

2022
**Annual
Report**

WSA

Welsh Sports Association
Cymdeithas Chwaraeon Cymru



Chair's Welcome



I am pleased, once again to introduce the WSA's annual report which highlights what a successful year we have had as an organisation in the face of continued challenges for our sector.

As a board we are very pleased to have been able to support our members in a vast variety of ways throughout the year, as well as launch new services and products. The new Membership Plus services offered by the WSA will allow our members to save money and focus on delivering sport out in the communities of Wales.

I want to extend my thanks to the staff of the WSA for their continued commitment throughout the year – they have shown great resilience in the face of a period of significant challenge and change. Of course, thanks should go to our outgoing Chief Executive, Victoria Ward for her long service to the WSA and her massive contribution to build the organisation to where we are today. It is difficult to put into words the scale of her contribution in my time as a Board Member and Chair. With that, we also welcome Andrew Howard as our new CEO. Andrew joins us from a career in the Football Association of Wales but also has experience with one of our smallest members in Welsh Pétanque. Andrew joins at an exciting time for the WSA as we focus on providing a range of new and exciting services for our members and we look forward to working with him.

We emerge from the pandemic into what remains a challenging landscape – with the rising cost of living our sector faces a dual challenge. Delivery costs are increasing, whilst our customers are seeing real falls in disposable income they can spend on our services. We will need to work incredibly hard to protect our sector and ensure that the gaps in participation we managed to keep down during the pandemic do not grow. Doing so will help us all deliver on the Vision for Sport in Wales and the Welsh Government's ambitions for a healthier Wales.

With the launch of the new curriculum, there are huge opportunities for the sector, and we want to work with our members to ensure they are placed to make the most of this. The commitment to open school buildings beyond the school day and create community focused schools could have huge benefits if it is done appropriately.

Thank you to all our members and partners for your continued support throughout the year, and a further thanks to Sport Wales, the Welsh Government, and others for constructive engagement over the previous year and into the future.

We are confident that the WSA is on good footing to support our members into the future, and we hope this annual report will show that.

Lynn Pamment
Chair

Farewell to Vicky



Victoria Ward steered the WSA through a huge period of growth. During her tenure as Chief Executive of the WSA we saw significant growth in staff numbers, turnover and a shrinking dependency on grant income as our commercial offer grew.

Vicky was a key voice for the sector during the most difficult period sport has faced in recent memory during the pandemic. Working closely with members, our staff team and key partners including Welsh Government and Sport Wales she helped steer the sector to be able to recover and return to activity safely and quickly as the public health landscape shifted.

Beyond this, Vicky has also been a strong advocate for sport and physical activity and consistently worked for the betterment of our sector. Whether this was a confidant and critical friend to our members and partners, or as a key figure in the delivery of our excellent services.

Message from the CEO



I am thrilled to be the new CEO of the Welsh Sports Association and in my brief time at the helm so far, it has been a real pleasure to have met so many outstanding leaders within our Membership who are committed to driving our sport and leisure sector forward in Wales.

We have recently launched our new Strategy, 'Setting Sport up for Success' and together with our hardworking and talented team, we will deliver this for our Membership over the coming years. We have three strategic pillars which are the heartbeat of everything that we do...Collaborate, Develop and Promote. The advocacy and services that we offer our growing membership across the Sports and Leisure sector makes us unique in Wales and we will continue to work innovatively, inclusively, and sustainably.

As partners of Sport Wales, I look forward to working with Baroness Grey-Thompson, Brian Davies and their team as critical allies, assisting Sport Wales in delivering on the Welsh Government remit letter for sport in Wales. The sector is still in recovery mode after the pandemic and yet new and significant challenges lay ahead with the cost-of-living crisis, increased energy tariffs and a reduction in disposable income all real concerns for our members. We have reacted to this already with the launch of our procurement service to help reduce costs and the launch of our WSA Membership Plus schemes are another example of how shared services can help drive economies of scale.

