



WELSH ATHLETICS
ATHLETAU CYMRU



ANNUAL REPORT 2019/2020



WELSH ATHLETICS
ATHLETAU CYMRU

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FOREWORD



Steve Perks

Chair of Welsh Athletics

This report is published within a year that has proved to be extremely challenging. With this in mind, I would like to thank everyone concerned with the sport for their hard work, diligence, patience and forbearance. It has not been easy for anyone involved whether they be officers of the organisation, club officials, volunteers, coaches and athletes.

During these times Welsh Athletics has endeavoured to ensure that technology has been integrated into the day to day running of the sport and enabling Webinars etc to keep everyone either up to date with education, information or the latest government changes that effect the sport.

You will read within this report of the successes that were achieved before the presence of COVID or any lockdown scenarios. It is clear from these reports that we are progressing well in all of the relevant areas and when we come to terms with the obvious changes that we need to embark upon post-COVID, we'll be able to move on once again with positivity in the sport.

Thank you everyone for your continued support and contribution to Athletics in all its' guises in Wales.

Diolch yn fawr.

Cyhoeddir yr adroddiad hwn mewn blwyddyn sydd wedi profi i fod yn hynod heriol. Gyda hyn mewn golwg, hoffwn ddiolch i bawb sy'n ymwneud â'r gamp am eu gwaith caled, eu diwydrwydd, eu hamynedd a'u goddefgarwch. Nid yw wedi bod yn hawdd i unrhywun sydd wedi bod yn gysylltiedig â'r gamp, unai yn swyddogion y sefydliad, swyddogion clwb, gwirfoddolwyr, hyfforddwyr neu athletwyr.

Yn ystod yr amser hyn mae Athletau Cymru wedi ceisio sicrhau bod technoleg wedi'i hintegreiddio i redeg y gamp o ddydd i ddydd, a galluogi 'Gweminarau' ac ati i gadw pawb naill ai'n gyfoes ag addysg, gwybodaeth neu'r newidiadau diweddaraf gan y llywodraeth, sy'n effeithio ar ein hathletau.

Yn yr adroddiad hwn fe ddarllenwch am rai o'r llwyddiannau a gyflawnwyd cyn presenoldeb COVID, neu unrhyw rhan o'r cyfnod cloi. Mae'n amlwg o'r adroddiadau hyn ein bod yn ymateb i'r sialensau yn dda ym mhob un o'r meysydd perthnasol, ac y byddwn yn gallu symud ymlaen unwaith eto yn gadarnhaol yn y gamp pan ddown i delerau â'r newidiadau amlwg y bydd angen i ni gychwyn arnynt ar ôl-COVID

Diolch i bawb am eich cefnogaeth a'ch cyfraniad parhaus i Athletau yn ei holl ffurfiau yng Nghymru.

Diolch yn fawr.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT



James Williams
Chief Executive Officer

What a difference a year makes. In October 2019, we launched the new strategy for Welsh Athletics at our conference weekend. We set out our ambitions to drive the sport forward over the next 7 years, with some very ambitious targets for growth and support across all aspects of the sport.

We remain firmly committed to delivering the objectives set out in our new strategy, to support the sport, and modernising the infrastructure that supports our structures.

What none of us could have predicted was the global pandemic, and the impact that this would have on sport in Wales as well as wider society.

Despite the many challenges that we face as a sport and as a National Governing Body there is still plenty to celebrate.

2019 marked another year of continued growth, with record club and member affiliation across all age groups. We continued to see record levels of demand for Coach Education, with the Leadership in Running Fitness courses seeing unprecedented growth. Once again, we saw more female leaders trained than male, further supporting the ambitions laid out in 2015 to increase the number of females running across Wales each week.

From an organisational perspective, we have re-structured our Senior Management Team to support the delivery of the strategy. My appointment as Chief Executive followed the decision by Matt Newman to focus 100% of his time on Run 4 Wales.

"I would like to place on record my thanks to Matt for his service to Welsh Athletics, I have no doubt that Run 4 Wales will continue to deliver World class events and generate additional income to be re-invested back into the sport in Wales in the years ahead."

I am honoured to be leading the sport that I have such passion for and look forward to helping the sport grow in all areas in the years ahead."

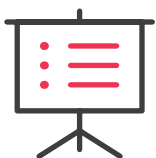
Modernisation



A central theme in our strategy is our desire to modernise the infrastructure of the sport. The sport has had to adapt quickly during the last few months, with Coach and Officials Education being delivered online, committee and Board meeting being held virtually and club utilising new technology to maintain their activities.

Many of the changes have been well received and has significantly improved engagement. I very much believe that the sport must grasp this unusual opportunity and continue to embrace technology to further improve the experience of everyone involved.

UK Athletics



The last 2 years has seen the sport in the headlines for many of the wrong reasons.

Since the beginning of the new year I have worked with the CEO's from UK Athletics and the Home Countries to put in place a master working agreement. This agreement will enable the sport to work together to drive forward change and progress in areas such as coaching, competition and officials development. We have now agreed a joint strategy that will demonstrate our collective ambitions in all areas of the sport over the next 12 years.

The commitment to collaboration will also be demonstrated by the establishment of a UK Athletics Talent Hub based in Wales. This hub will see the Welsh Athletics Performance Department taking on wider responsibility to creating an environment that will hopefully support the development of Welsh Athletes to progress through the sporting pathway through to the UK Athletics World Class Performance Programme.

Welsh Athletics will be able to further influence the overall development of the sport with the recent inclusion of our Chair as a permanent member of the UK Athletics Board.

COVID



The COVID pandemic has dominated all our lives since the start of March. We were forced to make the unprecedented decision to suspend all athletics activities on the 17th of March. This led to the cancellation of all competitions and club activities until the end of June.

I, along with colleagues from Welsh Athletics, have engaged in continuous dialogue with the Welsh Government, Sport Wales and the Welsh Sports Association to make the case for our sport to return in a gradual and controlled manner. We have led discussions in a number of areas, and will continue to highlight the challenges that COVID is having on our clubs, competition providers and the sport as a whole.

Throughout this period, we made a commitment to support our clubs and volunteers in any way we could. We also challenged the sport to be creative and innovative in the way they engage their members and to continue to deliver the sport.

Our clubs have risen to the challenge, with so many delivering virtual events and supporting the members in many different ways.



