

Chairman's Report – Mark Ridsdale

Once again, I will start with 'thank-you's to all our volunteers. Its important to recognise that we are a volunteer-led organisation, and that without the time and effort being expended by what is really quite a small number of volunteers, Welsh Fencing would simply cease to function.

I will start with my colleagues on the Board. So much work goes on behind the scenes, and I would like to formally recognise that, and say a big 'thank you' to all of you.

As well as the Board, there is a small community of workers that I would like to acknowledge:

- Michael Clemitson does a sterling job of managing our dbs data. This is extremely important, as it's a Home Nation responsibility. While BFA have an interest, the actual responsibility lies with us, so its important that any dbs requests from Michael are addressed. Michael liaises closely with BFA and Sport80 to manage our access to our data, and I know that this always brings issues. He brings that data through into the Crufts system, making the data accessible to the club community. The advent of GDPR had an impact in this area that was dealt with at the time. Allan, as our Data Protection Officer will mention this in his report.
- Gethin is a big part of our social media 'team'. He (along with Fran) is part of the WF face of Twitter. He brings an interesting twist on the more traditional approach to tweets, as well as ensuring we communicate in Welsh as well as English. We have been able to draw his imagery through into the website, offering a more integrated approach. Its also worth noting that it was Gethin who designed the 'new' Welsh patch, now used world-wide. So, Gethin – thanks for all your hard work.
- Referees. We have a small but important community of referees who support our local events. These are crucial in ensuring we are able to run our events, particularly the Youth ones. If anyone out there is interested in joining that team, there is always room for more. Please get in touch.
- Armourers. We are fortunate to have a strong team of armourers who support the local events. Again, they make sure that the equipment used by the fencers (especially the kids) is fit for purpose. They support the all the Welsh events, including the Welsh Open. Thanks – Nigel, Simon & Michael. Its especially good to be able to use local resource for the Welsh Open.
- Team Managers. These are absolutely crucial in our being able to support the various teams we send out. This is particularly important for those Youth events, of which there have been quite a few this year. We have had the Cadet & Junior Commonwealths, Challenge Wratistavia, Y5N, and the Cadet Winton this year. So thanks to Fran, Rachel, Jayne, Carl (and anyone I may have missed!). There are strict

requirements around this area, and a lack of TM could seriously impact on our ability to send teams to events. We simply cannot continue to rely on the same people time and time again.

- Welsh Open Team. This is an important team of people, as the Welsh Open is still seen as one of the few prestigious 6W events in the calendar. At one time, there were many of these, but in recent years the number has been falling. We are still up there, with Birmingham and the Nationals, as delivering a quality 6W event. That's down to Allan & his team (Tom & Sarah), who have worked hard to bring the event into the modern world through clever use of technology.
- Y5N. This was a new event this year, introduced as a replacement to the School Games. Wales stepped up to offer run the inaugural event, and I have to say, did a great job. A fabulous piece of work achieved by the team (led by Pete), really setting a high standard for the future. So, thanks to everyone involved in that

Well, that was a fairly long list of thank yous, but that serves to show just how much we rely on volunteers.

I think it's worth considering our Strategy, as that drives our activities, and will help to why we do what we do.

We have a four-prong strategy of:

1. Developing our coaches.
2. Developing our fencers
3. Managing our business
4. Delivering our competitions

I will focus on number 3, managing our business, as the others will be covered by my colleagues. There are a few things to report.

- The first has to be resources. This year we saw a reduction in both our grant funding and GIA from Sport Wales. This is one of our major risks, and something that we continue to actively manage. We need to ensure that any funding received is spent sensibly in delivering against our strategy. That's why we continue fund coach development (so, for example, we are organising a First Aid at Work course to run next February, and we subsidise the coach development workshops). This will continue to be an area of concern and will be closely monitored. The reduction in our GIA will impact on our venue costs – again, something we will monitor closely. I would also add that we established a relationship with the Welsh Sports Association this year; a relationship that allows us to offer governance support to our club network. So, if any clubs need support, we can connect you up. They are actively organised commercial relationships to give us a 'one stop shop' approach to

purchasing services, but they still have some way to go. We will keep an eye on that to see where there may be value for us.

- Safeguarding is a key responsibility, and its great to have someone with the depth of experience of Tania on the Board. Last year, I reported that we would be aiming to achieve the Level 1 Safeguarding, and I am pleased to report that we successfully achieved that. I won't steal any more of Tania's thunder as that's been an area of significant effort for her, and will no doubt be covered in her report.
- GDPR is definitely part of our business, and required some attention this year. That triggered us to implement website changes and beef up our policies. Allan will cover that.

I think its also worth mentioning the fencing.

The Cadet & Junior Commonwealth Fencing Championships were held in Newcastle this year. In the individual events, Abi Watkins achieved a Bronze medal in the Cadet Women's Epee. Well done, Abi. The Junior Men's Epee Team came away with a silver medal. Well done Owen, Jack, George and Dylan).

