

## ANNUAL REPORT 2014

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



**John Jermine**

Under the direction of Richard Dixon, the GUW has recruited and developed an exceptionally talented and committed management team who have created, and deliver, a comprehensive package of services and events to our clubs and players throughout Wales. Nothing has ever given me more pleasure than seeing the quality and strength of our younger generations.

Across the UK, and in the USA, the biggest challenge faced by clubs is the attraction and retention of members and, in Wales, those clubs who have joined our Business Support Scheme, and committed to its programmes have all reversed the trend of lower membership numbers. Faced with continually changing challenges, both economic and social, the clubs need to offer their members, and visitors, flexible options tailored to their specific needs. Richard's Report summarises the range of services available to clubs but it needs each club, and its committee, to take advantage of them and to do so over an extended period – the programmes work but the clubs have to be fully committed to them.

The Treasurer's Report explains our dependence on the continuing support of Sport Wales, the R&A, our sponsors and the Golf Foundation – over half our income comes from them and it is only provided because we deliver the programmes and meet the objectives agreed with them. All of our expenses are tightly controlled but, from the clubs' subscriptions, we are unable to provide everything clubs might wish.

We would like to be able to support clubs and players who qualify for international events and we would like to enter teams into every international tournament but funds do not allow – it would need a further increase in annual subscriptions of around 20%, something we do not believe would be possible, but, without that additional funding, every year, there will be difficult choices.

As reported last year, after 8 years as a merged Union, a comprehensive review of the Governance and Election procedures, for both Council and Board, has been undertaken to ensure they still achieve best practice and are transparent and accessible to member clubs. The whole exercise was directed, and managed, by our immediate past President, Mrs Louise Fleet, with considerable support and guidance from Sport Wales, and we are immeasurably appreciative to both of them. The Council and Board have examined all the proposals in great detail and believe they will meet the specific needs of Golf in Wales and, unanimously, recommend them for adoption.

Jamie Donaldson played the Shot of the Year, to win the Ryder Cup, and Amy Boulden emerged as a truly exceptional talent, on the Ladies European Tour. Both of them are delightful people and are marvellous role models for our younger players, and we wish them continuing success for many years – it gives me, and many of my friends, huge pleasure to watch their progress and to support them, albeit often from a distance. It is similarly re-assuring to see our Coaching programmes produce a new generation of Welsh golfers achieving international success, the latest being our Ladies team finishing 4<sup>th</sup> in the recent European Nations Cup, with Chloe Williams leading from the front and finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> best individual. Truly Marvellous.

Welsh golf depends on the hard work, and love of the game, of many volunteers in clubs, counties, and on our Council and Board. It has been a genuine, personal, pleasure to meet, and work with so many great people, with a special thanks to our retiring President, Celia Bartlett, who has worked tirelessly, in Wales, and as our representative on the Championship Committee of the European Golf Association.

Celia and I wish Neil Niblett, her successor, and Val Franklin, the new Chairman, our congratulations and good wishes for 2015, and the future. Over many years,



**Celia Barlett**

both of them have played a major part in the development of Golf in Wales and I am sure they will enjoy the full support of everybody in Wales.

The challenging times will continue but, with such good people, volunteers and staff, and the continuing support of our partners, we are well equipped to help our clubs and players to deal with them.

On behalf of the Council and the Board we thank you for your support and will continue to work towards Wales having more and better players, more members of clubs and a thriving network of prosperous and successful clubs.

**John Jermine**  
**Chairman 2014**

## **TREASURER'S STATEMENT**

### **2014 Financial Results**

In 2013, the unprecedented bad weather, weak economic climate and the biting of the Chancellor's spending cuts all contributed to a membership decline of 6.5%. Sadly, membership has continued to fall in 2014 (4.4%), although, on a positive note, at a slower rate than both 2013 and that level forecast (5%).

It is my belief that the continued hard work and initiatives of Golf Development Wales have gone a long way to ensure that the reduction in membership is kept to a minimum. I can only echo our Chairman's comments in asking Clubs to further investigate and to utilise the range of services that both the Golf Union of Wales and Golf Development Wales offers to try and stem this outflow in the coming years.

