



Welsh Sports Association Cymdeithas Chwaraeon Cymru

Welsh Sports Association

Annual General Meeting 2024

3.00pm. Wednesday 9th of October

Colliers Park, Wrexham.

With remote locations in Cardiff and on MS Teams

In attendance in Wrexham

Chair of the Meeting: Lynn Pamment CBE (WSA Board Chair)

Andrew Stead, Rachael Watkin and Debra Barklin (Sported), John Jackson (Esports Wales), Richard Bennett (Squash Wales), Andrew Tanner (Welsh Curling), Emma Rogers (Island Games Association), Fiona Reid (DSW), Kate Evans and Michelle Iddon (St John Ambulance Training), Sian Williams (The Outdoor Partnership), Manon Rees-O'Brien (Actif North Wales), Jamie Berry (UK Breakin')

Andrew Howard (CEO), Poppy Riley, Matthew Williams (All WSA Exec Team)

In attendance in Cardiff

Polly Crook and Richard Thomas (Sported), Robin Johns (Impetus Dance), Carys Kizito (Welsh Gymnastics), Tony Smith (Welsh Pétanque), James Williams (Welsh Athletics), Ceri Wynne (Welsh Weightlifting)

Tom Sharp, Steffan Howells, Louhi Jenkins, Max Parsons, Sion Jones (All WSA Exec Team)

In attendance remotely

Caroline Spanton (Beicio Cymru), Rebecca Edwards-Symmons (Commonwealth Games Wales), Barry Cawte (Cricket Wales), Ben Taylor (Welsh Lacrosse)

Fergus Feeney, Richard Lancaster, Andrea Ovey, Mark Tweed, Geraint John (All WSA Board)

1.0 Chairs Welcome

WSA Chair Lynn Pamment introduced herself and thanked everybody for attending. The Chair commented that it was great to be in north Wales for the AGM and to see many of the Association's North-Wales based members in attendance.

2.0 Apologies for Absence

Andrew Howard confirmed the apologies from Members as follows; Vicky Ward (Welsh Gymnastics) although they were represented, Paul Whapham (Hoci Cymru), Roger Williams (WKGB) and Kelly Aston (Badminton Wales)

Apologies from the Board - Damian Phillips, Kami Lamakan, Meleri Thomas and Clare Jeffries.

3.0 AGM held on 19th October 2023

3.1 Approval of Minutes

Fiona Reid (DSW) proposed the Minutes were a true record, which was carried unanimously.

3.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from members at the AGM.

4.0 WSA Annual Report 2024

Andrew Howard, Chief Executive Officer, presented the new Annual Report for the year 2023/24 and first noted that this year has been a testament to the sector's resilience and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Members were advised that to deliver on the Association's Vision and Mission, we have strengthened our team, expanded our range of partners, and embraced new services that are driving efficiency and growth for the sector, whilst also making our members stronger and more sustainable.

It was reported that the Membership is now 144 strong, representing a 125% increase since 2017/18, with eighteen Partners who all add value to the Membership, offering either discounted rates, pro-bono advice, money saving opportunities, income generation opportunities or a combination of these benefits.

The Report notes the progress in collaboration, a key strategic objective for the WSA, with the launch of the inaugural WSA Sports Industry Awards in June 2023, followed by the collaboration with the Federation of Irish Sport to host and deliver our first Sustainability in Sport Conference with over 100 delegates and a small Agile Cymru grant to support the costs.

The Report notes that the financial performance has been robust, despite a challenging economic environment and a new funding model for sport in Wales. The CEO added that Finance Director Mark Tweed will provide more information in the subsequent Financial Report. The CEO thanked Sport Wales for their continued financial support, which enabled us to deliver on the objectives of the Partnership agreement and the Vision for Sport in Wales.

The Annual Report reflects the performance of the team and our advocacy as the independent voice of the sport and leisure sector in Wales is as important to us as ever. Members were reminded that all our advocacy work is independently funded through our commercial activity and partnerships.

The success of the membership plus service was recognised and members were reminded that this income supports in-house shared services, which has also proved to be a cost saving for those members utilising the services, whilst also raising standards of administration.

The Report notes that the social and web presence continues to grow, and LinkedIn has been a high performer this year with a growth of 41%.

The increase in administrative and Governance costs over the last year was recognised, with a new investment in cyber security, in response to the high-risk factor.

Looking ahead, the CEO advised that the WSA remains committed to its mission of empowering members to be stronger and more successful, contributing towards a society fit for the future.

In closing, the CEO extended his thanks to the team at the WSA for their hard work and to the existing members for their continued trust and loyalty; before offering a warm welcome to the new members of the WSA Family. The Partners were also thanked for their support and finally, the WSA Board were thanked for their unwavering support and especially to WSA Chair, Lynn

Pamment who was awarded a CBE in the New Years honours list.

Members were advised that the Annual Report is now available in both [English and Welsh on the WSA Website](#) and members would be sent the link following the meeting.

5.0 Financial Matters

Mark Tweed (MT), WSA Finance Director presented both the WSA annual accounts and Vibrant Nation annual accounts for the financial year end 31st March 2024.

5.1 Presentation of WSA annual accounts

MT discussed the WSA accounts, which were shared in advance with the AGM papers. Members were advised that the headline is that we made a small surplus for the financial year of £179.00, having increased our member services over the year, whilst also remaining to keep costs low.

MT added that the Membership plus services continue to be in demand from the membership which reflects additional income in this area, but also additional expenditure in order to service the additional work. Members were advised that the Association has £103,596 in reserves, which is marginally above the reserves target level and below the maximum level, as agreed by the Board of Directors in the WSA Reserves Policy.

