



ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



WALES NETBALL
PÊL-RWYD CYMRU



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CHAIR FOREWORD

Netball in Wales is firmly back on the court as we stride out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Wales Netball has worked both with Welsh Government and Sport Wales to ensure that the most popular female team sport in Wales is both relevant and available to all our participants and supporters.

Our regional leagues managed to run in difficult covid conditions but adapted well and continued to grow the game. Internationally we have grown in strength and depth and qualifying for the Commonwealth Games this year was the icing on the cake for us after a difficult time.

The resilience of the staff, players and army of volunteers cannot be understated, and we are eternally grateful for everything that has undertaken. During the year staff have moved on and we have wished them well and in particular a fond farewell to our CEO Sarah Jones who was key to the stabilisation and growth of Wales Netball in recent years.

It's an exciting time for netball in Wales with our new CEO Vicki Sutton leading us into new commercial ventures and venues. Thank you to the Wales Netball Board and Panels who have worked diligently ensuring the sport stays on track!

See you all at the Commonwealth Games and we then look to preparing for the World Cup Qualifiers in Scotland in the autumn of this year.

Catherine Lewis,
Chair Wales Netball

WALES NETBALL BOARD 2021/22

Chair

Catherine Lewis

Vice-Chair

Cath Hares

President

Sheila Cooksley

Vice-President

Jean Foster

Elected Director (Growth and Development)

Mel Hellerman

Elected Director (Performance)

Julia Longville

Appointed Director (Commercial)

Kerry McDonald

Elected Director (Compliance and Engagement)

Carol Anthony

Appointed Director (Legal)

Andrew Brenton

Appointed Director (Policy & Governance)

Rhian Edwards

Appointed Director (Equality, Diversity & Inclusion)

Hellen Manufor

Appointed Director (Communications & Marketing)

Simon Jones

Appointed Director (Human Resources)

Zoe Grainger

Appointed Director (Finance)

Mike Bobbett



CEO SUMMARY

As I reflect on the past 12 months I feel a sense of pride in what the Netball community here in Wales has achieved.

Welsh Government Covid related restrictions eased just in time for Netball to start the new season without the strictly modified rules that we had become so used to during the last season. We were pleased to see many leagues taking a cautious approach and making the return to competition as safe as possible.

As I write this, we have seen almost a full recovery of membership to the pre pandemic figures. This is testament to the clubs and leagues for making Netball such an enjoyable activity in what have been very difficult times. Credit must also go to our wonderful members who have been resilient enough to step outside their doors and do life again. We hope Netball has brought you lots of joy in dark times.

As I write this, I have been CEO for almost 6 months. Whilst I have been involved with Wales Netball for quite some time, this role has certainly provided a different perspective and clarity on what a great sport we have.

I have really enjoyed meeting and reconnecting with so many of you over the past 12 months whether at an event or via email. I am here to serve you and always enjoy hearing from our members.

It's not just me that has a new role, we have a number of new staff members in each of the three main business areas here at Wales Netball. Please do take the time to check out the staff pages and get to know who does what. We are all very passionate about Netball and the power it has to change lives for the better. I am regularly grateful for the energy from our new look Senior Leadership team made up of Laura Milford (Head of Operations), Sara Moore (Head of Elite) and Anneka O'Connor (Head of Growth). These 3 talented females are an asset to our organisation and support me in more ways than they realise.



Onto some of my highlights of the past year:

In January we were thrilled to be able to host the Isle of Man, Republic of Ireland and Gibraltar in the O'Neill's Test Series in Ebbw Vale. Whilst the restriction meant we couldn't allow fans, it was great to be able to live stream all the games for a worldwide audience. We love hosting international teams here and hope to do it even more in the coming seasons.

2021 saw an entire refresh of the Wales pathway with a view to increasing the opportunities for talented Netballers to develop their skills. The Regional and National Academies now train much more regularly and purposefully, and I look forward to seeing them compete on the world stage in the coming months.

Our Vitality Netball Superleague franchise also underwent some major changes in 2021. The Celtic Dragons have a smart new appearance that matches the dynamic way the team plays. We also welcomed some fantastic players and members of the workforce to the Dragons family. The new-look Dragons have put on some exciting displays this season and the following we now have means a bigger venue for the 2023 season.

