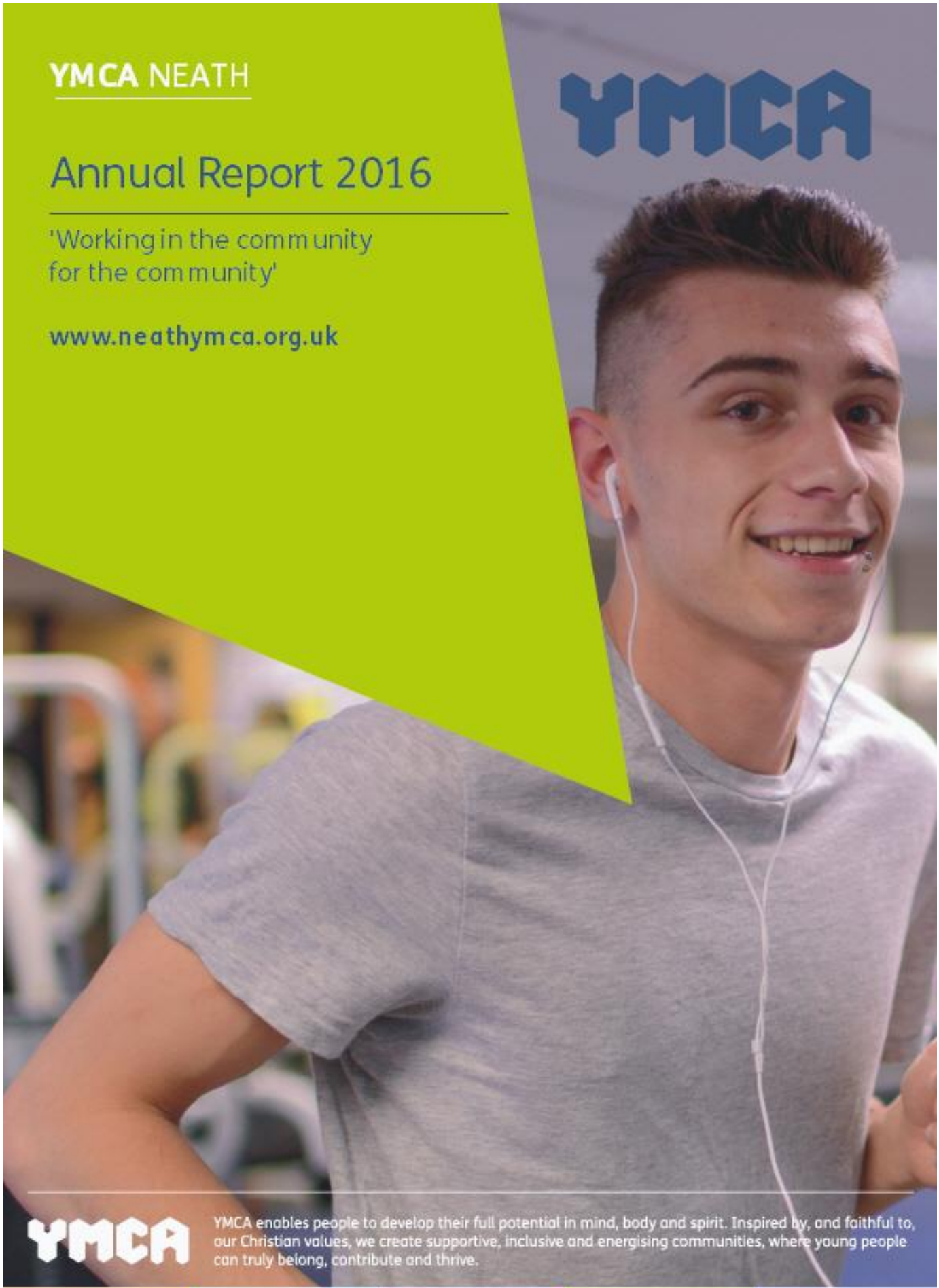
YMCA NEATH

Annual Report 2016

'Working in the community
for the community'

www.neathymca.org.uk



YMCA enables people to develop their full potential in mind, body and spirit. Inspired by, and faithful to, our Christian values, we create supportive, inclusive and energising communities, where young people can truly belong, contribute and thrive.