The Commonwealth Senior and Veteran Fencing Championships have just finished in Canberra. Well done to Emma Waller for achieving a BRONZE medal in the Veteran Women's Sabre, and to the Women's Epee Team (of Jess, Stella and Rebecca) who also won BRONZE in the Senior Women's Epee.

Its been a busy year.

Mark Ridsdale

9 December, 2018.

Directors report, Allan Banks

Welsh Open 2018

The table below shows the number of people who fenced in each competition over the last 11 years.

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
MF	117	109	72	73	56	63	62	66	102	100	73
ME	172	136	127	113	96	87	61	64	95	110	90
MS	95	84	58	91	94	82	58	54	49	48	50
WF	66	71	62	60	48	52	29	37	50	51	47
WE	91	101	83	73	77	95	47	67	101	115	85
WS	55	48	33	45	46	55	32	43	27	46	29
Total	596	549	435	455	417	434	289	331	424	470	374

The numbers fencing this year were 96 fencers down on last year with a drop in almost all weapons. Whilst this is disappointing, it does not reflect the feedback we received from those who fenced.

We had the usual set of challenges, however we had a particular problem in the Jubilee hall with false readings on several boxes. I would like to give a special mention to our armourers who worked to diagnose the fault and found a problem with the power supply to some of the sockets in that hall rather than the WF equipment.

It's worth noting that 2018 was the 48th Welsh Open and that in recent years a number of 6 weapon open tournaments have dropped off of the calendar. We believe the Welsh promotes Welsh Fencing and as part of that we try to provide quality referees and officials. In particular, we encourage some less well qualified referees to experience this event and hopefully for them to then continue to develop.

We will continue to look at what is necessary for Welsh Fencing to support the Welsh Open and also ensure its reputation as an event that is worth attending.

GDPR

The new European regulations on data privacy came into force during the year. GDPR has far reaching consequences for all organisations and Welsh Fencing is not exempt.

Mark Ridsdale ensured that the web pages met the requirements and our policies on access to Welsh fencing data have been reviewed. I have taken the role of GDPR Officer.

We have not received any challenges that fall under the GDPR regulations.

I would urge all clubs to be aware of the GDPR requirements. Do not assume that just you avoid the regulations. Personal details kept manually as well as such details held on

electronic devices are all subject to GDPR. Welsh Fencing cannot take on responsibility for your compliance with GDPR, but we are willing to work with you if you have any concerns.

Allan Banks,
Vice-Chair, Welsh fencing

Safeguarding Officer Report – Tania Craig

Having been in post for one year, I feel that I am now in a position to start moving things forward to support all clubs. It's been a learning curve!

I think it is important to recognise that whilst many see safeguarding as something that is important for the younger fencers in our care, it is actually for all fencers - regardless of age. It also encompasses welfare concerns which may not necessarily be safeguarding, but be broader in nature.

TRAINING

I have attended the CPSU (NSPCC) training and information meetings for National Safeguarding Leads – this has proved invaluable and has allowed us to develop some new processes in line with other National Governing Bodies, which will ensure that the fencers we represent know that we are taking their safety and welfare very seriously.

I have met with Ceri Dando from the CPSU, to look at the ways in which she and others can support Welsh Fencing to move forward to achieving the Level 2 Safeguarding Award – having successfully achieved Level 1 earlier in the year. This will involve all clubs playing their part through their Welfare Officer and working hard to ensure consistency in approach.

To that end there will be Welfare Officer training organised in the New Year to which all relevant people will be invited to, and expected to, attend. If we are to ensure we are compliant across the board there needs to be at least one person in every club who has completed the training.

There are a number of Time to Listen courses running in the coming year – please check the CPSU website for venues and dates.

I have updated the event checklist, which will once rolled out in the New Year, will need to be signed off by either myself or Mark Ridsdale to ensure that we are complying with all safeguarding procedures at every event.

INCIDENTS REPORTED

Due to data protection, I cannot give specific detail about the individual situations reported.

There have been three safeguarding / welfare issues brought to my attention during the year, in three different clubs.

For each of them I investigated the incident, ensured that all involved were safe and that there was no risk to anyone and then fed back to the person reporting the incident and to

Mark Ridsdale as Chairperson. All were successfully resolved within a short period of time after being reported to me.

In all three cases, I would like to thank everyone for their co-operation in resolving the issues raised.

Tania Craig
9 December, 2018

Director Report – Peter Russell

Over the year my primary responsibility has been the provision of coach education and development within Wales. In this role I have delivered/coordinated 8 coach education seminars in both the North and South of the country, and two BF level courses, qualifying 8 new coaches and upgrading the level of 7. In my coach education capacity I also attended BF education seminars and attended courses. I've started work towards creating a more integrated development plan for Wales, linking coach education, referee development and youth squad training, though this is at an early stage, I hold great hopes for the future opportunities this integration will offer to the WF community.

Earlier in the year, I organised the inaugural Youth Five Nations on behalf of WF in Cardiff. This new event replaces the School Games and it was fantastic to have Wales host young fencers from across the UK and Ireland. Ireland take on the event in 2019 and I look forward to seeing it become a permanent fixture in the calendar.