We have received some wonderful feedback about the new membership system that we put in place at the start of this season. The aim of the system was to give our members more control over their own data and to create transparent monitoring for Clubs and Leagues. We believe we have done just that and look forward to evolving the system this coming season to do even more.

We are enjoying speaking to our members more regularly through the new platform and social media and have seen an increase in our following over the past 12 months. It is pleasing to know that the community are engaging with us and our plans.

Key to community delivery is strong partnerships and it has been great to restart the work with some national and local organisations post-pandemic. These partnerships are already bearing fruit and I look forward to watching them flourish.

It has been so good to be at national events again and see so many happy faces. The pandemic gave us an opportunity to implement some evidence-based changes and I am grateful to the community for being open minded about doing things differently. I look forward to more national competitions in the future that give every Netballer that chance to experience the joys of taking part in something special.

Thanks to our brilliant staff for persistence and commitment throughout the last 12 months as we have returned to normal netball. I am very excited about working with you in the coming months.

Thanks to the Board for their ongoing support and for supporting our vision for Netball in Wales over the coming years.

And finally, to our fantastic partners, we love working with you and can't wait to do it all over again in the 22/23 season!

In closing, Netball is incredibly powerful! For some it is a hobby, others a way of life.

Whatever Netball is to you, we are honoured to serve you and hope that we continue to make your sport bigger, better and bolder than ever before!



Vicki Sutton, Wales Netball
Chief Executive Officer



GROWTH



During June 2021 the Welsh Government COVID-19 restrictions eased to allow clubs and organisations to play outdoor tournaments and festivals. Outdoor gatherings involving over 100 people needed approval from Wales Netball before they could take place. This meant outdoor leagues could now schedule more than one game per team per league session allowing outdoor netball to flourish once again.

Indoor restrictions continued with a maximum of 30 participants in a sports hall, the main change to the ruling was that teams were able to play indoor games against other teams with the restriction that they could only play one other team in a 24-hour period. Netball in Wales at this time still had to be played under the modified rules, restricting our clubs and leagues from playing the sport we love.

In July 2021, we were pleased to confirm that the return of 'traditional' netball

rules for outdoor netball had returned with information and resources produced to support clubs and leagues to provide a safe environment.

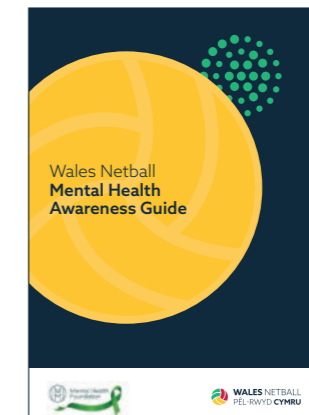
Friday 6th August 2021 was the day everyone was excited for as the announcement from Welsh Government came to say netball could return to normal and we could wave goodbye to the modified rules. This news arrived at the right time for our communities to start planning for the return of inter activities and in time for us to launch the new affiliation system in September.

In February 2022 Anneka O'Connor filled the Head of Growth position. Anneka is based in Northeast Wales and is no stranger to Wales Netball having worked for the organisation between 2008 and 2015 as a Netball Development Officer, before heading across the border to a role with England Netball. Anneka has been an active member of our Coaching and Umpiring

Workforce for the past 13 years and has professional experience developing high quality volunteer programmes in a sport and leisure setting. The Head of Growth remit includes areas such as Club Development, League Support and overseeing National Competitions and Workforce Development.

The last couple of years has raised everyone's awareness of the importance of mental health and how individuals deal with situations and life changing circumstances differently.

To support and educate our members, we worked in partnership with the Mental Health Foundation to produce a Mental Health Awareness guide and Netball Top Tips for Good Mental Health poster. The guide and poster were produced to support all members with their own mental health and how to support others within their communities. These documents were launched on our social media platforms during Mental Health Awareness week in May 2022. The theme being 'loneliness' and we shared how being part of the netball family can support anyone who is feeling alone.



To request a copy of the Mental Health Awareness guide please email Anneka.oconnor@walesnetball.com

For a copy of the Netball Top Tips for Good Mental Health please visit our [website](https://www.walesnetball.com).



