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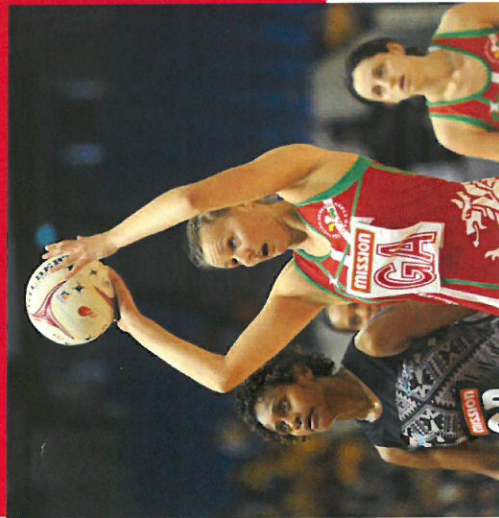
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Sport Wales National Centre  
Sophia Gardens  
Cardiff  
CF11 9SW

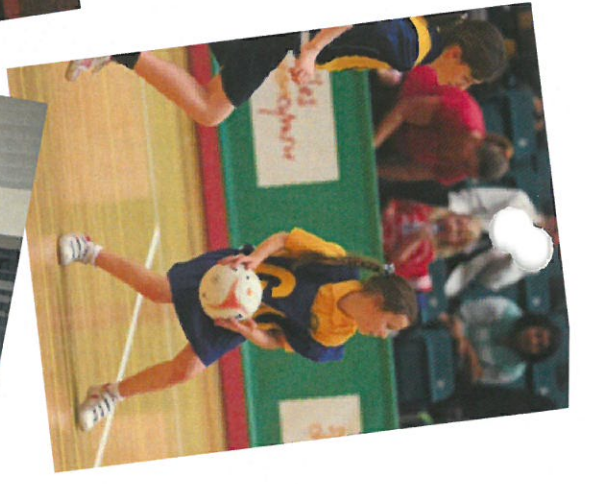
Tel. 0845 045 4302  
Email. [welshnetball@welshnetball.com](mailto:welshnetball@welshnetball.com)  
Web. [www.welshnetball.co.uk](http://www.welshnetball.co.uk)



# ANNUAL REPORT 2011—12



**Welsh Netball**  
Pêl rwyd Cymru 



NETBALL EUROPE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIPS 2012

The 2012 Netball Europe Championships will be held from 25 – 27 May 2012 in the EIS in Sheffield.

The squad selected to represent Wales will be:

Suzy Drane (Co Captain)
Sophie Morgan
Nicola James
Kyra Jones
Emma Thomas
Cara Lea Moseley
Chelsea Lewis
Rebecca James
Sara Hale (Co Captain)
Stephanie Williams
Jamilla Abbott
Rosie Pretorius

<b>Head Coach</b>	<i>Melissa Hyndman</i>
<b>Assistant Coach</b>	<i>Laura Williams</i>
<b>Technical Coach</b>	<i>Sophie Baxter</i>
<b>Team Manager</b>	<i>Wendy Pressdee</i>
<b>Physiotherapist</b>	<i>David Saunders</i>
<b>Sports Psychologist</b>	<i>Nikki Donovan</i>
<b>Massage Therapist</b>	<i>Alice Rees</i>
<b>Video Analysis</b>	<i>Liz Bealing</i>

To that end the Board has approved proposals for the senior team to undertake a ranking match tour this Autumn, the likely destination being the Cook Islands (currently ranked above us), with matches as well against Scotland, who are expected to be out there at the same time. The topic of international rankings remains shrouded in mystery, with very few people really understanding every single nuance and detail, but the essential facts are that if you play matches and win, you will increase your own ranking score. If these are against teams above you, there is a higher weighting than for winning against teams below you. There is also a weighting which favours matches played in the most recent two years of the four year cycle under which performances count. I think I'll stop there in case some of you are not following all this.... Basically, we need to be as sure as we can that come the cut-off point (likely to be summer 2013) we are in the top eleven. It is vital, for a non-Olympic sport like ours, that we are competing in the Commonwealth Games on a regular basis.

