

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24



SWIM WALES
NOFIO CYMRU

AQUATICS FOR EVERYONE FOR LIFE | GWEITHGAREDDAU DYFROL | BAWB

23
24

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SWIM WALES®
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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Ian Jones - Swim Wales Chair

DEAR MEMBERS,

As we close the chapter on 2023/2024, I am delighted to present the Swim Wales Annual Report. This year has been a remarkable journey, filled with challenges, triumphs, and significant growth.



We said farewell to our long serving Chairman Allen Bewley who retired after many years of commitment and dedication to our sport. Our thanks to Allen is immense and it was my absolute privilege to present him with an award at our Swim Wales Awards ceremony in January in recognition of his work.

As I step into the [role of Chair](#), I will endeavour to ensure that Swim Wales continues to evolve and develop so that our current and future members are able to reach their goals and aspirations. My commitment to Swim Wales is unwavering and I aim to represent you and our nation to the very best of my ability.

Our commitment to promoting the sport and the [health benefits](#) of being aquatically active has never been stronger. Despite the challenges we faced, our community came together, demonstrating resilience and a shared passion for swimming that is truly inspiring.

This year, we saw an increase in [membership](#), a testament to the hard work of our clubs, coaches, volunteers, and swimmers. Our [competitive events](#) were successful, with record participation and outstanding performances at all levels. We also made significant strides in our [learn-to-swim](#) programmes, ensuring that more children have the opportunity to learn this vital life skill. This at a time when we all experienced the effects of the cost of living crisis and constrained budgets making access to valuable pool time even more difficult.

Our [strategic partnerships](#) have been crucial in our achievements. We are grateful for the support of our partners in [Welsh Government](#), [Sport Wales](#), Local Authorities and the wider Business sector who have embraced our vision of [Aquatics For Everyone for Life](#). Your contributions have enabled us to provide high-quality experiences for our members and to make a positive impact on swimming in Wales.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the future. We will continue to focus on our strategic objectives as outlined in our [YMLAEN strategy](#), investing in our people, enhancing our programmes, and strengthening our Partnerships even further. We remain committed to our vision and look forward to building on our successes so that our generation and those of the future are able to participate and succeed.

No matter whether you are one of our athletes participating in the [Olympic Games in Paris in 2024](#), a [volunteer](#) in a gala or taking your first swim lesson, Swim Wales are here to support you on that journey.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our journey this year. Your dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment are the beating heart of Swim Wales.

Thank you for your continued support, here's to another successful year!



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CEO'S MESSAGE

Fergus Feeney - Swim Wales CEO



DEAR READER,

The spring of 2024 marked the end of the first financial period of our 3-year [YMLAEN \(PROGRESS\)](#) strategic term. Despite significant disruptions in our communities and environments due to global economic uncertainty and a well-documented cost of living crisis, we have continued to meet and exceed many of the challenging targets set in our strategy.

Our key objectives for aquatics in Wales were twofold. Firstly, we aimed to increase participation in aquatic activities and sports, making them more inclusive. Secondly, we sought to maintain high performance levels in international competitions while strengthening our development pathways. I am delighted to report that we have maintained our position as a leading participation activity and sport, with just under 250,000 adults being aquatically active every week in Wales, representing 9% of the population. Additionally, there is a latent demand of 172,000 (7%) Welsh children who are either currently active or looking to start their aquatic journey.

The national [Active Adult Survey](#) and [School Sport Survey](#) reveal incredible levels of latent demand, which instil great optimism for the future among everyone involved in the day-to-day running of aquatic activities and sports. This success, particularly the significant growth in participation, has been made possible by the incredible work of our local authority partners, leisure operators, [affiliated member clubs](#), and [registered swim schools](#) since 2021, and their rebuilding efforts post-COVID.

The number of women and girls now accessing the water in Wales for various activities and sports has reached over 51% of our population, and [disability swimming](#) has seen a 35% increase, making it the most favoured sport within that community.

We have also made significant strides towards achieving another key strategic objective: [creating equal opportunities](#) for people from underserved communities to access water. Over the past 12 months, we have met with Welsh government several times to address the challenges in school swimming and to help make swimming accessible to all children in Wales through our [Nofio Ysgol School Swimming Programme](#).

Following Birmingham 2022, our [senior national squad](#) athletes have continued to make an impact on the world stage. Matthew Richards became our first individual World Champion in several years, and Medi Harris became a European Champion. Our junior national squad athletes surpassed all expectations at the [Youth Commonwealth Games in Trinidad & Tobago](#), earning a staggering 10 medals between them. Additionally, many junior and senior Welsh records have been broken by the likes of Theodora Taylor and Tyler Melbourne-Smith since those games.

In April, at the inaugural [Speedo Aquatics GB Championships](#) in London (Olympic qualifiers), six of our Welsh senior squad members, including 1 Para athlete, qualified for [Paris 2024](#) and have been selected for Team GB. I speak for everyone associated with our governing body, board, staff, clubs, coaching structures, and volunteers alike when I say how immensely proud we all are of these achievements.



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CEO'S MESSAGE

Fergus Feeney - Swim Wales CEO

This year, we established several key strategic projects, one of which is a complete review of our aquatic pathways in Wales. This initiative is supported by a dedicated pathway budget to provide sustainable investment in developing young talent and the [facilities](#) around Wales that are used by nearly 100 development and performance clubs weekly.

The number of grassroots administrators on our [Just Go digital membership platform](#) grassroots administrators increased by 8.3 per cent this year, with 'auto renewal' proving to be hugely successful with our affiliated member clubs. Additionally, there are 30% more users on our [My Concern Safeguarding](#) platform enabling users to manage grassroots aquatic clubs and submit information in easy-to-use digital platforms.