MT added that this level of reserves provides the WSA with an extra buffer for unexpected financial challenges, as well as increased flexibility to take advantage of unexpected opportunities, without compromising financial stability and it should provide enhanced stakeholder confidence, especially for our members.

Members were advised that the Association's activities are funded through a core grant of £147,000 from Sport Wales (38.5% of total income), whilst we also received £12,000 from Welsh Government for a one-off cost of living payment and our commercial income continues to grow, and this now represents 56.1% of total income.

Members were reminded that the WSA's accounts (and historical accounts) are always available for download on the WSA Website. There were no questions from members.

5.2 Presentation of Vibrant Nation Ltd annual accounts

MT continued to present the annual accounts for the WSA's trading arm Vibrant Nation Ltd. MT advised that the Company made a loss of £10,548 for the year, despite recording a record number of DBS checks.

MT explained that the Vibrant Nation deficit was caused by the Post Office changing their ID service, with just 6 weeks' notice, which restricted the businesses income on Post Office ID checks in the second month of the Financial Year.

It was further explained that as a result of this loss of income, Vibrant Nation Ltd had to increase the cost of the DBS check and update service from January 2024 to ensure it didn't end the FY in the red. MT added that the Association and Vibrant Nation are grateful to the members for their understanding when the DBS cost was increased, which was the first increase since Vibrant Nation launched the service in 2017. There were no questions from members.

5.3 Re-appointment of auditors for 2024/25

The Board of Directors proposed that Arthur Gait & Company be reappointed as auditors for 2024/25, which was approved unanimously by Members.

6.0 WSA Membership Return on Investment: *Substance*

The Chair welcomed Dr Tim Crabbe and Luke Bullock from research and technology company Substance to present their report on Welsh Sport Association Valuation (2024). Dr Crabbe provided an introduction to the company, explaining that recent sporting clients included UEFA and WSA members, Byw'n Iach and the Football Association of Wales.

Dr Crabbe continued to explain that whilst the work for the WSA could not be described as a full, conventional Social Return on Investment study, the approaches adopted have drawn on aspects of the SROI methodology. It was explained that for the WSA the main driver was to try and identify the value it is delivering for its members, the types of service driving the most value and how this might play into future service offers.

The valuations Substance generated represent a projection of the total potential savings should a member take advantage of ALL service offers rather than being a precise measurement of the value achieved by any one individual member. Substance also provided values based on membership type to give a sense of the potential value for different categories and size of member.

It was explained by Luke Bullock that some of the methods used to determine the value were.

- Time and materials required by WSA staff to deliver relevant outputs,
- Market rate benchmarks for provision of equivalent services,
- Value of discounts achieved through WSA partnerships,
- Marketing industry benchmarks for the achievement of equivalent social media and other promotional engagements,
- Other methods were applicable including information gathered on relevant WSA Members Calls.

Members were advised that the research showed the following valuations, based on the production and discount values associated with a full engagement with each service

SMALL MEMBER (Turnover under £250k): **£69,482**

MEDIUM MEMBER (Turnover from £250k-£1m): **£92,455**

LARGE MEMBER (Turnover over £1m): **£131,728**

Mr Bullock discussed some future measures the WSA could consider and concluded by introducing the 'Individual Member Valuations' via *Valued* application. This innovative solution is Substance's digital application which enables organisations to process their own SROI valuations. *Valued* provides a cost-effective solution to enable ongoing, scalable analysis to organisations across the sporting landscape.

There were questions from Richard Bennett (Squash Wales), which were answered by Messrs Crabbe and Bullock. The Chair thanked the presenters for their informative research and report.

7.0 Questions from Members

There were no questions submitted prior to the meeting and no questions were tabled at the AGM from members.

8.0 Any Other Business

8.1 Sported Project Update

The Chair invited Andrew Stead from member organisation, Sported to present an update report on The Wales Strategic Volunteering Project, which aims to enhance the capacity and impact of Board/Trustee/Management-level volunteering within Wales's community sport sector.

Mr. Stead summarised the initial findings of the project, based on consultations with stakeholders from across the community sport and broader voluntary sectors in Wales.

Members were advised of the significant barriers/challenges to volunteering at the Board/Trustee/Management level, which include:

- Time constraints
- Limited support from external stakeholders to upskill in these roles and expand capacity generally at the Board/Trustee/Management level.
- Negative perceptions that volunteering can only be done by those with certain skills.

It was further explained that key issues around recruitment and retention of volunteers at the Board/Trustee/Management level are:

- Successful recruitment and retention of volunteers for these roles is more likely when volunteers feel their values/experiences align with those of the group.
- Personal relationships play a key role in recruitment, with many positions filled through informal, 'who-you-know' requests – but this also acts as a barrier for those outside a group who want to get involved.
- Effective recognition and reward for volunteers within a group supports and encourages development toward Board/Trustee/Management roles.
- There is limited support available within the sector to develop skills regarded as vital for these Board/Trustee/Management roles, such as fundraising and project management.

Finally, Mr. Stead shared what works well for responding to these challenges, which included.

- Reducing the bureaucracy and administrative burden involved in these roles.
- Encouraging inclusion through greater representation of the local community.
- More equitable funding landscape for community groups to support recruitment, retention, marketing, and role development

Members were provided with an opportunity to ask questions and they were also invited to a consultation session which followed the AGM in both Wrexham and Cardiff venues. The Chair thanked Mr Stead for his presentation and the progress made to date.

9.0 Any Other Business and Close Meeting: Lynn Pamment, WSA Chair

The Chair brought the WSA AGM 2024 to a close, thanking all for attending and reiterating that

the role of the WSA is to provide a service to our members and any feedback is welcome.

Caroline Spanton, CEO of Beicio Cymru responded by writing, *“WSA doing a great job, thanks to the whole team, always helpful and great to work with. Thanks all.”*

Meeting Closed