The other challenge revolved around ongoing participation in Superleague. The Celtic Dragons won six of their sixteen matches in 2011, which put us in a reasonably strong position from a performance perspective – especially as the Glasgow Wildcats had not won a single match – but we did not know whether any additional English regions would submit a bid for a franchise, and there was also the chance that Northern Ireland would follow up their initial interest.

Melissa Hyndman and I worked extremely hard on the bid and presentation and we were delighted when the Celtic Dragons' participation for the next four years was subsequently confirmed. It gives us an appropriate degree of certainty and continuity and enables us to plan properly rather than effectively operating from hand to mouth.

We are also really pleased with the new format. It has led to more interest in the first part of the season as teams jockey for position, and to more competitive matches between what would seem to be more evenly matched teams in the second half. There are some logistical issues which need dealing with, of course, such as the relatively short turnaround between the final match of the first phase and the opening match of the second, which in our case led to difficulty in selling tickets, and we would like there to be a more considered approach to the selection of televised matches, but these points have been

acknowledged and we are hopeful that there will be some further, beneficial changes in time for 2013.

Our promises at our presentation haven't been empty ones, either. The Dragons have been providing genuine competition. Following the six wins in 16 last year, 2012 has seen nine wins from 13 matches and the achievement of our objective of qualifying for at least the 'Eliminator', the one-off match to determine the final qualifier for the Finals weekend in London. The team has come on in leaps and bounds and it's been fantastic to follow their progress. There is a genuine buzz around the team.

Melissa has done a magnificent job, but her management team also deserve a lot of credit. Wendy Pressdee as Team Manager, Dave Saunders as Physiotherapist, Liz Bealing as Analyst and Rob Ahmun as Strength and Conditioning Coach have all done a superb job in preparing and supporting the squad throughout the 2011 season and again in 2012.

The Junior Dragons have also done well this year. They won four matches and ended the season in their highest ever position. It's not an easy task for Di Morgan, the head coach, and her management team, because the line-up changes so regularly at this particular level, but there has been steady improvement again this year.

We have asked England Netball if it is possible to obtain some clarity on the perceived purpose and objectives of the NTL competition. We remain big supporters of the concept but we would prefer a more structured fixture list, with matches mirroring the senior NSL fixtures so that the younger players are able to experience the whole 'big match atmosphere'. We recognize, however, that there are seven other franchises with their own opinions, as well as two English regions – South and West Midlands – who do not have senior NSL teams but who want to enter teams in the NTL competition. Along with the potential conflict of the Premier League competition across Offa's Dyke there are a host of different considerations. But some clarity would be helpful prior to the 2013 competition starting.

The Wales teams at Netball Europe all delivered silver medal-winning performances. The Under-21s, under the guidance of Head Coach Laura Williams, started their long approach to the IFNA World Youth Championships in Scotland next summer with second place, and the

### NETBALL EUROPE U21 CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS 2012 (Development Division – Wales U19 Squad)

	Malta	England	NNI	Wales	Points	Final Position
Malta		22	47	20		
England	65		92	30	5	3rd
NNI	30	10		19	1	4th
Wales	67	35	59		11	2nd

Netball Europe U19 Squad 2012

RHIAN BETHELL	<i>S E Wales</i>
CATRIN BOWEN (Captain)	<i>Afan Nedd Tawe</i>
HANNAH CADWALLADER	<i>Powys</i>
FERN DAVIES	<i>N East Wales</i>
BETHAN DYKE (Vice Captain)	<i>Glamorgan Valleys</i>
KATE GILDERSLYE	<i>Cardiff &amp; Vale</i>
HANNAH JONES	<i>Glamorgan Valleys</i>
KATIE LLEWELLYN	<i>Afan Nedd Tawe</i>
ELIZABETH PENFOLD	<i>S E Wales</i>
HARRIET SKINNER	<i>Cardiff &amp; Vale</i>
ELOISE SKINNER	<i>Cardiff &amp; Vale</i>
LEANNE THOMAS	<i>N E Wales</i>
Head Coach	<i>Diane Morgan</i>
Assistant Coach	<i>Tina Cox</i>
Team Manager	<i>Tina Cooke</i>

