



# CPG ON SPORT

THE STATE OF SPORTING FACILITIES IN WALES



## Annual Report

This is not an official publication of the Senedd. It has not been approved by either the Senedd or any of its committees.

Cross-Party Groups are informal groups in the Senedd which provide an opportunity for Members of all parties, outside organisations and members of the public to meet and discuss a shared interest in a particular cause or subject. The views expressed in this document are those of the Group.

# Introduction

It has been great to see the level of interest that there has been in our Cross-Party Review into 'The State of Sporting Facilities in Wales' over the course of the year, and, as a group, we are very grateful to all those that have taken the time to contribute to it.

I would like to thank the Welsh Sporting Association (WSA) for being our Secretariat again this year, namely Matthew Williams, and we appreciate the time and effort that he, and all Members of the Senedd in our CPG, have put into our Cross-Party Group' on Sport's work.

We are now all looking forward to starting our next review, that will deep dive into another area of interest in regards to sport in Wales over the next year.

Laura Anne Jones MS  
Chair of the Cross Party Group on Sport



## Secretariat and Members of the Senedd's CPG on Sport

The Group is established to provide a forum for discussion and exploration of key issues relating to sport and physical activity in Wales.

The Group is composed of the following members:

- Laura Anne Jones MS (Chair)
- Jack Sargeant MS (Vice Chair)
- Alun Davies MS
- Hefin David MS
- Andrew RT Davies MS
- Tom Giffard MS
- Llyr Gruffydd MS
- Mike Hedges MS
- Sam Rowlands MS
- Carolyn Thomas MS
- Samuel Kurtz MS
- James Evans MS
- John Griffiths MS

Secretariat is provided by Matthew Williams, of the Welsh Sports Association (WSA), the membership body for the sport and physical activity sector in Wales.



# Annual Minutes of the Cross Party Group on Sport

**Minutes: 9th April 2022, at 9am.**

## 1. Attendees:

- Laura Anne Jones MS (Chair)
- Matthew Williams - Welsh Sports Association - Secretariat
- Altaf Hussein MS
- Mike Hedges MS
- Stefan Ryszewski - Office of Sam Kurtz MS
- Ryland Doyle - Office of Mike Hedges MS
- James Wallice - Office of Tom Giffard MS

## Guests:

- Geraint John – WRU
- Leisha Hawkins – Cricket Wales
- Vicki Sutton – Wales Netball
- Robin Kellen – Welsh Snowsports
- Sara Jones – Welsh Snowsports

## 2. Apologies:

Caroline Thomas MS, Llyr ap Gruffydd MS.

## 3. Welcome from the Chair and Introduction to the session

### Presentations:

Invitees presented their views on the state of their sports to the members of the CPG.

### Geraint John – WRU:

- The WRU is putting together a programme of investment into community facilities – there are 270 clubs in Wales, 70 of them in the most socially deprived areas of Wales.
- There is a need to refresh what a rugby club looks like and modernise them.

- Clubs need to be community hubs – Rhyl Rugby Club works as an education hub, creche, nurse. The WRU are looking to roll this model out across Wales.
- £700,000 is needed to modernise facilities to support the female game this year. 111 applications from clubs from this.
- He noted concerns over the running costs of facilities in the face of rising energy costs, cost of living, increase in wages.

#### Robin Kellen and Sara Jones - Snowsports:

- Robin and Sara noted that Wales has good facilities, but a limited number scattered around Wales – with a large gap in mid Wales.
- Noted that slopes are expensive to build and maintain, and must be commercially maintained. The last new build was 30 years ago.
- Robin was positive about the investment Welsh Government and Sport Wales have put into snowsports facilities in recent years – but emphasised that there is still a need to modernise the facility stock.

#### Vicki Sutton – Wales Netball:

- Said the return to Netball is going well, with just 1000 fewer registered players in Wales at this point than pre pandemic.
- Emphasised particular facilities issues in parts of Wales. Threat to a sports hall in Lampeter through redevelopment of a leisure centre – over 200 players accessing this facility, and access to only two netball courts for 1000 players in the Rhondda.
- Welcomed the investment going into sporting facilities via Sport Wales, and netball hoping to access these funds to support players in the Rhondda.
- Vicki discussed future plans to access disused commercial space to run netball, on a similar basis to how Gymnastics club operate.

