

Senedd Cymru / Welsh Parliament

Pwyllgor Diwylliant, y Gymraeg a Chyfathrebu / Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee

Ymchwiliad i'r achosion o COVID-19 ac effaith y feirws ar ddiwylliant, y diwydiannau creadigol, treftadaeth, cyfathrebu a chwaraeon / Inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on culture, creative industries, heritage, communications and sport

CWLC COV09

Ymateb gan unigolyn/ Response from an individual

Dear Sir/madam,

This is my response to the inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on culture, creative industries, heritage, communications and sport

My response is in regard to the closure of tennis facilities.

The immediate effect has been three-fold –

1. A lack of income to the tennis centre where we attend. This will threaten the long-term viability of the tennis centre and undermine the hard work that has been going on for years to build up the tennis community in Swansea.

2. A number of the tennis coaches are self employed - the lockdown I assume has undoubtedly affected their income. I am aware the government had grants in place for the self employed but it was a number of months before this scheme was available to them,

3. Speaking for my children, they have had to adjust from playing 12 hours of tennis a week to nothing. This has had a significant effect on them physically and has required some adjustment mentally.

I am not aware of any support for the tennis community by the Welsh Government, UK Government & other bodies. I am sure the Tennis centre will have tried to access grants & business loans to keep the business going and as I have mentioned above I am aware there are Government grants for self-employed people. However, with regard to specific tennis help, I am not aware there has been any.

With regard to the long-term effects, we have tried to keep our children motivated with regard to fitness. The Swansea tennis centre coaches have been excellent in providing Zoom strength & conditioning classes and Trello tennis classes. However, our children play tennis because they love the game, they enjoy competing, The lack of access to this sport will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on their tennis development. Another risk is loss of facilities due to businesses becoming bankrupt or coaches being unable to afford to keep coaching due to a lack of income. From grass roots upwards this will have a detrimental effect on the sport within Wales.

More direct engagement should have been carried out to establish how a safe, staged return to tennis within our communities could be achieved.

Assistance with business continuity will be key, ongoing discussions with the LTA to ensure the future of the sport within Wales, support to players in the form of grants to

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the tennis centres/regional centres to reduce the fees players will have to pay to continue with training as I fear these costs will increase as lockdown is eased.

Thank you

Dr Rhian Jones