### NETBALL EUROPE U21 CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS 2012

	Wales	England	NNI	Scotland	Points	Final Position
Wales	39	1	5	5	11	2nd
England	58	5	5	5	15	1st
NNI	35	1	0	1	2	4th
Scotland	35	1	5	6	6	3rd

Player of the Championship – Sophie Morgan, Wales

### Netball Europe U21 Squad 2012

BETHAN BARKER	N East Wales
SIONED HISCOCKS	Glamorgan Valleys
CHELSEA LEWIS	Glamorgan Valleys
EMMA THOMAS	S E Wales
CATHY BASTIAN	Glamorgan Valleys
CARLY LEWIS	Glamorgan Valleys
SOPHIE MORGAN	N East Wales
SADIE BISHOP	Glamorgan Valleys
LOIS HOUGH	N East Wales
NIA JONES	N East Wales
LATEISHA KIDNER	Glamorgan Valleys
STEPHANIE MURPHY	N East Wales
<i>Head Coach</i>	Laura Williams
<i>Assistant Coach</i>	Melissa Hyndman
<i>Team Manager</i>	Lavinia Baker
<i>Physiotherapist</i>	David Saunders
<i>Video Analysis</i>	Liz Bealing

Under-19s (also in Belfast), and the Under-17s (Glasgow) also finished second. The senior event takes place in Sheffield in a couple of weeks' time. All of the teams, along with the Under-15s, who we are very hopeful will be heading to Switzerland to play a couple of matches around Easter 2013, are making excellent progress and we are really grateful to their respective management teams. The individual names are all listed elsewhere in this report. We really wouldn't be able to run teams without their commitment and support.

At the time of writing we are putting the finishing touches to Welsh Netball's long term performance plan. Initially aimed at the four years up to 2016 it will be revised and updated to ensure we're always working to a rolling four-year cycle. Led by Melissa Hyndman, Mel Tuckwell and the Performance Committee, the plan sets out our objectives, how we intend to operate and what structure we will need to put in place to deliver it. Clearly there are both cost and funding issues and we need to prioritize against objectives in other areas before we can commit to everything but the plan has already been the subject of a lot of consultation and revision and the Board has now approved the principles subject to affordability.

The plan focuses a lot, as you would expect, on the Hubs. We need to ensure that the feeder process for players, coaches, umpires and managers coming into the eight Hubs is in place and that there is consistency across Wales, which isn't currently the case. Obviously it will take time to do this and we recognize we need to communicate our intentions. Arguably with so much going on in 2011-12 we have not been quite as effective in this area as we would have liked but over the next few months I would expect to see a heightened degree of communication from Welsh Netball to the Hubs on performance matters and specifically on issues such as this.

## DEVELOPMENT

Once again it has been a year where 'visibility' has been a key word. I type this as my car is being put through its paces (a.k.a. an MOT) and with a broken turbo, two new drive shafts, rear brakes and four brand new tyres, the wallet has taken a hit as the 15,000+ miles have been racked up. It's easy for me to be flippant. However, without a willingness to travel to meet stakeholders – local authorities in particular – the whole process of trying to promote netball and to force our way onto people's respective agendas would be so much more difficult. We cannot expect to develop as an NGB by sitting on our backsides in an office in Cardiff.