SUPPORT & ADVICE | ACCOMMODATION | FAMILY WORK | HEALTH & WELLBEING | TRAINING & EDUCATION

1 Board of Management 3
1.1 Honorary Advisors 3
1.2 Bankers 3
1.3 Chaplain, Neath YMCA 4
2 Aims and Purposes 4
3 Full Membership 5
4 Chairman's Report 5
5 Community Use and Partnership Working 7
5.1 Adult Education Classes 7
5.2 Partnerships and Support 7
5.3 Fundraising 8
6 135th Good Friday Breakfast 9
6.1 Patrons of YMCA Neath 9
6.2 Good Friday Breakfast 9
7 The EASI Wellbeing Project 9
8 Section Reports 10
8.1 Fitness Factory 10
8.2 Cylch Chwarae Castell Nedd 11
8.3 Dance Wales UK 13
8.4 Neath Shotokan Karate Club 14
8.5 Kung Fu 15
8.6 Ju-Jutsu 15
8.7 Neath Judo Kwai 16
8.8 Ninjutsu 17
8.9 Gymnastics 17
8.10 Yoga 18
8.11 Music Club 18
8.12 The Joanies 19
8.13 POBL 19
8.14 Swans Community Centre 19
8.15 Police Youth Volunteers 20

1 Board of Management

Chairman	Mr Kevin Lewis
Treasurer	Mr Martin Evans FCA CTA
Vice Chairman	Mrs Joanna Jenkins MBE JP DL
Chaplain	Reverend Patrick Baker
	Mr Clive Ball
	Mrs Pauline Buselli
	Mr Roger Draper
	Mr Alun James
	Dr Bryn John OStJ DL
	Mrs Arlene Morgan JP (to Sept 2016)
	Mr Andrew Newman JP (to July 2016)
	Dr Donald Thomas
	Mrs Carolyn Wheeler JP DL

1.1 Honorary Advisors

Independent Examiner	Mr Phillip Hunkin W.B.V
Solicitors	Mr Robert Williams, Hutchinson Thomas Ltd

1.2 Bankers

Barclays Bank Plc. (Neath)

Swansea Building Society

1.3 Chaplain, Neath YMCA

When I was first appointed honorary chaplain to YMCA Neath (YMCAN) – officially, four years ago but in practise a little longer – the job description seemed brief and simple. First of all, as a member of the Board I had to accept the kind of responsibility common to all charity trustees. Secondly, I had to be available for those who wanted to share such personal or spiritual needs as members of staff felt unable to handle. (But I have to make clear that although I spent forty years as a minister in Baptist churches in Wales I am not a trained counsellor, and so I can offer such help only informally, as a sympathetic friend.) I continue to find myself on an interesting journey of discovery.

I visit the centre for an hour or so most Monday afternoons and am made welcome by the "Joanies", and I have been paying brief token visits also to the youth club most Saturdays. But other groups meeting at the centre are more structured and I do not normally feel free to intrude on them, although I have met some leaders briefly. If there are others which would welcome me, I hope they will let me know. When the staff are not too busy – and even, perhaps, when they are! – they make me welcome in the office and keep me up to date with events.

YMCAN aims to be available to every kind of person, but its basis is Christian, and so I am called upon to open Board meetings with prayer and to help organise and to lead in prayer at the Good Friday breakfast – a momentous and, I believe, unique annual event. In consultation with the Board I have been exploring what else I might offer appropriately to YMCAN, and in consequence during the past year I have made a point of calling at the centre most Fridays at 13.30 for ten minutes of prayer for YMCAN. I expect this to continue and I hope that anyone will feel welcome to join me in the first floor computer room for that brief period. Subject to the approval of the Board it may be possible to make more of that kind of activity in future. Watch this space!

Acting as honorary Chaplain to YMCAN makes a small demand. But it provides me with the privileged opportunity of making wonderful new friends and sharing in the unobtrusive but impressively professional governance of this much-valued organisation. I am grateful.

Reverend Patrick John Baker

Chaplain

2 Aims and Purposes

The YMCA is a Christian Movement. At its centre are Christians, who regarding Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, desire to share their faith with others and make him known, believed, trusted, loved, served and exemplified in all human relationships. It welcomes into fellowship persons of other religious faiths and of none.

Accordingly the Young Men's Christian Association stands for:

- A worldwide fellowship based on equal value of all persons.
- Respect and freedom for all, tolerance and understanding between people of different opinions.

- Active concern for the needs of the community.
- United effort by Christians of different traditions.

The Young Men's Christian Association aims to:

Provide a welcome to members for themselves, in a meeting place which is theirs to share, where friendships can be made and counsel sought.

Develop activities which stimulate and challenge its members in an environment that enables them to take responsibility and find a sense of achievement.

Involve all members in care and work for others.

Create opportunities for exchanging views, so that its members can improve their understanding of the world, of themselves and of one another.

3 Full Membership

The Full Membership of the Young Men's Christian Association is a fellowship of men and women over 17 years of age who have accepted the Basics of Union, are committed to the Christian way of life, desire to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, and seek to associate themselves with others in Christian service in and through the Association. Full Membership is open to any man or woman over 17 years of age who, by loyally accepting the challenges of Christ, is willing to take his or her part in the fellowship and service which the Association exists to promote.

4 Chairman's Report

It gives me great pleasure to introduce YMCA Neath's latest Annual Report.

2015 – 2016 has been a roller coaster of a year: a year which, I am relieved to say, has left us in a better position than I envisaged possible twelve months ago.

