

A young woman with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a teal netball jersey, is leaning over a table and signing a book. She is surrounded by a group of young girls, some of whom are looking at the book. The book is titled "2018 CELTIC DRAGON" and features a grid of photos and names. The background shows a brick wall and a red banner with the word "Lily" repeated.

Annual Report

2017/18

Welsh Netball
Pêl Rwyd Cymru

The logo for Welsh Netball, featuring a stylized netball in red, yellow, and green colors.

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Chair Foreword

Another year of my tenure has passed as Chair of Welsh Netball and I remain proud of the organisation as it continues to stabilise and grow in a tough economic climate.

The performance of the Home Countries at this year's Commonwealth Games showed the world the power of netball and female empowerment through the medium of sport. All four UK countries showed what they can do within the limits of funding available to them. The professionalism of the sport at the elite level and England winning the gold illustrates that female team sport athletes given the chance to train, eat and sleep as full-time professionals, will deliver. That is what Welsh Netball aspires for its elite arm of the game and now more than ever the links that we can secure with commercial sponsorship and assistance is the key to the progression of the performance side of our beautiful sport.

Our national squads, Celtic Flames and Celtic Dragons have represented Wales on the world stage over the course of the last year and whilst they have been highs and lows, that's sport and we are justifiably proud of our players, coaches, team managers, umpires and whole army of volunteers who make this sport tick. I wish to thank all those past and present who have supported and sculpted these squads and we thank you for what you have given to our sport.

Participation and the development of netball is growing in Wales and we are beginning to get the recognition we deserve for being the top female team sport in our country.

Welsh Netball Board, you have grown and adapted in an ever-changing sporting environment. You give many unseen hours to Welsh Netball and thank you for your time, experience, endurance and foresight. You, with the Welsh Netball staff work incredibly hard to ensure that the sport we all love continues to thrive and the support we receive from Sport Wales is immeasurable.

Board Members:

President – Merle Hamilton

Vice President – Sheila Cooksley

Elected Director – Jean Foster

Elected Director – Lesley Riddell

Appointed Director – Kerry McDonald

Vice Chair – Cath Hares

Vice President – Wendy Pressdee

Elected Director – Jan Richards

Appointed Director – Mike Halfpenny



Catherine Lewis
Chair of Welsh Netball



Sarah Jones
Welsh Netball CEO

CEO Summary

2017-18 has been a year of continued growth for Welsh Netball as we have seen netball capture the public's imagination like never before.

The National Governing Body has enjoyed an exciting twelve months of growth as it has continued to consolidate improvements in its infrastructure. Over the last year, it has facilitated unprecedented growth within the community game and faced a fiercely competitive performance environment with resilience.

Welsh Netball has remained steadfast in its commitment to its three strategic goals:

- 1. Grow the Game**
- 2. Raise performance - inspire success**
- 3. Sustainability**

Some of the highlights of the last year have included:

- ▶ Record growth for affiliated membership with has been in excess of 20% over the last two years.
- ▶ An 82% increase in the number of workforce courses offered by Welsh Netball to upskill coaches and umpires.
- ▶ Launching new learning opportunities: the 'Intro to Umpiring' and 'Netball Leaders' courses will embed key skills and knowledge into the future netball generation.
- ▶ Celtic Flames competed in New Zealand's inaugural Super Club competition and earning the highest placing of the non-Tasman teams. They were also the sole northern hemisphere team in the tournament.
- ▶ Successfully hosting the Netball Europe Open Championships 2017 competition and welcoming hundreds of netball fans to the Sport Wales National Centre.
- ▶ Demonstrating improved governance through the Sport Wales self-assurance process.
- ▶ Implementing an independent competition review, which will underpin key structural changes in the performance pathway over the coming 4-year cycle, in order to ensure success in 2022.

The power and potential of netball to improve quality of life, drive community cohesion and aid health and wellbeing is abundant. Our work will continue to deliver on these objectives as we grow and adapt. The significant increase in Welsh Netball membership has been one of our most important achievements. It is especially important given that one of our strategic targets for delivery has been increasing youth membership. Coupled with new and improved learning provision for young people via our Netball Leaders and Intro to Umpiring courses, our development staff have been hard towards safeguarding the future sustainability of the game in Wales.

This year we have embarked on several new partnerships. These exciting new relationships will allow us to reach out to even more people in the community. We are pleased to have developed partnerships with the University of South Wales, the Women's Institute and the Prince's Trust Cymru. These relationships will be developed as we move into the next year and they will provide a means of collaboration and innovation so that we can deliver netball via a range of mechanisms.

The exposure that netball has received from the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games has placed further fuel on an already roaring fire as grassroots netball goes from strength-to-strength. The desire to engage with netball is clear when you see the growth in our social media platforms. As membership, demand for netball courses and public attention grows, Welsh Netball must continue innovate, inspire and lead. I am confident that in the next twelve months, the organisation's staff, volunteers and leaders will do just that. As part of this, Welsh Netball is committed to the Welsh Government's Prosperity for All strategy. We all know the power and potential of netball to improve quality of life, drive community cohesion and aid health and wellbeing. Our work will continue to deliver on these objectives as we grow and adapt.

We have achieved a great deal over the last year across the community game, however, it has been a frustrating twelve months for Welsh Netball in terms of elite performance. Missing out on qualification for the 2019 Netball World Cup in Liverpool was painful not only for the players and staff, but also for the netball community across Wales. The dedication and commitment of our players is never in question, but it is vital that we take time to rebuild. It has been a busy year for performance, including Netball Europe, the Netball Youth World Cup and the Commonwealth Games and now looking towards the future, we must strive to improve our performance pathway. Within a challenging economic climate, we need to continue to make effective use of resources and be prepared to make difficult decisions when required.