Last year we had just employed the first of our Regional Netball Development Officers, with Suzy Drane having been in post for a matter of a few days at the 2011 AGM. Her appointment was the precursor to us taking on seven new (or redeployed) development officers to cover the other seven area associations. In December Claire Joll started in post as Cardiff and the Vale Development Officer and she was followed a few weeks later by Lucy Murray-Williams in the North West. Towards the end of last year we also redeployed Carolyn Greenwood, previously covering Swansea on a part time basis, and increased her hours to take in Neath Port Talbot as well, thus serving the Afan Nedd Tawe region. Anneka O'Connor was already in post in the North East so we did some rejigging of community coach personnel to enable Anneka to reprioritize her time. That means five regions are now pretty well covered.

At the time of writing we still have to deal with West Wales, where we have two current Netball Development Officers (NDOs) on contracts (Lyn Ryland in Carmarthenshire and Alice Watts in Pembrokeshire); Powys, where Margaret Nuttall retired towards the end of 2011; and Glamorgan Valleys, where Becky Lewis has been combining her new post as one of RCT's community managers with some strategic responsibility for netball. I aim to have all three of these positions sorted out, with one person taking the lead for netball in each of them, by the Autumn. The original plan was to have done all eight by the Summer of 2013 so we would be ahead of schedule.

The "8x4" model – eight Areas all having their own development lead, Forum, Hub and local authority partnerships – is something we committed to some time ago with Sport Wales and it's beginning to come together. I am still a little frustrated at a lack of progress here and

## NETBALL EUROPE U17 CHAMPIONSHIP RESULTS 2012

	England	NNI	Scotland	Wales	Points	Final Position
England	70	5	67	62	15	1st
NI	10	0	32	28	3	4th
Scotland	25	35	32	46	8	3rd
Wales	29	0	46	46	8	2nd

### Netball Europe U17 Squad 2012

EVIE BRERETON	<i>N E Wales</i>
FRANCESCA RICHARDS	<i>Cardiff &amp; Vale</i>
MEGAN POWELL	<i>Afan Nedd Tawe</i>
CHLOE MACLENNAN	<i>N E Wales</i>
ANNA LEWIS	<i>Glamorgan Valleys</i>
ISABELLE DUNSFORD	<i>Cardiff &amp; Vale</i>
CELYN EMANUEL	<i>Glamorgan Valleys</i>
GEORGIA WOOD	<i>Powys</i>
OLIVIA PHILLIPS	<i>N E Wales</i>
CERYS EVANS	<i>Glamorgan Valleys</i>
SARAH LEWELLYN	<i>Afan Nedd Tawe</i>
ELEANOR ROBERTS	<i>S E Wales</i>
<i>Head Coach</i>	Chris Weaver
<i>Assistant Coach</i>	Shaun Williams
<i>Team Manager</i>	Becky Lewis
<i>Physiotherapist</i>	Katy Gilvear

Tournament Results 2012

<b>Open Inter Area Championships – 28 April – LC2, Swansea</b>	Cardiff & District
Open Division 1 Winners	Afan Nedd Tawe
Open Division 1 Runners Up	Afan Nedd Tawe
Open Division 2 Winners	North West Wales
Open Division 2 Runners Up	North West Wales
<b>U14 &amp; U16 Inter Area Championship – 25/26 February – Deeside Leisure Centre &amp; Glyndwr University</b>	
U14 Winners	North East Wales
U14 Runners Up	Afan Nedd Tawe
U16 Winners	Afan Nedd Tawe
U16 Runners Up	North East Wales
<b>U18 Inter Area Championship – 4/5 February – Cardiff University, Talybont</b>	
U18 Winners	Afan Nedd Tawe
U18 Runners Up	North East Wales
<b>U21 Inter Area Championship – 4/5 February – Cardiff University, Talybont</b>	
U21 Winners	Ser Morgannwg
U21 Runners Up	North East Wales
<b>Anne Smart &amp; Presidents Cup – 25 March – Cwmbran Stadium</b>	
Anne Smart Winners	North East Wales-Cannah's Quay High School
Anne Smart Runners up	Cardiff & Vale- Corpus Christi High School
Presidents Cup Winners	South East Wales-Coleg Gwent Crosskeys
Presidents Cup Runners Up	Afan Nedd Tawe – Ysgol Gyfun Gwyr

there but we had a very good session with the NDOs and Sport Wales a few weeks ago focusing on challenges, barriers, timescales for resolution and how we could ensure that there was adequate support to help the NDOs deliver what we're asking them to.