The Easi Wellbeing Project, funded by a £243,563 grant from the Big Lottery People and Places Fund, which has been running since November 2013, came to a natural conclusion on the 31st October. The project vastly exceeded its target of delivering over 1,100 dedicated activity sessions, and health improvement plans to people over the age of 13. It made a noticeable difference to the lives of many hundreds of people, and has been recognised as an out and out success.

Running alongside that project, we have continued to develop the many classes and activities on offer at our Pen-y-Dre home. If you wish to improve your fitness levels or to learn a wide range of new skills such as learning to speak Welsh, or to play the piano or the ukulele; come to YMCA Neath. From walking groups to Boxfit; from gymnastics to martial arts – you can find it on offer here.

We have also continued to work with local organisations and charities. Some, such as the mental health charity POBL and Swansea City AFC's registered charity, the Community Trust have chosen to

base themselves with us; while others, such as the Shaw Trust, Western Division South Wales Police Youth Volunteers and the Cylch Chwarae Castell-Nedd Welsh Playgroup deliver sessions from our building. We are thankful for the help and support each of them has provided us.

YMCA Neath is busier than at any time in its history. The annual report provides an overview of our many achievements and the contributions made by our partners; patrons; and a small band of enthusiastic and truly dedicated volunteers. I thank you, one and all.

We are also extremely grateful for the assistance provided by organisations such as our neighbouring YMCA local associations in Wales; YMCA England; and Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Service. I would also like to offer my thanks to AMCOMM, the Probation Service, Barclays Bank and the Neath Sportsmen's Society. Each of them continues to support us year on year.

I must also pay tribute to my dedicated Board of Management colleagues: Rev Patrick John Baker; Clive Ball; Pauline Buselli; Roger Draper; Martin Evans; Alun James; Joanna Jenkins MBE JP DL; Dr Bryn John OStJ DL; Arlene Morgan JP; Andrew Newman JP; Dr Don Thomas; and Carolyn Wheeler JP DL. They each give their time and expertise freely.

I continue to be greatly assisted by our treasurer, Llanelli-based chartered accountant, Martin Evans; and our chaplain, Rev Patrick John Baker. Martin oversees our accounting processes and procedures; while Patrick makes a major contribution to the 'all inclusive' ethos that is at the very heart of YMCA Neath.

I have also called upon the expertise and support of two other colleagues: Jo Jenkins and Bryn John. Without their help, the board would not have resolved the small number of unforeseen difficulties that have arisen in the past twelve months.

Philip Hunkin, our Independent Examiner, and Robert Williams, our Honorary Solicitor continue to advise the board on the many day to day issues confronting us as a busy local charity. I owe them both a debt of gratitude.

I would like to thank our dedicated members of staff and volunteers: our full-time staff Sian Smart; Jessica Kennedy; Brett Jones; our part-time staff Hayley Barnes; Hayley James; Sarah Elias; and our many part time volunteers. Their supreme efforts have ensured that YMCA Neath continues to grow and to make a difference to our community. Sian Smart, our Centre Manager deserves my special thanks. She is a skilled manager with a wealth of funding bid experience and skills.

It is only fitting that I also pay tribute to our past president, George Griffiths. George, who celebrated his 93rd birthday in February, first joined YMCA Neath's Board of Management in the early 1960s. His involvement with YMCA Neath spanned five decades.

As a lifetime member George continued to support us up to his death on the 11th April. He was an ambassador for everything YMCA Neath stands for: improving opportunities, and the quality of life. We miss his phenomenal memory, easy manner, and wonderful sense of humour. He was a very dear friend.

Finally, I would like to issue a call to action. YMCA Neath was established in 1875. We are a wholly self-funded, non-profit making organisation. Despite the progress we have made, we continue to face many financial challenges. 2017 will no doubt be another challenging year.

If you are able to support this valuable local resource: by becoming a patron; or by joining one of our very many classes please ring us on 01639 769315, email us at info@neathymca.org.uk or drop in to see us. Sian, Jess and the team would love to tell you more about what we do.

Please allow us to continue to make a difference to your local community.

Kevin Lewis

Chairman of the Board of Management
October 2016

5 Community Use and Partnership Working

5.1 Adult Education Classes

The past year has continued to be a very challenging time for the adult education classes delivered at the YMCA by Neath Port Talbot's Lifelong Learning Service (NPTLLS), Neath Port Talbot College Group (NPTCG) and Swansea University (DACE). The Local Authority continues to receive significant budget cuts. The impact is far fewer classes and courses being offered under the Lifelong Service across the Borough of Neath Port Talbot. YMCA Neath currently only delivers one class through NPTLLS and NPTCG. This has had a significant impact on the YMCA's income, although the staff work tirelessly to generate income to overcome this deficit. DACE's classes increased slightly over the last year, mainly due to the increased provision of Welsh.