Early 2018 saw the appointment a Commercial Director to the Welsh Netball Board which is a significant step change in how the organisation sees its future. Changes have been made to the Articles of the Association to enable us to become more versatile and to bring new skills on to the Board. This work, in partnership with the Sport and Recreation Alliance, will be taken to the AGM in June 2018 for full ratification. Moreover, we have successfully achieved the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit Level 2 Safeguarding Standard. Development and modernisation is critical and these changes form the first phase of a long-term governance plan.



Ben Williams
Head of Community
Development

Community Development

The last 12 months has seen significant growth for community netball in Wales.

Netball was delighted to announce last February that its membership had increased by 20% over the past two seasons, hitting record levels for the Governing Body. The game is proving to be more popular than ever before, with increasing demands for new junior and adult opportunities to play both competitively and recreationally.

As usual the netball community is working tirelessly to 'grow the game' by setting up new leagues and divisions to cater for the increased demand. The voluntary workforce that underpins the vast majority of netball in the country is also increasing, with over 1000 coaches, umpires and volunteers accessing Welsh Netball courses over the last year. We salute the time and commitment our volunteers continue to commit to their communities and to improve themselves through our workforce development programme.

Membership

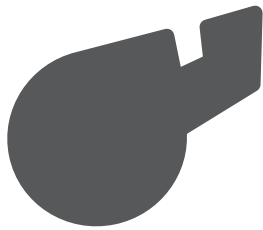
Welsh Netball has seen continued growth in membership during the 2016/17 season.

The continued growth of Welsh Netball membership demonstrates both the excellent work of staff and community volunteers as well as the value the netball community in Wales places on membership. Increasing membership allows Welsh Netball to reach more communities and engage with greater numbers of people, growing the game and building sustainability.



Workforce Development

“The netball workforce is the beating heart of the game, and fundamental to everything we do when looking to develop opportunities and grow the game.”



1737

Active Umpires



1185

Active coaches



202

Affiliated Clubs

A record number of workforce development courses were over the previous 12-month period with 62 coaching and officiating courses run between April 2017 – March 2018. This represents an 82% increase on the previous year. In total, 1030 workforce development opportunities were accessed with our course attendances reaching unprecedented levels. The netball workforce has shown great commitment and passion to both develop themselves and the athletes.

Courses

Total # Courses	62	# Attendees	1030
Total # Coaching Courses	27	# Coaching Attendees	444
Total # Officiating Courses	35	# Officiating Attendees	586

Figure 1: Courses (April 2017 - March 2018)

Workforce Development

Coaching

A record number of coaches entered the pathway with 27 coaching courses offered throughout the country, ranging from our brand-new Netball Leaders course to the UKCC Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications. In total, 444 new and existing coaches were upskilled.

The new Netball Leaders course was developed and launched in July 2017. It has proven an instant success with hundreds of participants taking the course across Wales. Netball Leaders marks the first step on the coaching ladder for aspiring netball coaches and seeks to impart the knowledge and skills needed to run fun and safe netball activities. Netball Leaders will provide the netball community in Wales with the leaders of tomorrow who will be equipped with the leadership skills needed to make an impact in the community game.

Umpiring

In May 2017, Welsh Netball launched a brand-new umpiring course as the start of the officiating pathway. The new 'Intro to Umpiring' course replaces the Q Award as the 'gateway' into netball umpiring. The course was completely re-designed from scratch, to make sure that new umpires have the necessary knowledge and some on-court experience of umpiring once they've completed the course. Learners also receive the added benefit of their own whistle and rule book, giving them the tools required to start their journey to becoming part of 'team white'.

Total # Officiating Courses	35	Total # Officiating Attendees	586
Intro to Umpiring Courses	22	# Attendees	367
C Award Umpiring Courses	10	# Attendees	192
B Award Umpiring Courses	2	# Attendees	19
Table Officials Courses	1	# Attendees	8

The course has proven to be a big hit with our newly upskilled tutor workforce and learners alike. Following an evaluation of the new course in Summer 2017, 86% of learners rated the course as 'excellent' or 'very good', with 100% of respondents saying that they would recommend the course to others. As a result of the roaring success of the new course, Welsh Netball hopes to see more umpires who have completed the course, utilising their skills in domestic leagues at junior and senior levels.

Regional Reports

Central South Wales

Over the last 12 months, there has been a huge range of netball activity in the Central South region. The A470 League has expanded from two divisions into three and next season there are plans to start a fourth. Meanwhile, walking netball in Eastern Leisure Centre, Cardiff has gone from strength-to-strength, with an extra weekly session added to cater for growing numbers.

It has also been an incredible year for netball in the Rhondda Valleys. In their first year, Rhondda Netball hit the ground running with over 250 women and girls participating in netball every week. In 2017/18 that figure has risen to over 450, demonstrating a huge appetite for grassroots netball in the area.

Case Study: Bridgend Adult League

In August 2017, the Bridgend Adult League was founded in order to provide more opportunities for netball clubs in Bridgend and the surrounding area to play locally. The league began with 8 teams from 6 different clubs with a grand total of 100 affiliated players playing during the season.

Furthermore, 8 participants have been on the umpiring course and are currently looking to be mentored to sit their exams soon. There has been a mixture of players in the league this year, some with lots of experience and others who haven't played competitively since finishing school.

Although the league has produced new players and clubs already, there are still plans afoot to grow the game in the area. Next year, the league will feature two divisions and an additional venue with more teams. All of this will provide even greater opportunities for netball participation in the Bridgend county borough area.

Nicola James, Treasurer and Secretary of the Bridgend Adult League was very pleased with how things have gone over the last few months:

"The league has been a pleasure to run and the feedback we have received throughout the season and at the end of season presentation evening made all the hard work worthwhile. It has also been wonderful to see the huge improvements made by teams as they have become used to playing together through the season."



