



serving welsh sport  
gwasanaethu chwaraeon cymru

## Welsh Government Budget 2012/2013

### Evidence to Finance Committee

The 2012 Olympic Games have been hugely successful in exciting the interest of the public in sport

We are sure the Paralympic games will have a like effect

If we are to see a long term Welsh legacy in terms of increased participation in sport/ physical recreation/outdoor pursuits - with all the associated positive benefits in terms of health and other agendas which we set out below- then it is critical that resource be protected for grass-roots development including coaching

It would be a tragedy if more of our people wish to take up sport/outdoor pursuits but are hindered due to lack of capacity or coaching availability and the chance of a lasting Welsh legacy will have been lost

We do appreciate that we are in increasingly austere times and that very difficult decisions have to be made but ministers are asked to make every effort to protect resource for this crucial area of Welsh life. It is the view of the WSA that such spending for all the reasons below represent an essential investment in the future of Wales.

#### **The benefits of sport, outdoor pursuits and physical recreation to the Welsh people**

The wider benefits that flow from increased participation in sport (*by which term we include outdoor pursuits and physical activity generally*) would more than offset the investment – for example:

Education - Sport has helped some children and young people who have become disengaged from school to return and begin to reintegrate into school. Providing new skills and inspiring children and young people, sport can be a powerful vehicle to improve educational attainment and skill levels. Sport provides an opportunity for adults also to learn new skills through coaching or volunteering in sport, that can then be used in future employment.

Social inclusion - Sports encourage positive character-building in young people. They develop individual responsibility, team working, powers of concentration and social skills. Anti-social behaviour is rare amongst those involved regularly in sport. Disability sport in Wales is hugely successful and opportunities must continue. Sport provides an environment in which diversity and equality generally can flourish.

Health & well-being - The impact that sport can have on both physical and mental health is well established through research. Increasingly we are more and more concerned with the health of the nation and obesity in both adults and children has become of greater and greater concern. It is vital that we encourage larger numbers of our population to be physically active for both their own physical and psychological health and so as to reduce financial pressure on our health budgets. One of the best ways to achieve this on a sustainable basis is to engage children and young people at an

early age with positive, inspiring experiences of sport and then ensure that there are clear pathways to sustain that involvement throughout their adult life.

The Welsh economy - It is estimated that sport, physical recreation and outdoor pursuits contribute nearly three quarters of a billion pounds to the Welsh economy, providing approximately 23,000 jobs.

### The Environment

In Wales we are fortunate to have a spectacular natural environment that is a haven for outdoor pursuits. With access to some of the best mountains, hills, rivers and beaches, and three National Parks, outdoor pursuits in Wales attracts participants from all walks of life and socio economic backgrounds. Outdoor pursuits also help to provide a welcome boost to hard pressed local economies in our rural communities. These activities regularly attract participants from outside Wales, with many choosing to take “active” family holidays. We need to ensure that as many people as possible are able to access our waterways and countryside and are able to enjoy a wide variety of outdoor pursuits through the sustainable use of our natural environment. The associated health benefits from a more active population, as well as the boost to local economies and increased job opportunities in the countryside are compelling reasons to be developing Wales as a sporting destination.

### The Welsh Sports Association

The Welsh Sports Association (WSA) is the recognised independent voice for sport, physical recreation and outdoor pursuits in Wales. Since its foundation in 1972 the WSA has been the ‘umbrella’ organisation for National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport in Wales, providing them with representation and support. Currently around 70 NGBs are members of the WSA with an estimated 500,000 plus individual members under their banner. As well as being the voice for the sector the WSA offers a wide range of services to its members including guidance, training, information, governance support, financial management, development support and other services.

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