

CROSS-PARTY GROUP MINUTES

Date of Meeting:	13.07.2022
Location:	Microsoft Teams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Name:	Title:
Laura Anne Jones MS	Regional member for South Wales East and Chair of the CPG on Sport
Mike Hedges MS	Constituency member for Swansea East
Alun Davies MS	Constituency member for Blaenau Gwent
Heledd Fychan MS	Regional member for South Wales Central
Tom Giffard MS	Regional member for South Wales West
Simon Johnson	CEO of Tennis Wales
Matt Adams	Manager of Calon Tysul
Matthew Williams	Head of Policy and Communications at Welsh Sports Association
Emilia Douglass	Member support staff for Laura Anne Jones MS
Ryland Doyle	Member support staff for Mike Hedges MS
Stephanie Grimshaw	Member support staff for David Rees MS
Jena Quilter	Group Researcher for the Welsh Conservatives
Curtis Shea	Member support staff for Darren Miller MS
Shah Almon Shumon	Member support staff for John Griffiths MS
Alex Sims	Member support staff for Jenny Rathbone MS

APOLOGIES:

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Name:	Title:
Samuel Kurtz MS	
Delyth Jewell MS	
Llyr Gruffydd MS	
Jack Sergeant MS	
Luke Fletcher MS	
David Rees MS	
Jenny Rathbone MS	

MEETING SUMMARY:

Laura Anne Jones (LAJ): Welcomed the group, outlining that the sporting facilities in Wales have not received large-scale funding for X years. She noted that it is important that both grassroots and professional facilities are addressed and built upon.

LAJ: Welcomed the first guest, Matt Adams, inviting him to speak.

Matt Adams (MA): Introduced himself as the manager of Calon Tysul, a community owned leisure centre in Llandysul, Ceredigion which was formed in 2017 after Ceredigion County Council transferred ownership of 'Llandysul Leisure Centre' to the Trustees of Llandysul Aqua Centre.

The building itself was built in the 70's which has created issues for the running costs as the building is not insulated. The centre gained a small surplus in its' third year of running however the rising prices of fuel and electric have significantly impacted the centre.

In 2018/19, the centre running costs were approximately £6000 per annum. However, now, the predicted cost is £12,000.

Although the site made it through lockdown, the cost of closing it for nine months caused a detrimental impact to the centre.

MA: The centre recently held an emergency meeting on how to mitigate the predicted doubling costs over the winter months? The outcome of the meeting was to reduce the opening hours, down from the previous 50 hours a week.

This is particularly concerning for them as they host lessons for 350 children a month and 150 primary schools. Their language of delivery is also Welsh, important for promoting Welsh culture.

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LAJ: Opened the floor for further questions.

Alun Davies (AD): Highlighted to the group that he was interested in the impact of the cost of living and understood that there is difficulty in increasing costs of lessons as this will lead to exclusions but questioned **MA** on how are they intending on dealing with these rising costs?

MA: Swimming lessons costs have been at £22 a month for half an hour lesson per week. These have remained the same for four years. Now, with increasing bills, they have raised prices to £25 per month. Membership costs have not been increased because they generate a small amount of revenue. Swimming lessons bring in £8000 per month, the bills are currently (but set to rise) £7000 but this does not include other costs such as staffing.

Matthew Williams (MW): Explains to the group that this is not an isolated problem but one which is industry-wide.

Mike Hedges (MH): How does this approach compare to other trusts and providers? Is there an opportunity for the council or other grant-giving organisations to provide short-term grants?

MA: Informs the group that they have approached two local funders, one being a windfarm in the area who have taken on their application last-minute. However, he noted that the windfarm had almost exhausted all their funds for this year.

Informed the group that they had also sought private individual funding but that this is a last resort.

There are plans in place to improve the building in two phases. The first is to improve lighting and heating from renewables. The second, long-term phase is building a system of insulation because at the moment, the centre need at least 10 people per lesson to recover the energy costs for an hour lesson plus the underlying operating costs to get it to a point of use.

Alex Sims (AS): Asked MA to provide details on the plans to use renewables as there has been evidence to suggest solar power is not sufficient. Also provided information on Government funding for levelling up building which could be considered.

MA: Confirmed to send over these plans to the group (NOTE: please find attached to minutes).

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MW: Affirmed that there is a cross-sectoral concern for huge rises in energy costs which cannot be met in the short-term. Lots of people in the sector have medium and long term plans to bring in renewables but it is the immediate problems that they are struggling with. 50-300% increased costs within the sector.

LAJ: Asked group if there was anything further?

Thanked Matt Adams for chatting and invited him to say a final note.

MA: Thanked the group for listening. MA urged members to consider supporting the small community leisure centres as 80% of swimming pools are over 20 years old in Wales.

LAJ: Wanted to take this midway break to pass on apologies from the members:

- Samuel Kurtz MS
- Delyth Jewell MS
- Llyr Gruffydd MS
- Jack Sergeant MS
- Luke Fletcher MS
- David Rees MS

LAJ: Moved onto the next guest, Simon Johnson.

Simon Johnson (SJ): Introduced himself as the CEO of Tennis Wales, since 2019 and gave some statistics about tennis in Wales.
1000 tennis courts in all 22 LA's.

SJ: There are three sectors of development for Tennis Wales:

1. Schools and education: 300-350 courts within secondary schools. Their goal is the 21st century schools project which aims at getting tennis on the curriculum, engaging in quality teaching and free equipment. Optimisation of facilities to allow local communities to access them outside of school hours.

Highlighted to the group that they are developing a National Facilities Plan.

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2. Public parks: 300 courts in public parks that need strategically upgrading. In the past, there were keepers who organised events and bookings. Money needs to be invested in technology infrastructure to ensure sustainability and easy-public booking. Looking for investments.
3. Tennis Clubs – Network of 100 clubs and centres with 150+ courts. These are run by charitable trusts etc. However, again, modernisation is needed and investment in professional management structures.

SJ: In all of these, Simon informed the group, are underlying threads. These are technology facilities investment, better governance models and sustainability.

MH: Questioned SJ on the lack of funding that Tennis Wales has given to its top athletes.

SJ: Tennis Wales have been working with Swansea to produce one cohesive plan. They are ensuring that there are opportunities for people to try tennis for free and create a pathway so that those who want to progress are able to get financial support. A perfect example of this is Mimi Webb who trained in Swansea and played at Wimbledon this year. However, the cost of upgrading Swansea, for example, would cost about 3 million pounds.

LAJ: Questioned if there were any subsidies for those wanting to learn to play?

SJ: Informed the group that historically, there was not a sufficient set-up with the education sector and LA's but that they are working to make these resources available. SJ gave the example of 'Park Run' and the desire to do something such as this.

LAJ: Asked if there were any other questions and opened to the group any ideas of issues they would like to address in the future?

MH: Recommended meeting with grassroots sports such as rugby, football and cricket.

MH: Recommended that Government ministers attend future CPGs.

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LAJ: Thanked the group and guests for their attendance and is looking forward to continuing this review after recess.