Regional Reports

Mid & West Wales

Despite the sheer geographical scale of Mid & West Wales, netball has continued to grow into the furthest reaches of the region. The last year has seen the first LA Hub introduced to Powys, led by Margaret Nuttall. The growth of the Hub has been remarkable with both Under 15 and Under 13 groups now up and running. This includes four coaches, all mentored by Margaret, who also chairs the adult league. This follows success elsewhere in Wales' largest county, with five teams, Beacons, Maldwyn, Builth Wells, East Radnor and Newtown competing in a regional tournament.

It has also been wonderful to see Sêr y Byd Netball Club continue to grow. They have enjoyed a fantastic season in the Llanelli league's friendly division, getting some wins and scoring dozens of goals. Next year they will be playing fortnightly matches as they continue their development.

Case Study: Under 9s in the Carmarthenshire and District Netball League

Last year an Under 9s division was launched within the Carmarthenshire District Netball League, as a stepping stone to the existing Under 11 and 13 age grades. Nine teams took part in the league from six different clubs from across the county: Ser y Cwm, Merlins, Trimsaran, Dulais, Morganite, Carmarthen and Kidwelly.

It is a friendly league with the emphasis being on fun and participation. Over 90 young players took part this season and the games were unscoring. Rather than focusing on winners and losers, the aim of the league was to begin to develop skills needed to embark on the netball journey.

During the presentation in April, all players from the Under 9s were recognised with awards and the hope is that the league will grow and attract even more players in its second season.



Regional Reports

North Wales

It has been a landmark year for netball across North Wales. A new league has been set-up in the North East – the Wrexham and Flinshire League has been established with a total of four divisions including 27 teams. Meanwhile, the North West League has celebrated its 40th year which is an incredible achievement and a testament to generations of netball players, officials, management and volunteers.

Case Study: Rhosnesni Netball Club

Rhosnesni Netball Club, now in its 12th year, won Organisation of the Year at the 2018 Wrexham County Borough Sports Awards.

Rhosnesni NC is run by passionate and enthusiastic volunteers and has grown rapidly over the last few years. In 2017 the club spent time mentoring new volunteers and ensuring that all had the opportunity to attend coach / umpire courses. They also mentored junior members as they attended their Netball Leaders Award and completed volunteering hours at the club. Rhosnesni NC also had success at Regional and National Club Competitions. Finally, the club has also collected the InSport Ribbon Award and offers fully inclusive opportunities.

Sue Williams, Chair & Head Coach since 2006, summed up the club's excitement at winning the award. She said: "We are so proud as a club to receive this award, we all put in so much time to ensure we give as many players an opportunity to play as possible. I'm particularly proud of how friendly our club is, we welcome all players new and old, experienced or not. Our club ethos is to ensure everyone enjoys playing – win or lose. She added:

"We have a fantastic group of volunteers, most of whom are mums and have gained coaching qualifications with no previous netball background. Rhosnesni NC is our family, with great friendships and this award is to say thank you to everyone for their hard work and commitment."



Regional Reports

South East Wales

There has been steady growth in player numbers in South East Wales in the last year. The emergence of new Aber Valley based club, KBE has been great for adult netball in the region and Blaenavon Netball Club have developed their junior section to cater for more players in the area. Beyond this, there has been extensive upskilling of workforce in the area, with several regional personnel now able to deliver the new Intro to Umpiring and Netball Leaders courses.

Case Study: Newport Walking Netball

A new walking netball group that has been set up in Newport. Marilyn Bryan-Jones established the group in October 2017, and spoke about the journey that the players have been on over the last few months.

"I've been talking about walking netball for a long time. After seeing walking football, I thought walking netball would be a lot of fun! I did some research into it and decided that it was something that I wanted to do."

"Lots of the players today are the players I looked up to when I started playing. People who never thought they'd play netball again are here and that's what is so lovely about it."

Asked about what the future might hold for walking netball, Marilyn was enthusiastic.

"I think it's going to be big. We might be able to set up a league. Even though walking netball is supposed to be non-competitive, as soon as people are involved in sport it's competitive – you want to do well, you want to win."

There was equal enthusiasm from those in the squad. Gail Allen, who is a former Wales international spoke about getting back into the game.

"I haven't played for 30 years. The reason I gave up was because of injury and I was interested to see if I could get back into netball."

"It is great for fitness! It's lovely to see friends and making new ones as well. I absolutely love it and I would like to see more people involved in the future."