#### Leshia Hawkins – Cricket Wales:

- Talked about the really strong growth in women and girls playing cricket, as well as really strong growth in BAME representation in cricket in Wales over the last ten years.
- Facilities stock is old, and doesn't serve the needs of women and girls, disabled people and other people with specific needs.
- Leshia suggested that there needs to be statutory provision for sport to be involved in the planning system, as there is in England.

## MINUTES: 13 July 2022

### 1.Attendees

- Laura Anne Jones MS - Chair
- Alun Davies MS
- Alex Sims - Office of Jenny Rathbone MS
- Mike Hedges MS
- Tom Giffard MS
- James Evans MS
- Stephanie Grimshaw - Office of David Rees MS
- Heledd Fychan MS
- Shah Alom Shumon - Office of John Griffiths MS

### Guests:

- Matt Adams – Calon Tysul;
- Simon Johnson – Tennis Wales
- Matthew Williams – WSA
- Emilia Douglass
- Curtis Shea
- Jena Quilter
- Ryland Doyle

### 2.Apologies:

Jack Sargeant MS, Luke Fletcher MS, Sam Kurtz MS, and Delyth Jewell MS.

### 3.Welcome by the Chair and introduction to the session

#### .Presentations:

Matt Adams, Calon Tysul:

- Matt Adams presented the history and challenges facing Calon Tysul leisure centre in Llandysul in rural Ceredigion.
- Recent hikes in oil/gas/electric costs have meant their costs have doubled in this financial year and they are currently losing around £7,000 months despite cutting back on pool hours.

- Example in Llandysul isn't isolated within the sector and many other providers are facing similar issues.
- There are opportunities to improve the building in the medium and long term.

Simon Johnson, CEO Tennis Wales :

- There are 1000 tennis courts across the 22 local authorities in Wales. About 300-350 courts are in schools – and Tennis Wales are looking to expand upon this reach through the 21st Century School Programme and the new curriculum.
- Around 300 courts in parks in Wales, often a legacy of Victorian park building and haven't received significant investment in some time.
- Tennis Wales has been investing to modernise with support from Local Government, Sport Wales, Welsh Government, UK Government and the Lawn Tennis Association.
- There are around 100 tennis clubs and indoor tennis centres containing around 300 courts. These are often volunteer led and in need of modernisation. Facing similar issues around rising energy costs to other leisure facilities.



## **MINUTES: 12th October 2022**

### 1.Attendees:

- Lee Parsons - Office of Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
- Sian Emlyn Edwards
- Jena Quilter
- Ryland Doyle - Office of Mike Hedges MS
- Natalie (Newport)
- Alun Davies MS
- John Griffiths MS
- Tom Giffard MS
- Emilia Douglass
- Laura Anne Jones MS
- Mike Bryan
- Heledd Fychan MS
- Stewart Owadally - Office of Vaughan Gething MS
- Huw Irranca-Davies MS
- Jordan Griffiths

### Guests:

- Natalie Opdenoordt-Pelders – Mumbles Rangers Girls Under 11
- Craig Leonard – Newport Corinthians
- Sam Houldsworth – Newport City FC

### 2.Apologies

### 3.Welcome from the Chair and introduction of the session

#### 4. Presentations:

Natalie – Mumbles Rangers Girls under 11s club.

The challenges facing girls clubs, and football clubs in Wales in general.

- 40% of Mumbles Rangers is female, but club management isn't so representative. Volunteer coach and chair of the girls section – 20 hours a week or so. Teaching Assistant in a primary school. 240 female members, one of the biggest girls sections in Wales.
- Real challenge finding volunteers.
- Facilities for girls football in Mumbles are difficult – it's a shared facility with rugby and cricket.
- The changing rooms are 1940s build, with adaptations in 1950s.
- Recent build of a small room for women and girls but often used by storage, there is a new build ready for spring/summer 2023.
- Frequent match cancellations due to flooding and poor drainage.
- Girls football is growing faster than infrastructure in Wales can keep pace with.
- There is a lack of female coaches in the older age groups – especially for working with teenage girls.

Craig – Newport Corinthians FC:

- Based at Coronation Park in Newport, their youth division (under 4s to under 18s) has expanded, four senior teams and one veterans team.
- Pitch quality is difficult to manage and the maintenance by Local Authority is a challenge.
- Having to reverse fixtures and play them away.
- In Craig's opinion the home pitch is unplayable and unsafe and he feels the club isn't getting support from Local Authority to address the issues.

Lee Parsons:

- Wondered if Community Asset Transfer might work for Corinthians.