During October 2021 Chloe John shared her amazing cancer journey with Wales Netball and the community during Breast Cancer Awareness month. We were proud to support and share Chloe's incredible story and her key messages were to "Trust your instincts" and "If you start checking now, then you will know what is normal for you and then will notice when there are any changes". To read about Chloe's journey, please visit our [website](https://www.walesnetball.com).

2021					2022				
June	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Feb	Apr	May	June
Vicki Sutton was appointed Head of Growth	Membership system launched to Leagues	Membership Benefits Package launched	Governance Pack developed for Organisations	Vicki Sutton appointed CEO leaving the Head of Growth position vacant	New Competition Steering group established Tasha Constable joined as the Events and Competition Officer	Anneka O'Connor appointed as Head of Growth	WN First Aid course launched	Mental Health Awareness Guide released The Group, Engagement and Development group was re-established.	Quarterly League Forums were re-established with representatives from Wales Netball presenting updates to the leagues. League and umpiring secretaries across league from Wales were invited to participant.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The continuation of online learning following the pandemic has allowed us to adjust the way in which our C Umpire Award courses are delivered. Our new blended delivery offers greater flexibility for our busy umpires. Courses have been delivered across Wales in St Asaph, Bridgend, Cardiff and Swansea. The new course format involves 3 hours of theory delivered virtually and 3 hours of practical work with qualified tutors and assessors. Working directly with leagues has allowed us to highlight areas where there is a greater need for development.

We have been working closely with Europe Netball looking at all aspects of our umpire development plan, ensuring our umpire assessors have regular access to re-accreditation and standardisation opportunities.

In collaboration with our performance programme, we have been able to benefit from opportunities from high quality match play during Celtic Dragons curtain raisers to carry out B & A Award assessments. This is something we are looking forward to developing in the future.

June 2021 saw the introduction of our 'blended learning' opportunities for UKCC L1 & L2 courses across Wales. We have delivered courses in Cardiff, Pembrokeshire, Bangor, Bridgend and Wrexham.

Working in collaboration with local authorities we have delivered Walking Netball Workshops in Llanelli & Swansea and are excited to see what opportunities arise from their walking netball programmes.

Our Netball Leaders and Intro to Umpire virtual learning has been a popular option for Schools, Local Authorities, Colleges, and Universities enabling closed courses and additional learning opportunities for umpires and leaders to aid the running of their own netball events.

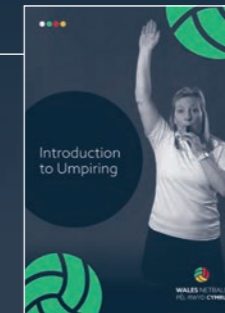
We have been developing new course resources for our officiating courses, so all attendees on future Intro to Umpire and C Award courses will receive a new workbook to aid their learning experience.

Working in collaboration with Groundwork North Wales UK, we delivered our first Netball Specific First Aid course in Cardiff. We will be training our own FA instructors to enable us to offer First Aid courses throughout the year.

Our new membership site is fully up and running and Courses and other workforce opportunities are accessible to all members through this site. This platform should be used for all members to record all qualifications and to upload certificates.

281

INTRO TO UMPIRE ATTENDEES



264

NETBALL LEADERS ATTENDEES



85

UKCC L1 & L2 COACHES

72

C AWARD COURSE ATTENDEES

16

C AWARD UMPIRE ASSESSMENTS



EVENTS AND COMPETITIONS

After a challenging 2 years, we have begun celebrating and showcasing the incredible talent of our community through the return of the long-awaited National Competition season. We would like to thank everyone involved in the Competitions for their continued support and encouragement, it is without doubt that these events would not be able to happen without the support of all officials, umpires, volunteers, coaches, teachers, and parents who take time out of their busy lives to dedicate themselves to netball. They have enabled the success and incredible atmosphere at each event. The display of remarkable talent from the players and abundance of spectators demonstrates the positive engagement sport has on our community.

We were privileged to host so many competitions this sporting year, with the strive to encourage an ever-increasing participation in netball through open, fair, and transparent competitions.

We would like to congratulate everyone involved in all the events, with a further congratulations to all the winners of this exciting competition season.