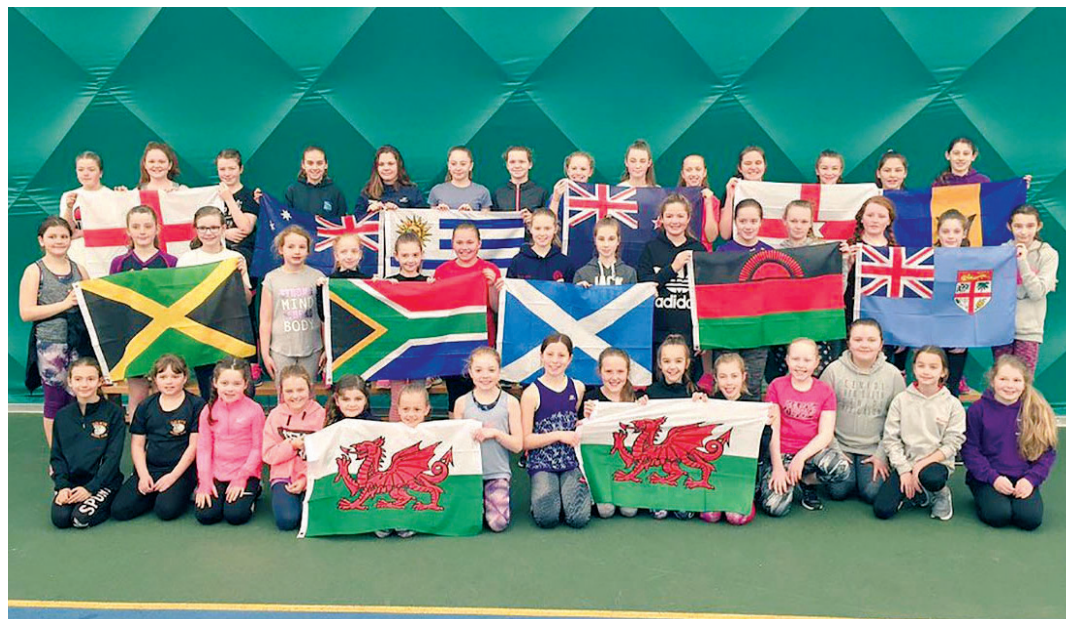


NETS Play Camps

Welsh Netball launched NETS Play in August 2017, initially across 2 regions as a pilot. It was a huge success and soon more followed in Easter with a Commonwealth Games theme.

The camps feature a range of activities, such as shooting games, killer, truck and trailer and lots of attack and defensive work. NETS Play offers young netball players the opportunity, regardless of ability or experience, to make friends, play netball and try some modified forms of netball in a fun environment.

NETS Play offers this at an affordable price for parents during the school holidays. Camps have taken place across all Welsh Netball regions and have been delivered by the volunteer workforce with support from the Netball Development Officers.



Pathway

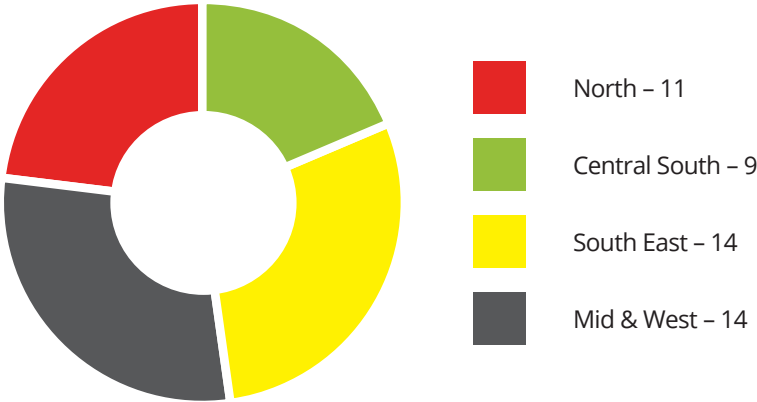
LA Hubs

The aim of the Local Authority (LA) Hub programme is to provide a progressive and accessible pathway to maximise our young athletes' potential to be the best they can be.

Through training once a month we can ensure that we are developing and nurturing our talented netballers throughout Wales.

The programme saw a total of 48 Hubs running across Wales (the same as the previous year).

LA Hubs running across Wales:



Total number of sessions **336**



19 out of 22 Local Authorities have LA Hub provision



12 LA Hub coaches will undertake their UKCC Level 2 coaching qualifications



Total number of trialists **1927**



Total number of LA Hub members **1107**

Safeguarding

We view safeguarding of young people in our sport with the utmost importance. The organisation works in conjunction with the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and Sport Wales to ensure our safeguarding requirements as a Governing Body of Sport are met.

In January 2018 Welsh Netball achieved Level 2 of the CPSU's Safeguarding Standards. Meeting these standards demonstrate that Welsh Netball is adhering to a stringent framework that helps to create safe sporting environments for children.

Welsh Netball continues to process DBS checks on behalf of the sport, with the new Complete Background Screening service in full operation. The current service continues to be provided free of charge by Welsh Netball, whilst volunteers will also benefit further from automatic enrolment onto the DBS Update Service. Our continued investment into this area outlines our commitment to high safeguarding standards within the sector.



Competitions

2017 – 18 Season

Under 17 Open Clubs

2 December 2017 | Merthyr Tydfil

Winner: CTK

Runner-up: Eastside

Under 16 A&B Inter Area

20 January 2018 | Cardiff

Div A Winner: Cardiff & Vale

Div B Winner: Cardiff & Vale

Div A Runner Up: North East

Div B Runner Up: Glamorgan Valleys

Under 14 A&B Inter Area

27 January 2018 | Bangor

Div A Winner: Glamorgan Valleys

Div B Winner: Glamorgan Valleys

Div A Runner Up: North East

Div B Runner Up: Cardiff & Vale

Under 18 Inter Area

11 February 2018 | Cardiff

Div A Winner: Glamorgan Valleys

Div A Runner Up: South East

Ann Smart Trophy

24 March 2018 | Deeside

Winner: Ysgol Maes Garmon, Mold

Runner up: Islwyn High School, Oakdale

President's Cup

24 March 2018 | Deeside

Winner: Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, Cardiff

Runner up: Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr, Gowerton

Senior Inter Area

22 April 2018 | Deeside

Winner: Glamorgan Valleys A

Runner up: North East A

Primary Schools

26 April 2018 | Merthyr Tydfil

Winner: Tywyn Primary School

Runner-up: Hawarden Village School

Under 15 National Club

12 May 2018 | Bangor

Winner: CTK

Runner Up: Llantrisant

Under 13 National Club

19 May 2018 | Cardiff

Winner: Newbridge

Runner Up: North Dragons Sirens

Under 11 National Club

20 May 2018 | Cardiff

Winner: Deeside

Runner Up: Mini Merlins

Performance

This season has been transitional for the Performance Team within Welsh Netball. As well as a change in Wales and Celtic Dragons management, we have also introduced the new position of Celtic Dragons Operations Lead. We have also welcomed a new Performance Support Officer to the team and have worked with a range of partners to provide elite performance support in terms of expertise, resources and facilities.

