



Report of the WI Sporting Ambassadors Programme

In March 2013, NFWI-Wales was awarded a Sports Development Grant of £9,400 to develop its WI Sporting Ambassadors pilot project. The project was in partnership with Sports Leaders UK and Sport Wales and aimed to increase regular female participation in sport and physical activity, thus encouraging women to maintain an active lifestyle. Four federations signed up to be a part of the pilot project, namely, Gwynedd Caernarfon, Glamorgan, Pembrokeshire and Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire. Members with an interest in sport and physical activity were recruited from the four federations and trained as WI Sporting Ambassadors by Rob Guy of Sports Leaders UK. Once trained the Sporting Ambassadors went back to their respective federations, and planned a range of activities to encourage women to participate regularly in physical activity. The following is a report of what has been completed.

Key Outcomes for the Project:

- **25 WI Sports Ambassadors trained as sports leaders across four Federations**

Sixteen WI members were trained by Rob Guy, Sports Leaders UK on the 14 May 2013 in Aberystwyth. Since then Glamorgan have trained a further four members who are part of their Sports and Leisure Committee, Pembrokeshire trained one further member who is now setting up further kayaking sessions for them and planning a Golf taster day. In addition four of the Sports Ambassadors are to undertake a free four day training session in association with Age Cymru Pembrokeshire to enable them to deliver Low Impact Functional Training (LIFT) and Gwynedd Caernarfon have received funding to train two members as Boccia Tutors. Therefore the total trained is 27.

- **Additional 8 sessions per week – 30 weeks of physical activity/sports opportunities per federation**

All the federations worked differently in how they delivered their activities and their individual reports are below. Some found the delivery of 30 weeks of activity challenging due to the large geographical areas of their counties and had to adapt their plans to accommodate the needs of the members.

- **Additional 120 participants**

A total of 2,055 women participated in the activities.

- **Links established with a range of partners including Sports Leaders UK, LA's in respective areas and relevant NGBs.**

All the federations worked with partners and these partnerships will continue. Glamorgan established links with Table Tennis Wales, and Julie Furber and Clare Flannagan facilitated the taster days for Glamorgan. Table Tennis Wales have offered free affiliation if WIs would like to join the association and cluster of WIs in the Gower area intend to affiliate and get as many members involved as possible. Kate Yhnell from the Welsh Rowing has liaised with Glamorgan aiming to get more

women into rowing. Through the contact made with Mike Hatniw more taster sessions will be offered leading to a ladies leisure group and Glamorgan have members interested in this. Pembrokeshire Federation has established links with Age Cymru who deliver LIFT training to them and they will continue to work in partnership to encourage women to remain active. They will also maintain the link with Age Concern and the Nordic Walking project. Gwynedd Caernarfon will continue to work with Caernarfon Celts Wheelchair Basketball Club, Arfon Leisure Centre and Marcus Politis, Gwynedd Council Disability Sports Wales Development Officer, who is helping them train two members as Boccia Tutors. Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire will continue their links with Carmarthen Leisure Centre, Llandysul Paddlers and Morfa Bychan Activity Centre. The NFWI-Wales Office will maintain contact with Sports Wales and Sports Leaders UK.

In addition to the above, each of the federations undertook an audit to establish what kind of activities members would like to participate in. Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire discovered that they had several national coaches and instructors within their membership and that many WIs were already undertaking activities such as croquet, short mat bowls, new age kurling, pilates, yoga, gentle exercise, ta'i chi, sailing and boules, and that there was some equipment within the county that members were already using. Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire has a national coach in indoor bowls and they were able to offer beginner lanes at an indoor bowls event which proved very popular. Glamorgan sent evaluation sheets out after the activities to gather the members' views and they noted that members said they felt confident to try new activities when they were in the company of other WI members, they also said that they knew the activities would be well organised as the WI was involved. Pembrokeshire and Gwynedd Caernarfon gathered the views of their members through their newsletter and both report that members have benefitted greatly from being offered participation in various sports, and like Glamorgan, were more confident in participating when they knew it was an activity organised by the WI as they would be with like minded women.

Activities Completed

Each of the federations approached things differently and the following is a breakdown of the activities they completed.

Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire Federation

Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire has said that the project encouraged them to increase regular participation in sport and physical activity and that the year had been fun and interesting. The project had offered new opportunities to increase the number of women who were keeping active on a regular basis and included fun and enjoyment as well as exercise. Following the audit, Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire planned three ten week programmes of activity for the autumn, spring and summer. They also purchased new equipment and offered taster sessions to the membership and beyond. Taster days included kayaking, pilates, yoga, ta'i chi, qigong, 10 pin bowling, an outward bound course and walking.