A key objective over the coming six months are the Forums. Some are up, running and thriving; a couple haven't started. We need to prioritize this area of work as it's so integral to much of what we are aiming to achieve, so there will be movement here in the coming months. Whilst I would love to see us doing more with disability sports, street games and doorstep sport, along with many other initiatives, we will have to go at the right pace and ensure that we are prioritizing the NDOs' work effectively for maximum impact in their respective regions.

The 22 local authorities have also been a pleasure to deal with. Clearly we have stronger relationships with some of them than with others but I have been delighted with the way that they have welcomed our ideas and, in many cases, how they have chosen to put their money where their figurative mouths are and back up ideas with funding for local initiatives. By my last count we had direct partnerships with 20 of the 22, which is a significant return.

I'd like to thank Margaret for her contribution over the years, as well as thanking Suzy, Anneka, Becky, Carolyn, Claire, Lucy, Lyn and Alice for their sterling work. Lyn has combined her work as an NDO with additional hours as Performance Co-Ordinator, supporting Melissa and overseeing domestic events. The NDOs are (in the main!) a real pleasure to work with and I genuinely believe that we're beginning to move things forward significantly. There are also a team of community coaches working to them on specific projects based largely around local need. There are far too many of them to mention here but it's only right and proper that we acknowledge their wider contribution formally.

Interestingly we also spent a lot of time at the most recent NDOs' meeting discussing and agreeing a new 'Net Gain' scheme for clubs. This is based on the pilot Ultimate Club scheme and will involve a scorecard of 100 marks across a whole range of headings which we believe combine to produce the ideal club, with 80% spread across specific areas, such as coaching, umpiring, facility access, senior and junior teams, affiliation, safeguarding, constitution etc.. The model allows for the governing body to retain 10% based on its own specific priorities for the year, with a further 10% for the NDOs to look at their own local

priority issues and assign weighting against these. It's a mix of the objective and the subjective, but what it enables us to do is to assign a score to every club we have, indeed every team we have, and to clearly set objectives and track progress. It makes that progress transparent and I believe it will be a really welcome move: for the NDOs, for the clubs and for Sport Wales. We'll publicize it later in the year.

We're also about to undertake a significant upgrade of our systems. The current membership system is nearly 15 years old, which in IT terms makes it positively Jurassic. It is faintly ridiculous, for example, that in 2012 we are unable to accept payment by credit card. Although we've successfully set up a ticket purchase scheme for Dragons matches via Ticketline, that incapacity has prevented us really doing any proper merchandising and has also been a hindrance in terms of enabling payments for coach and umpire education courses. Sport Wales have helped to accelerate this process by encouraging some of the sports to consider upgrading, dangling in front of us the not inconsiderable carrot of a contribution towards the costs. In time we want to do so much more, particularly with regard to developing affinity and rewards packages, but at this stage we'll settle for installing new systems, providing the appropriate training and integrating everything over the course of the coming year.

I'm sure there will be teething problems but I'm equally confident that when everything is in place it will save time, money and a significant amount of bother on the part of our staff, our members and our clubs. I know that Lyanne Fairclough's role will turn into a much more proactive one. Instead of just circulating information and then inputting it by hand, I am hopeful that the implementation of new systems will enable Lyanne to concentrate more on analysing the data and working more closely with the NDOs in identifying and dealing with specific issues on their respective patches.