## Sam – Newport City FC:

- Newport City FC is the only volunteer team at Tier 3 in the Welsh league.
- They have two junior teams, a women's team and a senior team.
- Pitch hire has gone up by 18%, which had previously been agreed to be 4%.
- The energy bill increase at Newport Cricket Club (used as a clubhouse) have been significant.
- Match officials are costing more.
- Volunteering commitment is hard to find, and the volunteer stock is aging significantly. Some older volunteers haven't returned.
- Sponsors have pulled back, which makes the funding gaps harder to meet – and there are risks to this given how FAW rules are constructed.



## MINUTES: 7th December 2022

### 1. Attendees:

- Laura Anne Jones MS (Chair)
- Mike Hedges MS
- Rhun ap Iorwerth MS
- Ryland Doyle
- Mike Bryan
- Gareth Williams
- Lee Parsons
- Stefan Ryszewski
- Shah Shumon – John Griffiths MS

### Guests:

- Mark Frost – Glamorgan/Cricket Wales
- James Williams – Welsh Athletics
- Ian Saunders - Monmouthshire County Council
- Hugh Morris – Glamorgan
- Steve Ward – Newport Live
- Jeff Reynolds – Caerphilly Council

### 2. Apologies:

### 3. Welcome by the Chair and Introduction of the Session

### 4. Presentations:

#### Ian Saunders:

- He set out the Active Gwent partnership and introduced colleagues from Caerphilly and the City of Newport. Ian highlighted that leisure is not a statutory service.
- He outlined that a significant issue is that many facilities were built in the 1970s.
- Four dual use facilities in Monmouthshire (shared with schools), one has been refurbished. Unfortunately, the three other sites cannot find capital investment.

- Maintenance budgets for artificial pitches are a struggle.
- Significant challenges in increasing the efficiency of the building stock.
- Clubs in the region have had significant direct investment from Sport Wales.

Jeff Reynolds – Caerphilly Council:

- Significant challenges in the borough with thirteen leisure sites.
- There will have to be difficult decisions around the future.
- Some buildings were constructed in the 1960s.

Steve Ward – Newport Live:

- Decarbonisation requires a significant investment.

Cost of living pressure is three fold:

- High energy costs, supply chain.
- Wages – especially eroding at the bottom of the wage pyramid.
- We stand to lose a lot through losing public leisure and pricing people out of physical activity.
- Looking at 10% increases in costs for consumers plus extra increases in year.

There are real threats to school swimming:

- The cost of travel for students, and the cost of energy for leisure sites.



## James Williams:

- Outlined that Athletics, especially running are Wales' widest participation sport. Welsh Athletics has directly invested in 50 parkruns since 2015.
  - 22 dedicated athletics facilities, 4 indoor facilities.
  - 5 Local Authorities with no dedicated facility : Merthyr, Anglesey, Denbighshire, Monmouthshire, Ceredigion.
  - At least 5 facilities are beyond end of life and haven't been resurfaced in over 12 years, which include; Cwmbran, Wrexham, Neath, Brecon, Deeside.
  - Only 2 facilities in Wales up to standard required by UK Athletics, 10 working toward completion. This means only two can be used for competition activity.
  - 4g cannot be used for throwing activities.
  - Resurfacing of grass pitches during the summer is disruptive to athletics activities.
  - "Run thump throw" are the foundations of most sports.
- 
- National Indoor Athletics Centre is a great facility, but indoor facility provision in Wales is limited.
  - There is a real challenge to maintain Wales' position on the global stage.
  - Wales sub 10 second sprinter has left Wales.
  - Significant growth in female participation since 2016.
  - New 300m track at Oakdale school has been successful – be aware of using smaller spaces.



Mark Frost, Hugh Morris and Gareth Williams:

- 190 affiliated cricket clubs, with one professional club in Glamorgan.
- Cricket has bucked the covid trend and is doing quite well.
- There is little strategic planning at local or regional level – we need to see Local and Regional Sport Plans.
- Standard expected of grounds is rapidly increasing and is exerting pressure on Sophia Gardens.
- Clubs have been supported with Community Asset Transfer issues.
- Because the game is growing the pressure on pitches is significant.
- The Gnoll indoor centre was built in 1954 and needs refurbishing.
- St Helens in Swansea, and Colwyn Bay are now below the standard expected by the ECB.
- Glamorgan are prioritising a new facility in West Wales.