The statutory accounts for the 12 months to 31 December 2014 show an operating deficit of (£19,944) compared to a surplus of £19,636 in 2013 and a budgeted deficit of (£51,000) for 2014. The principal variances to budget relate to: a £12,000 shortfall in staff costs which reflects the difference between the forecast increase of salary rises compared to those actually paid, a £17,000 lower than expected spend on Research and Intelligence, which will now be spread over 2.5 years rather than just 24 months, together with the £6,000 improvement in subscription income compared to budget.

It continues to be our aim to invest our reserves in golf in Wales although this aim must be balanced with strong cost control and appropriate consideration of all our investments to ensure that we achieve the best return for the funds that are deployed.

Grants now account for in excess of 50% of the Union's income and they are vital to our long term investment strategy. We are extremely privileged to receive such strong support from all our funders, including Sport Wales, the R&A, the PGA and the Golf Foundation and we continue to work closely with them to deliver our objectives and to ensure that golf at all levels and abilities remains open to everyone.

That said, austere times remain and our funders are not immune from cuts themselves and we have been informed by Sport Wales that we should expect a small reduction in income for the 2015 period.

The balance sheet remains healthy with reserves at appropriate levels. Our recent investments of funds held over from the merger of the Unions has started to gain in value (6.5% since investment) which is encouraging and, as set out in last year's statement, the cash balance has started to reduce as we invest further in golf in Wales.

It is important to briefly comment on deferred income levels for 2014, which appear to have increased considerably since 2013. This increase primarily reflects the change of funding year and during 2014, we received an additional £130,000 from Sport Wales that relates to the 2015 period and therefore must be deferred.

We continue to budget for losses in the coming years, which is expected to see our balance sheet reduce further as we increase the resources available for Club Services and Golf Development Wales. A further deficit of c(£60,000) is budgeted for the Golf Union of Wales in the 2015 period.

Finally, our Chairman has thanked and welcomed various parties but on a personal note, I would like to thank him for all the support and assistance he has provided me since I took office.

**Gareth Davies**  
**Treasurer**

## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

### **Introduction**

“We are committed to golf becoming a sport for all, and for life, and to making Golf a headline sport and an integral part of community life in Wales”

The Board and the Council of the G UW have committed to working with our clubs, partners, coaches and volunteers to focus on the following strategic themes:-

1. Growing the game
2. Thriving clubs
3. Implementing a world leading performance pathway
4. Developing and supporting a thriving workforce
5. Providing competitions for all
6. Raising the profile
7. Leading the sport

The G UW's Vision 2020 is hugely ambitious, but the passion, dedication, skill and experience of all of those associated with golf in Wales – whether staff, volunteers, players, coaches, or funding partners, give us the belief to reach beyond our current grasp. A full copy of the G UW's 2020 Vision can be downloaded at the following link [www.golfunionwales.org/documents/about-us/our-vision-5570.pdf](http://www.golfunionwales.org/documents/about-us/our-vision-5570.pdf)

The following report details our work during 2014.

### **Golf Development Wales (GDW) – Developing the Game in Wales**

It has been another successful year for Golf Development Wales based on the 2020 Vision “Golf for all, for life”. The Active Adults Survey (Sport Wales) highlights that percentage of adults playing golf on a monthly basis has increased by over 40%. The Survey also identified that the increase is greater among women which is supported by 60% of New2Golf members being female.

GDW officers have helped Welsh clubs gain over £60,000 of funding in 2014 from the Sport Wales Development Grant fund and £22,500 Community Chest funding.

**Business Support Scheme (BSS)** 90 clubs to date have benefitted from the business support scheme. The project is an intensive business development and mentoring programme. It provides a group of people involved in the decision making process with the education, support and tools to drive the project forward and implement change at the golf club.

GDW officers are currently reviewing the BSS for 2016 in order to implement a new approach. The review has included:

- Business specialist advice from the Welsh Government Regional Business Centre service
- Focus groups with past BSS (1 North and 1 South Wales)

- Extensive review of organisations and programmes already in action (with pilot projects)
- Meetings with other Home Unions (research and advice)
- Meetings with industry experts such as leaders in Governance and Marketing
- Advice gained from the Golf Club Managers Association
- Additional staff training via the Club Managers Association of Europe – Managers Development Programme

**New2Golf/Back2Golf Month** continues to be an integral part of the golfing calendar in Wales. In terms of attracting new and lapsed golfers to the sport, the scheme has also been successful in helping clubs in retaining participants into appropriate membership categories.