There have been a range of competitions for both senior and age grade elite netball players. Highlights have included the excellent performances of the Under 17s squad against high quality opposition and the record-breaking matches against New Zealand and Fiji at the Commonwealth Games.

It is also important to constantly review and improve our performance pathway, which is why we have implemented an independent competition review. This review will help us to make changes to the pathway as we move through the next four-year cycle and seek to achieve success in 2022.



Wales Seniors

Super Club

A brand new Super Club team called the Celtic Flames represented the northern hemisphere at New Zealand's inaugural Super Club competition in Nelson in July 2017.

The Flames were made up of a mixture of Welsh internationals, Celtic Dragons Superleague players and two exciting ANZ premierships league players. The Super Club competition was comprised of eight teams in total. The top three New Zealand teams from the ANZ Premiership featured in the event, as well as Gauteng Jaguars of South Africa, NSWIS of Australia, Marama Vou of Fiji and the University of Trinidad & Tobago. This was an amazing opportunity for our players to challenge themselves against some of the best club and international players in the world. Celtic Flames finished in fifth place ahead of all other international invited teams outside Australia and New Zealand.

Te Wananga o Raukawa Pulse vs **Celtic Flames**: 65-41

Celtic Flames vs Marama Vou: 68-41

SKYCITY Mystics vs **Celtic Flames**: 66-43

Celtic Flames vs Gauteng Jaguars: 57-45

Celtic Flames vs University of Trinidad & Tobago: 62-47



Wales Seniors

Netball Europe Open Championship

October 2017 | Sport Wales National Centre, Cardiff

The Sport Wales National Centre in Cardiff was the host city for the Open NE Competition in October 2017. It was wonderful to welcome Fiji to Wales for the very first time and we hope that they and their passionate fans enjoyed their time in Cardiff. It was also great to witness Leila Thomas and Christina Shaw (both just 19 years old) being awarded their first senior caps for Wales. Ultimately it was a disappointing tournament for Wales. Despite a comprehensive victory over Fiji, Wales were beaten in a closely contested game against Scotland and very narrowly lost out to Northern Ireland. Given just how close the match between the Thistles and NI was, Wales may look back with regret on some missed opportunities. The competition did give us a first glimpse of some of the young players that have moved up from the U21 squad and the future looks bright.

Scores:

Wales 46	Northern Ireland 47
Wales 49	Scotland 58
Wales 61	Fiji 40
Wales 50	England 72

The Wendy White Test Series vs Samoa

November 2017 | Sport Wales National Centre, Cardiff

The Wendy White Test Series in the Sport Wales National Centre in Cardiff saw Wales take on Samoa in two international Test matches. This gave the senior squad an opportunity for redemption after a disappointing performance at Netball Europe the previous month. After two convincing wins, Wales lifted the Wendy White Trophy to win the series. Eleanor Roberts gained her first senior cap and Georgia Rowe was crowned player of the series.

Scores:

First Test:

Wales 72	Samoa 34
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Second Test:

Wales 71	Somoa 45
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World Cup Qualifiers

January 2018 | Scotland

The senior squad travelled to Perth in Scotland for the World Cup Qualifiers where they lost to Scotland and Northern Ireland. The squad were hugely disappointed to miss out on qualification for the INF World Cup 2019. Kyra Jones hit an important milestone during the tournament by gaining her 50th Cap.

Scores:

Wales 40	Scotland 52
Wales 42	Northern Ireland 57



Wales Seniors

Commonwealth Games

To represent Team Wales in the Commonwealth Games is the pinnacle of a netball players career. With a new management team and revitalised squad after winning two Celtic Dragons matches in the run up to the games, the squad were in high spirits when travelling out to Tasmania for their training camp. Netball Tasmania hosted the Welsh team and provided three crucial match opportunities against Northern Ireland, Tassie Spirit and the Tasmanian Magpies. After a successful training camp, the squad travelled to the athlete village on the Gold Coast. Wales' first fixture was against the world No.2 New Zealand. After a tough first quarter, Wales went on to win the second quarter making history by doing so. After some challenging games in the group stages, Wales came last and found themselves in 11/12th playoff against Fiji. The squad finished on a high by giving a strong performance and delivering a record win with Wales' largest total goals ever achieved in a Commonwealth Games match and highest ever winning margin against Fiji.

Wales Commonwealth Games 2018 Squad & Management:

Julie Hoornweg – Head Coach | Natalie Peperell – Assistant Coach |
Lavinia Baker – Team Manager | Gemma Davies – Performance Analyst |
Suzy Drane – Captain | Kelly Morgan – Vice-Captain | Fern Davies | Bethan Dyke |
Kyra Jones | Nia Jones | Chelsea Lewis | Sarah Llewelyn | Cara Lea Moseley |
Georgia Rowe | Leila Thomas | Amanda Varey

Scores:

Wales 44	New Zealand 70
Wales 47	Scotland 51
Wales 31	England 85
Wales 40	Uganda 76
Wales 53	Malawi 68
Wales 81	Fiji 32

2017/18 Wales Senior Long Squad:

Cathy Bastian | Sara Bell | Fern Davies | Suzy Drane | Bethan Dyke | Lydia Hitchings
| Emily Holland | Chloe James | Clare Jones | Kyra Jones | Nia Jones | Lateisha Kidner
| Chelsea Lewis | Sarah Llewelyn | Kelly Morgan | Cara Lea Moseley | Megan Powell |
Eleanor Roberts | Georgia Rowe | Leila Thomas | Amanda Varey

Wales Under 21

Netball Europe May 2017

The Under 21 Netball Europe Competition took place in Aberdeen in May 2017. This competition was a vital part of the team's preparation for the Netball World Youth Cup a few months on. It was also the first major competition for the recently appointed Under 21 Head Coach, Natalie Peperell. The squad came away disappointed after losing to England and Scotland and had plenty to build on ahead of the Netball World Youth Cup in July.