The project has allowed Sir Gâr/Carmarthenshire to establish and continue links with Carmarthen Leisure Centre, Llandysul Paddlers and Morfa Bychan Activity Centre. These groups saw no boundary to age and they have encouraged all the members to increase their levels of skills in the variety of activities. As one member said, "imagine me starting up an

Soft climbing wall, let alone hurtling down a zip wire”. It encouraged others to push their personal boundaries to gain satisfaction and personal achievement.

Indoor kurling was introduced and was a huge success. The activity was demonstrated at the Autumn Council meeting in 2013 and over the spring and summer the Sports Ambassadors were busy visiting numerous WIs with the equipment. It has been such a hit that indoor kurling has been incorporated into the local WI programmes for the next year as it meant that members of all abilities can play it. Table tennis has also been a successful activity with the numbers for singles and doubles events trebling this year.

The county walks continued to be popular, with the walking programme attracting some 30 walkers every week and the outward bound taster and kayaking attracted 24 members and was an excellent day. Word has now got around, and due to a deluge of email from members who missed it, the federation will be organising another day soon.

The yoga, pilates, ta'i chi and qigong were delivered in July. The activity was attended by 48 members and many have now had the impetus to join regular pilates and yoga sessions in their local areas. Ten pin bowling proved to be a popular choice with the opening of a Ten Pin Bowling centre in Carmarthen. There were 112 members in attendance for the Best Bowler prize.

Pembrokeshire Federation of Women's Institutes

Pembrokeshire have offered members a number of activities over the last eighteen months and by far the most successful has been kurling with 220 members participating. They held seven taster sessions around the County. They obtained a grant from Sports Wales Community Chest of £1,163.00 to purchase three sets of kurling equipment and the kurling equipment is well used in the federation with WIs making use of the equipment in their monthly meetings on occasions instead of having speakers. A kurling night can also be used as a fundraiser and an opportunity to invite outside organisations to play.



An outdoor bowls taster session was held at Fishguard and Goodwick Bowls Club. Thirty members took part and they plan to offer further sessions in the coming year.



Four sessions of gentle exercise were held with fifteen members taking part each time.



Kayaking was held at Pembrokeshire Adventure Centre at Pembroke Dock. Twelve ladies took part on two separate days. The Centre offered a special price and members paid for themselves to attend. The weather was very windy and members did struggle to master the kayaks but the Instructors were very helpful and members enjoyed the event with many saying they would like to go back again.



Nordic walking was undertaken in association with Age Concern. As Age Concern had a grant to cover the costs, the five training sessions were free. This proved very popular but as they can only take fairly small groups for training two groups of eight took part. The County has now purchased six sets of Nordic Walking Poles and plan to start up more groups with the same Instructor in the coming months. The federation also undertake regular walks round the County.



Table tennis and badminton were offered at Fishguard Leisure Centre who were very helpful and offered the use of the venue and equipment free of charge on a Saturday afternoon. They also provided Instructors. Unfortunately only three members turned up on the day which was very disappointing.

The project has been very well received in Pembrokeshire and they feel that members have benefited from being offered participation in different sports. If it hadn't been for this project they would not have got involved with the kurling and purchased the equipment. Members are using the equipment regularly, thoroughly enjoying playing the game and the federation plans to organise a league in the County. Nordic Walking has also been very popular and this project has enabled the federation to purchase the Nordic Walking Poles and establish links with Age Concern which is working well for both organisations.

Gwynedd Caernarfon Federation of Women's Institutes

Since having the Sports Wales grant Gwynedd Caernarfon have been very busy in the federation and provided the following activities. Many of the members took up activities that they had not tried before and are now carrying on with them with local providers in their communities.

Zumba was a new activity that was introduced with five sessions starting in October 2013, 16 members attended each week and this will be considered again as an activity for those who want something more challenging.

The keep fit session organised proved to be very popular with 10 members participating each week. There were six weekly sessions with Debbie Jones from the Arfon Leisure Centre taking the classes; Debbie Jones is trained in promoting whole body fitness. These classes are now established and are ongoing with members funding them themselves.

