



WELSH ATHLETICS
ATHLETAU CYMRU

ANNUAL REPORT
2017/2018

“I am delighted to introduce the 2018 Annual Report which highlights the achievements and progress made in all areas of athletics in Wales during the year.”

Carol Anthony
Chair, Welsh Athletics



FOREWORD

Carol Anthony
Chair, Welsh Athletics

The specific achievements are documented in other areas of the report and, once again, illustrate the talent and commitment of our athletes, and the dedication, hard work and enthusiasm of our staff and volunteer workforce.

As I approach the end of my second term as Chair of Welsh Athletics, I reflect with great pride on what has been achieved over the eleven years that I have been privileged to have been a member of the Board of Directors. During this time the sporting environment has changed immeasurably and has required a focused business approach in order to ensure our sports existence in this competitive sector.

The Board has continued to provide vision and leadership ensuring that we meet the challenges presented by this changed environment and achieve our strategic objectives. The General Council, Regional Councils and committees have continued to give great support in the implementation of any changes to our delivery programmes in order to effect change.

We have reacted positively to the expectations of our funding partner, Sport Wales, and have continued to meet all targets set to ensure financial stability and maintain our position as one of the leading Governing Bodies of Sport in Wales.

Changes in the sporting landscape will, inevitably, need strategies to be reviewed to accommodate the changes. The new Sport Wales Strategy requires National Governing Bodies of Sport to be innovative in order to progress and move the sport forward, whilst still meeting the challenges of existing in a business environment.

With this in mind, we need to review our structures and delivery programmes to react to different ways of working in the future. This year, our focus on corporate governance has continued and the Governance Sub Group of the Board has worked tirelessly to review the governance structure to ensure that it meets the evolving and developing needs of athletics in Wales.

I feel confident that Welsh Athletics is in a very good place and has the infrastructure, staff and volunteer support to withstand any challenges ahead.

I wish to thank my fellow Directors for their unstinting support and advice throughout my time as Chair. Angharad Mair will also be standing down at the end of her six years on the Board and we are indebted to her for her commitment and advice particularly as our Welsh Language Ambassador and her input, advice and support to our Run Wales Programme.

My thanks also to the dedicated and enthusiastic staff team and to the great volunteers without whom our sport could not exist.

Lastly, it is vital that there is a very good working relationship between the Chair and CEO of any organisation and my thanks go to Matt Newman for his vision, professionalism and support during my time as Chair.

It has been a great privilege to serve as your Chair for the past six years and a Board member since incorporation in 2007. I will miss Welsh Athletics greatly and my most sincere thanks to you all for your support.

I wish you all very best wishes for the future.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Matt Newman
In Valencia where he presented on the IAAF Observer Programme

Over the past year, Welsh Athletics has taken the opportunity to review its activities in readiness for an exciting new chapter for athletics in Wales. The new chapter will see the emergence of a longer-term vision and strategy for the sport and presents an opportunity to provide clarity for athletes, coaches, officials and for the thousands of volunteers who are so important for the delivery of all forms of athletics in Wales.

The sporting landscape and the political environment are constantly changing and Welsh Athletics has positioned itself to take advantage of our sport's ability to influence a wide range of sporting and government agenda. We are uniquely placed to develop the skills for a lifetime in sport, whilst supporting athletic activities from social running to our contribution to Team Wales' success at the Gold Coast.

The extensive consultation conducted over the past year, will ensure that the new strategy is relevant and responsive to the needs of our customers base. We will maintain our focus on innovation and on the development of products which appeal to the wide range of ages and abilities across our sporting spectrum.

As always, our new strategy will align itself to the wider sporting environment, with a clear line of sight to the Vision for Sport in Wales. It will also contribute to the "Wales we want" and the core themes set-out in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Finally, our close working relationship with the other Home Countries will be reflected in "An Athletic Nation", the ten-year statement of ambition for athletics in the UK.

We will also seek to build agreements with individual local authorities and with the consortium of Sport North Wales to

ensure that resources are maximised. Our work with Higher Education will also reflect our emphasis on collaboration.

The building blocks for a high-performing organisation are already in place, but the new strategy will seek to improve all areas of our organisation, starting with a refresh of the Governance structures in line with the Governance and Leadership Framework for Wales. The end-game is to implement a structure that both supports and challenges the delivery of the new strategy and is "best in class" for the sector.

The past year has seen a renewed focus from the staff team and our track-record of delivery has remained consistently high.

My thanks go to the team for continually going the "extra mile". The systems are now in place to provide a consistent pipeline of talent through to the elite levels of our sport.

The next chapter will see a refinement of these systems and an innovative competition programme to complement the athlete pathway.

Finances

The annual accounts to March 2018 and a full audit report have been distributed to members ahead of the Annual General Meeting on 27th October.

The end-of-year accounts to March 2018 show an income of £1,686,146 (£1,596,307 in 2017) against expenditure of £1,784,816 (£1,499,075 in 2017) resulting in a net deficit of £98,670 (surplus of £97,232 in 2017 and surplus of £77,232 in 2016).

As we approach the end of our current four-year funding cycle with Sport Wales, we can be secure in the knowledge that Welsh Athletics is in a stable financial position. Reserves are above the required level and revenue growth is showing an upward trend year on year.

Finally

We also reach a significant milestone in the leadership of the organisation as we seek to appoint a new Chair of the Board of Welsh Athletics.

My heartfelt thanks go to Carol Anthony for over 11 years of selfless dedication as a Director and Chair of Welsh Athletics. Carol's leadership and commitment has been vital to the success of athletics in Wales and we all wish her well for her future in sport.