INTER COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP

House of Sport Cardiff

U14	A	B
Winners	North East	North East
Runners Up	West Wales	Afan Nedd Tawe
Player of the tournament	Holly Owen (North East)	Mali Jennings (North East)
U16	A	B
Winners	Cardiff & Vale	North East
Runners Up	North East	Afan Nedd Tawe
Player of the tournament	Ellie Thomas (Cardiff & Vale)	Amy Beynon (Afan Nedd Tawe)
U18	A	B
Winners	Cardiff & Vale	West Wales
Runners Up	Afan Nedd Tawe	Afan Nedd Tawe
Player of the tournament	Lottie Pleasant (North West)	Naomi Nowell (Afan Nedd Tawe)



ANN SMART TROPHY & PRESIDENT CUP

House of Sport Cardiff

	ANN SMART TROPHY	PRESIDENT CUP
Winners	Cwm Rhymney	Monmouth School for Girls
Runner Up	Bishopston	Bryncelynnog
Player of the Tournament	Lowri Windsor (Cwm Rhymney)	Anwen Nesham (Bryncelynnog)

NATIONAL CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIP

House of Sport Cardiff

U12	CUP	PLATE
Winners	Dinas Devils	Cwmbran
Runners Up	Deeside Daredevils	Pencoed Pegasus
Player of the tournament	Jessica Smedley (Dinas Devils)	Ava Wooler (Merlins)
U14	CUP	PLATE
Winners	Pengam	Merlins
Runners Up	Gilfach	Mold Finches
Player of the tournament	Zoe Biraga (Brymbo Blitz)	Kirsten Day (Mold Finches)
U16	CUP	PLATE
Winners	Penarth Allstars	Mold Swifts
Runners Up	Gilfach	Mumbles
Player of the tournament	Milly Bayliss (Bridgend Bolts)	Rose Prendergast (Eastside)

Ensuring a safe return to elite sport and raising performance standards have been our key focuses over the past year, as we were able to return fully to performance netball for the first time since 2020.

Navigating the pandemic was a challenge for all sports, and netball was no exception. All of our performance activity remained heavily restricted in the early part of the 2021/22 season, but thankfully the summer of 2021 marked the return of international netball for our National Squad, as they aimed to qualify for the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham 2022.

PERFORMANCE

Our involvement in the sector-wide Elite Sport Group continued to be key to helping us to shape our elite sport return to play protocols. Working alongside National Governing Bodies, the Welsh Sport Association, Sport Wales and the Welsh Government we were able to proactively develop workable covid protocols, which would allow us to once again return to netball on the international stage.

As we move forward in the post-pandemic world, we have used the opportunities presented to us to both re-shape and grow performance netball in Wales. We have embedded a new

staffing structure for Performance, led by Sara Moore (nee Hale) who stepped into the new Head of Elite role, in late September 2021. This new strategic leadership role sees Moore lead on all aspects of elite performance at Wales Netball including the Wales Senior and age group programmes, performance pathway and Celtic Dragons, alongside her role as Senior Squad Head Coach.

This new role has been transformative for Wales Netball, as Moore has sought to drive systemic change, as well as developing a framework for long-term success across all of our elite performance teams and programmes, seeking to provide Wales with an oversupply of talent both on and off court. This coupled with the introduction of our Performance Development Group (PDG) chaired by Julia Longville, ensures that our strategic decision making around performance is transparent and robust.

In addition to embedding the new performance staffing structure, and PDG we recognised the need to create more opportunities for talented netball athletes to access high performance training environments, which in turn allows us to build a sustainable foundation for our performance at international level. We know that this will ensure success at international level, at every age group, for the future. An integral part of this process has been the launch of our new Performance Pathway, which will support our ambitions to compete with the best in the world as we move into the next cycle.

The new Performance Pathway is designed to support both athletes and coaches, with a focus on both athlete



and coach growth and development, allowing us to significantly extend our athlete pool over the next 4+ years, as well as providing more opportunities for our elite coaching teams and support staff to develop their skills. We continue to work with many talented volunteer coaches and team managers who work tirelessly behind the scenes to lead and support our performance squads, and we continue to be hugely grateful for their efforts.

We continue to demand more on the court and off the court, and as such we have also expanded our pool of sports science support staff, working closely with Sport Wales and Commonwealth Games Wales, and our partners to ensure we have the best support available for all of our performance squads.

Our performance squads are training more frequently this season than they have in any previous season, and our approach to performance is more strategic and streamlined than it has ever been. We hope that this will signify a new era for netball in Wales, securing success for all of our squads moving forward.