The staff at Welsh Athletics have worked tirelessly throughout, collaborating with colleagues from the other Home Countries to ensure that Welsh clubs and members were supported at all times. They created guidance to support the safe delivery of the sport, and adapted the ways they work, ensuring that virtual means were adopted very early on.



We are proud to have been the **first sport to get our elite athletes back training** at a specially created hub at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Such has been the dedication of the staff during this period, that we were also the **first sport in Wales to re-start competition**, and the **first Athletics Home Country to re-start Coach Education**, albeit in a blended learning format.

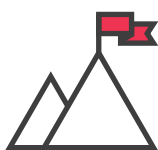
Our desire to support our coaching network saw the delivery of close to **100 online webinars**, with over **1,000 individual coaches engaging**. The level of engagement will no doubt lead to the virtual learning being a central part of the new normal.



Our ability to adapt our response was formed by our ability to understand the emerging challenges through a number of **Ask Us engagement webinars**. We delivered over **10 open webinars**, where the Senior Management Team at Welsh Athletics had the ability to provide updates on the latest guidance, but to also **answer questions and queries direct from our members**. These sessions played a vital role in evolving our response.

Despite the positive response, I am under no illusion of the challenges that we will continue to face in the weeks and months ahead. The ever-evolving situation will no doubt lead to further challenges for the sport. We will continue to make the case for the benefits of our sport to return, but we must be open and honest with the potential of severe restrictions in our ability to deliver mass participation events in the near future. This will have a massive impact on the increasingly popular road, cross country, trail and mountain running sectors in Wales.

We are committed to working with all stakeholders to support them through this period, and will continue to engage the league operators, competition providers, parkrun and club organisers to ensure that the sport can return as quickly as possible.



I would like to end by making special reference to the huge number of passionate volunteers across Wales who make the sport happen. During these challenging times, it has been the passionate volunteers who have worked so hard to ensure that their clubs can operate within the guidance that has been set. A huge number have undertaken COVID Officer training and have spent many, many hours completing risk assessments. **This passion and dedication has allowed us to continue making progress over the past six months.**

"Our sport has many challenges ahead of us, but if we continue to work together then I have no doubt that the sport will return as strong as ever."



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Nick Everitt

Non-Executive Director, Finance

James Williams

Chief Executive Officer



Even prior to the COVID pandemic, the sport sector in Wales was enduring a challenging time. Due to the pressures on public funding, we received a reduction of 5% of total funding from Sport Wales, with a reduction in lottery investment for the first time since its inception.

We once again managed to absorb the funding cut from exchequer funding and continued to prioritise the investment to support development activities.

Over the past few years, we have been fortunate to receive a grant from the Run 4 Wales Charitable Foundation. This money has supported the Welsh Schools Athletic Association and the Run Wales Social Running Programme. A challenging year meant that no funds were received from Run 4 Wales in 2019/20.

This has led to a £38,000 direct reduction in funding to Welsh Athletics, plus a £50,000 reduction in support for the Welsh Schools.

Welsh Athletics has committed to supporting the Welsh Schools programme and assumed the financial responsibility during the year. We also managed to maintain the full investment into the Social Running programme through a series of internal efficiencies.

Prudent planning in the previous year enabled the reduction in income to be offset somewhat by the deferment of a UK Athletics grant, albeit the previous long term commitment from UK Athletics to invest in each of the Home Countries has now ended. A commitment has been given to provide financial support for talent development, but this will mean a real term reduction in support of 50%.



The Home Countries and UK Athletics have agreed to work collectively to maximise commercial revenue and partnerships in the years ahead. This agreement will complement the existing commercial partners Joma, Brecon Carreg, Physique, Orthotix and Ace.

Each Department worked hard to drive down operating costs whilst also ensuring our commitment to the sport was maintained. The budget position improved month on month, and the organisation was on track to achieve a break-even position at the beginning of Q4.

The impact of the COVID pandemic on the organisation's finances cannot be overstated. The performance of the organisation's investment fund, which yielded a surplus in the 2018/19 accounts of **£9,351**, deteriorated rapidly in the last few weeks of March. This has meant a posted loss of **£22,278** for the financial year. We are pleased to report that all losses have now been recovered and the fund has already yielded a significant return above the original investment level.

An improved years performance by Run 4 Wales indicated an in-year grant of **£15k** was expected in early 2020. Unfortunately, due to the desire by Run 4 Wales to retain earnings to support their financial challenges, this grant has not been realised. No income is being budgeted for the 2020/21 financial year, with the challenging financial climate indicating no investment in the following year also.



The impact on our commercial partners has been significant, our fitness and retail partner DW Fitness First entered administration, demonstrating a £6k loss in 2019/20 on the budget, with an additional £6k included within the 2020/21 financial year.

The Finance subgroup has focused on a number of key areas over the past 12 months. Enhanced financial control processes have been put in place, with increased scrutiny on budget holders to manage the organisations cash flow. Another key area has been the review the organisations depreciation policy. Given the uncertainty of central funding, it is prudent to avoid enhanced depreciation periods when grant funding is reduced. With this in mind, we have amended our policy to depreciate in the year of acquisition. This change in Quarter 4 meant an increase (non-cash) depreciation charge of **£14,633**. This change should yield a positive position in the years ahead.



The factors above led to the organisations posting a year end loss of £63,430, with income down £55,114 (including the decrease in investment fund) on the previous year to £1,760,274. The organisation had total expenditure of £1,823,704, an increase of £43,873 compared to the previous year.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Income	£1,686,146	£1,824,739	£1,760,274
Expenditure	£1,784,816	£1,779,831	£1,823,704
Balance	£98,670	£44,908	£63,430



The 2020/21 Financial year has already been incredibly challenging, but the hard work of the staffing team, plus the support and oversight of the finance subgroup has meant the immediate financial challenges have been overcome.

We have utilised the Government job retention scheme and have received a small grant from Sport Wales to support our blended learning approach to coach education. Despite the hard work undertaken to date, Welsh Athletics is budgeting for a deficit position in 2020/21.

The long term financial forecast for the organisation will remain challenging, but I am confident that with the level of internal control around risk, and the level of scrutiny being provided by the Finance sub-group we will be able to manage the uncertainty and maintain all key deliverables for the sport.