Netball World Youth Cup July 2017

The Wales U21 squad travelled to Gaborone in Botswana for the 2017 Netball World Youth Cup. The team were drawn in to a tough group alongside England, Fiji, Grenada and Trinidad and Tobago. The young Welsh squad suffered three losses in the pool stage but had a convincing win over Grenada. After losing against the host nation, Botswana, the Welsh squad beat Barbados to claim 13th spot. This was ultimately a disappointing placing for the team who had targeted a top 10 finish.

2017 Netball World Youth Cup Squad:

Natalie Peperell – Head Coach | Jamilla Abbott – Assistant Coach |
Lavinia Baker – Team Manager | Lucy Baros – Physio | Lucy Wilde – Performance Analyst |
Rebecca Baker | Fern Davies | Izzy Dunsford | Chloe Dyke | Celyn Emanuel |
Lydia Hitchings | Chloe James | Bethan Johnson | Sarah Llewelyn | Megan Powell |
Leila Thomas | Miquie Walker-Jones

The U21 Long Squad and Talent squad then had various friendly fixture opportunities with Superleague curtain raisers and friendly fixtures against England Under 19 as the season progressed. The squad are now building towards Netball Europe in October 2018 with their Head Coach, Natalie Peperell, bringing back a wealth of experience from her role as Interim Assistant Coach for the Celtic Dragons and Wales seniors at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Under 21 Long Squad:

Anna Brindley | Bethan Johnson | Bethan Moore | Chloe Dyke | Chloe James | Christina Shaw | Eleri Michael | Elysse Haywood | Erin Williams | Georgia Jenkins | Gwenan Williams | Hari Truman | Leila Thomas | Megan Baker-Rees | Milly Watts | Miquie Walker-Jones | Morgan Dunn | Rebecca Baker Tia Meddick | Rachel Davies

Under 21 Talent Squad:

Ceri Evans | Lucy Werret | Alex Callender | Anni Emmerson | Caris Morgan | Ellie Begley | Emily Davies | Maddia Hanna | Megan Gareth | Natalie Griffiths | Niktia Harris | Carys Llewelyn | Elen Jones | Leah Kirby | Laruen Francis | Lucie Hogg | Malkia Beadle | Kathryn Titley

Wales Under 17s

NPL Tournament August 2017

The Wales Under 17 team were invited to the England Netball National Performance League Tournament in August 2017. The tournament consisted of the 10 franchise NPL teams and 4 invitational teams (Wales being the only non-English team invited). The squad travelled to Nottingham for the 4-day tournament and stayed in the University Halls. After some exciting and extremely close games, Wales finished 5th overall. This was an amazing opportunity to showcase the Under 17 team's talent against the best teams in England. After such an impressive performance, the squad have been invited back to the next year's NPL tournament due to take place in Loughborough, July 2018.

Scores:

Manchester Thunder 31	Wales 26
Surrey Storm 25	Wales 34
Yorkshire Netball 33	Wales 30
Team Bath 28	Wales 28
Team South Tigers 23	Wales 35

Play off:

Team Bath 26	Wales 29
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We would like to thank the following sponsors for making the tour possible: Gallery Loft Conversions, Glamorgan Telecom, Redrow Homes Ltd, Gittins McDonald Solicitors, M & P Enterprises, Edwards Coaches, Push Beyond, Mainetti UK Ltd, Bridgend College and Allchurch & Co. We would also like to thank the players, parents and management team for their hard work and commitment to raise over £6000 to cover the costs of their participation in the tournament.

In October, the Under 17s also competed in an international match against Northern Ireland Under 17s. The match featured as a curtain raiser fixture at the Netball Europe Open Championships in Cardiff. This gave the squad invaluable exposure to international netball on high-profile show court. Wales came away victorious with a 67-31 win.

Wales Under 17s

During the season, Wales Under 17s also played curtain raiser fixtures before Celtic Dragons Superleague games. Furthermore, the Under 17s were invited to a tri-tournament against Team Bath and Hertfordshire Mavericks in Bristol, during March. With the cancellation of Netball Europe in Ireland due to adverse weather conditions, this proved a critical competition for the young squad. The tournament was a great opportunity for the U17s to play some fiercely competitive netball against quality opposition. They put in another two impressive performances to win the round-robin tournament.

Results:

Wales U17s 56	Team Bath U17 52
Wales U17 49	Team Bath U17 44

Wales Under 17 Long Squad:

Sapphira Fisher | Charlotte Scarborough | Angharad Broughton | Millie Carter | Lauren Francis | Catrin Hughes | Nan Williams | Nia Evans | Macy Morgan | Hannah Owen | Macey Lane | Rhian Evans | Lauren Evans | Beca Hughes | Mollie Underhill

Wales Under 21 Talent Squad:

Ella Porter | Lydia Hanniford | Alicia Simpson | Ellie Merriman | Ellie Thomas | Esmé Cornelius | Ffion Cooper | Georgia Hellerman | Grace Lim | Jessica Llewelyn | Lucy Nota Maisie Williams | Rosie Pope | Sarah Cole | Seren Davies | Thalia Humble | Wiktorija Rejniak | Grace Postlethwaite | Grace Connolly | Ellie Saunders | Ellice Gallagher



Development Training Centres (DTC) and Performance Training Centres

Throughout the last year, Welsh Netball's performance pathway has continued to prepare players for elite age-grade netball. 23 players at the PTC tournament in June 2017 were successfully selected to attend the National Under 21 trials with over half of those players being successfully selected into the Under 21 long or talent squad.