The WSA and its members have shown collective strength in the past when faced with adversity and together, we will do so again.

Andrew Howard
WSA CEO

Setting Sport up for Success

Our Vision

“A vibrant, active nation”

Our Mission

“To empower our members to be stronger and more successful, contributing towards a society fit for the future”

How will we achieve this?

Leading Advocacy

An independent, collective voice

Developing Resilience

Financial and organisational sustainability and professional support, training and development



How are we doing?

“Conwy County Borough Council’s Leisure Service is better now than before the pandemic and the WSA can accept some credit for that based on the support they’ve provided me and the rest of the sport and leisure sector over the last two years or so.”

The WSA is integral to the development to sport and leisure within Wales; what they offer, how they deliver it and the professionalism of the team can only help organisations like local authorities, NGBs and other sport and leisure providers.”

Mally Tidswell
Principal Leisure Manager, Conwy County Borough Council



The 6 sentiments stats from the Annual Perception Report below:

	Agree	Neither Agree Or Disagree	Disagree	Total Positive Sentiment
I would recommend the WSA as a great organisation to work with	91%	9%	0%	91%
The WSA delivers high-quality services	100%	0%	0%	100%
WSA keeps my organisation informed about its activities	100%	0%	0%	100%
WSA communicates well with organisations like mine	97%	0%	3%	97%
WSA takes equality and diversity seriously	88%	12%	0%	88%
WSA takes the Welsh language seriously	75%	22%	3%	75%

{Source: Pollen Shop, May 2022}

*The WSA will improve its commitment to the Welsh language. Our Priorities for 2022-23 (Page 10) pledges that the WSA will... Respond to the Cymraeg 2050 strategy by helping our members to increase their number of Welsh speakers and the use of the Welsh language This Annual Report can be viewed in {the Welsh language here}.

Leading Advocacy and Influence

In 2021 the WSA Board agreed to make minor changes to our Mission and Vision to better reflect our work, and to ready us for the publication of our new strategy in summer 2022. Throughout the year, we have worked with UK organisations to support their understanding of the devolution settlement, attention to which has been brought to the fore by the Covid19 crisis.



Our voice in the Senedd continues to grow, as we have made contributions to several inquiries and reports. Supporting the Senedd in scrutinising the Welsh Government and ensuring our members voice is heard. We were quoted extensively in a Senedd report on Sport in disadvantaged communities, Covid impact and legacy and on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

In Parliament we have also lent our voice to inquiries investigating the effectiveness of the promotion of Wales as a tourism destination and ongoing investigations into free to air broadcasting and the impact of Covid in the UK.

We have also supported our members to facilitate their own effective engagement with Welsh public institutions, including the Welsh Government and Senedd.

During the period of this annual report, we have also represented members views on the National Sport Group, to ensure that elite and professional athletes were protected under the Covid regulations, thereby enabling them to continue to train through an exemption to the Regulations.

We know that 2022-2023 will bring fresh challenges, with changes to the Sport Wales funding model and the ongoing recovery from the pandemic, and escalating pressures because of inflation and the rising cost of living.

As we approach the mid-point of the current term of Government in Wales, we need to begin to look to the five years from 2026-2031. We will begin the process of influencing the political parties' manifestos over the coming year and support our membership to have their voice in this process too.

Sport can and should have a visible role in public debate, and the WSA will work to give our members a voice and a platform to influence and advocate the power of sport effectively.

Building Resilience

Membership

We continue to work with our members and partners to deliver high quality business support and services.

Over the course of 2021-2022, our membership has grown, and we are now proud to serve 142 organisations, involved in sport and leisure with a positive membership retention rate of over 95%.

Since the WSA has charged for Membership in 2016/2017, our membership has increased from 64 members to 142, which represents a 122% increase.