This has been a difficult time for all the venues supporting Adult Community Learning; and also for the excellent tutors delivering the classes and courses. On a positive note; our groups are continuing and numbers are slowly increasing. People meet frequently at the YMCA, and work together to plan and progress their mutual interests. This will be the way forward for Adult Community Learning in future years.

5.2 Partnerships and Support

YMCA Neath is fortunate to be part of many positive partnerships. We continue to have strong links with individuals, groups, and the private and voluntary sectors across Neath Port Talbot. Our future will see us strive to strengthen these partnerships and build new ones to ensure the future development of YMCA Neath; and to maintain its drive in delivering quality services to the community of Neath and its surrounding areas.

Partnership working remains fundamental to successful funding applications, and this year has seen one of our largest projects come to fruition. Strong working relationships have proven vital to the whole process of new and existing opportunities for the people of Neath to enjoy at the YMCA. Exciting developments during the year saw new programmes and activities added to it's already diverse portfolio. The active presence of various organisations basing themselves at YMCA Neath

puts into practice our ethos of developing sport, education and health projects across South West Wales and sits nicely within our core functions.

Collaborative working with others especially Neath Port Talbot's Community First programme continues to maximise our resources. Working together we delivered a wide range of quality educational, recreational and sporting activities and training for people of all ages from pre-school children through to senior citizens.

YMCA Neath's annual footfall for the year increased to over 27,000 people. The importance of continuing our work in partnership with our service users, groups and organisations will support us to continue to deliver inclusive and robust programmes of education and activities appropriate for everyone.

Sian Smart
Centre Manager

5.3 Fundraising

This year has been very challenging for YMCA Neath, and funding has been no exception. Many changes meant that our focus has been directed elsewhere, but it is a priority for 2017.

Many of our prior successful applications have now come to fruition, and this year has been concentrated on sustaining many of the activities that has been delivered. We have been especially grateful to our staff and volunteers who have supported YMCA Neath in maintaining the rear garden area, the internal maintenance and sustaining many of the activity programmes originally delivered by the EASI Wellbeing project.

Continuous support from Barclays Bank and Neath Sportsman's Club is overwhelming and very much appreciated in supporting the activities delivered to young people across Neath.

As we celebrate the achievements of the past year and look ahead to the year to come; we firmly believe that working together we will achieve great things and YMCA Neath will continue to be the pride of our community.

Clive Ball
Chairman of the fundraising committee

6 135th Good Friday Breakfast

6.1 Patrons of YMCA Neath

In 2012 due to the increasing costs of running and maintaining the YMCA building the Board decided to invite people to become Patrons of the YMCA to try to ensure the financial viability of the YMCA. All members pay an annual subscription and we have dedicated employed staff, who are essential for the organization of all the activities, and these are ably assisted by the many volunteers and are overseen by the Board of Management who are all unpaid volunteers and meet monthly.
You too can become a Patron – there is little tangible benefit in becoming a Patron but we will keep you up to date by email about activities taking place at YMCA Neath and you will have the most satisfaction of being part of an Organization that has served the people of Neath for almost 150 years and ensure that it will survive in the future.
If you would like to become a Patron please see any staff member – the minimum cost is £30 per year for individuals, £100 for corporate bodies.

6.2 Good Friday Breakfast

This year YMCA Neath held its 135th Good Friday Breakfast - this is a unique event and we believe it is the oldest such event in Wales and possibly the UK.
It was a very enjoyable morning and if you have never attended the event before we would love to welcome you to the 136th Good Friday Breakfast which will be held at the YMCA on Friday 14th April 2017. The breakfast – which consists of ham & turkey salad (there is a fish option for non-meat eaters by prior arrangement) with boiled potatoes, followed by a hot cross bun and tea/coffee – is preceded by a prayer and a rousing Easter Hymn. There is then an address by an invited speaker
This year the speaker was Rev. Lionel Hopkins the recently retired chaplain of HM Prison Swansea. He gave an inspirational talk and the musical interludes were given by Sara Davies, a very accomplished local vocalist. Kevin Lewis, Chairman of YMCA Neath gave a short update of the progress and activities held in the YMCA over the last year the breakfast concluded with another Easter Hymn and final blessing.
Next year's Good Friday Breakfast is being held at 8.30am on Good Friday 14th April 2017.
All are welcome – just let any staff member know or email info@neathymca.org.uk so that we can cater for all.

Dr Bryn John

Chair Good Friday Breakfast Committee

7 The EASI Wellbeing Project

The EASI Project was funded through the People and Places Fund supported by the Big Lottery. Funding was awarded to YMCA Neath with Sian Smart as the project lead.

The project worked in partnership with voluntary, community and public sector organisations to empower local people to make their communities better places to live.

The EASI Wellbeing project demonstrated its commitment to improve the physical and social wellbeing of the Neath community, by introducing new wellbeing activities at YMCA Neath.