Board Attendance

Board Member	Board Meeting	Governance Sub-Committee	Performance Oversight Committee	Finance Sub-Committee
Steve Perks	6/6	-	-	-
Sue Alvey	6/6	-	-	-
Dr Nicky Lewis	5/6	5/5	-	-
Adrian Thomas	5/6	-	8/8	-
Nick Everitt	5/6	-	-	8/8
Bernie Plain	6/6	-	-	-
Ron Odunaiya**	4/4	-	-	-
Charlotte Waite*	3/3	-	-	-

** Passed away, Jan 2020

* Stood down Jan 2020

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Dr Nicky Lewis
Non-Executive Director, Governance



Good governance continues to be a primary objective for Welsh Athletics. The changes brought in at the 2019 Annual General Meeting have now been fully implemented.



Over the past twelve months, all Board members attended over 92% of Board meetings, and 100% of sub-group meetings. All meetings were quorate, including the additional Board COVID response meetings that were put in place between March and July.

The Board has once again reviewed its skills matrix and recruited two new Non-Executive Directors. The new open recruitment process was used to recruit Tom Overton with the remit for Development and Participation, and Helen Adams for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

The two new Non-Executive Directors will chair new Board sub-groups in their respective areas of responsibility. Recruitment of these groups will be through an open process, with the need for a mix of skills and experiences across each group. The two sub-groups will complement the existing sub-groups of the Board and will play a crucial role in ensuring that the strategic objectives of Welsh Athletics are delivered, with an opportunity for detailed discussions and action across each aspect of the sport.

A key objective for Welsh Athletics is engaging its membership and ensuring that they contribute to the decision-making process. In an effort to deliver against this objective, three new athlete engagement forums are being proposed. The Junior Athlete Voice was launched last Autumn and has already provided valuable insight into what the junior element of our membership would like from the sport in Wales. This group will be complemented by a Seniors Group and a Masters group. All three will report into General Council and will no doubt add a valued perspective on the development of many aspects of the sport in Wales.

The focus over the next 12 months is to ensure that the recommendations outlined in the recent UK wide safeguarding review are implemented. A working group led by Sue Alvey and Steve Jones will be established to oversee this crucial work. The Governance sub-group had

already identified the need for improved provision for duty of care within the organisational policies, along with the need to review the organisation's disciplinary policies. Both aspects will be included within the scope of the safeguarding working group.

Finally, ensuring we have a diverse representation across all areas of the governance structure of Welsh Athletics continues to be an area of great importance. Significant progress has been made, but there is clearly still work to be done to ensure that the membership of our committees and councils is representative of the sport in Wales.



Currently, 37% of the Board members are female and 63% male but following the departure of Christian Malcolm in 2019 and the sudden passing of our friend and colleague Ron Odunaiya in 2020, we find ourselves in the position of not having representation from our BAME communities at Board level.

This is something that as an organisation, we are proactively committed to addressing during the next 12 months; not just at Board level, but throughout every aspect of our governance infrastructure and wider organisation activities. We would strongly urge our membership to hold us and each other to account in this, as further positions become available and nominations are called for.



It has been a very different year for us all to navigate in light of the COVID19 pandemic but as an organisation we have done this diligently, in line with Welsh Government directives, in open communication with our membership and with the commitment to the health and well-being of our membership at the core of every aspect of our decision making; and this will continue into 2021 and beyond.



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EQUALITY STATEMENT

Helen Adams

Non-Executive Director, Equality

Rob Sage

Head of Corporate Services

Welsh Athletics is committed to making the sport accessible to all. As part of this commitment and our continued Governance reforms, we have appointed a Non-Executive Director to lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

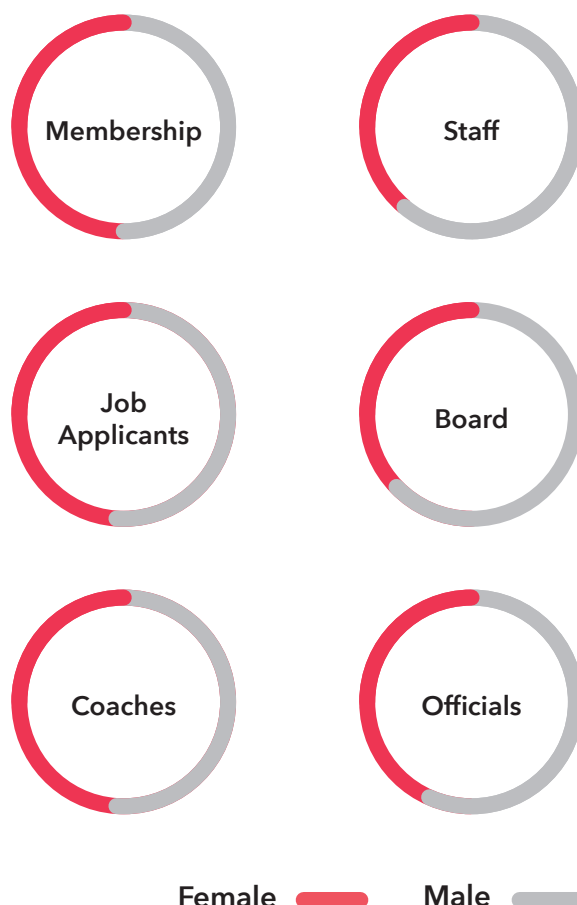


Helen Adams was appointed to the Board in April 2020 and is working to progress our Equality Action Plan. One of her first tasks is to establish an Equality Group reporting directly to the Board who will oversee the work undertaken to achieve the Intermediate Standard of the Equality Standard.

The Equality Standard is a framework to assist us in widening access and reducing inequalities from under-represented individuals, groups and communities. It is based around developing the organisation and services to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of what we do. These are critical if we want to achieve our Vision 'to be the number one sport for participation and opportunities across Wales and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate and achieve.'

A key area over the next 12 months is working with our stakeholders, including our member clubs to use insight to help to drive this agenda and to remove any potential barriers to participation. We want everyone to engage with us and our annual Members Equality Survey provides invaluable insight to help us make progress in this area. We would encourage all our members to complete this and to support us on this journey.

The sport continues to see a good level of diversity represented within the different areas of the sport, but with more to be done.



SAFEGUARDING & DUTY OF CARE

Sue Alvey

Non-Executive Director, Safeguarding

Steve Jones

Safeguarding Officer



Ensuring the sport is safe for all to enjoy should be at the heart of every club in Wales. Welsh Athletics recently supported UK Athletics and the Home Countries in a review of safeguarding and welfare practices across the UK.