WALES SENIORS

The Wales Senior Squad have had an incredible return to court this season, with many highlights.

Wales vs Republic of Ireland	= 69-13
Wales vs Isle of Man	= 87-25
Wales vs Gibraltar	= 82-27

The VNSL competition remains integral to our performance at international level, and this season saw 17 of our Wales Squad athletes training and playing at the highest level in the UK in either VNSL or NPL, which is an increase from last season where we had 13 athletes competing at this level. This is fantastic for Wales and essential to underpinning our success moving forwards:

Clare Jones	Celtic Dragons
Shona O'Dwyer	Celtic Dragons
Nia Jones	Celtic Dragons
Leila Thomas	Celtic Dragons
Georgia Rowe	Celtic Dragons
Phillipa Yarranton	Celtic Dragons
Ella Powell-Davies	Wasps
Christina Shaw	Wasps
Betsy Creak	Team Bath
Eleanor Roberts	Celtic Dragons
Celyn Emanuel	Celtic Dragons
Lucy Howells	Celtic Dragons
Bethan Dyke	Severn Stars

Several of our Senior Squad athletes secured Training Associate positions at VNSL Franchises, or NPL positions this season, including:

Millie Carter	Celtic Dragons
Suzy Drane	Celtic Dragons
Zoe Matthewman	Celtic Dragons
Nia Evans	Team Bath NPL

Our Senior Squad returned to training in the summer of 2021, following the conclusion of the 2021 Superleague as they prepared to embark on the first of four training blocks planned for the year following the announcement by World Netball that the qualification date for the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022 had been extended to January 31st, 2022.

The Senior Squad played several international friendly matches including:

- International Friendly Matches against Scotland and Netball Northern Ireland, in Glasgow in August 2021
- International Friendly Match against South Africa Spar Proteas, in Belfast in October 2021



The Senior Squad then turned their attention to international competition, returning to the court to play their first ranking matches since 2019, including:

- International Test Matches against the Isle of Man, in the Isle of Man in November 2021
- International Test Matches against the Isle of Man, Gibraltar and the Republic of Ireland (playing for the Wendy White Trophy) in Ebbw Vale in January 2022

The Senior Squad, led by Head Coach Sara Moore won all six of their international test matches, and subsequently secured Commonwealth Games qualification for Birmingham 2022.

In addition to this, their success on the international stage continued, as Wales moved up to 8th in the netball world rankings. Wales had the highest points tally of any international netball side, having played 6 test matches and 3 training matches this year. This is down to the decision to take a more strategic

approach to world rankings, led by our Performance Development Group. To secure this on the back of a pandemic is a fantastic achievement, particularly given the ongoing disruption to the start of the 2021/22 season due to Covid.

Wales will feature in the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham from the 28th of July - 8th of August, where they will go head-to-head with the countries ranked 1-12 in the world.

Following the Commonwealth Games the next milestone for our Senior Squad is to qualify for the World Cup in 2023. The Squad will have some much needed down time following the CWG, before re-grouping in September to begin preparations for the World Cup Qualifiers in October 2022, which will be held in Glasgow.



CURRENT WORLD RANKINGS

Ranking	Team	Played	Weighted	Points	Rating
1	Australia	30	19	3,698	1952
2	New Zealand	37	24	4,553	190
3	England	40	25	4,556	182
4	Jamaica	23	15	2,638	176
5	South Africa	54	38	5,975	157
6	Uganda	42	31	3,951	127
7	Malawi	39	28	3,430	123
8	Wales	15	11	1,321	120
9	Scotland	10	6	703	117
10	Trinidad & Tobago	22	13	1,298	100

PERFORMANCE PATHWAY

The new Performance Pathway was launched in 2022, following a lengthy consultation process, which saw the launch of 7 Regional Academies (RA) and the National Academy (NA). Wales Netball aspires to create a sustainable over-supply of athletes via its Performance Pathway for its National Squads, our Regional Academies and National Academy are vital in ensuring this success.



REGIONAL ACADEMY

We support our Regional Academy coaches, and guide performance activity within these programmes to ensure consistency, and to embed the Welsh Way throughout the regions.