Over a 3 year period the project over 8,300 people actively took part in physical activity sessions with over 830 people indicating their understanding of health risk factors had improved.

Over 240 specific health and wellbeing sessions had volunteer support to drive them forward, many with training opportunities to support volunteers gaining new skills for their future professional development.

The project was fundamental in improving social networks for young people. Over 7,100 young people participated in over 511 structured activities during the 3 years based on improving positive health and social wellbeing.

The EASI Wellbeing project successfully delivered lifestyle health improvement programmes encompassing information and behavioural change support addressing poor health behaviour and succeeded in surpassing all initial targets.

Sian Smart
Centre Manager

8 Section Reports

8.1 Fitness Factory

We were fortunate to receive a further 12 months funding from the Poppy Factory to appoint a new instructor. Brett Jones started a new career path with YMCA Neath; building the fitness factory into a competitive area where members received individual programs that enhanced their routines.

A new multigym, punchbags and medicine balls were added to the existing equipment, enabling the introduction of BoxFit, Insanity and Body Blast classes to our existing classes of Box Circuit, Pilates, Over 50's, Yoga Fusion, HIIT, Walking groups, Bootcamp and Circuits. These classes proved extremely popular and continually adapted to the needs of our members, and were run by our gym instructor

and instructors from the EASI Wellbeing Project. The new classes strengthened membership to the gym and to the delivery of other classes and activities within the YMCA.

The gym area has two separate fitness areas; a free weights area which includes a larger matted area with added equipment, and a cardiovascular and resistance area that is separated for upper and lower body machines.

This year saw no increase in membership charges, and remained competitive in its pricing structures. Monthly and Annual Membership benefits included the option of free fitness classes. This assisted the membership figures increasing dramatically towards the end of the year, making the gym area the most used within the building.

We are always looking at improvements; which makes funding increasingly more important in maintaining our activities and classes. This year is no exception, and ensuring a steady income will be a priority for YMCA Neath in the forthcoming years. Next year will see the introduction of new classes working in partnership with Communities First – watch this space!

Sian Smart
Centre Manager

8.2 Cylch Chwarae Castell Nedd

Cylch Chwarae Castell-Nedd are a Welsh playgroup for children 2 years until they have a space in nursery in Primary school. The Cylch sessions are for 2 and half hours, 9:30 till 12:00 Monday to Friday for 42 weeks of the year for Flying Start requirements.

Flying Start buy 8 spaces from the Cylch and the other spaces are for private customers. The Cylch is

registered to provide sessional childcare for up to 28 children but are currently only accepting 16 children per session (an increase of 4 children per session from January due to demand.)

The Cylch employs 4 staff all of who are NVQ Children's Care, Learning and Development Level 3 qualified, First Aid qualified, and the Manager is NVQ Children's Care Learning and Development Level 5 qualified. All staff attend regular training sessions run by Flying Start to maintain their professional development.

The Cylch staff have worked together to implement the following changes:

- Staff have daily meetings to discuss the sessions, planning, training and any other business
- The introduction of staff using observation jotters to document children's progression
- Staff display their own one page profiles to promote a happy working environment
- The introduction of a staff checklist for daily resources and routines
- A developed planning system
- The introduction of a visual timeline for the settings routine

Staff have found that these changes have helped them feel more valued and take more responsibility and ownership of their roles in the setting and promoted the professionalism of the setting.

The Cylch provided the parents the opportunity of feeding back to the Cylch their opinions and ideas in a questionnaire. The results of this are as follows:

- 80% of the questionnaires handed out were received back
- 100% of the reply's said their children's needs are met by the staff and the setting
- 100% of the reply's said that staff are always ready to answer parent's questions and discuss the children's progress
- 100% of the replies said that their children enjoy coming to Cylch and enjoy the session.
- Parents gave examples of the activities that the children enjoy: Going outside, playing on bikes, singing songs, painting, snack time, going on outings, games, colouring, arts and crafts, reading, playing with toys, gluing,
- When asked do you think your child's development is encouraged, progressed and supported by their attending Cylch, parents replied:

"Yes my child has definitely progressed with her speech since attending in both English and Welsh"
"Yes" x 14
"Yes – exceptionally"

- 100% stated they feel included in the children's learning experiences by knowing what they are learning in Cylch
- 100% are happy with the information and newsletters given out by the Cylch
- 100% think the Cylch is a welcoming and safe environment
- Parents were given the opportunity to give suggestions or improvements they think would help the Cylch provide a better service, these included, asking for lyrics of the songs we sing in the setting to be sent home, "none – very pleased as I have sent all 3 of my children there. Exceptional team of Staff." "No – Everything is to a high standard there and I feel my son has everything he needs there." "It would be nice for the children to do a cooking/baking lesson once a week. All other just replied No or N/A
- 100% said they would be happy if the Cylch needed to increase the price of the session from £6 to £7 and would be willing to pay that amount.
- 75% would like the Cylch to offer afternoon sessions in the future. The other 25% work in the afternoons so wouldn't be able to use the service
- 90% of parents gave 10 out of 10 with how happy they are with the service

- 10% or parents gave it a strong 8.