Equality and diversity will continue to be fully embedded across the organisation. We will build on our work with Disability Sport Wales to provide a fully-inclusive offer to communities across Wales and our Run Wales Social Running Programme will be further extended to areas of social deprivation. Our commitment to the Welsh Language has been recognised by the Welsh Language Commission as we seek to provide a bilingual service across Wales.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY

Welsh Athletics has continued its commitment to make the sport as accessible as possible to participants from all social and ethnic backgrounds. We continue to increase opportunities and reduce barriers for participation. Following the awarding of our Intermediate equality standard, we have been progressing with colleagues from UK Athletics and the other Home Countries towards the Advanced standard.

Our annual members equality survey continues to show progress in many areas. One area of significant progress is female membership. This was identified as a key development area for Welsh Athletics as part of our Intermediate submission. Following the success of a number of programmes, we now have more Female members (50.2%) than Male for the first time ever. Despite this positive growth, we acknowledge that further work is required in increasing female participation in Coach Education.

From a governance perspective, we are proud to have a diverse Board, and continue to lead the way within the sector on female and BME membership. Our aim is that the standard set at Board level will be replicated across the entire Governance structure of the Sport in the years to come.

Two key areas that have been identified through the members survey as future priorities are Mental Health and Disability.

We have already piloted some very exciting projects in recent times, with Run4All Neath collaborating with Mind Cymru to provide its members with a series of mental health and wellbeing seminars. We also collaborated with Carmarthen Council on a programme to demonstrate the impact of social running on mental health and community mental health provision. The pilot programme will hopefully be replicated in other Local Authorities in the coming months.

As part of this work, Welsh Athletics will aim to pledge its commitment to Time To Change in 2019, raising awareness of Mental Health to its employees, volunteers and clubs.

Welsh Athletics continues to work with colleagues at UK Athletics and the Home Countries as we ensure that the Duty of Care in Sport Report findings are implemented across the Sport.

We continue to work with colleagues at Disability Sport Wales on the InSport programme to further embed disability athletics across the Sport. At a performance level, both disability and able bodied athletes competed and prepared together as one team. Many of our clubs continue to lead the way on inclusion, and we aim to share best

practice at our clubs conference and through the Network Team.

All four Home Countries agreed to the addition of a non-binary gender category as part of the new UK Athletics rule book. This was introduced on the back of successful trials in Scotland, and we are committed to working with competition providers to explore additional pilot events in Wales.

As part of our strategy development, we will outline a series of equality objectives to demonstrate our continued commitment to driving awareness, education and access across all elements of the Sport.

Carol Anthony
Chair

Matt Newman
Chief Executive



HEAD OF OPERATIONS REPORT

James Williams

Members Consultation

As we stated in the 2017 report, we were committed to engaging the views of our members to ensure that the new strategy for the Sport directly addressed the challenges and opportunities we all face on a day to day basis.

Through a series of open forums, an online survey, 1:1 meetings and club meetings, we engaged the views of nearly 400 members. The following points were identified as the key challenges for our sport going forward;

-  **Recruit and develop coaches/leaders – aligning education and development**
-  **Reduce the admin burden for volunteers/clubs/parents by improving the use of technology**
-  **Need to use the sport as a vehicle to deliver health benefits – physical activity and wellbeing**
-  **Professionalise Coaching – making it a desired vocation**
-  **Ensure that all key stakeholders (clubs, parents, coaches, WA) are aware of their role in developing athletes –improve the retention of athletes**
-  **Create Champions to inspire the Nation**
-  **Recruit and develop officials**
-  **Improving number and quality of facilities across Wales**
-  **Improve communication of key/inspiring messages and to raise the profile of the sport**
-  **Create a clear competition pathway**
-  **The 3 C's – coaching, competition, clubs – effective collaboration between them all**
-  **Clarify the roles of the clubs/regions**
-  **Simplify the sport and keep it fun**
-  **Support clubs to modernise – improving the culture within them**

Our member consultation occurred at the same time that Sport Wales were engaging with the Nation to gather their views and create a new vision for Sport in Wales. As referenced in last year's annual report, Welsh Athletics is one of five NGBs chosen by Sport Wales to explore how the sector can deliver against the outcomes in their new Vision for Sport.

This shows the continued confidence that Sport Wales has in Welsh Athletics to deliver against the wider political agenda in Wales.

Competition

Our competition programme continues to grow year on year – all be it it's superb to see more and more athletes engage with the various forms of competition, it also adds significant pressure to our volunteer workforce.

It is clear that if we want to reduce the demands on our officials, whilst at the same time improving retention rates in junior athletes, then we need to make some brave decisions.

Many of our endurance events are sourcing licences from alternative sources – Welsh Athletics through its links with British Athletics have worked tirelessly to improve licencing standards. We will aim to have an Event Adjudicator at every road and multi terrain event – we will work hard to recruit, train and develop these Adjudicators over the coming year. It is important to reiterate that Welsh Athletics is the only recognised licencing body in Wales, and the only licencing body with such robust standards and support services in place.

We all have a duty to make our athletes aware that only if they compete in officially licenced events will they be covered under the membership insurance.

To support competition providers, we have invested into the **Run Britain portal** so that it can be used for licencing all Welsh Road and Multi Terrain races going forward. The portal also has a huge amount of supporting resources available for race providers to use in order to deliver an event in a safe and effective manner.

In relation to track and field, we must ensure that our events are relevant to modern society. This will mean some bold changes – shorter competition days, better use of technology and embracing the event specific formats. We must also ensure that the schools and club competitions are aligned, the schools events are a fantastic opportunity to talent ID and engage new athletes into the sport. However, if we do not align our structures, we run the risk of duplication and putting additional pressure on a very small talent pool to over-compete.

Aligned to our desire to improve the service to our members, we hope to launch a **new online entry** and support portal for competitions in the coming months. Initially the portal will be focused on Welsh Athletics events, but the hope is that it could be used by clubs and regions going forward, further reducing the administrative burden on volunteers whilst improving the experience of the athletes.