We are thrilled to have designed specific cost-effective solutions to optimise organisational efficiency and capacity, through a new membership offer, Membership Plus. The first two Membership Plus packages developed are Finance Plus and Advocacy Plus with four National Governing Bodies already opting to utilise the new initiative.

We will offer at least five Membership Plus packages by the end of the next strategic cycle, and these will be identified by the sector, for the sector.

In 2021, we completed a comprehensive spend analysis on a cross-section of the WSA membership. The report identified a range of potential savings on common spend categories, which proved the case for collective procurement.

A procurement service for the sport & leisure sector has since been developed with Cardiff-based procurement specialists 2buy2.

We formalised our working relationship with Community Leisure UK (CLUK), agreeing an MOU to provide an even stronger voice



for all our members in Wales and to help build crucial links across the sector. We delivered the final phase of the Sport Wales Governance and Leadership framework (GLFW) support contract. Our innovative delivery of the programme added substantial value to the sector, and we know that our work was highly valued by all the beneficiaries of the programme.

We continue to deliver a range of Governance services for the sector, including our pro bono Non-Executive Director training service to strengthen member boards, as well as governance & risk mitigation support & training.

We will look to roll out an innovative governance & risk platform to support members, which will align to the Sport Wales Capability framework as well as the GLFW.

Our training offer continues to be an enormous success and we will continue to deliver to our members on topics such as politics, safeguarding, legal structures, GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) compliance and governance. We are again committed to delivering for the needs of our members and future courses will be identified by the sector, for the sector.

We are working with an online training provider to develop our training and CPD (Continuing Professional Development) offer further for the sector in conjunction with CIMSPA.

Our DBS service continues to flourish with a 15% increase in the number of checks compared to the previous year. ID verification enhancements including the Post Office and digital ID verification have led to an increase in UK organisations subscribing to the service. The bi-lingual capabilities continue to be of importance to some of our member organisations.

"We've had training through St John Cymru, which we've rolled out to our community. It's been a quick, uncomplicated process to get that done – a case of a central email and then off we go."

"We've also previously made use of the WSA's partnership with Acorn, utilising it for our board recruitment."

"And we use the WSA's DBS Checking Service, which is just ridiculously simple! It's really quick (so quick, in fact, that most people can't believe it!), simple to use, and it enables us to get the process done in a very efficient manner. It's saving our staff time, and the fact that it's a digital system just means that we're not carting anything around with us."

Helen Tan
Former CEO Welsh Rowing



Finance and Governance

As was the case for many of our members, the 2020/21 financial year was hugely challenging. The WSA suffered a 27% reduction in commercial revenues at a time when the demand for our services was at its highest.

Our initial scenario planning and financial forecasts were anticipating a requirement to use our reserves to ensure we were able to continue to support our membership and the sector through the pandemic.

However, the increasing demand for our services resulted in a growth in our membership, increasing our membership income by 36%.

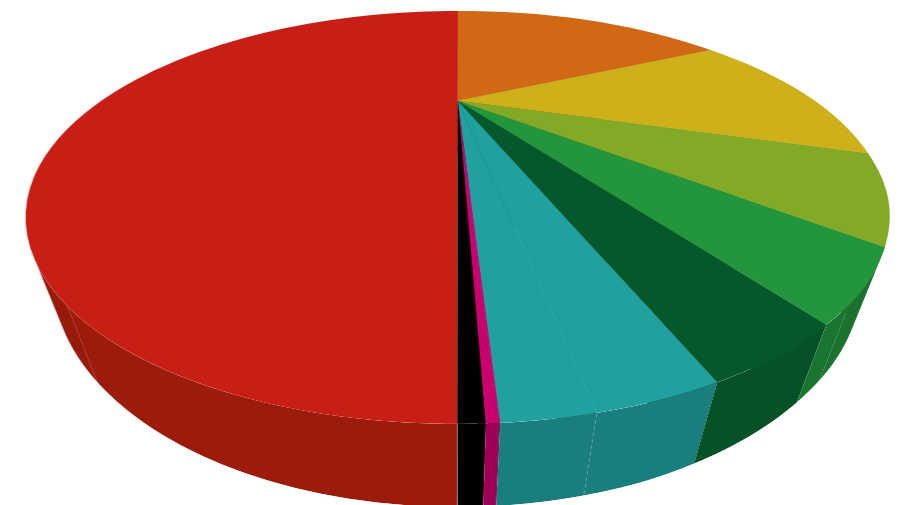
This increase, coupled with additional resilience funding from Welsh Government/Sport Wales enabled us to replace our lost commercial revenues and provide additional funds to add further services to our members.