As a result of the questionnaire responses the Cylch are very pleased with the positive feedback from the parents about our service. We are planning to include a cooking session at least twice every half terms it is an activity that requires a lot of planning as we are restricted to what resources we are allowed to use in the hall so it will have to be an outdoor activity but we are aiming to include it. Lyric sheets are handed out by the setting on a terminally basis but this can be done half terminally instead to include new parents. We are considering implementing the price increase in September 2016 but will inform parents if this is the case in due course. We are also looking into providing afternoon sessions from September onwards depending on demand and hall availability. This will be confirmed by July 2016.
Staff are continuing to develop professionally by attending training courses including Behaviour Management, Food Safety, Empathy Doll training, Elklan Training and UNCRC Training all of these courses are accredited to ensure that staff are maintaining the best standards possible.

Thank you for the continuous support.

Stephanie Law

Cylch Playgroup Manager

8.3 Dance Wales UK

We have had a very busy year with more competitions for our Western Warriors cheerleaders and taken on so many new members for next season. From competitions such as ICC CHEER COMP NEWPORT, BCA SPRING SENSATION EXETER, LEGACY CHEER AND DANCE CARDIFF AND CHEER SPORT WALES NEWPORT. I can happily report we have achieved from these comps alone 25 1st places, 16 2nd places and 6 3rd places. Our tiny pom dance girls also came away with the title Grand Champions at the Legacy cheer & dance competition, beating girls up to the age of 15! Very proud moment as these girls are only aged 3-6! We are very proud and wish our new squads all the best in next season's competitions.

Last September Melissa Gnojek and Hannah Edwards placed 1st with their acrobatic solos at the St David's festival in Port Talbot and both each also gained the highest mark in their age categories.

Hannah did it again in October at the Swansea Dance Festival and Reflex also placed 1st and highest mark overall.

In January we put on our 10th year anniversary show called A Decade of Dance Wales UK which was excellent and very emotional.

Western Warriors put on their own Talent competition to raise funds for their new uniforms, and I was very impressed with everyone's choreography and talents. Thanks to our judges Jessica Hughes and Jessica Niklin.

Another show in July called Best of British was also a huge success and we wished Musical Theatre coach and Reflex member and Acro assistant Chloe Miller our farewells as she leaves us on her journey to University. We wish you all the very best Chloe we will miss you.

August 15th-19th we held a summer school for 3-18year old Students who had a fun week taking part in contemporary, Acro, cheerleading and musical theatre. A show was put on at the end of the week which everyone enjoyed. Thanks to Chloe Miller & Jessica Hughes.

September 18th in Cardiff we are involved with the Royal Dahls City of the Unexpected so look out for us.

This September we would like to welcome on board Beth Richards who is going to assist in Acro classes and take Musical Theatre Wednesdays advanced dance and Saturday dance classes.

I would like to say thank you to my Cheer coaches Hazel Davies & Hannah Davies for all your help and support and sometimes even counselling. And thanks to Jessica Hughes who has sorted music, website and a lot of other admin ready for this next season.

Very proud coach

Kerry Dale

Dance Wales UK Instructor

8.4 Neath Shotokan Karate Club

2015/2016 has seen new pupils joining the club and also existing members progressing through their belts. To mention a few Jodie has obtained her brown belt, Bethany has obtained her 2nd brown belt. Both have their black belts well within their sights.
Ellie Hinder has also obtained her level two coaching award and has joined the team of instructors. I'm positive that Ellie has a lot to give to the students as she grows into her new role within the club.

Within the Welsh Karate Union and Karate Wales we have had another successful year with winning medals in both the European and World Championships.
A squad of 48 athletes travelled to Dublin to represent Karate Wales at the 6th World Union of Karate Federations World Championships, held from the 17th to 19th of June, bringing back a total of 4 Gold medals, 5 Silver and 5 Bronze! . It was a huge event with over 2250 athletes competing from 76 Federations worldwide.

This year also saw our chief instructor Sensei Paul Watson awarded with his 7th Dan Black belt by the Legend Sensei Dave Hazard

Sensei Andrew Richards

Neath Shotokan Karate Instructor

8.5 Kung Fu

This year has been a great one for Lau Gar Wales. The class has grown from strength to strength with a number of new starters in the kids and adults class. Six of our little Pandas achieved their White sashes, four achieved Blue sash and two achieved Orange sash and two of our adult members have achieved their Brown sashes. A number of our students attended the week long National summer course training camp in Llandudno this year training with the head of our style Grandmaster Yau. Four of our students have also trained with Master Xia who flew over from the Shaolin Temple in China. The British Kung fu National Championships are taking place again in October. The club Instructor will be defending his two British titles and another five students (two kids and three adults) are competing for the first time hopefully to bring home more silverware!