On the critical issue of improving representation or '[moving to inclusion](#)' is becoming embedded within Welsh aquatics, and we continue to work with our stakeholders to accelerate change. Swim Wales has invested in an head of inclusion role to add focus and insight to our work. We now have in house expertise on hand to support the development of resources, provide ad hoc advice and guidance to staff. This has supported us in moving away from routinely commissioning external advisers for short term pieces of work and to embed change in a more sustainable manner.

Our [commercial partnerships](#) remain vital to our success, with new agreements signed this year with Parkwood leisure, Cardiff Metropolitan University, Swansea University, Freedom leisure alongside Speedo and Good Boost.

SWIM WALES Chief Executive, Fergus Feeney said: "This year we've made strong progress towards our strategic goals despite the difficult economic climate and the challenging targets that we set for ourselves. We've increased our investment into all levels of aquatics for the first time since the global pandemic, while protecting our reserves as self-insurance against similar events which may negatively impact the NGB in the future. We've also hit record investment from Sport Wales & UK Lottery funding, which is a significant milestone.

"We have added several new faces to our talented and motivated team, passionate about driving meaningful change within aquatic activities and sports across all of our communities in Wales. I'm confident that we head into the future with a strong strategy [YMLAEN](#), in robust financial health, and the ability and desire to rise to the challenges and the opportunities that are presented to us."



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2023
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DIRECTOR'S GOVERNANCE DECLARATION

Following two external reviews commissioned by Sport Wales, Swim Wales undertook significant evaluations in alignment with the [Governance Leadership Framework for Wales \(GLFW\)](#).

The first of these was to examine and update the Swim Wales Articles of Association. The review identified minor revisions to enhance relevance to Swim Wales' operating model and to better align with the seven key principles of the [GLFW](#) framework.

The second review was focused on the governance across the organisation as a whole, from the board down through our executive team and departments. The purpose was to assess and improve governance structures and processes across Swim Wales.

Both reviews highlighted a robust approach to governance improvement, and reinforced our ongoing work to ensure that Swim Wales' practices are in line with Good Leadership Framework for Wales standards.

It was the opinion of both independent external consultants that the review findings and recommendations reflect Swim Wales' commitment to continuous governance improvement and adherence to best practices as outlined in the GLFW.

The Governance review also identified some necessary revisions, and we were delighted to see our commitment to and clear prioritisation of governance across the organisation, as demonstrated by the numerous 'best practice' examples highlighted in the report.

The review included 'board observation' at a Swim Wales Board meeting as well as a series of interviews with key leaders in our organisation. The findings emphasised a very business-focused environment with a healthy culture of both challenge and support. There was clear evidence of a strong, skilled, and competent board of directors that collectively offers significant benefits to the organisation and makes well-informed decisions. Due to retirement and end of terms the board will look to strengthen the number of board members in this next financial year with the skills and experience to support key growth areas, such as;

- Diversity, Equality and Inclusion
- Partnership Management & Customer Relationships
- Health & Wellbeing
- Product Development & Marketing
- Digital Technology
- Sustainability

The People Committee (a Swim Wales Board Sub-Committee) has been tasked with working through the recommendations and revisions from both reports, and we have presented them as part of our accountability work with Sport Wales and [Aquatics GB](#).

There is no doubt that these reports have provided valuable insights for improvements for us in our quest to be a recognised sector leader in Wales and beyond, and the directors of Swim Wales would like to thank all of the staff, partners and external consultants who have supported the governance work undertaking this year.

Board of Directors
Swim Wales



ANNUAL ACCOUNTS



SWIM WALES
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The financial year ending 31st March 2024 (2023/24) ended on a £12,472 operating surplus, compared to the £27,912 surplus in the previous year. The closing position for 23/24 includes a reduction in the value of our investment property so we have incurred an additional expense of £20k within the year.

In 2023/24 Grant income made up 52% of total income, the balance of 48% came from self-generated revenue such as [training & development](#), events, membership fees, badges & certificates and merchandise. Whilst there was an unprecedented mid-year budget review, Sport Wales funding remained unaffected for 2023/24.

Swim Wales continued to build on self-generated revenue streams and 2023/24 was an exception year for growth within key areas. In comparison to 2022/23 [Merchandise](#) saw a 42% increase and Sponsorship achieved the highest revenue and saw an increase of 129%. Despite anticipating a 15% reduction in sales due to potential pool closures both Badges & Certificates and Training & Development exceeded budgeted income. Overall revenue has increased by £124k from 2022/23.

During the year, we received an insurance pay out of £38.4k due to the cancellation of the 2023 National Championships and £5.9k for Water Polo travel insurance claims.

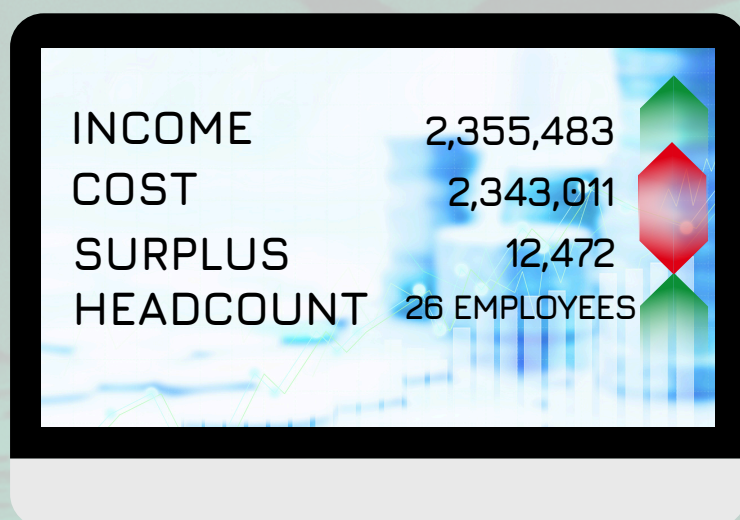
Whilst the year has shown strong revenue growth, the economic environment with rising inflation presented challenges in managing costs.