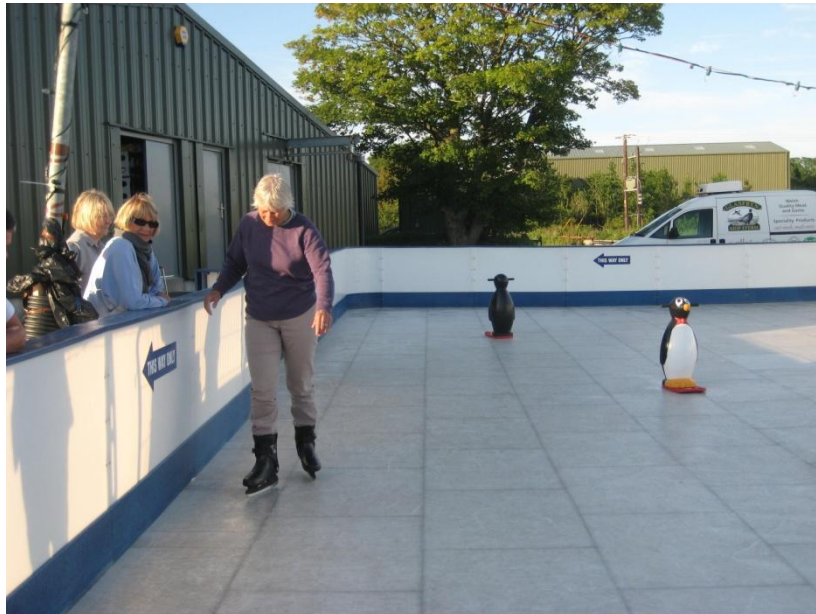


Keep Fit at Arfon Leisure Centre

For members to try a range of activities a Taster Day was held at Glasfryn in June 2014 for the Llyn and Eifionydd Groups. This was an outdoor event which went well with 45 members taking part in paddle boarding, archery, ice skating, go carting, croquet, boules and fly casting. The centre supplied the instructors apart from a croquet instructor who was brought in for the day.



Paddle Boarding at Glasfryn



Ice Skating at Glasfryn

To ensure that members from the whole federation had an opportunity to participate another taster day was held at Canolfan Hamdden Glaslyn Porthmadog in September 2014. This taster day was for the whole federation and also the neighbouring federation Gwynedd Meirionnydd who were invited to share the day with them. Over 80 members took part and the federation are grateful to Gwynedd Council for letting them hire the Canolfan.

Activities included badminton, short tennis, kurling, boccia, indoor boules and archery. Caernarfon Celts Wheelchair Basketball Club community coaches were also involved and helped with the delivery of the activities. The Federation Secretary is an Archery Tutor and she ran the session in archery on the day.



Archery at Porthmadog



Boccia at Porthmadog



Table Tennis at Porthmadog

Owing to the demand and interest in the kurling, the federation purchased two sets of kurling equipment for the federation and will loan these to WIs who will be running regular sessions throughout the year.

The federation have also sourced a grant to purchase boccia sets through Cist Gwynedd. Marcus Politis, Gwynedd Council Disability Sports Wales Development Officer helped the federation tremendously with organising the sports event at Porthmadog and with acquiring a grant for the boccia sets. He is now arranging for two WI members to train as Tutors in Boccia which is also funded from this grant; this sport is for all abilities as members can take part sitting down if need be.

Glamorgan Federation

Having completed a 90 mile walk in celebration of their 90th Anniversary Glamorgan federation went on to arrange various activities for their members to try. They held three table tennis taster days in Cardiff, Bridgend and Cymmer in partnership with the Table Tennis Association of Wales. The taster sessions were positively received and many members are continuing to play, even if it is only with their grandchildren. Many members asked for a table tennis competition and Glamorgan are considering this now. Glamorgan have purchased table tennis equipment so that WIs can continue to borrow them to hold sessions and they will be useful for any future competition/tournament.

Two rowing taster days were held in Cardiff Bay Water activity centre, where members first had an opportunity to try the rowing machines and rowing simulator before heading out onto the water. The members headed out in fours, together with a coach onto the River Taff heading for Clarence Bridge and Cardiff Castle. One member acted as cox and each member took it in turn to practice in the boat with oars, eventually they were rowing in twos and threes. The response from the members was 100% positive and at least four of the members are still attending rowing sessions regularly.

An archery and shooting taster day was held at Periswood Farm, Penmaen, and Gower with qualified instructors. Archery proved to be very popular and will be an activity that Glamorgan put into their programme for the future.

Following various sessions in bowls throughout the county, this culminated in an outdoor bowls tournament held at Kenfig Hill and Pyle Bowls Club with teams of four competing from various WIs throughout the county who had been playing bowls regularly leading up to the tournament. Two walks were also organised, both from Margam Park, one 4 miler around the park and an 8 miler to Llangynwyd and back.