In a more general capacity I have attended regular board meetings, assisting where I feel I can make a contribution. I've also assisted in the running and organising of various WF events and competitions.

It is with regret that I stand down from the board, but unfortunately I can't continue to contribute the time to do the role justice, and feel the board can only benefit from getting input/ideas from new members. I will of course continue to support the board and the sport of fencing in Wales in whatever way I can.

Can I take this opportunity to commend the members of the board. Over the past two years I have had the opportunity of seeing how hard they work on behalf of the members, sacrificing their time and expending masses of energy to develop, support and improve the sport in Wales. It has been a pleasure to work alongside you.

Peter Russell
9 December, 2018

Treasurer's Report – Caroline Wheeler

The financial statements reflect the transactions of the year ended 31 March 2018 and include accrued amounts for the period.

The Board's intention is to continue to support all activities associated with the sport of fencing, this includes athletes of all levels from beginners to elite international competitors as well as the 'back room' teams of coaches, referees, armorers and administration officers. We are continuing our work to encourage all Welsh affiliated clubs to engage with the Board so that the support offered is fit for purpose and helps clubs to retain and increase membership. During 2017/18 we have offered safeguarding and first aid courses to our members as well as coach development days. We are still striving to extend the area in which the courses are operated to cover the whole of Wales not just Cardiff and the South.

Our income comes from grant aid, membership subscriptions, competition entry fees and payment for courses. Grant income remained static at £22,000 and £3,000 for Talent Cymru, the amount that we have received for the current year, 2018/19 has been reduced by £4,000 to £18,000. All of the Talent Cymru funds were distributed to individual fencers within the terms of the grant.

Membership income increased by £782 to £8,283. The income is received from British Fencing on an ad hoc basis after charges have been deducted for the processing of the membership applications and renewals.

The grant income of £22,000 is used to pay for coach and fencer development days and for first aid courses and safeguarding updates. The funds are also used to purchase equipment, to support Welsh teams representing the region at international and domestic events such as the Winton, Cadet Winton, 5 Nations, Commonwealths and UK School Games.

This year's income from competition entry fees has increased from £14,750 to £29,241. This reflects additional entry fees relating to the Youth trip to Poland and contributions from the other Home nations towards the costs of the 5 Nations that was held in Cardiff in November 2017. The costs of competitions has also increased from £26,623 to £44,984 being the total of both domestic and international costs. The £13,424 represents the cost of the Poland trip while the additional expense in domestic competitions relates to our share of hosting the 5 Nations.

The income and expenditure for the 2017 Welsh Open is included in the figures of competition income and domestic events, following the success of offering cash prizes the Open has improved its profitability to return a better surplus, the Board will continue to closely monitor the event to ensure it is still of benefit.

The Directors are not remunerated and the Company does not operate a PAYE scheme. Occasional out of pocket expenses are reimbursed to the Board executive members on receipt of a valid invoice. In the year ended 31 March 2018 the following amounts were paid:

Mark Ridsdale	£nil
Allan Banks	£nil
Caroline Wheeler	£nil
Peter Russell	£nil
Fran Russell	£nil
Alun Boore	£nil
Tania Craig	£nil

Included with in the administration costs is £102.42p which relates to the costs of tea and coffee when the Board meets and conference calls to allow remote Board members to take part in meetings via the telephone.

We also paid £1,230 net of contributions from fencers to support the UKSG. This is the last year that fencing will be included in the UK School Games. We have tried to establish an alternative event to replace this for our younger fencers, unfortunately this has been met with mixed results. Initial correspondence indicated full support from the other Home Nations but after Peter Russell and others organised the competition a number of Home Nations withdrew their support. The costs of this will be reported in the 2019 accounts. We are still pursuing our costs.

Our costs for the year totaled £56,894 – Coaching costs £2,728 (this includes provision of first aid and safeguarding courses); cost of domestic events £31,560, Poland trip £13,424, other costs (bank charges, depreciation and general administration) £9,182. Other costs have fallen as the depreciation charge this year was £6,555 compared to £9,743 last. General administration costs have also reduced as we have not suffered a cancellation charge from the WIS for late amendments to events.

Overall for the year we have a surplus of £4,911, £2,280 of this arises from a refund of bank charges dating back over several years. Without that one off windfall our surplus would have been £2,631.

Our balance sheet shows we hold funds of £75,326 in cash at the bank and £13,778 in assets so our overall member's funds have increased by the surplus of £4,911 to £84,333. The debtors and creditors on the balance sheet relate to amounts to be received and paid in respect of the Poland trip which took place in March 2018.

The Board regularly reviews the financial position of our organisation and carefully considers how to allocate funds to obtain the best value and return for Welsh Fencing. It is important that we use our funds for our current fencers but must always retain sufficient reserves to allow the organisation to continue, particularly now that our grant income has been cut to £18,000. This balancing act of spending sensibly while also saving for a rainy day is difficult to achieve but the Board will continue to apply a risk averse prudent strategy to ensure that Welsh Fencing can continue to operate for many years to come.

Caroline Wheeler
9 December, 2018