During the financial year we created the [Aquatic Club Development Fund](#) and distributed £51.5k to support our affiliated member clubs in the year.

The next financial year 2024/25 has seen a reduction in our anticipated Sport Wales funding of 3.5%, which will bring fresh challenges alongside anticipated further rises in inflation. We have produced a detailed budget for the upcoming year which will help support the challenge to manage costs.

There will also be significant funding uncertainty going into 2025/26.

Laura Llewellyn
Head of Finance & Administration



2023/24 STATS

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS



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INCOME

EXPENDITURE

	31/03/24 £	31/03/23 £
GRANTS		
Sport Wales	1,116,577	1,003,279
Other Funding	115,312	149,925
	<u>1,231,889</u>	<u>1,153,204</u>
AQUATIC DEVELOPMENT		
Membership	254,860	244,220
Events	216,613	170,427
Regional	117,832	86,377
Diving	13	10,992
Water Polo	55,455	31,397
Pathway	1,845	362
	<u>646,618</u>	<u>543,775</u>
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT		
Merchandise	38,780	27,370
Sponsorship	34,867	15,240
Badges & Certificates	85,761	89,950
Education	291,309	366,869
	<u>450,717</u>	<u>499,429</u>
NATIONAL PERFORMANCE	<u>7,072</u>	<u>9,891</u>
BUSINESS INTERRUPTION INSURANCE CLAIM	<u>0</u>	<u>6,631</u>
OTHER INCOME	<u>19,187</u>	<u>13,081</u>
	<u>2,355,483</u>	<u>2,226,011</u>

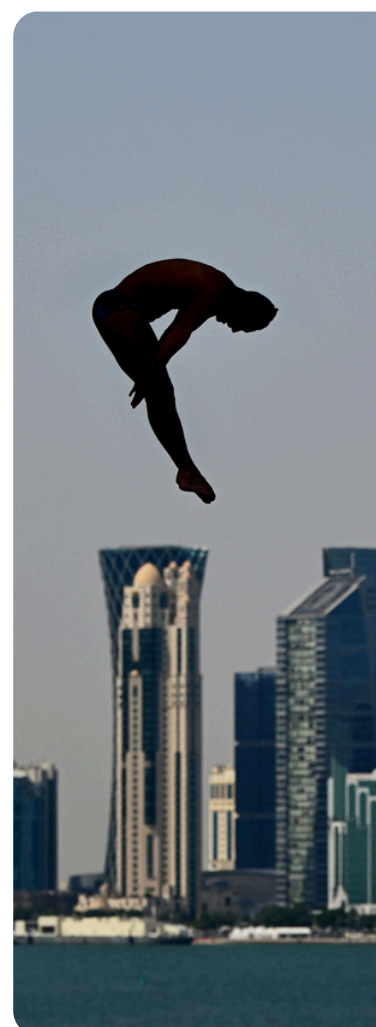
	31/03/24 £	31/03/23 £
AQUATIC DEVELOPMENT		
Staffing	189,507	124,293
Membership	35,118	34,800
Events	242,893	187,853
Regional	83,365	63,589
Diving	-	10,992
Water Polo	44,043	44,748
Pathway	147,067	124,290
	<u>741,993</u>	<u>590,565</u>
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT		
Staffing	12,792	23,704
Merchandise	17,613	13,737
Sponsorship	3,413	14,898
Badges & Certificates	19,077	23,208
Education	233,545	265,682
	<u>286,440</u>	<u>341,229</u>
NATIONAL PERFORMANCE		
Elite Programme	322,539	400,922
Elite Staffing	411,844	378,634
	<u>734,383</u>	<u>779,556</u>
OVERHEADS	<u>560,195</u>	<u>486,749</u>
LOSS ON REVALUATION OF INVESTMENT PROPERTY	<u>20,000</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>2,343,011</u>	<u>2,198,099</u>
NET		
(Deficit / Surplus for the year before taxation)	<u>12,472</u>	<u>27,912</u>