Facilities

This has been a constant risk for the sport in recent years. Local Authorities' finances continue to be under pressure, and it is essential that we work closely with them to ensure the quality of our facilities are maintained. We have recently completed a facility audit, this will enable us to plan long term with facility providers and move away from the reactive response that has been the norm in recent years. The recent UKA directive relating to throws cages across the UK will add an additional challenge, but one that we must tackle as a collective to

ensure our sport continues to operate in a safe manner.

On a more positive note, it is superb to finally see the athletics facility in Aberdare re-open after six years. Rhondda Cynon Taff have also recently announced 2 new facilities for the region. We have also seen significant investment by Cardiff Council, Cardiff Met University and Swansea University in relaying surfaces at the various facilities.

Communications

The desire of improving the way Welsh Athletics communicates with its members has been a constant discussion point, both internally and at General Council. Given how important this area is for us, we have expended this department, with Rob Sage coming in as Communication and Marketing Manager in early January. As new strategic lead in this area, he has been working tirelessly on a digital communication strategy, with a new website scheduled for early 2019.

Former Commonwealth Games finalist Adam Bitchell, also joined the communications team, and has been pivotal in driving an improvement in our overall content and coverage of the sport in Wales.

Our social media reach continues to grow, with close to 11,000 Twitter followers, and almost 500,000 twitter engagements with Welsh Athletics each month. This continues to prove the most effective form of communication with many of our members.

Another significant step in 2018 was the launch of our Clubs Portal. Enabling clubs to update their club contacts list in real time has enabled us to be more direct with our communication. This will hopefully enable us to be more focused with our communication to clubs going forward.

We appreciate that we still have a long way to go, but we are committed to improving the way we engage with our membership, whilst at the same time highlighting the many positive aspects of our sport to the widest possible audience.

Governance

We continue to work with our committees to ensure that they are adopting the changes put forward as part of the governance review in 2016. Certain Regions have embraced the proposals and have seen an influx of new clubs engaging. It is clear that there is still work to do with some of the Councils, but we hope to work with them to support them to engage with a wider audience.

The Committees and Councils play a vital role in enabling the various challenges and opportunities that our members face to be highlighted. It is vital that we continue to encourage more representation within our governance structure. This will only be achieved by having the right environment and by being relevant to the clubs, athletes, coaches and officials that they represent.



GENERAL COUNCIL

Sue Alvey
Chair

The main focus of the General Council this year has been around identifying changes that need to be made to enable the delivery of improvements of competition and the development of Athletics in Wales.

We have worked to improve the communication between the General Council and Welsh Athletics and are striving to strengthen the links between Regional Councils, the Athletics Committees and, ultimately, the clubs. We have clarified the roles that the representatives of Regional Council have on the General Council and have undertaken a self-review where we identified that we wanted to have greater input from the Regional Councils and Athletics Committees so that we share good practice and hopefully solve any issues arising from these committees.

This year the General Council has also been involved in the Self Evaluation of the Board and General Council, a process that is still continuing, supported by the Sport and Recreational Alliance.

The role and responsibilities of the Board were clarified and this has focussed the thoughts of the General Council on how we can best serve the Board and the Members.

The General Council has received presentations on the following topics this year:

- **Performance and Coaching development with an emphasis on Commonwealth Games together with the progress of the Regional Development Squads**
- **A presentation of the Club's Portal following on from the launch and presentation at the Club's Conference**
- **A Communications Update from our new Communications and Marketing Manager**
- **A Schools Athletics presentation highlighting the competition programme delivered and the challenges facing schools athletics**

This year saw another very successful Welsh Senior Championships held in Cardiff and a busy and successful Junior Championships held in Newport. The focus for our Elite Athletes of course were the Commonwealth Games held in Gold Coast, Australia. There were some excellent performances in all these events and hopefully, with our support, many more excellent performances to come at all levels in the future.



DIGITAL REVOLUTION GAINING MOMENTUM

In response to your feedback, our communications team are supporting all the departments to identify and implement digital solutions which will improve the service and experience for our members, as well as increasing our ability to gain insight to inform future planning. A number of key new developments launched in 2018 with more to follow in 2019 and beyond.

Club Transfer
This key process is now online and can be completed within 48hrs.

Live Results
We now provide Live Results online at our competitions.

Run Leader App
In 2019 we'll be working to launch a Run Wales App to help Run Group Leaders organise their runs and gather more data, more efficiently.

New Website
Work on the much needed new Welsh Athletics website is well underway and its due to launch in early 2019.

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Race entry and results
A new combined race entry and results system is being developed to simplify and improve the experience for customers.

Clubs Portal
Allowing clubs to affiliate online, self manage club information, and access essential resources and review tools.

Race licensing
Race licensing of Road & Multi-Terrain events has moved online via Run Britain.

CLUB DEVELOPMENT

Chris Moss
Head of Development

Building for success...

Modernisation and growth have very much been the theme for 2018 and in that vein, we have seen strong developments in both the number of clubs and individual members. Welsh Athletics membership now boasts over **12,000 individual registered members** for the first time in the history of the sport.

12,000
Individual registered members

This year we have refined and evolved club affiliation, introducing more stringent and robust methods which focus on good governance and correct policies and procedures. As a result, we now have **109 fully affiliated clubs** across Wales.

109
fully affiliated clubs



Our annual Clubs Conference at the end of 2017 was used to launch the Club Modernisation Programme; a series of club support mechanisms aiming to enhance both the help that we provide to our clubs and the support that we give to the wider membership. The modernisation programme has seen us invest directly into clubs, support key club modernisation projects as well as provide a variety of support services to clubs across the country.