In September Kate Donnelly left us after just over two years as Education and Events Co-Ordinator. She's spent the majority of the time since then travelling around the world. We didn't replace 'like with like', taking the opportunity to look at areas where we needed to grow and develop. Julia Bowkett has come in as our Education and Development Manager. She has taken on the responsibility for dealing with coach and umpire education as well as picking up certain development issues such as strategic community coach management and the formulation of a

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2011

	2011	2010
	£	£
TURNOVER	572,608	430,949
Cost of Sales	(559,354)	(411,864)
GROSS PROFIT	13,254	19,085
Administrative expenses	(4,000)	(3,990)
OPERATING PROFIT	9,254	15,095
Interest receivable and similar income	510	708
PROFIT ON ORDINARY ACTIVITIES BEFORE TAXATION	9,764	15,803
Tax on profit on ordinary activities	(100)	(144)
PROFIT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR	9,664	15,659
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 AUGUST 2011		
	2011	2010
	£	£
FIXED ASSETS		
Intangible assets	3,053	1,160
Tangible assets	3,053	1,160
CURRENT ASSETS		
Stocks	1,000	1,000
Debtors	20,406	20,605
Cash at bank	143,318	109,262
	164,724	130,867
CREDITORS		
Amounts falling due within one year	(87,846)	(61,760)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	76,878	69,107
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	79,931	70,267
RESERVES		
Profit and loss account	79,931	70,267
	79,931	70,267



## THANK YOU

Volunteers are the lifeblood of every sport and netball is no exception. We are very fortunate that so many people want to come and support the sport they love in Wales and we are very grateful to each and every one of them. Last July we held our inaugural annual awards dinner in Cardiff, which provided us with the opportunity to recognize a number of people across a range of different categories. We will be repeating this in July and the process of working up the nomination criteria and categories is almost complete, so details of how you can nominate someone will be made public shortly. It is a small gesture, but was very well received, and over the 2012/13 season we aim to act on a number of other suggestions of how we might reward and recognize the work of volunteers.

Finally I want to thank Sport Wales for their continued support at all levels, from Chair Laura McAllister down through the senior management team, the operational staff and especially, in the last twelve months, to first Owen Lewis and more recently Susie Osborne, who are our assigned NGB liaison officers, acting as the gatekeepers in responding to anything we raise. Sport Wales have been incredibly receptive to new ideas when we have put them forward and they remain 100% behind us as we work up our performance and development plans. Of course they expect specific results in return. But operating in an environment where they listen to us and then trust us to go out and deliver is highly encouraging.

For my part, I remain committed to keeping a tight rein on the overall direction. There is so much going on, and with growth and development inevitably come growing pains. The next year will be a tough one because we have to finish so much off and ensure that it all knits together. If someone had asked me when I started where I thought Welsh Netball would be three AGMs on I'd certainly have settled for where we are currently: the team is on the edge of the top ten in the world; the Dragons are now a competitive force; we're delivering profits; we're ready to roll out performance and development plans; and we have a clear strategy to develop the grass roots, particularly clubs. There is plenty to do, but there is a really solid foundation in place.

**Mike Fatkin**  
**Chief Executive**  
**May 2012**

[mikefatkin@welshnetball.com](mailto:mikefatkin@welshnetball.com)

new Tri-Net primary school game which we intend to start rolling out in the Autumn.

We've also brought in Becky Corne as our part time PR Co-Ordinator. She has already done a lot of productive work developing a new website for the Celtic Dragons, attacking the weaknesses in our social media (Facebook and Twitter) promotion and working with Melissa, the players and the media in trying to improve the profile of the sport and its leading participants. That's not an easy job but we've had some successes and it's an area we expect to grow and develop more in the coming year.

I'm sure I mention them all individually somewhere in this report but the staff you have working on your behalf are terrific. They are all committed to the development of the sport and although we will disagree from time to time the general atmosphere is one where we can challenge but can also have fun. It is a pleasure to lead them.

## EDUCATION

The Coaching and umpiring education programme has been something of a curate's egg this year. There have been 14 Starting Out courses run, with 213 learners; four UKCC Level 1 courses (60); and two UKCC Level 2 courses (Garmarthenshire and Glamorgan Valleys) (24). The NDOs are contracted to deliver two Starting Out courses, which is a great help. As from September, there will be a Sports Leaders bolt-on course delivered in schools through Welsh Netball. This is aimed at 12-16 year-olds learning how to lead netball sessions.