Adam Mainwaring

Kung Fu Instructor

8.6 Ju-Jutsu

It's been another successful year for NVMA with member numbers remaining steady and a steady trickle of new starters coming through the door. The junior class has remained consistent with many loyal junior members having now trained regularly for several years.

This year members of the club have regularly attended seminars with some of the top names in martial arts including Master Dave Turton 10th Dan (ASMAA) and Master Andy McCormack 8th Dan (Taiho Jutsu). Club members have also had the opportunity to travel to the USA to train with Master Danny J. Hoskins in Missouri. This was a fantastic experience.

The club continues to be a member of Dave Turton's All Style Martial Arts Association (ASMAA) and is now also one of the few clubs in the UK to be affiliated to the UK Taiho Jutsu Association. Taiho Jutsu is the "arresting art" of Jujutsu developed in Japan and taught to many police forces throughout the world. The club is also able to offer tuition in Native American Warrior Arts (NAWA) and Glima (Viking wrestling) as Ian East is the Welsh representative for both arts under Master Danny J. Hoskins.

In addition to seminars the majority of junior and senior members have graded throughout the year and are progressing well. I am consistently impressed by the enthusiasm and commitment that people show, especially the very young ones.

As always I would like to thank the members of the club for their continued commitment, the parents and assistant coaches who keep everything running and Sian and all at the YMCA for their support and help throughout the year.

Ian East

Ju-Jutsu Instructor

8.7 Neath Judo Kwai

It has been an interesting year for the Judo section especially for the club coach Ian Cardy. Having been involved with Judo for the past 57 years Ian was awarded life membership of the Welsh Judo Association for continual membership and service to the association. This was indeed a great honour for Ian as such awards are given to a few members of the association only after 40 years of membership to Welsh Judo. Ian was told of his gaining this during his participation in former World Champion Neil Adams master class so it was a particularly memorable day all round for him

On top of this in March of this year Ian was nominated by the YMCA itself for the High Sheriff of West Glamorgan's Award for activity and contribution for the enhancement of life in the community. It was a great surprise for Ian to learn of this nomination and he had an extremely emotional day at the ceremony when so many fond and rewarding memories of his time on the Judo mat were read out to the High Sheriff himself. Hopefully, the receipt of these awards will enrich the Judo Club itself and continue to encourage new members and support for the art of Judo.

The club entered several members into the Pontardulais Open Judo Championships at the beginning of the year. Members gained medals and trophies at Dragon, Mini Mon and senior level. Our congratulations to Alan Morgan for winning the senior category, Cian Davies for gaining a medal in the Dragon category and Sion Morgan, Ellis Jones and Zara Bowley for medals and trophies at junior mon level. We intend to compete again and maybe take a few members to experience the day.

The senior section although numbering only a few, members have been graded to Blue belt and Alan Morgan gained points to his Dan grade. So all positive stuff which will no doubt enhance the seniors. Several juniors have gained promotion which also sees the club richer for their experience : -

Cian Davies – 4th Dragon

Tegan Jeffreys – 4th Dragon

Lawri Isaac – 4th Dragon

Sean Watkins – 13th Mon Blue Belt

James Woolcock – 7th Mon Orange Belt

Jack Barnes – 3rd Mon White

Jac McAteer – 3rd Mon White

Ellis Jack Jones – 4th Mon Yellow

Sion Morgan – 4th Mon Yellow

The club is always pleased to see young members achieving promotion and gaining a worthwhile sporting qualification.

One senior Gary Evans has also gained the grade of 2nd Kyu – Blue belt, which again can only enhance the quality of the senior sector of the club.

Numbers have tended to fluxuate over the weeks but we have a very loyal core of Judoka who are continuing to keep the club very much alive and well. Indeed we can again toast Judoka who are medal winners and even those whose special needs are catered for by the weekly participation that gains them self-confidence and self worth.

Ian Cardy 3rd Dan

Club Coach Neath Judo Kwai

8.8 Ninjutsu

Mahoutsukai Dojo 2015-2016.

We have had a very busy year attending and teaching at seminars across the UK. I have been honoured with a promotion in rank from Japan to Judan, Shihan (10th Degree Blackbelt, Teacher). I am hoping to use this promotion of rank to help promote both the Dojo, the martial arts section and the YMCA in the local media in the near future.

We are hoping to use the YMCA to promote traditional Japanese martial arts with a series of seminars to commence in the beginning of 2017.

We have had several new students start, but we continue to have a regular turnout although we are capable of increasing the class size.

We continue to train and teach at the YMCA with its first class faculties and expert staff that we couldn't do without.