New2Golf/Back2Golf month provides a unique chance for GDW to target individuals outside of traditional communication channels. The 2014 campaign utilised industry research to identify key target areas for promotion. These included juniors, families and ladies. See examples below.



A record number of over 90 clubs took part in New2Golf providing structured beginner programmes, which included things such as fun taster days, 12 group lessons, social opportunities, playing opportunities and trial membership packages. New2Golf month contributed to 2014 participation rate increases in GDW related schemes, to an all-time high of almost 50,000 people. This included over 1,000 becoming New2Golf members.

**Junior Club Accreditation (Junior GolfCert).** This award has been developed to recognise those clubs attempting to increase the number of young people playing golf by providing a quality and fun experience. It also acts as a model for a junior section to strive towards. The accompanying Junior Golf Guide website is in the process of re development. It will be a tool that fully supports clubs in achieving the award as well as acting as a general guide for junior organisers. In 2015 the application process will be fully online and combine Disability Sport Wales' *insport* accreditation.

**The Welsh Mini Masters** continues with more than 200 young people taking part in 2014. The Final was once again held at The Celtic Manor Resort, home of the 2010 Ryder Cup. Competitors included children who were not members of clubs and did not have handicaps. The competition is designed to be their first, fun, competitive experience and was coordinated by GDW and Shelter Cymru.

**Safeguarding Children** – The G UW achieved the NSPCC Safeguarding **ADVANCED** Level 3 standards (one of only 3 sports to achieve). GDW is continuing to support clubs with cases, developing safeguarding policies and procedures, advice and education. Sian Simmons, GDW Administrator now has the added remit of Safeguarding Co-ordinator. GDW has recently gained very positive feedback regarding our processes from external organisations.

**Insport – Disability Sport Wales Standards** - Officers continue to work towards achieving Insport Silver. 45 PGA Professionals are trained with additional courses planned for 2015 to up skill these coaches. Wales is leading the way in this regard

**Community Officers** continue to have a huge impact on delivery across Wales, engaging with 83 clubs and 14 local authorities who are actively planning golf sessions in their areas. The number of participants in GDW funded schemes has reached 49,730.

### Initiatives to look out for in 2015

- Community officers setting up a Junior Council. The council will be made up of Young Ambassadors (non golfers) and current junior golfers to help shape future GDW schemes and initiatives.
- ‘What’s your story?’ A project promoting case studies of ladies who have been through our New2Golf programme.
- Community Officers and Dan Farmer to launch REPS (Regional Partnerships). 7 workshops will take place across Wales aimed at engaging all those supporting junior golfers e.g. Pro’s, junior organizers, LA officers.
- Continue to promote the PGA ambassador projects and roaming pro scheme.
- Working on post standards NSPCC self-assessment
- Engaging clubs with CDH and Play More Golf initiative.
- GDW have linked with Amy Boulden who has agreed to become a GDW ambassador and the face of the 2015 Women and Girls Scheme.
- GDW are redesigning the ‘Street Golf’ workshop with Street Games to then deliver a national programme in 2015.

### **Elite Performance and Coaching**

There were many notable Welsh performances in 2014 with the team highlights coming at the Men’s Home Internationals and European Team Championships. The Men’s Home Internationals were held at Southerndown Golf Club and a strong Welsh team finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place after successfully overcoming Scotland 8-7, tying with England 7.5-7.5 before losing out to eventual champions Ireland 7-8.



Our Men also performed well in winning the European Team Championships (Division 2) title in the Czech Republic and thus being promoted to Division 1 for 2015. The stroke play rounds saw Wales finish 1<sup>st</sup> by 16 shots with our top 3 players leading the individual scoring on -8.

The Boy's team finished in 8<sup>th</sup> place at their European Team Championships in Norway. This was an improvement on the last few years, but could have been an even better result had we not had a counting score disqualified in the stroke play rounds. This meant playing against Italy (the best team in the event) in the first match play round rather than Ireland who we had beaten earlier in the year.

