on opportunities that may exist for a more collaborative approach to working with and amongst NGB's.
- 3.2 At a time of austerity and when public funds are reducing, the WSA, as part of its remit to support the National Governing Bodies of Sport in Wales, would like to explore the potential for greater collaboration with and between its members so that opportunities for cost savings and new resources can be unlocked.

Brief summary of research:

- 3.3 It is planned to contact and meet up to 24 NGB's of all sizes to contribute to this research. Areas to be covered include the following:
- A) Staffing
 - B) Volunteers
 - C) Governance
 - D) Core activity functions, skills and expertise
 - E) Use of Information Technology
 - F) Commerciality and income generation
 - G) Spending and Procurement
 - H) Banking

Interim update

- 3.4 20 NGB's have so far been involved and the following are examples of issues being discussed:
- A) Staffing requirements against budgetary constraints
 - B) Over reliance on volunteers
 - C) Difficulties in recruitment of board/committee roles and increased compliance/risk factors
 - D) Lack of skills and expertise in certain areas holding back the NGB
 - E) Potential for better use of Information Technology
 - F) NGB marketability and potential for income generation
 - G) Potential for cost savings by combining buying power
 - H) Better banking services
- 3.5 More comprehensive details on this work will be shared with members at the AGM.

Existing shared services:

- 3.6 Services continue to be offered for financial and governance consultancy and members requiring these services are welcome to request support at any time.
- 3.7 Our coaching advisory service continues to go from strength to strength. Some of the highlights from the past year are hosting the National Coaching Summit in Wales and the marked progress of Workforce Planning in 16 National Governing Bodies. We are delighted to announce that we will shortly be extending the coaching team with the appointment of a new coaching officer, on a full time basis. Our existing

coaching officer will continue with this role for 2 days per week, in addition to the full time officer, and will spend the remaining 3 days per week on her new role as Workforce Projects Manager. Within this role she will be involved in developing a recruitment service in partnership with universities for undergraduates to gain experience working within the sector and also enhance the skills base of some of our member organisations. Other projects which are in the pipeline for this new role include a significant expansion of the training services on offer to members and a pilot project relating to the potential development of a recognised centre for Qualification delivery.

- 3.8 The use of our training services has expanded this year, with 20% more courses and a percentage increase in uptake of 82%. This is set to expand further in forthcoming months.

Future Plans

- 3.9 Without the benefit of having the completed shared service review and subsequent consultations, it is difficult to fully plan for the future of a shared services programme. However, given the feedback we have received from speaking with colleagues in the past few months, we have started to dip our toes in the water and start to tentatively develop our business model for the future (appendix two).
- 3.10 As you will see from appendix two, our plans for the future are ambitious, but we like to aim high. We believe that developing a solid case for business need within the sector to secure additional funding to support some of these plans, combined with solid partnerships and entrepreneurial skill is the combination required to reach this goal. And we have already started to 'dip our toe' in the pool of progress, as follows:

Business Services Partnership:

- 3.11 Business Wales is the all-encompassing business support unit for Wales, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government. We are currently negotiating the terms of a memorandum of understanding with Business Wales, to develop a business support service for organisations and companies involved with the business of Sport. This exciting new development will offer helpline services, training programmes and one to one business consultancy support.

Insurance:

- 3.12 It is important that we look at collaboration within the sports development sector in Wales. However the same principles can be adopted across the UK. The WSA is leading the way in the promotion of collaboration in its position on the UK and Ireland Confederation of Sports Associations. All partners around the table are committed to exploring the many opportunities that exist for us to join together to become a force to be reckoned with across the UK.
- 3.13 Our first experience of this is in the field of insurance. As we go to print on this report, we are in the final stages of a tender process to find a preferred supplier for insurance for Wales and England, which may see Scotland joining before the year's end. The potential for us to collaborate and drive down the price of insurance is significant and has attracted the attention of some of the world's largest insurance groups. We look forward to sharing further details with you on this service as negotiations continue.
- 3.14 What we ask all members to bear in mind, in respect of shared services, is that none of this is mandatory. Some of you may decide the relationships you have with existing providers, for whatever services we may offer, are not worth compromising and of course you have the right to choose. However, just taking insurance as an example, can you imagine the impact we could have on the industry if hundreds of NGB's and tens of thousands of clubs joined forces? Flexing this kind of collective muscle would put the ball well and truly in our court.

Conclusion

The needs of the sector are changing and we are fully aware that we need to change too, to meet the demands those changes will bring.

Clouds of austerity still hang over the sector and we believe the key to a brighter, more prosperous future, lies in uniting through shared and collaborative working practices across Wales and the UK. In doing so, we believe that our sector can become a force to be reckoned with.

There is huge long term potential for the sector, with opportunities that reach far wider than our traditional business operations. No one is saying this is going to be an easy road on which to travel, it will have its trials and tribulations and not every potential opportunity will convert but, if you don't try, you don't ask, you don't get. Are the risks of standing still greater than those we encounter on the road to change?

Appendix 1 - Manifesto

If you wish to download a copy of our manifesto, please find it [here](#) on our website.

Alternatively we have hard copies of both the executive summary and unabridged version at our office which we can send out on request.

Appendix 2