April 2018 saw the launch of the new Welsh Athletics Clubs Portal and, at the time, it was commented that, as a National Governing Body; *"this has placed us at the forefront of developments in this area and one of the leading organisations in the support it offers to the membership"*.

The Clubs Portal boasts a range of features including; Affiliation Management, Club Review and Planning Software, Online Training Course, a Club Document Library, as well as a Club Resource Centre, all of which have enhanced both the depth and level of support we offer to clubs across Wales.

The aforementioned Clubs Conference was part of the 'Conference and Awards Weekend, which included the Welsh Athletics Coaching Conference and the National Awards Dinner.

The dinner was a celebration of the sport and a chance to recognise the work carried out across the sport throughout the year by so many individuals.

The evening saw us recognise national winners across the; club, officiating, volunteering and coaching and athlete categories.

Our Grants for Grassroots Athletics scheme once again proved popular with clubs, and we **distributed over £27,000** to support the work of clubs and school districts at a local level.

The increases in both the number of clubs and the membership across the sport do not come without challenges. What we must be clear on as an organisation is both the role that we play in supporting the development of the sport and the role that the membership has in developing athletics in Wales at all levels. The consultation process and the development of a new strategy for the sport in 2019 will allow us to become more refined and more focussed in the activities that we carry out and the support we offer across the sport.

Statistics

- **7.4% year on year membership growth (September 2018)**
- **Membership – 50.2% Female 49.8% Male**
- **Over 12,000 individual members for the first time... (12,300 at the end of the 2017-18 affiliation year)**
- **7 thorough and comprehensive 'club reviews' launched to support clubs in planning for the future**
- **46 online training opportunities for key club officers and volunteers**
- **26 awards presented to volunteers across the; club, volunteer, officials and coaching categories, as part of the National Awards programme**

£27,000
for clubs and schools

ATHLETE & COACH DEVELOPMENT

Neil Wheeler
Track Coach Development Manager

In 2018 we delivered a full programme of regional and national athlete and coach development activity across the core disciplines: Endurance, Speed, Throws, and Jumps.

National Endurance Development Programme

Our National Development Programme supports around 35 endurance athletes ranked in the UK top 30. The programme shares best practice amongst some of Wales' most talented endurance athletes and coaches and seeks to create a sense of togetherness in the athletics community in Wales. We ran a 4-day camp at Margam Activity Centre, where 34 athletes and 7 coaches worked with the Sport Wales delivery team on four specific areas:

- **Key group skilled running sessions**
- **Key group endurance long interval sessions**
- **Nutrition workshop delivered by Felicity Hares from Sport Wales**
- **Strength and Conditioning with Matt Craythorne, Sport Wales**

Looking ahead to 2019, we will invite more of our junior athletes to senior training camps, which in turn will increase the contact time and levels of support available to those junior athletes.



Chris Jones
Endurance Coach Development Manager

Regional Endurance Development Programme

Our Regional Development Programme is a support regional endurance athletes across Wales, and is divided into four regions across the country led by four regional coordinators:

- **South Wales – Liz Davies (Cardiff AAC)**
- **North Wales – John Messum (Deeside AAC)**
- **West Wales – Delyth Brown (Carmarthen Harriers)**
- **East Wales – Darryn McAtee (Newport Harriers)**

Each Regional Coordinator is supported by a further 3 endurance coaches, to aid the planning and delivery of regional development days. There are currently 150 athletes and 40 coaches involved in the Regional Development Programme, all of whom were involved in four separate regional development days in the autumn and winter of 2017.

Those development days focused on the following key areas:

- **Physical Preparation**
- **Coach Education**
- **Skill Development**
- **Athlete-Coach Support**

Our Regional Development Programme is now embedded into Welsh Athletics' overall endurance programme. In 2019 we will work closely with the WSAA to continue the integration of our respective programmes and competition structures. For example, the four regional coordinators will become responsible for overseeing the selection process for the London Mini Marathon.

Adrian Palmer
Field Coach Development Manager



National Speed Development Programme

Our National Speed Development Programme supports around 40 speed athletes, all ranked in the UK top 30. The aim is to provide opportunities for the top sprinters and hurdlers from across Wales to interact and work together and has four clear objectives:

- **Raise individual standards across all events**
- **Develop baseline relay skills across Regional and National programmes**
- **Transition speed athletes into British teams**
- **Challenge Welsh national records in the 4 x 100m relay**

In December 2017 we hosted two days of activity; the first day brought 40 of the country's best sprinters together for education and practical sessions with the primary theme being the 4x100m relay. The second day brought short and long sprint hurdlers gather in Swansea with their coaches to participate in practical hurdle skill development and physical preparation monitoring and education.

The sprint relay will continue to be a theme within our National Programme moving forwards, and plans are already in place for the winter period of 2018/2019. The standard and depth of sprinting is increasing, we need to work hard to ensure this continues through the next cycle.

Regional Speed Development Programme

Our Regional Speed Programme provided opportunities for athletes, coaches and parents to engage with development activity. The Speed Programme is divided into three regions; led by regional speed coordinators:

- North Wales – Denis Doyle
- South & East Wales – Jason Quirke
- West Wales – Steve Boyles

The overall aim of the Regional Programme is to equip athletes with the skills to progress on to the national programme and to represent Wales.

There are currently over 40 athletes, 30 parents and 12 coaches involved in the Regional Speed Programme, all of whom were involved in five separate regional development days during the autumn and winter of 2017.

These regional days were organised in correlation with the Regional Programme's two major themes:

- Relay Skills
- Physical Preparation



These two themes will continue to be a priority as the programme grows into 2019. The goal of the regional programme over the next few years will be to convert talented junior speed athletes into successful senior athletes.

Jumps, Throws & Combined Events

A significant amount of work and energy has been put into the emerging development pathways by the Regional Event Co-ordinators and volunteer coaches in the community across 2017 / 2018.