In September the World Amateur Team Championships (WATC) were held in Japan. Results on the whole were not as good as we hoped or expected, with the Ladies in tied 25<sup>th</sup> (Chloe Williams tied 32<sup>nd</sup> individually) and the Men tied 35<sup>th</sup> (David Boote 60<sup>th</sup> individually).

The positives from the WATC were that this was the best-prepared and supported Welsh team we had ever sent to the World Championships (thanks in part to Sport Wales for providing additional funding support). Our players could not have been prepared any better or provided with more support from the G UW coaches, Captain and strength & conditioning staff. They also benefitted from nutrition, hydration and jet lag advice from the Sport Wales performance department

We had a number of excellent individual performances and some highlights are listed below:

- Chloe Williams (Wrexham) 3<sup>rd</sup> at British Ladies and selected for the GB&I Ladies team in the Astor Trophy;
- Tim Harry (Vale Resort) made the semi-finals of the British Boys and selected for the GB&I Boys' team in the Jacques Leglise Trophy;
- Jack Davidson (Llanwern) 5<sup>th</sup> at the Henry Cooper Junior Masters and selected as a reserve for the GB&I Boys' team in the Jacques Leglise Trophy;
- Jane Rees (Hendon) won the Senior Ladies European Championship;
- Becky Harries (Tenby) 2<sup>nd</sup> at English Women's Open;
- Rhys Pugh (Vale Resort) made the last 16 at the British Amateur;
- Mike Hearne (Southerndown) 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Berkshire Trophy;
- David Boote (Walton Heath) tied 9<sup>th</sup> at the European Individual and 14<sup>th</sup> at the Jones Cup (USA);



**CHLOE WILLIAMS**



**TIM HARRY**



**JANE REES**

Tim Harry (Vale Resort) was selected for the Jacques Leglise trophy team held in Sweden. GB&I ran out winners by 12.5-11.5 against the continent of Europe with Harry making a strong contribution to their success.

Chloe Williams (Wrexham) was included in the GB&I team for the Astor Trophy hosted by Australia. Williams played in all of the team's matches where GB&I finished in 2<sup>nd</sup> place behind the hosts.

Individually it was Evan Griffith (Conwy) who stole the headlines in a fantastic season. Amongst other results, he ended as Welsh Amateur Champion, Welsh Amateur Golfer of the Year and being a key part of

the Home Internationals team. You can find a summary of Griffith's 2014 achievements in the Welsh Golf Awards section.

The Order of Merit competitions were won by Evan Griffith (Men), Becky Harries (Ladies), Thomas Williams (Boys'), Jordan Ryan (Girls') and Jeff Thomas (Senior Men).

The Boy's team retained the Cardigan Cup by beating Ireland 10 – 2 at Cardigan Golf Club and the Under 15 Boy's beat Surrey 7 – 5.

We have gone through a few changes in our staffing structure with previous National Coach, Jeremy Bennett and Regional Coach, John Peters moving on from their roles. As a result Paul Williams (Wrexham) has been promoted to replace Jeremy and Gareth James (Clays) to replace John. Having worked for the GUW for a number of years we are confident they will continue to serve Welsh golf well and are deserving of the opportunity.

The change in role for Gareth meant we have appointed Andy Humphreys (Aberdovey) as North Academy squad coach and Sam Griffiths (Clays) as North Nursery squad coach. Finally, Nathan Prosser has been appointed to provide strength & conditioning support for our squads and players based in North Wales.

Improvements across Teams & Performance are continually being sought to move Welsh golf forwards and to make the best use of our resources. We remain extremely grateful for the financial support we receive in this area from both Sport Wales and the R&A.

Congratulations to all our Champions, both individual and team. Katie Bradbury (Cottrell Park) won the Welsh Ladies' Close Championship at Monmouthshire GC whilst Evan Griffith (Conwy) was crowned the Welsh Amateur Champion at Pyle & Kenfig.

In the Team Championships, St Pierre triumphed over Radyr at Pwllheli in the men's event and Southerndown beat Newport in the Ladies Team Championships at Whitchurch GC.

As always we are extremely grateful to our member clubs for making available their courses and enabling us to stage so many popular championships, during 2014 well over 12,000 golfers played in a GUW event.