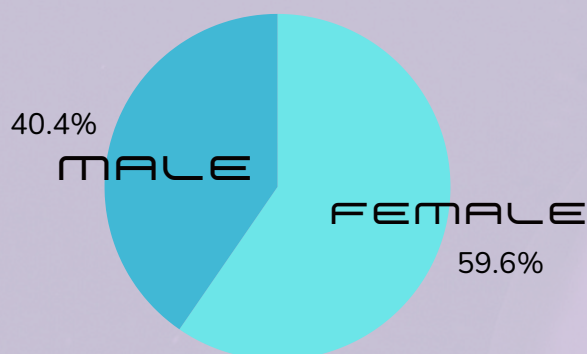
ACCOUNTS BALANCE SHEET

	31/03/24 £	31/03/23 £
FIXED ASSETS		
<i>Tangible assets</i>	25,308	29,062
<i>Investments</i>	1	1
<i>Investment property</i>	390,000	410,000
	<u>415,309</u>	<u>439,063</u>
CURRENT ASSETS		
<i>Stocks</i>	8,050	10,006
<i>Debtors</i>	332,221	246,808
<i>Cash at bank and in hand</i>	828,963	570,773
	<u>1,169,234</u>	<u>827,587</u>
CREDITORS		
<i>Amounts falling due within one year</i>	<u>798,976</u>	<u>480,816</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS	<u>370,258</u>	<u>346,771</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>785,567</u>	<u>785,834</u>
CREDITORS	<u>(15,833)</u>	<u>(25,000)</u>
<i>Amounts falling due after one year</i>		
PROVISIONS FOR LIABILITIES	<u>(1,571)</u>	<u>(4,994)</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>768,163</u>	<u>755,840</u>
RESERVES		
<i>Revaluation Reserve</i>	107,207	107,207
<i>Fair Value Reserve</i>	35,000	55,000
<i>Income and Expenditure Account</i>	625,956	593,633
	<u>768,163</u>	<u>755,840</u>



The past year has been a period of significant progress for our organisation, as we achieved key objectives and laid the groundwork for a promising future.

MEMBERSHIP



[School Sport Survey, State of the Nation Report 2022](#)

Swimming is the second most commonly participated sport in a community club setting at least once a week

Latent Demand: **Swimming 48% (148,000 pupils)**
Water Polo 14% (43,00 pupils)

[Sport & Active Lifestyles: State of the nation report 2022/23](#)

Within Fitness Activities, the most common activity adults reported a demand for was Swimming, with 172,000 adults saying they wanted to do more. Demand for swimming fell by around 62,000 people between 2021-22, however this was somewhat counter balanced by participation numbers increasing by 60,000 people during the same period.

During the 2023-24 financial year, we witnessed growth across all membership categories, however, as we know from the latest school sport survey and State of the Nation report we know that there is huge potential for further growth with swimming topping as the sport with the highest latent demand amongst children and adults.



MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

As we approached the second anniversary of the Just Go integration, we reflected on the successful changes implemented across all associate memberships. As a result, Swim Wales made the strategic decision to extend these enhancements to all membership types ahead of the 2023/24 financial year. Furthermore, we upgraded every club's Just Go package at no additional cost to ensure clubs are well-equipped and can broaden their reach. To support these changes, we created an interactive [membership support page](#) on our website, which is accessible.

Events

We intended to start the financial year with the return of our Swim Wales National Championships. Unfortunately, both 50m pools in Wales faced issues, forcing us to cancel the event. I want to express my gratitude to our dedicated volunteers and officials, supportive members, parents, and partners for their unwavering support during this unprecedented situation. Amidst the challenges, we successfully organized an innovative Level 1 meet in Liverpool, which allowed us to explore the potential for hosting long course meets in North Wales, even if a few miles across the border

Club Development

The 2023/24 year also marked the return of the Swim Wales National Conference, held in Llandrindod Wells in October. The conference focused on providing solutions and support in response to sector risks and pressures from rising energy costs and the need for a sustainable future, both financially and environmentally. We covered a range of topics that encourage membership growth and seamless integration from Learn to Swim programs into aquatic activities.

During the Club Conference, we launched three exciting initiatives:

- 1. Ein Clwb:** This initiative offers a catalogue of helpful guides, how-to videos, case studies, useful templates, and links to further support affiliated clubs, making volunteering as rewarding as possible. You can access the [Ein Clwb portal](#).
- 2. Swim Wales Club Audit:** Aimed at capturing the aquatic landscape's recovery post-pandemic, the audit provided vital information to support our clubs in the coming year. We achieved a response rate of 78% (59 out of 76 clubs), and I would like to thank every individual and club that participated in the audit.
- 3. Aquatic Club Development Fund:** Recognising the financial strain on our clubs, we launched this fund, which received 38 applications and provided over £50,000 to support sustainable development initiatives benefiting clubs. We are extremely grateful to Sport Wales for their generosity, as this [fund](#) would not have been possible without their support.



The 2023/24 financial year also saw the return of our in-person [Swim Wales Annual Awards](#) evening at the Village Hotel in Cardiff. The event was a huge success, celebrating our nominees and winners across multiple categories. With nearly 300 nominations, it was a testament to the incredible work happening across the sector.

As we look forward to the upcoming financial year, we have several exciting projects in development that will drive growth and inclusivity within our pathways. I want to extend my sincere gratitude to our amazing aquatic community for their continued support over the past year, with special thanks to all club and event volunteers and officials who help drive our sport forward.

Sioned Williams
Head of Aquatics & Inclusion



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PERFORMANCE

The 2023/24 financial year saw two individual Welsh World Champions crowned with Matt Richards taking gold in the 200m freestyle at the 2023 World Aquatic Championships in July, and Aidan Heslop topping the podium in the 27m high diving at the 2024 World Aquatic Championships in February.

These performances were undoubted highlights in another outstanding year for Swim Wales performance athletes at the major international competitions, which included many more medal winning performances on the World stage. A summary of these is given below:

2023 WORLD AQUATIC CHAMPIONSHIPS, FUKUOKA, JAPAN

Matt Richards – Gold 200m Freestyle, Gold 4x200m Freestyle relay, Bronze mixed 4x100m Freestyle relay.