The DTC tournament in July 2017 ran successfully at the brand-new Archers Arena at Cardiff Metropolitan University. 50 players then attended the U17 National trials where over 30 players were successfully selected to represent the U17 Long and Talent Squad.

The DTC and PTC trials ran in October 2017 with the regional training centres training hard for the new season's tournaments in the summer of 2018.

Officials

To improve the umpire performance pathway, umpires from across Wales were identified and selected into the Elite Umpire Group. From this group, the umpires were allocated to a national squad and worked closely with that squad over the season. This gave the top umpires elite match and training game opportunities, including international friendlies and Superleague curtain raisers.

In July 2017, Rhian Edwards and Ann Burt-Williams were successfully selected to umpire at the Maccabiah Games in Israel. Known as the 'Jewish Olympics' they are one of Israel's biggest sporting events. The event hosted about 10,000 athletes and 22,000 fans from more than 80 countries in a festival of sports. Both Welsh umpires did a fantastic job at the games and found it an invaluable experience.

Rhian Edwards was selected to umpire in the Championship section of the Under 17 Netball Europe tournament in March 2018. Becky Scott was also selected to umpire in the Challenge section of the tournament which was due to take place in Ireland. Unfortunately, due to adverse weather, the organisers of the event decided to make the extremely difficult decision to cancel the event.

Ali Harrison (née Davies) has had an extremely successful year and was officially awarded her International Umpire Award in Botswana at the Netball World Youth Cup in July 2017 where Ali officiated throughout the tournament. Ali was also selected to umpire the Northern Ireland Quad series in the summer of 2017, the Netball Europe Championships in October 2017 and the 2018 Vitality Netball Superleague season.



Communications

Communication has continued to be critical to Welsh Netball in 2017/18. The role of clear, proactive and engaging communication is to support the work that the National Governing Body does in growing the game, competing in elite competition and safeguarding the sustainability of netball in Wales.

To this end, Welsh Netball's communications output has not only continued to showcase community development and elite performance, but it has further developed its approach to marketing. Marketing Welsh Netball events, courses and workshops is critical to upskilling workforce, engaging with the community and securing sustainable revenue streams.

Welsh Netball has also continued to feature stories from across Wales' netball community. From walking netball in Newport to Wrexham sports awards, there are numerous stories of success within the Welsh community game. We work to amplify these and demonstrate the power of netball to inspire women and girls, tackle inequality and strengthen self-esteem.

Press and Media

Welsh Netball has been featured in a range of media over the last year.

The senior Wales team has been featured live on the BBC as part of their coverage of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and this has included live broadcast, online streams, radio coverage and online match reports. Furthermore, Wales international test matches from the Netball Europe Open Championships 2017 and the World Cup Qualifiers have been streamed online via QTV on our social media platforms, as well as on Netball Europe's own channels. Both tests and Celtic Dragons matches receive immediate post-match coverage and reaction from BBC Radio Wales as well as BBC Sport online.

Celtic Dragons v Loughborough Lightning was a live Sky Sports Netball match in the Superleague this year. The broadcast included a feature from goal-keeper Kelly Morgan and highlighted the Dragons community links with coverage of mascots from Pontypridd and Penarth enjoying their match-day experience.

Elsewhere, Welsh Netball has also been featured in Welsh language broadcasting via S4C, appearing on the popular Heno variety show. Players have also appeared on Made in Cardiff TV and have filmed with Sky Sports. Netball continues to feature in local and regional print media, including extensive coverage on leading independent Welsh sports website, Dai Sport.

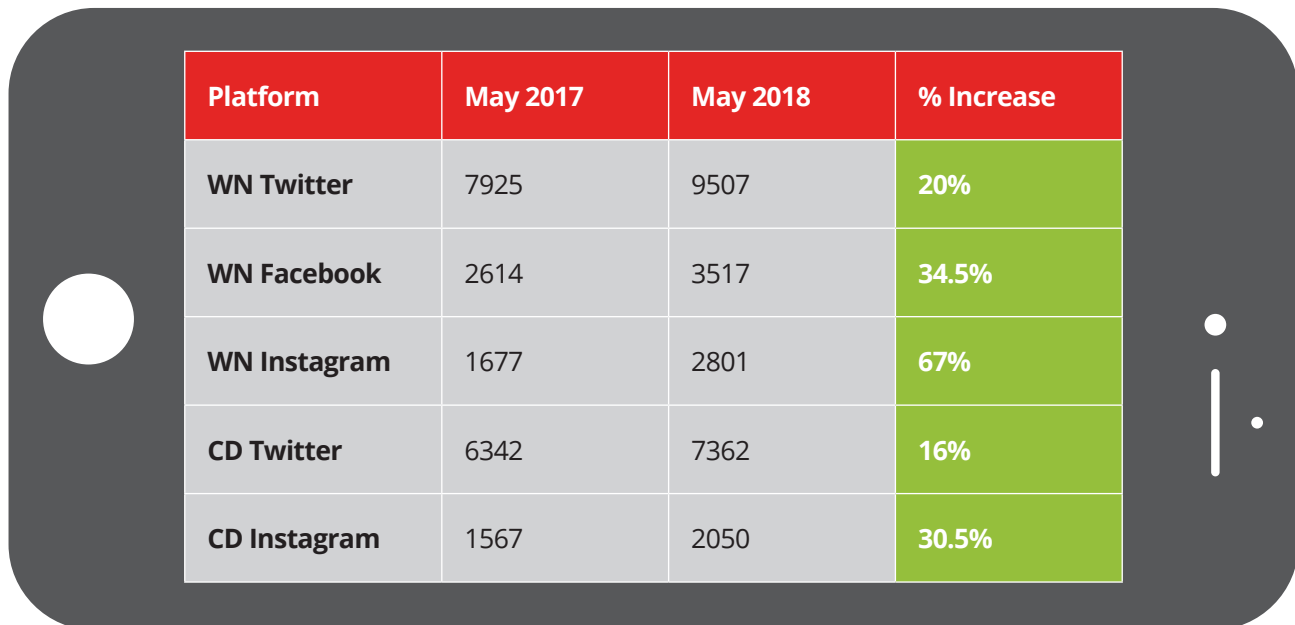
Social Media

The growth in Welsh Netball's social media platforms has continued in earnest over the last year. The growth in followers not only allows us to reach out to the wider public, but it also provides a means to market the Welsh Netball brand, its products and services to a greater audience. By making use of social media to showcase courses and workshops, Welsh Netball has increased traffic to its website. 40% of our web visitors now come via social media and this demonstrates a desire to engage with our stories, products and brand.