Merlyn

Ninjutsu Instructor

8.9 Gymnastics

The Gymnastics section remains extremely popular and has two sessions per week held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for 3 hour sessions. We provide tuition to approximately 140 children over the 6 hour sessions, an increase again from last year's children. We deliver recreational, fun, non-competitive gymnastics, encouraging the development of good basic skills and a love of physical activity for life. We have purchased some new equipment and one of our coaches has done her Level 2 coaching award, which has been funded by a grant for the club both which will benefit all attending gymnasts. Two of our Level 1 coaches has left us to go to university, but two of our older gymnasts will be joining our coaching team this September as assistant coaches and we hope to gain funding next year for them to develop their coaching skills. We still have excellent links with Neath Afan Gymnastics Club where our gymnasts can further develop their skills. All gymnasts undertook their

next BG Award last July successfully and will be undertaking their next badge which will be awarded before Christmas.

Karen Phillips

Neath Gymnastics Coach

8.10 Yoga

Yoga has been running at Neath YMCA for many years and has a solid base of regular students. The class concentrates on a variety of yoga and breathing techniques, both of which are beneficial to health and wellbeing.

All age groups are welcome, with or without experience and a friendly welcome await all newcomers. The class encourages new students and have had a few new attendees this year and hope more will join in the future.

Doreen Bassett

8.11 Music Club

Music Club at YMCA Neath continues to be popular with children & adults alike, providing opportunities to learn different aspects of music for the local community. The well-equipped rooms at YMCA Neath are easily accessible for adults and children alike who wish to pursue music as a leisure or 'out of school' activity.

Practical piano lessons, from beginner to advanced level, are available along with music theory & musicianship skills. The Professional qualifications offered by The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music can be studied and examinations taken, or alternatively, students can learn music for pleasure. Neath college students who have attended the club, have gained excellent results in the advanced grades of the music theory examinations. Success in passing these exams have earned students UCAS points towards University places. Likewise, students sitting practical examinations have also reached excellent standards.

Community Ukulele Group

The YMCA community ukulele group, Kool Hand Ukes (Neath), piloted during the summer of 2014 at YMCA Neath, has proven to be very successful. The group, who recently performed their 1st gig at NPT Hospital, is made up of almost 20 adults, who meet twice weekly. During the summer, a ukulele bootcamp was run for total beginners. The idea behind this was to lay the basic foundations of successful playing in order that students could join evening ukulele groups in their locality. Recently,

workshops were arranged for all the ukulele students & Gary Phillips, (The Amigos), visited YMCA Neath to run the workshops which were immensely enjoyed by all who attended.

Summer Bootcamp 2016

Half a dozen children attend the Junior group and they use their instruments during school music lessons and for assessments in school ensemble groups. I have had several requests to run an evening group & it is highly likely that this may commence as early as November. The ukulele groups provide the 'sunshine' factor, very much needed by us all today ☺

Judith Randall

8.12 The Joanies

The Joanie Club continues to meet at the YMCA on Monday afternoons. As always we are assured of a very warm welcome and plenty of support when needed from the YMCA staff. We have a varied programme-craftwork, music and talks from visiting speakers. We enjoy quizzes and members are always keen to enjoy afternoon tea. Meals out are always popular too.

Carol Thomas

8.13 POBL

POBL (meaning PEOPLE in our Welsh language) is a new and fresh mental health charity that has been formed to make a difference to the people of Wales and their families, who are either now, or will at some future point, find themselves suffering from a mental health condition. We are called POBL because that's exactly what we are all about. People helping people! We aim to be as bi-lingual as possible in all of our dealings, as we feel that this is of vital importance to be able to discuss issues in your native tongue if that assists you better.

We are not about big strategies and grandiose ideas. We are about providing real 'hands on' advice and support at grassroots level to the ordinary man and woman in their own communities. We will primarily do this via education, workshops and support groups. This is where we feel help is most needed.

Basing ourselves within YMCA Neath will ensure easy accessibility to the people of Neath and surrounding areas.

8.14 Swans Community Centre

The Community Trust is Swansea City AFC's registered charity since 2008 and is at the heart of the football club.

It gives staff, players and volunteers the opportunity to work in South West Wales' communities helping develop sport, education and health projects, all designed to improve the lifestyle of individuals and neighbourhoods across the area.

We've held soccer camps in the community for local children, helping youngsters learn skills from our coaches, keeping them active during the holidays.

The 2013/14 season saw the Trust launch SwansAid, introducing a small grants scheme which other charities and community organisations can apply.

Over the last 3 years we have been working closely with YMCA over many health initiatives.

Find out more about what we do in the local community by following us on twitter - **@SCFCCommunityTr**

8.15 Police Youth Volunteers

On the 14th January 2016 Western Sector launched the Police Youth Volunteers at the YMCA in Neath.

The scheme designed to bridge the gap between young people and the police service saw youths from a selection of schools aged between 13 and 16 attended the first meeting.

In March 2016 the second Western Hub based in Swansea was launched.

The journey continues.