By the financial year end, we were able to record a small surplus which helped to partly recover the loss of the previous financial year. Our trading subsidiary Vibrant Nation also suffered adversely from the pandemic with a 13% drop in DBS revenues although DBS costs were also reduced, enabling a small increase in our reserves.

The current economic climate continues to be a challenging one and we remain grateful to our members and to Sport Wales for their continued and valued support.

Our efforts will focus on recovery and continued diversification of income streams to strengthen our resilience and ensure investment into our ever-expanding services continues to grow.

Our annual accounts for the WSA and Vibrant Nation can be found [here](#). This is a combined income breakdown for WSA and Vibrant Nation.



	2021/22	%
Grants	187,958	36%
DBS Income	131,450	25%
GLFW Management Fee	67,440	13%
Membership Income	47,270	9%
VN Management Fee	36,000	7%
Commercial Income	50,519	8%
Sundry Income	4,556	1%
Commercial Kick Start	3,450	1%
Total Income	528,643	100%



Priorities for 2022-2023

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our agility to respond to the crisis, helped our members protect their people and ensure that wherever possible, activity has been able to continue or resume where regulations have allowed.

Our Sector now faces additional and significant economic challenges with the cost-of-living crisis. Spiralling inflation, substantial energy price cap increases and a reduction in disposable income for members and customers will impact all our members and ourselves.

We want to make the most of our agility in the coming year to put ourselves and our members on a firm footing for the next stage of recovery and renewal.

LEADING ADVOCACY

Be the independent voice of sport, leisure and physical activity in Wales. We will continue to be a trusted leader in the sector, uniting the voice of our members:

- Help our members tackle the issues we face as a sector through collaboration, including our collective commitments to;
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity
 - Tackling climate change and sustainability
 - Response to the cost-of-living crisis and the increase in energy prices.
- Contribute to and play a central role in the debate on the future of Welsh Sport in the Senedd

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Continue to build the WSA and Vibrant Nation brand and services, reinvesting any surplus back into the services offered to WSA members:

- Broaden the range of shared services available through professional partnerships that can demonstrate enhanced service levels and efficiency savings.
- Launch our new, improved and extended online training platform.

- Our procurement portal will deliver measurable savings for our members this year, which will become the baseline figure for year-on-year increased savings.
- We will deliver an online Governance & Risk Platform to support sector best practice which will align to the Sport Wales Capability Framework and GLFW
- We will deliver three membership plus offers, offering new services and opportunities to all our members.
- Become more financially resilient, leveraging public investment for the greatest return to our sector.
- We aim to become the 'go to' place for recruitment within our sector, enabling our members to attract the best talent, who will contribute to a high performing workforce.
- Respond to the Cymraeg 2050 strategy by helping our members to increase their number of Welsh speakers and the use of the Welsh language.

WELSH SPORTS FOUNDATION

We will attract seed-funding for the Sports Foundation for Wales, enabling the Charity to get started, to support future generations.

WSA SPORTS AND LEISURE INDUSTRY AWARDS

We will recognise and promote the initiatives and successes of WSA members, while also communicating best-practice models and strategies, that are helping to keep the Welsh Sports and Leisure sector moving forwards both inside and outside the sports arena.