The Regional Event Co-ordinators are:

- Jumps – Stephen Bailey & Ed Thompson
- Throws – Robert Eales & Ryan Spencer Jones

Acknowledging that field disciplines have nine events all with very different requirements, the Regional Co-ordinators, along with several volunteer coaches have delivered a series of successful development sessions over the last two years aligned with the following steps on the development pathway:

1. Foundation
2. Development
3. Emerging Pathway

Our objective is to provide a clear development pathway for athletes and coaches that can eventually operate at Commonwealth level. However, there is also a fundamental requirement to provide appropriate development opportunities for athletes and coaches at all levels of the pathway if this is to become a reality.

In 2018, the Regional Coordinators, along with the support of volunteer coaches in the community delivered;

- A 2-day residential development programme focusing on key performance skills and coping strategies
- A follow up 1-day session focusing on planning, physical preparation and building on coping strategies with Chris Beaumont and Vanessa Davies from Sport Wales
- A development day based around Jumps and Throws focusing on warm up drills, coach feedback and physical preparation
- A series of Discus Development days , Open Javelin sessions, and Foundation Athletics sessions
- A series of Open Javelin sessions delivered by the Welsh Javelin Group, focusing on educating athletes and coaches on the technical elements of Javelin Throwing

Our Field Events Programme is an emerging programme which is beginning to gain momentum.

The next two years will be critical in embedding the Foundation / Development Programmes. Whilst we have a very promising cohort of Field Athletes at this juncture, investment in the Programme is key to ensure that the momentum builds. The overarching aim of the Field Events Programme is to develop and raise standards across all areas of the programme.

Coach and Official Education

Tom Marley
Competitions Manager

All the above coach development work is supported by a comprehensive programme of coach education courses.

In 2018, 564 people attended the 44 Coaching courses run. There was a 50:50 gender split in those attending, matching our membership demographic.

In response to the views expressed in the consultation, greater focus will be placed on coach development, club development and our education programmes to ensure ongoing support and opportunities to help new and existing qualified coaches to progress.

Officials

Once more 2018 has seen a fantastic effort from all Officials across Track and Field, and Endurance, supporting a variety of competition from grassroots to National Championships and ensuring their continued success.

The last 12 months has seen 31 Officials Courses with 121 unique individuals attending those courses.

It is great to see so many individuals going through the education process and it is now the task of Welsh Athletics to see how we can best integrate those individuals into the Officials pathway and support their attendance at events in Wales.

We have continued to offer Officials courses free of charge following the 2017 initiative, an offer that is not in place in any other home country.

Welsh Athletics will look to follow this up with a structured rewards programme that will form part of the strategy. The strategy will additionally look at the best way of recruiting and how to retain Officials to support and build upon the current volunteer workforce.

2018 has seen the implementation of Event Adjudicators at all road and multi-terrain races, falling in line with licensing requirements from Run Britain.

To support this activity, there has been a surge of Event Adjudicators in Wales coming from a mixture of Endurance Officials and Race Directors and thank you to everybody who has qualified so far. This ensures that races across Wales are delivered to a minimum standard that is safe and enjoyable for the runners.

It is with great sadness that we lost John Chidlow during 2018. John was instrumental in setting up the Endurance Officials Committee and could be seen at numerous events officiating as well as helping set up and deconstruct courses, and pushing endurance events in Wales forward.

Once again in 2018, there has been numerous high-quality events in Wales and I would like to extend thanks on behalf of Welsh Athletics to all the officials for continuing to make events in Wales something to be proud of. Without your tenacious commitment competitions in Wales could not boast the success that they do.



GOLD COAST

Adam Bitchell
Communications Officer



A strong contingent of Welsh athletes travelled out to Australia's Gold Coast for the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Twenty-six athletes represented Team Wales, supported by members of Welsh Athletics' performance and physiotherapy staff.

Their journey started on 13th March as the cohort departed Sport Wales Headquarters in Cardiff for their pre-games preparation camp in Queensland on the Sunshine Coast, where they spent two weeks fine tuning their preparations and acclimatising to the blistering heat.



During their time in Queensland, Welsh athletes visited local schools to deliver specific coaching sessions and inspire local school children, and a handful of athletes also competed at the Queensland International on 27th March; with Hammer Thrower Osian Jones producing a new Welsh Record throw of 71.62m.

The Games themselves got off to the perfect start from a Welsh perspective, with **Bethan Davies taking bronze in the 20km Race Walk**, and **Olivia Breen winning gold in the T38 Long Jump** in a new Games Record of 4.86m on Day 1. **Hollie Arnold followed up on Day 2 by winning the F46 Javelin** with a new World Record throw of 44.43m, before **Melissa Courtney produced a stunning sprint finish to take bronze** in the 1,500m on Day 4, clocking a new lifetime best of 4:03.44 in the process.

Olivia Breen added to her medal tally on Day 5, clocking 13.35 seconds to take bronze in the T38 100m.

Wales finished 11th overall in the Athletics medal table and helped Team Wales to a 7th placed finish on the overall medal table.

The 5 medals earned on the Gold Coast equalled Wales' best tally in the Athletics after winning 5 medals at the 2010 Games in Delhi. In addition to the 5 medallists, another 9 athletes secured top 8 finishes in their respective events with over 70% of the Athletics team finishing equal to or above their ranking going into their events. The 2018 Games also marked the first time that the para and able-bodied athletics team was fully integrated and was the Games with the highest ever athletics standard.

26 ATHLETES





TEAM WALES - ATHLETICS TÎM CYMRU - ATHLETAU

Gold Coast 2018 XXI Commonwealth Games
Gemau'r Gymanwlad Arfordir Aur 2018 XXI



WELSH ATHLETICS
ATHLETAU CYMRU

COMPETITIONS

Tom Marley
Competitions Manager

All disciplines of our sport saw fierce competition across the age groups this year. We are continuing to consult and work with clubs and event providers to develop standards and support systems across the spectrum of competition in Wales.