2023 WORLD PARA SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS, MANCHESTER, UK

Rhys Darbey – Silver S14 200m Individual Medley

2023 EUROPEAN YOUTH OLYMPIC FESTIVAL, MARIBOR, SLOVENIA

Theodora Taylor – Gold 50m Freestyle, Silver 100m Breaststroke, Silver 4x100m Freestyle relay, Silver mixed 4x100m Freestyle relay, Silver 4x100m Medley Relay

Mabli Collyer – Silver 4x100m freestyle relay, Silver 4x100m medley relay

2023 EUROPEAN SHORT COURSE CHAMPIONSHIPS – OTOPENI, ROMANIA

Matt Richards - Gold 200m freestyle, Gold 4x50m freestyle relay, Silver 4x50 medley relay

Medi Harris - Gold 200m backstroke, Silver 100m backstroke, Bronze 4x50m freestyle relay

2023 COMMONWEALTH YOUTH GAMES, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

10 medals won in total which equated to **66%** of the total medals won by Team Wales across all sports.

Tyler Melbourne Smith – Gold 400m, Gold 1500m Freestyle, Bronze mixed 4x200m Freestyle relay

Theodora Taylor – Silver 50m Freestyle, Silver 100m Breaststroke, Bronze 200m Breaststroke, Bronze 50m Breaststroke, Bronze 200m Individual Medley, Bronze mixed 4x200m Freestyle relay

Holly Marshall – Bronze 400m Individual Medley

Maxwell Anderson – Silver 200m Breaststroke

Sophie Davies, Solomon Williams, Joshua O'Brien and Holly Marshall – all Bronze mixed 4x200m Mixed Freestyle relay.

2024 WORLD AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS, DOHA, QATAR

Aidan Heslop – Gold 27m High Diving
Hector Pardoe – Bronze Marathon 10km Open water

Medi Harris – Silver 4x200m Freestyle relay, bronze mixed 4x100m medley relay

Matt Richards – Bronze mixed 4x100m medley relay





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PERFORMANCE

From a strategic perspective, significant progress has been made on key performance projects outlined in the Swim Wales YMLAEN strategy.

Swim Wales have now implemented a fully inclusive National Squad Programme that successfully integrates para swimmers at all levels of the National Squad pathway. The programme supports in excess of 100 swimmers / para swimmers across the pathway and provides activity ranging from domestic camps focusing on skill development, physiological testing and holistic education through to international competition opportunities, plus bespoke sports science support and financial aid to our elite athletes. The programme continues to play a critical role in supporting Wales' elite athletes, while at the same time developing and inspiring the next generation of swimmers and para-swimmers.

There has also been significant progress made with our female elite transition project which aims to develop and transition a group of junior female athletes capable of success at senior international level. Over the past 12 months this project has provided bespoke education and activity including specific strength and conditioning, female health in the performance context education, exposure to high level international competition, and confidence building through a shared journey approach.

The professional development of coaches across Wales has continued to be a strategic priority and the Swim Wales [Coach Development Programme](#) aims to improve the knowledge and skills of coaches working at all levels of the Performance pathway including the transition from development to performance. Over the past 12 months the programme has provided opportunities including workshops focusing on swimming specific physiology and event specific training, practical learning opportunities through the National Squad Pathway and experiential learning at international competitions.

Swim Wales has continued to be committed to promoting clean sport and providing appropriate education. During 2023/24, Swim Wales, in conjunction with [UKAD](#), have delivered an anti-doping education programme across all levels of the National Programme pathway to both athletes and staff.

As we look forward towards 2024/25, there are already encouraging signs of an exciting and successful year to come as 5 Welsh swimmers and 1 Welsh para swimmer have gained selection to represent Great Britain at the Paris 2024 Olympic / Paralympic Games.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our key partners – Aquatics GB, Sport Wales, Team Wales and our facility providers for their support and collaboration. Finally I would like to thank all of the athletes, coaches, team managers, sports science practitioners, and club volunteers across Wales who have given so much to make this last year such a success.

Ross Nicholas
National Performance Director



COMMERCIAL

We are delighted to announce that Swim Wales has experienced another strong year commercially. Our business development team has delivered outstanding results in key areas.

Non-funding revenues have increased by 5% year over year, and our fulfilment of products and services, along with customer service, has remained at high levels. As outlined in YMLAEN, our Swim Wales strategy, [Business Development](#) is focussed on four clear strategic objectives aimed at growing and improving our revenue streams. These projects include;

- [Sport Passport®](#)
- Securing a new brand partner
- Launching further developed sponsorship opportunities, and
- Increasing the diversification of our product range

During these turbulent times for the sport and leisure sector it is important for us as a leading National Governing Body to protect our (non-funded) autonomous income streams going forward and add to our portfolio of products and services to meet customer demand and highlight the key role we play in our customers activities.



In a year where we saw further reduction in funding by government into sport, combined with reduced investment into local authorities in Wales it is more critical than ever that we drive forward with our work to strengthen autonomous revenue streams. We have increased customer insight, competitor information and activity as well as market analysis to help us identify new markets, products and services to add to our existing ranges. The [Water Dragon](#) clothing sales and its associated marketing plan is in development, and we now have a strong diversification in our training business.

Swim Wales is very proud of its commercial partnership with [Speedo UK](#), part of the Pentland Group, and our ambition is to bring on another international brand partner. Sponsorship continues to be an extremely challenging place for many sporting organisations, and Swim Wales have created an attractive commercial offer to take to market. We are constantly seeking like-minded partners that align businesses and brands with our values and will join with us in working towards our vision - Aquatics for Everyone for Life. In partnership with Aquatics GB and the other home nations (England & Scotland) we have an activation plan ready to run in parallel and discussions are ongoing at many levels.

Our Sport Passport® software product has seen significant levels of investment over the past 12 months with an overhaul of the existing platform. The new improvements will result in better performance for the the high volumes of users, version two creates a modern up to date platform that customers, across all sports, can benefit from. We hope that the updated platform with additional features including a booking and payment system will significantly increase customers, users and sales.