This enables both Regional Academy athletes and coaches to develop and transition smoothly into the National Academy Squads. Our Regional Academies are developing athletes for the long term that embody our values and behaviours in a welcoming and enjoyable environment. For many of our athletes, Regional Academies will be their first experience of Wales Netball, and we want it to be a great learning environment for them.

Regional Academies are for athletes in the under 15 and under 17 age group, and sessions run weekly across our 7 sites at the following venues:

Coleg Gwent

Cardiff University

USW & Coleg Y Cymoedd

Bridgend College

Neath Port Talbot College

Coleg Sir Gar

Coleg Cambria

We have over 180 talented athletes across our Regional Academies, and we will be expanding the number of Regional Academies across Wales for the 2022/23 season, partnering with the following regions:

Brecon (Freedom Leisure)

Merthyr College

Coleg Llandrillo



UMPIRES

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our coaching staff, team managers, sport science support staff and our athletes for their dedication and commitment to their training programmes this year. We could not do it without you!

NATIONAL ACADEMY

Our National Academy is home to our U17, U19 and U21 athletes, out of which we select our age group sides for international competition.

The National Academy was launched in February 2022, and we selected 60 of Wales's most talented athletes into this programme for the 2021/22 season.

These athletes are the next generation of Senior Wales Squads, and the aim of the National Academy is to continue to develop these talented young athletes on and off the court, developing their technical and tactical knowledge so that they can transition into the full Wales Senior Squad.

Our new National Academy squads are led and supported by Head Coaches Jo Ricketts and Rhian Davies, both of whom have excellent coaching

pedigrees having worked with our U17 side for a number of seasons. They are joined by Assistant Coaches Jen Berry (U19/U21) and Sian Ruttley (U17) and Team Managers Cerys Rees (U21) and Anni Wilkinson (U17).

All athletes in our performance programme have taken to the court in training matches this year and have coped incredibly well with their return to performance netball, and they continue to impress.

Europe Netball took the decision to cancel the U21 competition for 2022, due to cost and covid concerns, so the home nations are discussing the option for friendly competition activities in the UK in the autumn. The U17 Europe Netball competition will take place in February 2023 in Northern Ireland.

OPERATIONS

2021/22 2020/21

Members

9163

6221

Organisations

210

148

Leagues

28

24

Total Figure

9401

6393

In September 2021, in partnership with Sport:80, we launched the new membership platform ready for the 2021-22 season.

In consultation with members of our community, we built a platform that functioned not just for the operational team, but also for our members.

The platform has seen an increased usage of member logins and has reduced the administration levels for our Club Secretaries. The membership system will forever evolve and will require connections with our community to ensure that the system is functioning for them. There are many features that have been introduced throughout the year, such as a netball club and league finder for new and future netballers, events and course booking system, reporting tools for Club and League Secretaries.

Alongside the membership platform, we also launched our new member query portal, Zendesk. The portal is managed by the Business Support Officer daily and has reduced our response rate to member's system queries to ensure customer satisfaction and has connected our members directly with our operational team.

In February 2022, Wales Netball recruited for a new position in the organisation whose primary responsibilities include leading on the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of our governance strategies and to spearhead the delivery of high levels of customer service. The strategic



leadership role oversees a newly formed Operations Department, including the Digital Communications and Business Support Officers, who work towards pioneering a new business approach for our sport. Our newly appointed Head of Operations, Laura Milford, is focused on creating and maintaining a strong, sustainable netball business for our community across Wales, and is looking forward to seeing the impact this newly formed department will have on the business moving forward.

Internally, we have been committing to reducing our carbon footprint as an organisation and are proud to have moved all internal processes to digital and are in the process of digitising our historic records for archiving purposes.

The Wales Netball offices have reopened following the pandemic, and our Officers have returned to the office on a rota basis. The team adjusted well to working from home, continuing to put our members first. To ensure that stakeholders queries are answered

efficiently and effectively, a phone system has been introduced to connect individuals directly with the department they require.

As netball in Wales is moving to new strengths, and has returned fully to the courts, we'd like to say a massive thank you to all our members, from our Tots starting on their netball journey, to our Walking Netballers, for supporting us through the pandemic.

Our membership base is returning to pre-pandemic numbers, with new clubs and leagues being established throughout the season. We look forward to growing the sport in many areas and are thankful for the continued support of our loyal members.