ROAD RUNNING

It has been another great year for road running culminating in the inaugural Commonwealth Half Marathon Championships which will be held within the Cardiff University/Cardiff Half Marathon 2018.



The season started with the road relays at Pembrey park for the first time with Swansea victorious in both the senior men's and women's competitions. The road relays race will return for another year to Pembrey in 2018 making use of the newly built National Closed Road Cycle Circuit and following on from the Tour of Britain.

In October was the Cardiff University/Cardiff Half Marathon incorporating the Welsh Half Marathon Championships. This was, once again, a resounding success selling out months in advance with Edith Chelimo smashing the UK All-Comers record clocking a time of 1:05:52. Jenny Nesbitt and Dewi Griffiths were the top Welsh Athletes in 5th and 4th

respectively with the latter becoming the 2nd fastest Welsh man ever with 1:01:33.

This preceded Griffiths' trip to Frankfurt for his debut marathon. Big things were expected after his recent half marathon personal best and the Welsh man did not disappoint running a time of 2:09:49 to become the 2nd fastest Welsh athlete behind Steve Jones.

Welsh Marathon Champions for 2018 were Russell Bentley, 2:29.40 and Clara Evans, 2:59.48.

The 2018 Welsh 10km Championships took place within the Nick Beer 10km in Llandudno which starts and finishes on the promenade taking a loop of the Great Orme. The men's title was taken by

Andrew Davies in 32:36 and the women's by Bronwen Jenkinson in 38.56.

The Welsh 5km Championships took place within the Cardiff 5k and saw Charlotte Arter win the women's race in a new Welsh all-comers record of 15:40 just over a week after Stevie Stockton ran a new national record of 15:39.

The men's race saw 3 of our returning Gold Coast athletes battle it out, with Jon Hopkins coming out on top. He won in 14.18 ahead of Ieuan Thomas, Abed Teweldebrhan, and Tom Marshall.

TRACK & FIELD

Rhiannon Linington-Payne
Event Delivery lead – Track & Field

It will come as no surprise that once again the 2018 domestic season was an incredibly busy one with almost 90 Track & Field events being licensed across the indoor and outdoor seasons.

Welsh Athletics' Photo Finish and timing equipment was utilised at over 50 events during the outdoor season with the income from this hire being reinvested into the development of technology to further modernise our equipment used at competitions. Welsh Athletics Officials and Competition Staff also supported and delivered 37 events during the outdoor season and a further 13 through the 2017-18 indoor season.

Once again without doubt, the highlight of the domestic calendar was the Welsh Senior Championships held on a new date in the fixtures calendar this year of 13th and 14th July. This year also saw the introduction of 4 cash prizes of £500 for the best male and female performances on both track and field with the aim of continuing to increase the quality of the competition at the Welsh Senior Championships.

**Cash prize winners in 2018:
Rebecca Chapman,
Rhistanna Tracey, Osian Jones
& Owen Smith**

We were also delighted to welcome teams from Scotland and Northern Ireland to this year's Welsh Athletics Outdoor International held in Swansea. We hope that the event will continue to attract teams from all the Home Countries and provide a high quality international competition for the U20 age group. Congratulations to England South who were the winning team for 2018. Attendance at outdoor Track & Field Championships continues to grow with a 37% increase in athlete numbers at the Combined Events Championships, a 21% increase in numbers at the Senior Championships and a 36% increase in numbers at the Junior Championships, all based on 2017 figures.

Both indoor Championships also saw significant increases in athlete numbers with the Junior Championships showing a 31% increase from 2017 numbers.

Popularity of event-specific competition continues to grow and this year was no exception with a series of middle distance events being launched in conjunction with Middle Distance Athletics Ltd. The sprints continue to be well-supported with over 330 performances recorded across the two #RunWithTheWind Sprints Open meetings.

The Welsh Athletics League remained ever-popular this year with the total number of athletes across all four fixtures remaining consistent with 2017. Congratulations to Swansea Harriers who defended their title in style, winning all four matches. The Welsh Athletics Junior Leagues continue to go from strength to strength and this year, culminated

in an incredibly close battle between Swansea Harriers and Cardiff Archers at the Cup Final match, with Swansea eventually coming out the victors. Neath Harriers were the winners of the Plate Final. Congratulations must go to Cardiff Archers who qualified for the YDL Lower Age Group National Finals and finished a very credible sixth place.

Welsh Athletics also support the Carmarthen Throws Open and Cardiff Throws Opens which continue to be a success.

At the World Junior Championships there was a bronze medal for Joe Brier in the 4x400m relay and a 4th place finish for Jake Heyward in a tight 1500m final.

Other Performance Highlights:

Lauren Williams Welsh Junior Record 400mH; Osian Jones Welsh Record Hammer; Jac Palmer Welsh U23 Record Hammer; Bethan Rees Welsh U20 Record Javelin; Bethany Moule Welsh U17 Record Javelin; Tom Hewson Welsh Junior Record Javelin; Nicholas Young Welsh Junior Record Shot Put; Amber Simpson Welsh Junior Record Hammer.



CROSS COUNTRY

Alex Donald
Event delivery lead – Endurance

The 2017/2018 Cross Country season was once again extremely successful building momentum and putting Wales on the map.

At the Welsh Inter Regional Championships in Brecon the senior men's winner was Jack Blackburn of Pontypridd Roadents, and senior women's winner was Sandra Chipper, Lliswerry Runners. East Wales won both the men's and women's inter-regional team titles.