This review has highlighted a number of key areas for improvement across all aspects of the sport. We are committed to delivering the recommendations and will need the full support of everyone involved in the sport to ensuring this is achieved. We will increase the level of training for club Welfare officers, coaches and parents, whilst also take a much harder line with clubs who do not meet the required standards.

Safeguarding is not just about junior athletes, it covers athletes of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. I am sure you will all take your responsibilities seriously in this space and work with Welsh Athletics to ensure we achieve our desire of ensuring that everyone feels safe to enjoy our sport.

Welsh Athletics continues to work with the NSPCC (Child Protection in Sport Unit) as well as the Ann Craft Trust (Adults at Risk) to continuously review and improve its' processes in this area. As part of this improvement strategy affiliated clubs had been advised to have in place both male and female Club Welfare Officers (CWOs). With the launch of an on-line affiliation process from April 2018 (via the portal), compliance in this area has been more closely monitored. Clubs were also advised that this provision would become mandatory in April 2019. It is now not possible for a Club to renew its' affiliation without having

two CWOs in place. To support this the organisation ran a series of courses (Safeguarding and Protecting Children) throughout 2018 to ensure that CWOs are well supported and aware of the responsibility the role brings.

Safeguarding modules are now also a mandatory part of licence renewal for all Coaches. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are also now being more widely used by clubs with respect to their volunteers in addition to those involved in Coaching and Officiating.

In April 2020 Welsh Athletics adopted the MyConcern case management platform already widely used across educational establishments and sports governing bodies like Swim Wales and Welsh Rugby Union. This facilitates consistency in recording of information across the organisation's case load and allows access to key safeguarding information to staff. This now looks likely to be adopted by the other Home Countries Federations as well as UKA.

Welsh Athletics has welcomed the findings of the UKA Safeguarding Review. Staff are already actively involved in action planning to ensure delivery of the review's recommendations which will continue to challenge our processes and procedures and make the sport a safer place for all participants and stakeholders.



WELSH ATHLETICS
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GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT

Sue Alvey
Chair of General Council

The year started with General Council receiving updates as usual regarding performance, where the Athlete Support Programme was highlighted with an explanation of how this was going to be implemented and operated.

This was followed by an update on the Junior Athlete Voice and the welcome news that it was planned to introduce both Seniors and Masters equivalents. An update on Club Modernisation highlighted ways in which clubs were responding to modernisation and ways in which Welsh Athletics could assist clubs looking to move forward with their

Sadly, a discussion planned to discuss ways in which the regions could actively link into the new Welsh Athletics Strategy had to be postponed due to the non-attendance of some regions. This is a continuing worry, reported last year, but now having a direct impact on the work of General Council where the desire is for all regions to have their voice heard in discussions, not just at General Council but also at all other committees which feed into General Council.

All the plans for the year came to an abrupt end with lockdown when new challenges faced us all. New ways of working, coaching, meeting and competing had to be implemented in this strange new world. Technology has been at the forefront of progress and many of us have had to learn new skills in this time of change. After initially cancelling the early March meeting, a written update was circulated to all members of General Council explaining the current situation with regard to staffing and changes at Welsh Athletics and the current rules surrounding coaching, club training and competition. A virtual meeting was set up later in the month to keep all the members of the Council in touch and give an opportunity for any good practice to be shared together with any problems

encountered. These virtual meetings have continued to follow the planned meeting schedule since then when information has been shared regarding the numerous and well received webinars and the series of 'Ask Us' meetings.



Many clubs and regions have held successful virtual meetings and AGM's with many reporting a better attendance than normal. However, it must be noted that some clubs and regions have not embraced this way of communicating to date, leaving them at a disadvantage.

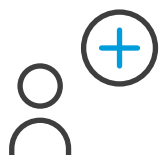
One area that has received interest is the '**Cashless Club**' perhaps as going '**cashless**' has become more widespread in retail, it has become a way of paying that has become 'normal' for all of us.



We started the year with plans, hopes and ambitions and although the lockdown restrictions have changed a lot of the way that we live, we still have those same hopes and ambitions even though we have had to amend the plans to achieve them.

CORPORATE SERVICES

Rob Sage
Head of Corporate Services

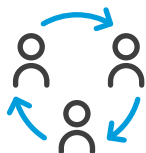


Human Resources

The past year has seen five new starters join the Welsh Athletics staff team, and five staff leave.

Most notably, Matt Newman stood down as Chief Executive to be formally replaced following an open recruitment process by James Williams. Matt had been CEO since Welsh Athletics became a limited company in 2007. Also leaving us this year was Lynn Goward, who retired from the role of Finance Manager after four years.

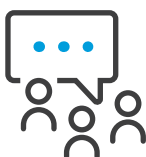
Welsh Athletics continues to retain a low sickness absence rate, well below 1%, which will help the organisation to perform well (normal absence rate c. 2.5%). Our HR support service, Cobalt HR, conducted staff engagement surveys and forums on our behalf and concluded;



"People are highly motivated and prepared to go the extra mile for the organisation. Welsh Athletics therefore benefits from a healthy staff turnover rate, measured at 13% for 2019/20."

A new behavioural framework was introduced during the year, based on Welsh Athletics' values. This was incorporated into a new, short, strategic, appraisal process, using SMART goals to aid performance management of staff. An Employment status toolkit has been developed and applied during the year as a guide to ensure new employees are on the correct type of contract. This is a valuable tool in avoiding contractual issues with staff and HMRC.

Employee development remains central to the philosophy of the organisation and staff have been encouraged through the performance management processes to seek out and undertake external training and learning opportunities, with financial support available from the organisation. This has included our Finance Manager being supported to complete his AAT Professional Diploma in Accounting qualification, and staff attending Sport Wales communication learning sessions [CLIP programme].



Communications

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, there was a greater focus on communication and engagement with our members and stakeholders than perhaps ever before.

Our strong position online - web & social media - and our digital systems meant we were able to continue to respond and deal with members queries whether by phone, email, or social media messaging in a timely manner.

Social media is becoming ever more prevalent in our society. It is an area where people from all ages can interact with one another. At Welsh Athletics, we understand that we have a diverse community - we aimed to ensure we published a broad range of content during the Lockdown period to both inform and engage the whole community.

As Welsh Government restrictions started to be relaxed, we were able to release our Return to Athletics roadmap mirroring the Government's traffic light approach. This was followed up with specific guidance documents for each element of the sport, and regular updates to these as required. Senior staff were part of regular group calls organised by the Welsh Sports Association with other National Governing Bodies across Wales, keeping up to date and making the case for our sport whenever possible.