UKCC numbers have been down this year, which resulted in some courses being cancelled but we still ran six courses, half of the Level 1 courses being full or close to full. The general UK trend is down, something which the authorities are looking into but could well be due to the current economic climate.

To address all education challenges this year we have planned an education programme based on areas linking up and working together to run courses, rather than assuming we can run them across all eight every year. Essentially this means we will have a South Wales region comprising the South East, Glamorgan Valleys and Cardiff & The Vale of Glamorgan; West Wales (Afan Nedd Tawe and West Wales); and North Wales (North West and North East). The likelihood is that Powys will be split into three depending on where the learners are based, though Starting Out and Q award courses will still be run in Powys if the demand is there.

In umpiring, there were 17 Q Award courses run, with 299 learners; five Level 1 courses (55); and one Level 2 course (12). There is another Level 2 course taking place in North Wales in two weeks' time.

Umpiring has been a real area of focus for Welsh Netball this year and we have seen progress towards improving our structure. We were successful in gaining an IFNA Net Effect grant which enabled us to organize a very successful umpire, tutor and tester weekend in January. Umpires were ranked and placed into three groups: Hub umpires; development umpires; and high performance umpires. Mentors were allocated to the development group and a lead mentor role was established to look after the high performance umpires.

This year we have made recommendations to change elements of the Welsh Netball membership. The basic price hasn't increased for a number of years now and we have also been keen to try to simplify what, on first sight, looks to be an overly complicated structure. There is an accompanying document explaining these changes so I shan't seek to go through all of those various changes and what they mean to you here. The basic premise is an attempt to focus membership on the individual, and to try to 'declutter' by reducing the number of categories. Essentially we have an adult, an associate, a junior and a club as well as categories for universities and secondary schools. We are proposing to do away with a payment for primary schools (though we will continue to ask them to register). The proposed adult fee remains as at 2011 levels, with a small increase from previous years on the early payment.

## COMMERCIAL

We are grateful to a number of organizations for their support over the course of the year, in particular:

- Samurai Sports
- Gilbert
- Arriva Trains Wales
- DE Photography
- Powerade
- Dean Conway Associates
- Tiger Tiger
- Strachan Travel
- Eversheds
- KTS Owens Thomas
- Blue Sky Recruitment
- Urdd
- Local Authorities
- IFNA & Netball Europe
- Ty Hafan
- Welsh Universities
- YC Sports
- Sport Wales

## GOVERNANCE

We were delighted recently to announce that Jon Saunders, General Manager of Tiger Tiger, has joined the Board. His commercial knowledge and experience will be invaluable as we seek to generate more in the way of sponsorship and fundraising. Frank Ady of Ty Hafan has also agreed to continue as the second appointed director for a further two-year term. As our esteemed President has pointed out to me, this is the first time in a very long time that we have had all of our offices – President, Vice Presidents, Chair, Vice Chair, elected Directors and appointed Directors – all filled. I take that as a positive sign that people really want to be involved.

As ever, I have relied greatly on the Board, and in particular on our Chairman, Catherine Lewis. She's very good at keeping me on track, but she has been incredibly supportive and it's a pleasure to work with her. All of the Directors put in a huge amount of time on behalf of the members and that ought to be publicly recognized in this report. Throughout 2011/12 we have also had the advantage of seeing our President and our two Vice Presidents, Wendy Pressdee and Sheila Cooksley, attending meetings regularly in a non-voting, observer capacity. Their knowledge is extensive and their continued contribution to all of the important issues on the agenda is always very welcome.

The weekend also developed Welsh Netball's testing procedures, allowing current testers to gain up-to-date information on testing procedures. During the weekend a new young up-and-coming umpire was talent spotted and she is now working with our mentors to be fast-tracked. A clear umpire pathway is beginning to emerge.