The Liverpool Cross Challenge saw Dewi Griffiths finish in an impressive 4th place with Charlie Hulson following closely in 14th. In the Under 20 Men, Matthew Willis and Jake Heyward finished in 3rd and 4th respectively with Cari Hughes winning a bronze medal in the women's race.

At the European Championships, Matthew Willis was Britain's top finisher in the Under 20 Men category finishing in 14th place with Jake Heyward finishing in 30th. Cari Hughes finished an impressive 9th

place helping Great Britain to a team Gold Medal.

Tom Marshall and Melissa Courtney helped the British Team to victory in the inaugural mixed team relay at the same championships.

The Welsh season culminated with the Welsh Cross Country Championships that took place in Swansea's Singleton Park for the last time before it moves to Pembrey Park in 2019. Congratulations to;

Senior Men's Winner – James Hunt (Cardiff AAC)

Senior Men's Team – Swansea Harriers

Senior Women's Winner – Bronwen Owen (Scarborough AC)

Senior Men's Team – Swansea Harriers



MOUNTAIN RUNNING

Arwel Lewis
Mountain Running Secretary

Mountain running continues to prosper and is more popular than ever, both at home, and abroad, with more and more events being organised around the country to cater for the increased participation and demand.

On the International scene, Bronwen Jenkinson of Eryri Harriers takes pride of place, following on from last year's British Championship success, the first, Welsh female champion since 1994. Bronwen also became the first Welsh female champion of the International Snowdon race since 1989 with a time of 1:20:41. The event also saw Welsh athlete Rob Samuel, also Eryri, finish 3rd overall, the best finish by a Welsh male athlete since 2006.

Wales' Senior Men's and Women's teams both picked up medals at the Home Countries International Mountain Running Championships that took place in Sedbergh, Cumbria.

The men's team picked up bronze in a highly competitive field, with Rob Samuel Wales' top finisher in 20th place as the men pipped Ireland for a place on the podium by just one point.

Wales women picked up silver, finishing second behind England with Heidi Davies finishing 3rd and Bronwen Jenkinson finishing 5th individually to help propel the team above the third placed Scottish team.

Both athletes were selected for the British Athletics' Senior Women's team for the European Mountain Running Championships in Skopje, Macedonia, helping them to a fantastic bronze medal.

Andrew Davies (Stockport Harriers) was crowned World Master 35 Champion at the World Masters Mountain Running Championships which took place in Slovenia, and there was more individual gold medal success for Wales in the British & Irish Junior Mountain Running Championships at Glendalough, Ireland with Samia Jones (Menai) winning the Under 17 race in a time of 22:14.



This year's Welsh Athletics Mountain Running Championships were held at the Tal Y Mignedd fell race on the 9th June 2018 in the sun drenched Nantlle valley in the shadow of Snowdon. The ladies' race was won by Caitlin Rice (Ribble Valley) closely followed by Bronwen Jenkinson with Mel Price (Merical) in third. James Espie (Deeside Runners) won the men's race, Sam Tosh (Rossendale Harriers) second closely followed by Ross Gollan (Shettleston) in third overall and first under 23.

A full review of this year's mountain running will be made available online.

TRAIL RUNNING

Matt Ward
Trail Running Secretary

2018 was another fantastic year for trail as many see the joy and benefits of running in the natural surroundings. Participant numbers are up in many events as more runners take to the trails.

Competition providers are also increasing the number of ultra-trail races with the new Ultra-Trail Wales, Scott Snowdonia Trail Ultra, and the Ultra Tour of Snowdonia races providing fantastic opportunities to cater for this increasing demand.

Once again, the Royal Welsh Trail Running Festival played host to the Welsh Inter-Regional Trail Half-Marathon Championships.

The event saw six races with participants ranging from age 2 to 81 learning the beauty of trail running.

The annual Red Kite Challenge hosted the Welsh age group trail running Championships. The men's 10k race was won by Aberystwyth athlete Owain Schiavone, with Andrew Poole (Sarn Helen) finishing second and Norman Biggs (Aberystwyth AC) third.

In the women's 10k race, U20 athlete Chloe Leek (Cwmbran) crossed the line first ahead of Isobel Dawson (TROTS) and Anne Mynott (Colwyn Bay AC). Meanwhile, in the half marathon event it was experienced Welsh international Rob Samuel (Eryri Harriers) who won the men's race ahead of Daniel Bodman (Aberdare Valley) and David Bruce (Bristol & West AAC).

Sarn Helen's Jessica Bruce was victorious in the women's race as she took victory ahead of Lauren Cooper (Parc Bryn Bach) and Nerys Jones (TROTS).

Clubs such as the Academi Coed-Y-Brenin are helping youngsters to enjoy trail running are going strength to strength and with several runners going on to represent Wales in the mountains.

There were once again international opportunities for Welsh Trail Athletes with a team of men and women travelling to Brittany to represent and compete in the Celtic Trail Challenge, two days of races ranging in distance from 10km to 27km.

WELSH SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Steve Jones
Welsh Schools Athletics Support Officer

The Schools Association continues to work in partnership with both Welsh Athletics and Run4Wales. What follows is an account of the activities undertaken during the 2017/18 academic year.

Domestically, competition began on Saturday, October 7th with the Joint Combined Events Championships, held at NIAC, Cardiff. This led to selection for 16 young athletes to attend the Indoor International which this year returned to the Emirates Arena in Glasgow.

The Inter Schools Cross Country returned to Brecon on Saturday, November 18th. There were 368 finishers on the day with an additional 81 taking part in the primary school development races.

Teams representing the eight School Districts were back at Brecon for the National Cross Country Championships on Wednesday March 7th.

Following this event teams were selected to travel to Wollaton Park in Nottingham for the SIAB Cross Country (32 athletes) as well as to London for the Mini Marathon (36 selected). WSAA also selected teams of 6 to participate at the Home Countries International Cross Country.