Finally, many thanks to all of our partners, customers and finally the Business Development team.

Jon Fletcher
Head of Business Development



INCLUDE®
CYNNWYS

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY + INCLUSION

At Swim Wales, our goal is to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where everyone has the opportunity to engage in aquatic activities. Participating in swimming, water polo, diving, and other aquatic sports offers numerous benefits for both physical and mental wellbeing.

We are committed to fostering an environment where diversity is celebrated, and everyone is treated with respect and dignity, ensuring that everyone can learn, participate, and compete in aquatic activities.

Unfortunately, the current financial climate has made access to aquatic activities expensive for many. This situation highlights the critical importance of [school swimming](#) programs, which ensure that every child in Wales has the opportunity to learn how to swim and develop this essential life skill, regardless of their background. Despite the significance of school swimming, our research indicates that only 41% of children leave primary school able to swim. For the past 24 months, we have been advocating to the Welsh Government for further support to guarantee that every primary school in Wales offers swimming lessons as part of the curriculum.

Over the past year, we have made significant strides in our commitment to inclusion. In November 2023, we were awarded the Silver National Governing Body INSPORT award. [INSPORT](#) is a Disability Sport Wales project that supports the physical activity, sport, and leisure sectors in delivering inclusive programs for disabled individuals. Swim Wales strongly encourages our clubs and partners sign up and partake in the programme.

We have also collaborated with our partners to increase diversity within our workforce. An inspiring example is Theresa Ogbekhiulu, whose journey from overcoming her fear of water to becoming a trainee swim teacher is truly motivating.



In addition to creating new opportunities and breaking down barriers, we believe that embedding an inclusive culture requires educating the aquatics community about their role in this effort. At our [National Conference](#), we launched our club resource program 'EIN CLWB.' This resource hub offers a variety of tools to support clubs in their journey toward full inclusivity.

As we move forward, Swim Wales will host more Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI) workshops and webinars on important topics. Although progress has been made, we plan to make significant advancements over the next 12 months. In July, we will launch '[CYNNWYS](#)' Swim Wales's first DEI framework. This framework will outline our strategic outcomes and objectives for the coming years and hold us accountable as an organisation.

Together, we can build a community that embraces diversity and promotes active, healthy lifestyles for all.

Sioned Williams
Head of Aquatics & Inclusion

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY + INCLUSION

Theresa's Story



Just two years ago, Theresa Ogbekhiulu could only splash around in the shallow end of the pool due to a fear of deeper waters, but now she is inspiring others on their learn to swim journeys.

Theresa moved to Wales from Nigeria aged 16 and went on to study at Swansea University where alongside her studies she has campaigned for race equality and the need for education to reflect the diversity of the student body. Theresa is now able to take an active role in ensuring people from all backgrounds are represented within different spaces in her role as Project Advisor for Race Equality and EDI at the University.

With studies, work and volunteering all taking up her valuable time, aquatics had never really crossed Theresa's mind. But a chance conversation with a friend has changed her outlook, and taken her from a total novice to a trainee swimming teacher with the goal of inspiring her community to get into water.

"Last year, I was having a conversation with my friend about swimming and how we hadn't done a lot in the past apart from splashing around," she said. "I definitely had a big phobia of the water so my friend and I started Learn to Swim classes at Moriston Leisure Centre.

"We both started from ground zero, from almost drowning in the shallow end to now swimming with a lot of confidence in the deep end. Prior to that, I didn't think swimming was an activity I would be interested in because I had that fear was there. But we took the bold step to make enquiries and sign up for Learn to Swim.

"If you follow all the news and data around drowning, people from minority ethnic backgrounds drown in disproportionate rates due to so many reasons including people not being exposed to leisure from a young age. "Living in a coastal city like Swansea, it's almost impossible not to come across water so it's such an important life skill to have. We carried on with the programme and three months later, we could swim a length of the pool without any help."

People from ethnic minorities are at an increased risk of drowning according to the World Health Organisation, and only 5% of black adults in the UK say they regularly swim. While some white people grow up with swimming lessons and holidays that provide access to pools or the ocean, the same isn't the case for many Black people across the nation.

Just three months after starting her Learn to Swim classes at her local pool, Theresa was swimming a length unaided. Her journey inspired her to want to pave the way for other black people to get into the water and learn the lifesaving and life enhancing skills swimming provides.

The Black Swimming Association contacted Theresa and she jumped at the opportunity to complete Swim Wales swim teacher training.

"I love to volunteer my spare time to help in the community in any way I can and I thought teaching kids how to learn to swim would be a great use of my time," she added.

"But learning for yourself is much different to teaching other people. You need the right language and the right feel.

"I jumped at the opportunity and thought 'why not!' with a lot of excitement, but also anxiety because I had just learned to swim myself.

"For the BSA, it came from a place of wanting to increase diversity in the workforce across Wales. Young people need role models and they need to see people who look like them in these spaces to believe they can do these things as well. It's about making swimming more accessible and that's why I'm doing this."

Swim Wales were awarded Level 3 'Met' Standard by the [CPSU](#) and Sport Wales for child safeguarding for the 10th consecutive year, an accolade we are extremely proud of. This is not just our award, due to the work embedded at club level; we were able to evidence the work our Club Welfare Officer commit to, this award standard belongs to us all. [Safeguarding](#) is not the responsibility of any one person, it is everyone's.