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DIGITAL & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The organisation continued its drive to embed digital technology and capabilities across its work this year.



The Lockdown period sped up our use of video conferencing software both internally and externally with new investment in to GoToWebinar and Zoom packages to facilitate online engagement with our members.



During the year payroll was successfully brought in house to Quickbooks, and the organisation continued to invest in digital platforms and technology to help staff adapt and continue to deliver during the COVID-19 restrictions



Our ability to work successfully online was comprehensively tested this year, and yet we were able to continue to function fully in terms of financial, staff management, and delivery systems.

DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Chris Moss

Head of Development & Participation

Membership



As we moved through the 2019-20 affiliation year, the Welsh Athletics individual membership exceeded **13,500** for the first time in its history across over **110 affiliated clubs**. In April 2020 we entered the 2020-2021 affiliation and membership year in the midst of a global pandemic, whilst we did not expect the membership numbers to increase it has continued to remain strong with currently a **70% year on year membership level**.

The support that clubs across Wales have been able to provide for their individual members has been amazing, likewise each and every member that has supported their club must be commended for their support and commitment during this time. Over recent months it has been heart-warming to see the way that clubs and groups have responded to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the array of activities that have taken place up and down the country are testament to the nature of the athletics community of Wales. This response has been conducted thoughtfully and effectively and has ensured that we have had both a safe and responsible return to activity across the sport.

Volunteers week, held in June, gave us the opportunity to showcase and highlight the fantastic work undertaken by so many people across the sport. The stories and features were inspirational with many clubs paying tribute to the coaches, leaders, officials and key officers within their environment without whom the sport would be not be as rich. As we look towards 2021 a great focus will be put on supporting all volunteers that contribute invaluable to the delivery of athletics in Wales.

Club Modernisation



Towards the end of 2019 we hosted the first joint Clubs and Run Wales conference which saw over 80 delegates attend the various seminars and workshops facilitated throughout the day. The day was a showcase of amazing activity and this theme continued into the evening with the National Awards Dinner which recognised the great work of so many clubs, volunteers, coaches, officials, running groups, and athletes that have excelled.

If we can take a positive from the challenges that 2020 has presented us to date it would be the accelerated use and familiarisation with technology and online platforms. It was said that "out of adversity comes opportunity" and clubs across Wales were forced to innovate, to find solutions to improve the communication, engagement and interaction with their members whilst in the midst of Welsh Government lockdown restrictions.

We used the #SupportYourClub initiative to showcase the fantastic ways that clubs adapted to lockdown, the challenges it presented and the innovative ways that were used by clubs to; engage with and bring their members together to inspire activity. Rather than drive us apart, lockdown united the athletics community in Wales and there was a sense of solidarity and togetherness in overcoming the difficulties that we were facing and continue to face as we move forward. This hashtag continues to be used to highlight inspiring activities and celebrate the response of athletics clubs across Wales.

"Out of adversity
comes opportunity"





WELSH ATHLETICS
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During lockdown we
produced a total of
122 VIDEOS



gaining a
monumental
5,498 VIEWS



Our IGTV reached
33,579 PEOPLE



Our virtual races raised
£2200
in donations for 3 charities



Under the **#SupportYourClub** feature we ran a series of workshops to engage with clubs and key officers. The first series of three were delivered in May in conjunction with **The Sports Marketing Network** and addressed; 'Keeping Your Members Engaged', 'What Will Your Club Do Now?' and 'Preparing for Life After COVID-19'. These were received extremely well and led to us running another three looking at; 'Physical Literacy & Athlete Development', 'Becoming a Cashless Club' and 'Club Development & Planning' which again saw high levels of engagement and interaction.



In addition to the club focussed webinar activity, we launched a series of 'Ask Us' engagement sessions which took place on both a national and regional level. The aim of these sessions was to provide opportunity for all members of Welsh Athletics to ask questions and engage with the Senior Management Team directly. These sessions were well attended and will continue throughout the next 12 months in a way to help improve contact and communication across the sport and reach a wider audience.



At the start of the year, the Club Modernisation and Innovation Fund was accessed by a number of clubs with monies committed to support projects at local, club and regional level. These projects are vital in developing additional opportunities and supporting activities taking place within specific environments. Our thanks must go to the clubs that have embraced the modernisation agenda and been pro-active in their development over the last year. In an additional boost to funding, throughout the last few months Sport Wales launched the 'Be Active Wales Fund' which, to date, has seen a number of clubs across Wales supported financially with their return to training and activity.



Starting Blocs

Throughout the end of 2019 and into 2020 significant progress was made on the Welsh Athletics physical literacy initiative.

Starting Blocs is set for launch over the coming months and will see an inclusive accessible programme established which will benefit clubs, local authorities, community and private providers alike. The objective being establishing a sustainable programme capable of delivering fun and engaging activities that teach children aged 4-9 the foundations of running, jumping, and throwing. All the activities are progressive and develop the key physical competencies required to enjoy a lifetime in sport. Starting Blocs will complement the work being done across the physical preparation stage and ensure that athletics in Wales has a complete pathway from the foundation years to seniors.





Facilities



Over the last 12 months there has been significant improvements and developments at facilities across Wales. Facility upgrades have taken place in **Carmarthen** and **Newport**. The **Carmarthen project** will be completed towards the end of 2020 and will see an all-new **8 lane facility** established in West Wales.

The newly resurfaced Bridgend Track was one of the first facilities to open with COVID mitigation measures in place as restrictions started to be lifted.

Through the generous support of Sport Wales (through the 'Places for Sport' funding) we were able to work with Newport City Council, Newport Live and Newport Harriers to support the upgrade and development of facilities at Newport International Sports Village. These improvements and the establishment of new throwing facilities (both internal and external) will benefit the sport at all levels.

In May 2020 the new state of the art facility opened at Clydach Vale (Rhondda) which quickly became epicentre of activity for many based in South Wales. This now sees Rhondda Cynon Taff boast three state of the art athletics facilities across the council. In what will be another boost for athletics in East Wales, work has started on whilst the development of the new facility in Caerphilly (Oakdale) and significant progress has been made.



The end of 2020 will see the **installation of a new external throwing area at Cardiff International Sports Campus** which meets World Athletics specification and also competition compliance, in another boost for the sport.

Coach Education and Coach Development

It has been an interesting and ever evolving year for coach development and qualifications, there have been a number of changes and updates to the formal coach qualifications delivered in Wales which have occurred both from natural changes and updates as well as the response to changes imposed by COVID-19.