Priorities for cricket :

- Facility in West Wales, for which progress is steady.
- Facility in North Wales; currently there is one in Shrewsbury school, but we need to move beyond that.
- Significant growth in the game at a local level demands new non-turf pitches for kids, women etc.
- Young people on performance programmes are financially supported, but the priority is to take cricket to the doorstep.



## MINUTES: 24th May 2023

### 1.Attendees:

- Laura Anne Jones MS
- Matthew Williams
- Stuart Vanstone
- Rob Baynham
- Emilia Douglass
- Ryland Doyle - Office of Mike Hedges MS
- Tom Perry - Office of Tom Giffard
- Stewart Owadally - Office of Vaughan Gething MS
- Jena Quilter
- James Wallice
- Tom Giffard MS
- Samuel Kurtz MS

### 2.Apologies:

Heledd Fychan MS, Carolyn Thomas MS, Jack Sargeant and Rhiannon Passmore MS.

### 3>Welcome by the Chair and introduction of the session.

### 4.Presentations:

Stuart Vanstone (Welsh Student Sport/Cardiff University) delivered against a presentation on student/HE sport in Wales. He covered the following key issues:

- University cricket playing estate is somewhat diminished. For example, Cardiff University use St Fagan's Cricket Club and the Vale club.
- Other universities also hire local club facilities for use by their students.

- Collaboration on the delivery of facilities with communities and external organisations is really helpful and can be transformative, but some Universities have academic pressures on their available space.
- There is a balancing impact between delivering student experience, and generating commercial revenue to reinvest in the facilities.

Robert Baynham (Colegau Cymru):

He spoke on the sporting experience in Further education settings, including the following points:

- There are challenges around building a facility for educational purposes and VAT exemptions/tax restrictions on opening for profit and income generating purposes.
- When colleges open to community, there is very heavy use and this can cause some operational issues.
- Despite significant investment many colleges lack capacity for their own curriculum use and have to use off site community facilities.



## MINUTES: 31st January 2024

### 1. Attendees :

- Sam Rowlands MS
- Mike Hedges MS
- Laura Anne Jones MS
- Imogen Thomas (MSSS)
- Matthew Williams

### Guests:

- Ali Tyebkhan – Rhydycar West Snowsport Development
- Robin Kellen – Snowsport Wales
- Richard John – Deryn Consulting
- Richard Welsford – Cwmbran Celts Pickleball Club

### 2. Apologies:

### 3. Welcome by the Chair and introduction of the session.

### 4. Presentations:

#### Rhydycar

- Ali Tyebkhan and Robin Kellen spoke to the significant opportunity that could arise in Merthyr Tydfil from the private snowsports development being pursued at Rhydycar.
- This could have a transformative impact on snowsports in the UK providing world-class training facilities for Welsh and UK athletes, and year round access to quality Snowsport provision.

#### Pickleball

- Richard Welsford discussed the growth of his pickleball club, Cwmbran Celts as well as the growth of the sport globally and in Wales. He noted that there was an ambition to establish a recognised National Governing Body for Pickleball in Wales.

# AGM: MINUTES: 15 July 2024

## Attendees:

- Tom Giffard MS
- Jack Sargeant MS
- Mike Hedges MS
- Laura Anne Jones MS
- Hannah Jarvis (MSSS)
- Matthew Williams (WSA)

## 1. Apologies:

Delyth Jewell MS, Llyr Huws Gruffydd MS, Alun Davies and Rhiannon Passmore MS

## 2. Welcome by the Chair and introduction of the session

## 3. Adoption of Reports

Members adopted the Annual Report and passed it unanimously.

Members adopted the CPG Sport Report into 'The State of Sporting Facilities in Wales' and passed it unanimously.

## 4. Election of Office Holders:

Re-elected: Chair: Laura Anne Jones MS

Nominated by: Mike Hedges MS

Seconded by: Tom Giffard MS

Re-elected: Deputy Chair: Jack Sargeant MS

Nominated by: Tom Giffard MS

Seconded by: Mike Hedges MS

Secretariat: Matthew Williams, WSA

Nominated by: Laura Anne Jones MS

Seconded by: Jack Sargeant MS

## 5. Finance Report:

The finance report was adopted.

The Cross Party Group has incurred no expenses, and has received no sponsorship of gifts.

## 6. Future Business:

Suggested areas for further review:

Artificial Grass Pitches - a deeper dive into numbers, cost, maintenance, new legislation and placement of pitches across Wales

Financial support available for sports and individual athletes for competitions

Date of next meeting: 7th October 2024, at 1pm.