We must ensure we move to the same commitment to safeguard adults in aquatics in Wales, every adult regardless of role has the right to be safeguarded. We will be working with the chosen partner for [Adult Safeguarding in Wales](#) to include achieving the standards recently introduced, through evidence against the set criteria currently used in England, soon to be live in Wales including compulsory training for all Club Welfare Officers.

Following the successful launch of MyConcern, Swim Wales have introduced MyVoice, available on the Swim Wales website. Using the tab 'Report a Safeguarding Concern' anyone can report direct to Swim Wales, when reporting directly to a club's Welfare Officer is not an option.

Club Welfare Officer Support

Forums, inductions remain in place for Club Welfare Officers, every part of these learning and development opportunities remain well attended, and we will continue to develop and improve these forums.

As we move forward, increased learning and development opportunities will become available through our club leadership programme, 'Ein Clwb' (Our Club), which will be rolled out in 2024.

Zita Cameron
Head of Governance





SWIM WALES
NOFIO CYMRU

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The 2022-23 financial year has been an excellent period of growth and success for Swim Wales and Communications has played a key role. Our efforts have yielded significant milestones in audience engagement through campaigns, events and more, marking this year as one of considerable progress and innovation.

Growth

One of the key highlights of this year has been the substantial growth of our social media audience. Through targeted strategies and engaging content, we successfully increased our social media following by over 15%. This growth reflects our commitment to reaching and inspiring a wider audience to participate in aquatics, while engaging more effectively with our community. We now have an exciting opportunity to accelerate this trend by targeting emerging channels including [TikTok](#) to reach new audiences.

Our newly introduced internal 'News Splash' newsletters have been instrumental in ensuring consistent and direct communication within our organisation and with our external stakeholders. The 'News Splashes' have provided a platform to share updates, celebrate achievements, and foster a sense of community among our staff and board.

Campaigns

Our campaigns this year have been both impactful and widely recognised. The [#SaveOurPools](#) campaign, launched in 2022, continued to advocate for our partners amid the critical situation facing our estate of pools across Wales. Through strategic advocacy and community mobilisation, this campaign has raised awareness and garnered support to preserve essential swimming facilities.

The launch of our YMLAEN Strategy has been another notable success. The accompanying campaign, aimed at promoting our strategic vision, has not only engaged our community but also received external recognition. We were proud to see the YMLAEN Strategy campaign was nominated for a [Welsh Sports Association Sports Industry Award](#). This nomination is a testament to the innovative approach and impactful execution of our communications efforts.

In the coming weeks and month, we will shine a light on our dedication to improving diversity throughout aquatics in Wales with the launch of our Cynnwys inclusion programme, and showcase our Olympians and Paralympian to inspire the next generation.

Events

We broke new ground this year by hosting and contributing to a number of successful corporate events, which have played a crucial role in advancing our strategic objectives and strengthening our community ties. A key highlight was the launch of the YMLAEN Strategy. This launch event not only outlined our strategic vision for the future but also engaged our partners and stakeholders in meaningful discussions about our goals and the path forward.

Our [Annual Awards](#) ceremony was another standout event, celebrating the exceptional achievements of our members and clubs. This event continues to be a cornerstone in recognising and motivating excellence within the Swim Wales community.



COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Annual National Partner & Club Conference provided a platform for knowledge exchange, networking, and collaboration. This conference brought together partners and clubs from across the nation, fostering a collaborative environment to discuss best practices, share experiences, and align on future initiatives.

Additionally, the Wales in London Week event was a significant success. Designed to attract new business opportunities, this event featured a Q&A session with former swimmers Alys Thomas and Georgia Davies. Their insights and experiences added immense value, drawing interest and engagement from potential business partners and stakeholders.

In conclusion, the 2022-23 financial year has been a period of significant achievements for the Swim Wales Communications team. Through strategic growth initiatives, successful event organisation, and impactful campaigns, we have strengthened our community, enhanced our communication channels, and positioned ourselves for continued success in the future. As we look ahead, we remain committed to advancing our mission and engaging our audience with compelling and meaningful communications.

James Candy

Communications Manager



STRATEGY UPDATE

Our YMLAEN strategy was launched in May 2023, and the first 12 months have seen both challenges and progress in equal measures across a number of key strategic areas.

Our approach attempts to connect strategy at the corporate, business, and functional levels, to enable our teams to;

- Operate with alignment
- Encourage collaboration engagement and purpose
- Produce value adding results

The Swim Wales business strategy isn't just a plan for what we are trying to achieve as a national governing body but it also reflects our internal and external environment equally. It positions our objectives and services against our membership needs, the requirements from our funding partners and new opportunities.

We see our YMLAEN strategy as a differentiator, it gives us both a competitive advantage and an edge in performance. Our strategy isn't just a plan for what we are trying to achieve as a organisation it reflects both your internal and external environment equally. It should position your goals and offerings against your competitors, market demand, and new opportunities.

We operate with three distinct levels of strategy:

- Corporate (company-wide, overarching)
- Business (department-wide, contextual)
- Functional (team-wide, tactical)

We track progress weekly at each senior team management meeting and at each board meeting via management reporting and enterprise performance management. We have developed a package of performance data, and we turn this into actionable insight that can be used to drive our organization forward.

YMLAEN is divided into six strategic blocks:



STRATEGY UPDATE

APRIL 2024 UPDATE

AQUATICS

1. Conduct a full **COMPETITION & EVENTS REVIEW** and implement changes. On track. Review completed in 2023, full implementation by September 2024.
2. Implement a support programme for Clubs '**Ein Clwb**'. On track. Launched October 2023 and ongoing through 2024.
3. Introduce **INCLUSIVE PATHWAYS** across all aquatic activities and sports. On track.
4. Implement **NOFIO YSGOL (SCHOOL SWIMMING)** improvement in partnership with Sport Policy Division and Dept. of Education. On track. Project on hold due to UK elections and ministerial changes in Wales.
5. Implement **NEW MEMBERSHIP GROWTH STRATEGY** across all categories. On track. To be informed by pathway review completed in July 2024 and key objectives shared at annual conference.