COMMUNICATIONS

It's been an exciting year managing communications, especially as we move away from the pandemic and the world has changed the way it communicates.

Our first announcement heading into the current season was our Rebrand from Welsh to Wales Netball. The Rebrand was achieved through hard work alongside extensive consultations and has been received positively and aligns the National Governing Body in Wales with other National Netball bodies around the world. A new name, new look and refreshed team, has enabled us to look forward on our journey of exciting things to come for the organisation and netball community in Wales.

We successfully launched our new Membership System this year, working alongside Sport:80 to provide a working membership platform that functions for our netballers, clubs and leagues.

The communications that went out to our members enabled a smooth transition to the new platform and we have received numerous positive feedback from our members. The Sport:80 system has also facilitated us to host our new Wales Netball newsletter, allowing us to communicate Business, Growth, Performance and Community updates directly to our members.

As we build into the Commonwealth Games, we were extremely proud to share the news of our Wales Senior Squad reaching eighth in the World rankings and qualifying for the 22nd Commonwealth Games. In the coming months, we will be campaigning and supporting our Welsh athletes as they take to the courts in Birmingham to represent netball in Wales and inspire future athletes across the country.

Throughout the year, we have changed the way we communicate with our stakeholders and the information we communicate. We have seen an increase in followers and fans across all platforms, and have seen heightened engagement from participants across Wales and beyond, as we showcase the sport we know and love.



CELTIC DRAGONS			WALES NETBALL		
Platform	September 2021	June 2022	Platform	September 2021	June 2022
Facebook	1,834	2,345	Facebook	4,825	5,085
Twitter	8,068	10,468	Twitter	11,326	11,700
Instagram	5,316	6,140	Instagram	4,082	5,413

We have also changed the way we communicate department updates to our members through online newsletters and have seen fantastic engagement figures for both our Wales Netball and Celtic Dragons newsletters.

Our Wales Netball newsletter includes information from each department in the business, covering upcoming events and dates from our Growth department, news and results of our Wales and Pathway squads from our Performance department, membership and policy updates from our Operations department, and any other relevant business news.

We have recently asked our members what they want to see included in our newsletter, to ensure we're catering it to them, and sharing the information they want to hear about. Thank you

to all our members who have given us their feedback already, we're excited to monitor our newsletters engagement and continue to share our news and updates with the wider community.

As we lead into the start of a new season, our Sport:80 platform will allow us to communicate updates and changes to the system directly with our members.

Looking forward to the coming months, there will be several exciting projects released across the business that we are eager to share with not only our netballers in Wales, but with the world netball community. We aspire to keep connected to our community through the many different mediums of communication, and we hope to continue to grow our followers as netball grows around Wales.



CELTIC DRAGONS

ON COURT (VNSL)

The 2021/22 Vitality Netball Superleague (VNSL) season saw a much welcomed return to home and away fixtures, where fans were able to come watch the team in action. The VNSL season

is now complete and Celtic Dragons finished 10th. Although we would have liked to place higher, the team have made significant improvements from last season.

	2022	2021
Placing	10th	11th
Games won	3	1
Quarters won	18	10
Quarters drew	9	2
Games lost <10 goals	11	1

After a season comparison from this season back to 2017, we have statistically made substantial strides in narrowing the gap; from where the team were last season, from where we were in the first half, and between us and the opposition.

Although we've not pushed some of the fixtures across the line, we are competing more closely with the

topflight teams, and have had narrower score lines than those positionally near us in the table have been able to achieve.

The netball we're playing is exciting and it is growing the Celtic Dragons fanbase. To play in front of sell-out crowds at Sport Wales has been one of the highlights of the season.

OFF COURT

This season has seen much change across the franchise developing a new brand of Celtic Dragons. This included updating our logo, our mascot (Delilah) as well as personnel changes.

We had ten new contracted Celtic Dragons VNSL athletes this season: Seven Celtic Dragon VNSL athlete debuts (*Kat Short, Phillipa Yarranton, Lefébre Rademan, Celyn Emanuel, Hannah Leighton, Annabel Roddy, Shaquanda Greene-Noel*);

Six Celtic Dragon VNSL staff debuts (*Dannii Titmuss-Morris, Jen Hinton, Jenna Adamson, Nicky Miles, Beth Dursley, Fiona Triggs*);

Plus four VNSL athlete and five VNSL staff debuts (*Kat Short, Phillipa Yarranton, Celyn Emanuel, Shaquanda Greene-Noel, Jen Hinton, Jenna Adamson, Nicky Miles, Beth Dursley, Fiona Triggs*).

