

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Iechyd, Gofal Cymdeithasol a Chwaraeon
Health, Social Care and Sport Committee
Ymchwiliad i weithgarwch corfforol ymhlith plant a phobl ifanc
Inquiry into physical activity of children and young people
Gohebiaeth gan gynrychiolydd o Glwb Athletau Newport Harriers
Correspondence from a representative of Newport Harriers Athletic Club

As far as participation is concerned Newport Harriers is an athletic club with currently over 600 registered members. Some of those registered members are children who tried the sport briefly when they were captivated by something they saw or heard and then a couple of weeks later saw Wimbledon Tennis and urged their parents to buy tennis racquets and shoes, before a few weeks later moving on to another sport.

However our year on year membership numbers are increasing from a registered membership database of 160 members in 2011. Undoubtedly the Olympic Games in London and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow had an influence.

As a club we hire Newport Stadium three evenings per week (a total of 7 hours per week) at an hourly cost in 2017 of £37.37 (£13341.09 per annum). This will increase to £38.38 per hour in 2018/9 (£13851.60 per annum). The club uses the stadium 51 weeks the year. The stadium management do not allow it to be opened during Christmas week.

The club is at a point where numbers dictate an additional session may be required. If we add an hour per week it will cost the club £1957.38 per annum. As a voluntary run organisation with over 40 qualified coaches all giving their time freely and put in additional hours planning their sessions, supporting athletes at competitions and analysing performances. We estimate the value of their voluntary work worth £250,000 or more per annum.

The club only advertises itself via our website and via Welsh Athletics website. Most of our members are introduced to us by word of mouth.

In terms of getting children active we do a good job given the resources we have. If we were to advertise ourselves we would get an increase in membership as stated above that would mean additional time slots and more hours for some of our coaches, although we could also recruit more volunteers.

There are many athletics clubs throughout Wales working with children and adults. There are many opportunities for people to get active and involved. Specific points are

- The cost of hiring facilities needs to be kept down to enable clubs like ours to deliver at all levels of the sport.
- There are opportunities for people to get involved at voluntary level or an enjoyment level even if they do not want to be competitive.

- Work could also be done on finding out why so many children switch from one sport to another without committing fully to any of them and being disappointed because they do not achieve or attain anything in sport.
- More can be achieved at a lower cost if funding is directed towards the voluntary end of the spectrum as opposed to the performance end of the spectrum. (e.g. £14000 buys many hours of stadium usage or gemstone athlete to the final of the Commonwealth Games).