This season umpires were invited to all Celtic Dragons home games as observation and learning sessions, and this has proved to be really successful. In November five umpires sat their 'A' paper, with three passing: Laura Harry, Hayley Lewis and Debbie Stott. The two that were unsuccessful are in the process of sitting the test this month.

At the Under-21 Netball Europe event in Belfast in 2012 Alison Smith and Maria Webber were both selected to umpire, and Carl Daniels and Matt Cole were selected to umpire at the Under-17 event in Glasgow. Rebecca Roberts and Alison Davies have been invited to umpire at the Netball Europe Development Tournament in Gibraltar next month. Our congratulations to all six.

## SAFEGUARDING

We have spent a lot of time over the past year on the subject of Safeguarding, and rightly so. It is vital that we are offering a safe environment for youngsters to come into, that there are processes and procedures in place, and that we work as hard as we can to transform the culture within netball into one that puts the welfare of children and vulnerable adults at the forefront of everything that we do.

The NDOs have been asked to revisit the whole question of CRB checks for those operating in their respective areas. We knew, for example, that there were a number of people working in Hubs, and in clubs and leagues, without the appropriate checks, something we had a duty to start to put right. In the overwhelming majority of cases that was largely down to oversight, but the NDOs are now all officially accredited verifiers and an offshoot of the new Net Gain scheme is that they will be producing plans for every club, something that will as a matter of course pick up on any safeguarding deficiencies.

Towards the end of 2011 our updated policy was approved by Sport Wales and the NSPCC Child Protection Unit. We presented to the NSPCC CPU panel in January and were given a conditional green light to move to the next stage. The two primary conditions centred on training and communication. We are working on a plan which identifies how each of the different stakeholder groups will be trained and we also recognize the need to disseminate the information in the policy so that it is a lot more accessible to clubs and other groups. We need to be much more approachable in seeking the opinions of young people in our sport and we have some ideas which we are developing which we anticipate will help us to deal with that particular challenge. It would be wrong for us to assume that a 100-odd page policy with a myriad of formal appendices and templates will be the answer to everything.

I make no apologies for including the topic as a separate item in an annual report. It might not be the most interesting of subjects but I am of the view that if we 'crack it' at Area and club level it will mean that we have genuine engagement at grass roots level. It's a daunting prospect dealing with it all, but deal with it we shall.

## FINANCE

As can be seen from the short form accounts elsewhere in this report (the main accounts can be found on the website) we returned a profit for the second consecutive year. The figure of £9,664 may sound somewhat modest but set against a background of two trips to Singapore by the senior team and a continued global recession it represents continued progress as far as we are concerned.

It means we have generated over £25,000's worth of profit in the last two years, enabling our reserves to climb back to the sort of levels they were at four years ago, and gives us the ability to be able to plan major items of expenditure such as further overseas tours, new systems and staffing additions with that much more confidence. I personally do not believe NGBs such as ours should be seeking to return sizeable profits. Small profits, yes, but we are not in business simply to deliver a bottom line; we are here to ensure that the interests of our members and the sport as a whole are looked after, which means generating small profits which are then reinvested. However, we are in good financial shape.

Our turnover went up by over 32% last year which, on the face of it, is very healthy. However, we need to sound a note of caution. We are still reliant to a significant extent on Sport Wales funding (more so, ironically, with them having agreed to fund our development plans last year), we still have a mountain of work to do on the commercial side, and we still have to ensure that we manage our costs effectively. I am hoping that in the coming months we will be able to develop Louise Carter's role so that she is given the flexibility and responsibility to be able to look at our finances more strategically, aligning them to the rolling four-year performance plan coming into place in the Autumn. We do not have a finance 'expert' on the Board, or an FD, and although we continue to receive tremendous support from Peter May and his colleagues at KTS Owens Thomas, I believe that developing Louise's role is a sensible next step for us to take.