Throughout the season and bucking the trend of the rest of the VNSL, the viewing figures for Dragons VNSL games increased, with our two last home games being played in front of sell-out crowds.

Our VNSL End of Season Awards were an intimate occasion, held after our last home game with the VNSL squad, support staff, and their families present. It was an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the successes of the season.

Our awards were presented to the following athletes:

Green Army Player of the Season
(voted via social media)
Shaquanda Greene-Noel

Players Player of the Season
(voted by CD athletes)
Lefébre Rademan

Coaches Player of the Season
(voted by CD VNSL coaches)
Lefébre Rademan

Dragon of the Season
Player who has most consistently embodied our values across the season (voted by CD VNSL staff and athletes)
Three-way tie: Phillipa Yarranton, Annabel Roddy and Lefébre Rademan



ON COURT (PATHWAY)

We held trials at Cathedral School in January, which were attended by over 160 athletes.

There were 62 athletes selected for our Celtic Dragons Pathway across the U21, U19, U17 squads. The U21, U19, and U17 pathway squads have trained and played regularly from February to June.

We have created meaningful competition for our pathway athletes, as we are not yet invited to attend NPL age group competitions. Our age group squads have played in curtain raisers before VNSL home games and travelled to play neighbouring franchises.

Fixtures have included playing Cardiff Regional Academy, Bridgend Regional Academy, RCT Rockets, Cardiff Metropolitan University, London Pulse Futures, Team Bath NPL, Wasps Netball

NPL, Severn Stars NPL and Nova Academies, and Saracens Mavericks.

They are playing some exciting netball; for example, when the U21s played Stars U21 the game went goal for goal with the lead switching several times, Stars running out the eventual winner; the U17s went to play the Stars Nova Academy with two great results 35-22 and 33-16. Their performances continue to improve, and we're pleased with the development of all squads.

To additionally develop our Pathway athletes this season we have also offered defending and attacking positional workshops. These were led by VNSL athletes: Lucy Howells & Shaquanda Greene-Noel (defending) and Lefébre Rademan, Phillipa Yarranton, & Laura Rudland (attacking).

OFF COURT

We are building a pathway more connected to the VNSL squad; where the Pathway athletes can see a tangible route to the VNSL squad. The VNSL squad have supported at all the pathway curtain raisers, and we have invited appropriate U21s to experience a VNSL session.

The 'What It Takes' talks are another example of weaving a green thread from pathway to VNSL. The talks entail our VNSL athletes sharing their netball journey highlights and setbacks to our pathway athletes, followed by a Q&A session.

We have had talks with Clare Jones, Hannah Leighton, Nia Jones, Shaquanda Greene-Noel, Lefébre Rademan, and Shona O'Dwyer. The talks have been well received by all and have given inspiration to the next generation of Dragons.

As well as building a pathway for our athletes, we are also creating a green thread for our pathway support staff. We have also opened the VNSL sessions to our pathway staff for CPD, where the U21s coaches came to observe.



CAMPS

2000+

CELTIC DRAGONS CAMP ATTENDEES

The last year has seen Celtic Dragons Camps make a comeback, with over 200 attendees throughout the year.

This season, we have introduced two new venues for our Camps, expanding to Northeast Wales, Deeside, Southeast Wales and Ebbw Vale, giving more opportunity for people to attend the Celtic Dragons Camps across Wales for the 2023 Season.

Our Camps are led by Superleague players and coaches from within our programme; this season we'd like to thank the following for leading our Camps across Wales:

- Catrin Hughes
- Georgia Rowe
- Lefébre Rademan
- Nia Jones
- Shaquanda Greene-Noel
- Tricia Sterling

Following an update to our website, our future Camp dates can now be found on www.celticdragonsnetball.com in the Events section.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



We would like to say a massive thank you to all of our partners and people we have had the pleasure of working with for many years. We appreciate the support from grassroots all the way to the international stage.

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We really appreciate all the time and effort you put in to helping Wales Netball, Celtic Dragons and our Welsh athletes.

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