In the first half of the year (up until March 2020) we delivered; **11 Leadership in Running Fitness courses (187 attendees)**, **5 Coaching Assistant courses (59 attendees)**, **2 Athletics Coach (25 attendees)** and **2 Coach in Running Fitness courses (26 attendees)**.

From April despite the challenges and the pause of coach education and qualifications, to support the continued development of our coaches and leaders British Athletics made their four online development modules including; Disability Inclusion Training, Clean Athletics Awareness, Mental Well-Being in Sport & Physical Activity, Preventing Bullying in Sport and Event Group Qualification online modules free of charge to coaches and leaders for a period of time. Other opportunities made available to coaches and leaders was free access to the Athletics App and resources. This opportunity continues until April/May of next year.



The Welsh Athletics 'Stay Involved' Webinar Series provided online opportunities across all event groups and other areas of coach development. These 31 webinars were attended by over 1000 attendees.

To recognise the success on online engagement with our coaches and leaders the intention is to continue with this way of supporting the community and sees the launch of the autumn/winter 'Be The Change' coach development offer.

This will be a mixture of live webinars and on demand content which will complement the existing webinar content. This will be housed on the Welsh Athletics YouTube channel and will continue to be a resource for both new and existing coaches to engage with content and develop their knowledge accordingly.

Over the last 12 months we have worked closely with British Athletics to ensure that the new online Disability Inclusion Training is made available to coaches and, through our webinar series we have hosted two Disability Inclusion sessions highlighting equality and accessibility. Working with Disability Sport Wales (DSW) we also developed a new Guide Running Workshop, which was due for launch in April however this launch will now take place over the coming months where feasible. We must say a huge thank you to staff and colleagues at DSW for their input, contribution and collaboration experienced throughout the last year.



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CLWB RUN WALES

WALES' VIRTUAL RUNNING CLUB
#YOURRUNNINGCLUB

- ✓ Exclusive offers & discounts
- ✓ Dedicated Website & forums
- ✓ Training tips & advice
- ✓ Welsh Athletics membership
- ✓ Club Vest / T-Shirt

JOIN NOW

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CYMRU
RUN
WALES



July 2020 saw the launch of Clwb Run Wales; a virtual running club open to all adults of any age or ability. Designed for those who do not have the time for or access to a local affiliated running club but want to be part of a thriving community of like-minded runners.

The response has been positive, and it is anticipated that this will grow and develop over the coming months and support those in the extended running community. Together with Clwb Run Wales a series of inspiring Run Wales webinars were launched which included sessions with; TV personality, author and ultra-runner Lowri Morgan, Welsh Athletics Head Coach and endurance guru Chris Jones, Dave Rowe, Senior Soft Tissue Therapist for Sport Wales and parkrun World Record Holder Charlotte Arter.



Additional webinars have been scheduled on the coming months and engagement via this platform across a variety of topics will continue to help and motivate and unite the running community of Wales.

Whilst we recognise the challenges we all faced (and continue to face) through this pandemic there are opportunities. Running is an open and accessible form of exercise and the past few months has seen and increase in those taking up the sport and running activities across Wales.



Run Wales continues to develop and numbers continue to increase and across the programme and initiatives already established we are committed to the development of high quality, social, easily accessible and enjoyable running opportunities for all. With the vision being that running becomes the number one participation sport in Wales.

Run Wales

It has been a positive 12 months for the Run Wales programme which continues to grow and develop. The number of registered groups has increased to **174**.

In partnership with Run 4 Wales the Cardiff University Cardiff Half Marathon held in October 2019 was used to help celebrate the rise of women's running via the Run Wales 100. This movement saw 100 women offered the opportunity to run in the event and highlighted the fact that for the first time in the history of the event, female runners were expected to make up the majority of participants. Alongside this we also ran the #WhyWeRun campaign exploring people's motivations and reasons for getting out and getting active via running which gathered valuable insight and a greater understanding of a wider social running demographic.



The Big Social Run launched last year, has extended the number of events at a variety of venues across Wales. For obvious reasons lockdown has provided an additional challenge for this initiative. Not to be deterred, two 'virtual' Big Social Runs have now taken place. June saw 676 people register for the inaugural Virtual Big Social Run whilst over the Bank Holiday Weekend in August 224 people registered for the Virtual Pride Social Run. This event was run in partnership with Pride Cymru to celebrate LGBT Equality and making a positive statement through running.



Our partnership with parkrun remains strong and we have supported the establishment of new events, both junior and senior, and the number of parkrun events in Wales now stands at **58**, (41 of those being senior and 17 being junior events).



Over the past year, despite the restrictions, we have **qualified 211 run leaders** (Leadership in Running Fitness) and **26 coaches** (Coach in Running Fitness) we now have **1287 licensed LiRF's** and **163 licensed CiRF's** across Wales.

The Run Champions initiative was re-launched with the establishment of new Run Leader Champions who will further support the development of new and existing Run Leaders. The Run Wales LiRF (Leadership in Running Fitness) Network continues to provide support for qualified Run Leaders and now boasts over 320 active members. The network along with the newly established Run Leader Champions will be pivotal in bringing the running community together.

Lockdown and the challenges presented by COVID-19 inspired a variety of activities amongst running groups across Wales. In response and to lead the way, members of the Run Wales Advisory Group quickly developed the 'Return to Group Running' guidance which was met with enthusiasm by the running community of Wales. The running community of Wales was celebrated through the 'Resilient Runners' showcase - a series of blogs about the brilliant ideas our running community came up with to keep each other going during lockdown.

Over 20 groups were featured, ideas ranged from virtual relays to mental health check ins. In addition, through the popular Run Leader Newsletter, a series of '30 Day Challenges' was launched to help to engage and motivate our leaders to encourage the development of their knowledge, keep their minds active and hone their skills.



Lockdown challenges saw us work closely with both British Athletics and the other home countries to change the approach to coach qualifications and coach development.

In September 2020 we were the first home country to re-introduce face to face delivery and a huge amount of work has taken place which ensures that a blended approach (e-learning, virtual environment and face-to-face) to the delivery of the formal leader and coaching qualifications is available. This theme is expected to continue moving forward so that qualifications can be delivered in a fully accessible online or virtual format. In September we were the first home county in the UK to re-introduce and deliver face-to-face coach qualification activity with both Athletics Coach, Coach in Running Fitness assessment day and the new blended approach practical day Leadership in Running Fitness running in North and West of Wales. We hope to be able to navigate local lockdowns to continue to safely deliver face to face to elements of course where possible and moving forward.