We have taken a more dynamic approach to our scheduling of social media content. Posts are now scheduled to take place at peak times for digital traffic and are repeated in a way that will minimise people missing out on key messaging.

Social media has continued to be an excellent tool for us to engage with our partners and sponsors and we have also seen the sustained benefit of having our Netball Development Officers on social media. They have the autonomy to engage with audiences locally and add value to our communications activity with contextualised and relevant local content.

Social media growth:



Platform	May 2017	May 2018	% Increase
WN Twitter	7925	9507	20%
WN Facebook	2614	3517	34.5%
WN Instagram	1677	2801	67%
CD Twitter	6342	7362	16%
CD Instagram	1567	2050	30.5%

Celtic Dragons

Community Engagement:

During the 2017/18 season the Celtic Dragons players have been out in local communities offering masterclass camps, fan zones, dress reveal events and player appearances for fans, clubs, schools and Welsh Netball members.

This season's new playing dress was revealed in North Wales for the first time ever, engaging many local young players from the North Wales junior league and beyond. Once again, the pre-season friendly match against Manchester Thunder was a sell-out well in advance of the event.

Players continue to engage and participate in varying coaching and appearance opportunities throughout the country working with schools, clubs, universities, colleges and businesses. Celtic Dragons players have fully embraced opportunities to engage with the community this season, passing on valuable 'money can't buy experiences' via Celtic Dragon mascot and birthday packages.

Community engagement is, and will continue to be, a key focus for the franchise, in alignment with Welsh Netball's vision to 'Grow the Game' and 'Inspire Success.'

Our loyal and committed green army fans continue to support at home games with this season average attendance increasing 15.1% compared to the 2016/17 season.

Coaching workshops have been organised as career and professional development opportunities for coaches and teachers in across Wales. The learning outcomes for the workshops are focused around footwork and movement, defence and attack and provide another excellent opportunity to upskill the Welsh Netball workforce.

Performance:

At the start of the 2017/18 season the Celtic Dragons participated in two pre-season games against Severn Stars and Manchester Thunder. For the first time, this seasons Vitality Netball Superleague (VNSL) campaign has been split to incorporate the recent Commonwealth Games in the Gold Coast, resulting the VNSL season starting in February and finishing in July.

With an unsettled start to the 2018 campaign due to the change in the Celtic Dragons management team, the Dragons lost their opening three games. However, Round 4 saw Dragons secure their first win of the season against Surrey Storm quickly followed by a second win against Severn Stars ensuring that the squad had secured sixth place in the table heading into the Commonwealth Games break.*



* Correct as of 15 April 2018. Vitality Netball Superleague season concludes on 30th June.

Acknowledgements

Welsh Netball would like to extend their warmest thanks to all of our sponsors and partners for their continued support.

Your help has been invaluable in our continued success. The sport has gone from strength to strength this year due, in no small part, to your involvement.

We would also like to say thank you to all of the staff and volunteers, what ever your role, for continuing to be integral to the success and growth of our sport in Wales.

Thank you.

Sponsors & Partners:

Sport Wales | University of South Wales | Gilbert Netball | Ace Feet in Motion | Orthotix | Physique Management | Ticketline | PlayerLayer

Commercial Support

Team Mascots:

Llantrisant Netball Club | Gilfach Netball Club | Netball Cherubs | Bridgend Bolts Netball Club | Cardiff University Development Centre | Merthyr Netball Club | Penarth All Stars Netball Club | Pontypridd Netball Club | Aberavon Celtics Netball Club | Mini Merlin's Netball Club

Programme Sponsors:

The Print Co Wales | The Netball Show | Carter Lauren | CMS Teamwear

Player of the Match Sponsors:

With Love...Flowers & Gifts

Ball Girls & Boys:

Llantrisant Netball Club | Llandaff City Primary School | Builth Wells Netball Club | Mary Immaculate Secondary School | Dulais Netball Club | Dyffryn Comprehensive | Bridgend Bolts Netball Club | Barry Netball Club | Cwmbran Netball Club

Thank You:

Many thanks to our supportive and loyal volunteer base who without them we would struggle to provide these opportunities, your time, support and dedication is appreciated – Bench Officials | Umpires | Volunteers | Umpire & Team Liaison | Stewards

Celtic Dragons Squad:

Suzy Drane – Captain | Kelly Morgan – Vice Captain | Kyra Jones | Bethan Dyke | Amanda Varey | Clare Jones | Eleanor Roberts | Sara Bell | Georgia Rowe | Cara-Lea Moseley | Sarah Llewelyn | Fern Davies | Leila Thomas | Megan Powell | Nia Jones

Celtic Dragons Management Team:

Sarah Palmer – Operations Lead | Julie Hoorweg – Interim Head Coach | Natalie Peperell – Assistant Coach | Louvain Lake – Team Manager | Michelle Wood – Performance Analyst | Ian Kirkham – Physiotherapist



Welsh Netball
Pêl Rwyd Cymru 

www.welshnetball.com