"It has been a real pleasure to meet many of our members since I joined the WSA in August. Our support in recent years has been invaluable and this will continue in 2023 as our sector faces new challenges. I can commit to our members that during this challenging time, we are here to support you with advocacy and outstanding shared services – together we can be a resilient sector in Wales."

Sport is for everybody and our objective to launch the Welsh Sports Foundation in the forthcoming year will contribute to a healthier and more equal Wales. And finally, we recognise from our independent survey that we can do better with our commitment to the Welsh language. And we will. It is a priority for us over the next twelve months to begin to create a thriving Welsh language culture throughout the sports sector. More information will be released to members soon. We thank you for your support and really look forward to working with you and helping in any way we can."

Andrew Howard, CEO

Watkin Davies Renewal

The WSA are hugely excited to announce the renewal of its partnership agreement with insurance consultants Watkin Davies. Having been working together for three years already, WSA's new agreement with Watkin Davies will see the partnership extended all the way to March 2027!

Supported by a network of specialist Insurers who provide tailor-made and cost-effective solutions, Watkin Davies provide insurance solutions for Amateur and Professional Clubs, Coaches, Events, National Governing Bodies, Leisure Trusts and National Training Facilities.

The past three years have already yielded many highlights...

"The best thing we did was moving our money to a Welsh firm who understood the challenges that we are facing, not only as a business but as a country. And I just want to convey my absolute thanks for all your support and knowledge."

Torfaen Leisure Trust on Watkin Davies

Who's services they accessed via the WSA partnership

WSA members have been able to benefit from Equipisme, Watkin Davies' very own health and wellbeing plan for businesses. Their practical, simple, and cost-effective plan removes the cost and complexity away from more traditional health benefits and makes adopting one possible.

Watkin Davies has been the registered broker that has permitted WSA members to access the Allianz Sports Fund, which provided sports clubs with grant funding in June and November of 2021, June of 2022, and will do so once more later this year.

Members have been able to benefit from an online coaches' insurance portal, manufactured in partnership between the WSA, Watkin Davies, and Sportscover Europe.

Specifically created for coaches across Wales, the unique insurance product was developed through an understanding of exactly what coaches need from their insurance cover and was designed to reflect this.

As the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it newly emerging risks, Watkin Davies provided guidance on a whole host of matters affected by an unprecedented couple of years; these included reviewing Business Interruption policy conditions, clauses and claims, Directors' and Officers' liability exposures, General and Employers' liability exposures, and Risk Management guidance for premises' return to normal.

"As a Welsh Insurance Broker, a partnership with the Welsh Sports Association made perfect sense and we are delighted with the success we have had since partnering with them. The partnership has given us a platform to support Organisations throughout Wales and beyond, with Insurance and risk management solutions, building off the back of the exceptional reputation that the WSA already has."

We are looking forward to working with them for the years to come and continuing to develop initiatives to support their members, following the recent long-term renewal of our agreement."

Watkin Davies



Sportscover Europe Renewal

The WSA is extremely excited to announce the renewal of its partnership agreement with insurance underwriters Sportscover Europe.

Sportscover Europe have now been WSA partners for six years, in which time they have supported member organisations, their facilities, as well as coaches with a full range of insurance options. They have also been an invaluable part of the WSA's support throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, during which they were able to input their expertise and insight while offering guidance during an exceedingly challenging time for all our members.

"We're very proud to renew our partnership with the WSA for a further 5 years."

"We remain fully committed to the sport and leisure sector in Wales. We have been working alongside the WSA team to provide a range of services to members, including risk management support and the sports coach portal in addition to our core business of insurance."

"We look forward to continuing working with the team at the WSA, and their ever-growing list of members, over the coming years."

Sportscover Europe CEO
Martin Crannis



Diolch

We would like to say a great big Diolch to all our valued partners, for their support over the year, enabling us to deliver added value and improve efficiency for our Members.



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