During this year's UK Coaching Week (September 14th - 21st) we celebrated the great work carried out by our leaders and coaches across the country. We also launched our new and exciting partnership with UK Coaching which will provide coaches across Wales with subsidised access to a wide variety of resources and training to help develop both their knowledge and experience further.

Welsh schools



The Schools Association has continued to work in partnership with Welsh Athletics during the 2019/20 academic year. WSAA continues to work to align competition pathways and become a fully integrated part of Welsh Athletics.

The Schools summer Track & Field Championships were another casualty of the crisis, closely followed by the NASUWT Cup & Plate and the SIAB Track & Field. The Association now awaits the opportunity to restart its' competition programmes as well as continuing to support School District competition across Wales.

PERFORMANCE & PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

Chris Jones
National Coach



Developing our sport in a challenging landscape this year has proved how resilient our athletes, coaches and parents truly are. Before reflecting on year 2019 - 2020 it is important to look forward and acknowledge that our sport is returning albeit in a changing format and will continue to evolve as the Performance Team builds into what will be a very busy athletics calendar ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

This year has allowed the Performance Team to embed new skills and technology that will support its journey in delivering its objectives through this and the next Commonwealth Games Cycle. Social Distancing and

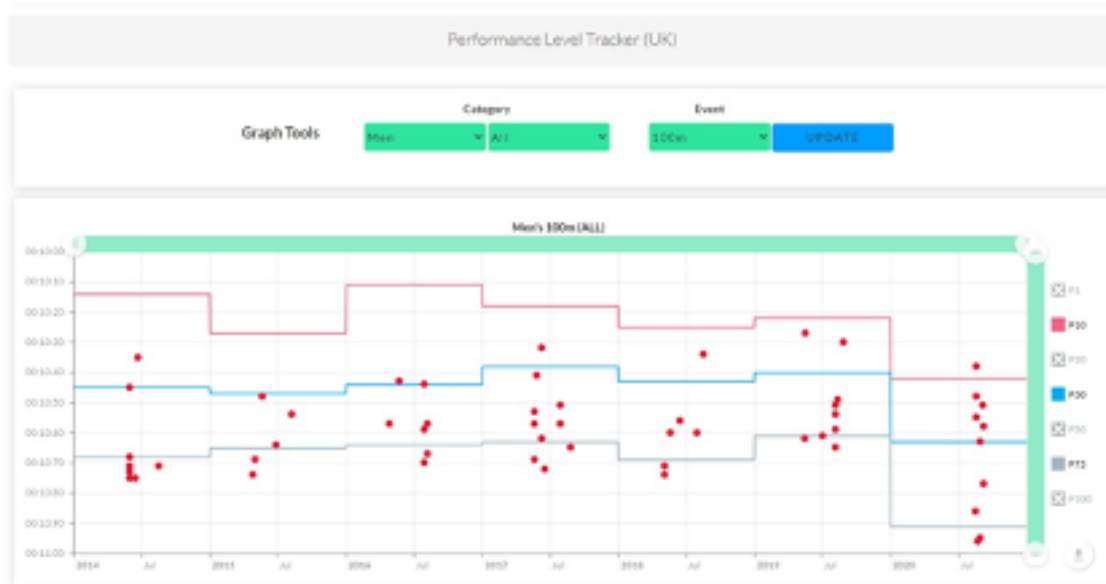
Lockdown has meant looking at using technology to keep in contact with Athletes, Coaches and Parents.

In a very small period, the Performance Team adapted to communicating and education on-line with some highly positive results / feedback. The Performance Team invested in the GoToWebinar Platform an online tool that allows professional presentation and education sessions. Each of the sessions involved significant work writing and developing the session content led by Zoe Brown, Coach Development Coordinator and each of the Event Group National Talent Development Coordinators.

From when the Lockdown was introduced through until September 2020 the Performance Team delivered 29 Development Sessions with over 1074 Athletes, Parents and Coaches attending.



Embracing Technology has allowed a collaboration between Welsh Athletics and Sport Wales to develop an Event Group Tracking System to support the Athlete Development Programme. The tracker profiles Event Groups from U15 through to Senior Age Groups and clearly shows participation as well as performance trends. This will be a significant monitoring tool as the Athlete Development Programmes move forward.



Athlete and Coach Development remains at the heart of what the Performance Team stands for and the key interlink is the Community Activity / Regional Development Activity and our National Development Programme, this ensure that athletes have the longest time working with us on their individual development pathway and coaches have the opportunity to learn and develop at all levels.

The National Development Programme is a programme that was initiated in 2012 and has continued to evolve over the years. This year saw a programme that run for either 2 or 3 days and covered all Event Groups. In total 54 Athletes attended the weekends and athletes / coaches had the opportunity to develop all aspects of their event. Ahead of the Covid Pandemic and the associated Lockdown the Regional Activity delivered by the Performance Team was

proving successful with the community fully engaging, 11 development sessions were delivered, with 280 athletes and 65 coaches attending. In developing the Athlete Development Programme the whole pathway from Regional Development to Commonwealth Games Programme has been built and has been published on the Welsh Athletics Website for Athletes, Parents and Coaches to be able to understand how the programmes interlink and how you become involved at each stage.

Athlete Development Programme

<https://www.welshathletics.org/en/page/athlete-development-programme>

National Development Programme

54 Athletes

Regional Development Activity

11 Development Sessions involving 280 Athletes & 65 Coaches



To support individual coaches' development the Performance Team delivered a Coaching Conference on the 20th October in the Vale Hotel attracting 75 Coaches, Athletes and Parents. The theme of the conference was 'Coaching the Individual in front of you'.

The day was supported by an inspirational Key Note from Kelly Sotherton who talked about her journey from an Olympic Athlete to Coach, a very honest session that hopefully resonated with the audience. There were practical sessions from Femi Akansanya, Chris Bramah, Ryan Freckleton and Laura Kerr, all the sessions were based upon the theme and there was positive interaction in each of the sessions. Ben Pullen, Cardiff Met pulled the day together with a discussion on 'What is Physical Literacy and what is the Psychosocial Impact on Young People. The day was very positive with attendees fully engaging with the sessions.