March also saw the Welsh Schools Sportshall Final at Cwmbran which was again an unqualified success.

Swansea University again provided the venue for the Outdoor Combined Events Championships on Saturday, June 9th. This was again in partnership with Welsh Athletics and again saw an increase in numbers.

The Schools summer Track & Field Championships were an important part of the Gemau Cymru festival of sport early in July. The event saw 2 new Welsh age group records as well as 8 new Championship Bests. Following the Championships, a team of 69 was selected and travelled to the SIAB International at Grangemouth, Scotland at the end of July, the team returned a haul of 8 medals. In addition, there were no fewer than 17 personal bests.

The Association also accepted an invitation from Welsh Athletics to enter teams in the Under 20 International.

Qualifying events across the 8 School Districts fed into the final event of the domestic programme as a total of 63 teams from 41 schools battled it out in the NASUWT Cup and Plate Final in Brecon on July 11th. Quality of performance was evidenced by no fewer than 13 new Championship Best Performances which punctuated a great day of athletics, a fitting end to another great year of schools' competition.

RUN WALES

Gareth Hall
Run Wales Programme Manager



Run Wales continues to grow, providing high quality, easily accessible and fun running opportunities for everybody. Everybody has a reason to run. Here at Run Wales we celebrate people and groups who run, jog and walk their way to a more active lifestyle. So regardless of age, fitness level, aspiration, background or location we are aspiring for everyone to be a part of Run Wales.

Our programmes have again seen fantastic growth over the last 12 months and continue to provide the inspiration, expertise and opportunity for more people than ever to run across Wales.

A relatively new addition to the suite of programmes, but one that is proving ever more successful is workplace running. Aimed at encouraging employers to support running groups during or after work hours, the scheme has already been taken up by a number of high profile Welsh and Welsh based businesses. The programme is proving an easy sell as employers are quick to recognise the benefits of having a healthy and active workforce.



Participants with mental ill health were supported to train and complete the Swansea Half Marathon. Also in West Wales, Walk to Run Carmarthen has proved popular, and a group linked to the DW Fitness First store in Llanelli is now well established. The expanding group is led by Rob Champion, who was recognised in the Welsh Athletics awards as Run Group Leader of the Year.

The Group of the Year award went to Blaenau Gwent's Sole Sisters, who were featured in BBC Wales' Cardiff Half Marathon coverage.

Our strategic alliance with Parkrun has continued to flourish and prove fruitful. This weekly running opportunity now has 14 junior and 33 senior parkruns, with at least one senior event in each Welsh local authority. Registration numbers for the events have shown significant growth, with over 110,000 individuals signed up, representing a 34% increase over a 12 month period.

Looking forward we strongly believe that Run Wales is ideally placed to lead the sector in promoting physical activity across Wales. To this end we will look to be at the vanguard when full details of the new Healthy and Active Fund, a partnership between Welsh Government, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales, are announced.



As well as our successful website, social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram continue to prove increasingly popular.

Run Wales could not be as successful as it is without key partners and stakeholders. We continue to build these relationships to deliver new and exciting opportunities. Such examples include working with specific groups of the population, with successful groups being set-up as diverse as mental health wellbeing run groups to buggy running group for new mums.

Work with Carmarthenshire County Council has led to the successful We Can Run Llanelli group being established and featured by Wales Online this year.

The increasing number of registered run groups, workplace running opportunities and Leaders in Running Fitness, as well as the success of partnerships, such as with parkrun, continue to prove the impact Run Wales is having.



The number and geographical spread of our running groups has risen significantly, and we now have 133 registered groups across Wales. Supporting these groups are an invaluable workforce of qualified Run Leaders. Over the past two years we have successfully qualified 650 Leaders in Running Fitness (LiRF's) and 49 Coaches in Running Fitness (CiRF's). As we continue to seek equality balance across all our programmes it is heartening to note that across all qualified LiRF's and CiRF's in Wales 54% are females.

ROLL OF HONOUR

The full Roll of Honour can be viewed at:
<http://www.welshathletics.org/about-us/our-history>

Life Membership

John Penny – Cardiff AAC

Life Membership of Welsh Athletics is reserved for individuals who have given long and exceptional service to athletics in Wales, either at regional, national or national schools level. John also received a Lifetime Achievement award.



Award of Honour

Peter Lane – Cardiff AAC

Peter Walton – Neath Harriers AC

Brian Davies – Cardiff & Vale Schools

David Llewellyn – Timekeeper

The Award of Honour is given to individuals in recognition of exceptional service to athletics in Wales. The award is given for a minimum of twenty-five years active contribution to the sport at club, regional, school, district schools or national level on behalf of Welsh Athletics or the Welsh Schools Athletic Association.

Meritorious Awards

Brian Fox – Swansea Harriers

George Edwards – Swansea Harriers

Jeff Cooze – Swansea Harriers

David Davies – Neath Harriers

Neil Edwards – Wrexham AAC

Philip Walker – Wrexham AAC

Helen Davies – Wrexham AAC & North East Schools AA

John Gould – Blaenau Gwent AC

Christine Vorres – Pontypool & District AC

Simon Mansfield – Carmarthen Harriers

Christopher Boswell – Newport Harriers

Colin Bradley – Newport Harriers

The Meritorious Award is open for to individuals for services at club, regional, school, district schools and / or national level on behalf of Welsh Athletics or the Welsh Schools Athletic Association. The award is given in recognition of services to athletics in Wales over a minimum period of fifteen years active service to the sport.

Hall of Fame

Five more legends of Athletics in Wales were inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2018:

Berwyn Jones

Nick Whitehead

Julie Crane

Matt Elias

Rhys Williams





WELSH ATHLETICS
ATHLETAU CYMRU

welshathletics.org

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