PERFORMANCE

1. Deliver a Swim Wales **PERFORMANCE COACH DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY** On track. Pathway in development phase one complete.
2. Implement our **FEMALE ELITE TRANSITION** project. On track. Launched October 2023. Phase 1 complete.
3. Deliver a **PROGRESSIVE & INCLUSIVE NATIONAL SQUAD PROGRAMME**. On track.

COMMERCIAL

1. Launch **SPORT PASSPORT 2.0**. Project delivered by Jan-24 and 'go live' market launches scheduled in October across digital channels.
2. Secure a **NEW INTERNATIONAL BRAND** partner. On track.
3. Develop and market Swim Wales 2023 **SPONSORSHIP OFFERING**. On track.
4. Increase the **DIVERSIFICATION OF SWIM WALES PRODUCTS**. On track.

GOVERNANCE

1. Implement **SPORT WALES GOVERNANCE RECOMMENDATIONS**. Behind plan, implementation priorities agreed by board of directors July 2024.
2. Introduce a sustainable and **INCLUSIVE OPERATING MODEL** aligned to GLFW (Governance Leadership Framework for Wales). Behind plan, work in progress towards **INSPORE GOLD** accreditation in addition improvements under 'Moving to inclusion' framework.
3. Publish Swim Wales **TRANSGENDER POLICY**. Behind plan, draft document in discussion to be published as part of CYNNWYS launch in autumn 2024.

STRATEGY UPDATE

APRIL 2024 UPDATE

SECTOR LEADERSHIP

1. Maintain L3 **SAFEGUARDING IN SPORT** standard (Children in Sport). Review completed in 2023 and L3 achieved for 8th consecutive year.
2. Participate in **ADULTS AT RISK SAFEGUARDING PILOT** in Wales. Delivered. First NGB in Wales to complete with excellent results & feedback.
3. Deliver **AAR TRAINING** across our aquatic networks. Behind plan.
4. Maintain quarterly **WELFARE OFFICER FORUMS**. On track.
5. Introduce **MY VOICE APP** to our aquatic audience. On track.

EDUCATION & HEALTH

1. **S.A.F.E. CYMRU** rollout across 5 partner sites in Wales. Behind plan.
2. Reinforce the **NHS WALES PARTNERSHIPS** (Post Cancer Care, MSK, VoG). On track.
3. Launch Swim Wales **MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY** with partners. Behind plan.
4. Launch the **NATIONAL EDI TRAINING PROGRAMME**. Behind plan.
5. Implement **V2.0 NOFIO YSGOL (SCHOOL SWIMMING)** improvement in partnership with Sport Policy Division and Dept. of Education. On track.

The first year of the Swim Wales business strategy was reviewed by both senior management and our board of directors in April 2024. This review celebrated the achievements of year one and identified several key strategic areas for the 24/25 business year.

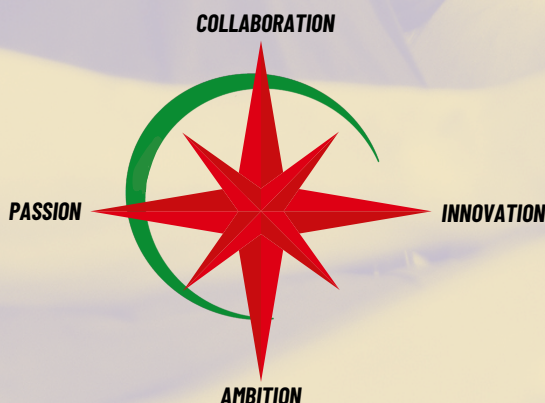
They are as follows;

- **Membership support and growth**
- **Strategic partnerships**
- **Diversity, equality and inclusion**
- **Pathway development (to include coach education and volunteer development)**
- **Nofio Ysgol/School swimming**
- **Facilities audit and protection**

We would like to thank all of our board members, staff and partners across aquatics in Wales for supporting year one of our new strategy and helping us achieve our objectives. We look forward to working closely on all of these areas of focus in the next 12 months and beyond.

Fergus Feeney
CEO

OUR VALUES





SWIM WALES
NOFIO CYMRU

OUR VISION

AQUATICS FOR
EVERYONE
FOR LIFE

“Our organisation is fully committed to opening up our activities and sports to new audiences in every community, so aquatics better represents the rich diversity of Wales. We will ensure that our activities and sports continue to evolve and adapt to thrive in the future, helping to create a truly inclusive pathway for all where everyone can belong, flourish and soar.”

OUR MISSION



SWIM WALES
NOFIO CYMRU

**A WORLD LEADING NGB DELIVERING
EXCELLENCE, INSPIRING OUR NATION
TO ENJOY, PARTICIPATE, LEARN &
COMPETE IN *WELSH AQUATICS.***

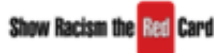


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AQUATICS FOR EVERYONE FOR LIFE | GWEITHGAREDDAU DYFROL | BAWB

23
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OUR PARTNERS + ENABLERS



Chwaraeon Met Caerdydd
Cardiff Met Sport

PERSPECTIVEHR
HR | LEADERSHIP TRAINING | LEGAL SUPPORT



SWIM WALES®
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