In an unprecedented year the collaboration with Cardiff Met in setting up an Elite Training Environment operating to Welsh Governments Legislation needs to be recognised and thanks given to Cardiff Met University. Welsh Athletics in partnership with Cardiff Met have established an Elite Training Environment at Cardiff Met, Athletics was the first Sport in Wales to return to training albeit within the Government restraints, this allowed both our programme athletes and DSW's programme athletes to resume training ahead of the general population in Wales.

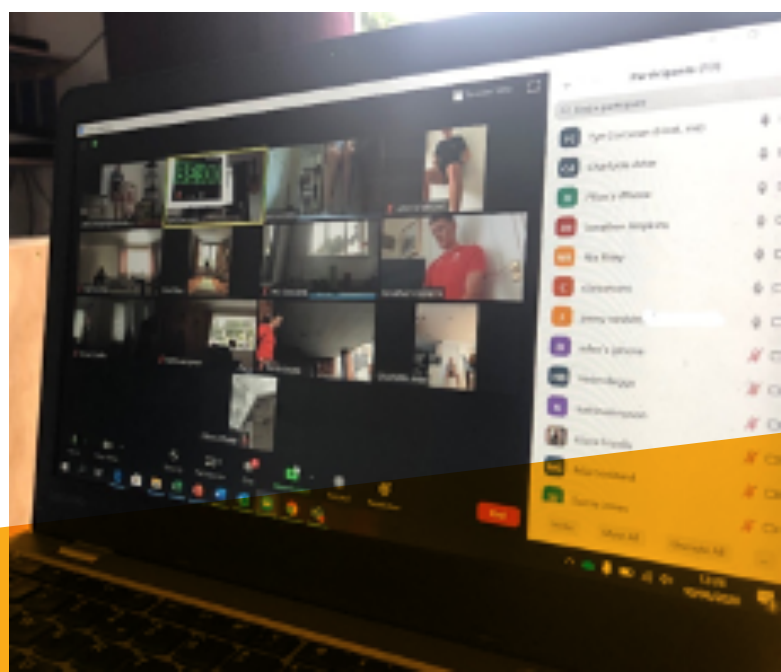
The bio-secure training environment was set up within Welsh Government Legislation and continues to allow athletes the opportunity to train twice a week at Cardiff Met. Strict Welsh Government Legislation and the Testing Protocols have meant that this bubble has been able to grow past its current sanctioned number of 24 athletes (WA/DSW).

As a Performance Team we are continually reviewing the bubble with a view to expanding it to incorporate a wider breadth of athletes.



We are currently in discussion with Cardiff Met as to how the Bubble will continue to operate when the University returns to a teaching environment in October 2020. Whilst there are always challenges it is the intention to maintain the bio-secure elite training environment in case of further lockdowns.

As we move forward, the Welsh Athletics Performance Team is looking for new and engaging ways of engaging with the Athletics Community and developing the performance element of our sport, ensuring that we have athletes making Great Britain Age Group Teams, Great Britain Representative Teams and importantly that perform in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games.





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COMPETITION

It was pleasing to see the popularity of our indoor Junior Open competitions continuing to grow year on year, and we saw almost 900 athletes take part over two days of competition in December & January.



Once again, the highlight of the indoor season was the Welsh Senior Indoor Championships which saw its highest number of competitors in recent years and we were delighted to welcome back the livestreaming services of Vinco Sport to enhance the profile of the event beyond those present to witness the action in person.

However, the subsequent events of 2020 have provided a unique set of challenges to the Competitions Department and have required us to adapt very quickly to a new way of competition provision.

Working closely with representatives from the other Home Countries each week during the sport's suspension, we developed Return to Competition documents for each discipline that would facilitate Competition Providers to be able to deliver competition for our members in a safe manner that was within Welsh Government guidance.

We also worked in partnership with England & Scottish Athletics and our entry/results platform provider OpenTrack to roll out a virtual race offering. This was free of charge to all registered members and clubs during the lockdown period and ensured that there was a competitive stimulus available to athletes of all ages and abilities, using synchronisation with Strava as a means of performance ratification. An extension to this offering was developed in partnership with SportsHall and was successfully trialled with schools across all regions of Wales, contributing to a National leader board.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has provided a significant number of challenges with regard to facilitating competition in Wales this year, it has also provided us with the opportunity to test new models of more athlete-centred competition across a range of disciplines. As and when restrictions ease in Wales, I look forward to this model of competition being extended to a larger number of athletes whilst still maintaining a manageable day for officials and volunteers.

Rhiannon Linnington Payne
Head of Competitions

The outdoor season was an unfortunate victim to the events of 2020 and uncertainty around when larger sporting events would be safe to resume meant the unfortunate cancellation of the Welsh Championship programme for 2020. During August we were delighted to see the return of a restricted form of athletics with four pilot competitions. These led to the delivery of a further 6 events, each with a slightly extended programme based on learning and experience during this period. These events mirrored a similar format to event-specific open meetings delivered in previous years and over 500 athletes competed across this period of restricted competition which took place over six weekends.



We had hoped that 2020 would see the launch of an extended Event-Specific Open Meeting series which would run as a Virtual Welsh Athletics League between April and August. Instead, this concept will be launched for the 2021 season (restrictions permitting) with the format of these shorter meetings proving ever-popular with athletes and officials alike.





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AWARD RECIPIENTS IN 2019

Award of Honour

Tony Balmont (official)

David Edwards (Wrexham AAC)

Terry Goodridge (official)

Ken Goodger (Newport Harriers)

Hillary Goodger (Newport Harriers)

Denise Harris (Deeside AC)

Bernie Jones (Wrexham AAC)

Adrian Thomas (Coach)

Meritorious Awards

Delyth Brown (Carmarthen Harriers)

Kay Chapman (Cardiff Athletics)

Athlete Achievement Award

Malcolm Edwards

Alison Hourihan

Bernie Plain

Full Roll of Honour

www.welshathletics.org/en/page/welsh-athletics-awards

LIFE MEMBERS OF WELSH ATHLETICS

1989	Raye Evans *
	Ken Harris *
	Ron Evans *
1991	Bill Evans *
	Margaret Elgie *
1992	Frank Ireland *
2001	Lynette Harries
2002	D. Hedydd Davies
	Ivor Adams
2003	Gwilym Evans *
	J. Barrie Owen
2004	Alan Currie
2005	David Alun Williams *
2007	John H. Collins *
2009	Jan Evans
	Keith Matthews
2015	J. Clive Williams
2017	John Penny



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