A summary of the winners of our national championships and Welsh performances in international team events follows:

<b>INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS</b>	<b>WINNER (CLUB)</b>	<b>RUNNER UP (CLUB)</b>
Ladies' Open Stroke Play	Eilidh Briggs (Kilmacolm)	Annabel Dimmock (Wentworth)
Ladies' Close	Katie Bradbury (Cottrell Park )	Becky Harries (Haverfordwest )
Welsh Open Stroke Play	Jamie Dick (Forest Hills )	Toby Tree (Goodward)
Welsh Open Youths	Harry Hall (West Cornwall)	Evan Griffith (Conwy)
Welsh Seniors	Jeffrey Thomas (Royal Porthcawl)	Andrew Williams (Newport)
Welsh Open Seniors	Charles Banks (Stanton-on-the-Wolds)	Anthony McLure (Longhirst Hall)
Welsh Boys	Ben Chamberlain (Padeswood & Buckley)	Luke Harries (Tenby)
Welsh Girls	Megan Lockett (Huddersfield)	Nicola Wainwright (Rhuddlan)
Welsh Amateur	Evan Griffith (Conwy)	Ryan Davies (Aberdare)
Welsh Boys' U15	Jamie Pickering (Royal Porthcawl )	Tom Froom (Nefyn & District)

Welsh Boys' U13	Archie Davies (Spalding)	Myles Protheroe (Maesteg)
Welsh Open Senior Ladies	Jane Rees (Hendon)	Ann Lewis (Royal St David's)
Welsh Individual Handicap	Martin Neilan (Tenby)	Conor Worwood (Pontypool)
GUW Medal	Wendy Edwards (Glynneath)	Annie Davies (Alice Springs)
Australian Spoons	Val Samuels & Marilyn Smith (Alice Springs)	Helen Pring & Margaret Medlow (Pontypridd)
Challenge Bowls	Silver Wendy Edwards (Glynneath) Bronze Sandra Hathway (Wenvoe Castle)	Silver Lisa Yates (Celtic Manor Resort) Bronze Helen Carter (Langland Bay)
Centenary Greensome	Rita Howells & Ann Yorston (The Vale Resort)	Dare & Paulin Peacock (Clays)

### WELSH CHAMPIONS – 2014



**EVAN GRIFFITH**



**KATIE BRADBURY**

<b>TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS</b>	<b>Winners</b>	<b>Runners Up</b>
Welsh Inter Counties	Gwent	Glamorgan
Welsh Boys' Inter Counties	Flintshire	Glamorgan
Welsh Ladies' County Champ	Monmouthshire	Mid Wales
Welsh Girls' Inter Counties	Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire	Monmouthshire
Welsh Ladies' Team Championship	Southerndown	Newport
Welsh Team Championship	St Pierre	Radyr
CCV Welsh Handicap Team Champ	Caerphilly	Wenvoe Castle
Welsh Junior Inter Club Challenge	Maesteg	Carmarthen
Ping Welsh Mixed Team Challenge	Carmarthen	Cardigan
Victory Shield	Pennard	Mold
European Boys' Team Championship	Italy	Sweden
Boys' Home Internationals	England	Scotland
Girls' Home Internationals	Ireland	England
Men's Home Internationals	Ireland	Wales
Ladies' Home Internationals	England	Ireland
Senior Men's Home Internationals	Scotland	Ireland
Senior Ladies' Home Internationals	England	Ireland

## **Rules Schools**

The Rules Sub-Committee continues to stage bi-annual Rules Schools and we are delighted to report that 25 candidates attended the G UW / R&A Level 2 Rules School held at the Celtic Manor in December 2014. Out of the 25 candidates 23 obtained over 60%, and 3 of the 25 received distinction grades of over 90%.

Jeff Harries was also successful in obtaining a merit grade at the Level 3 Rules School held at the R&A in February.

## **Staffing**

Rhys James has left the G UW Championship Department to take up a new role at the Emirates Club in Dubai and we thank him for all his hard work during his time with the G UW. Incoming Championship Manager Gavin Reen started his post in January of 2015 and we wish him well.

## **Championship Review**

The Championship Committee are in the process of reviewing G UW Championships; changes have already been made to the format of a few championships to allow more entries into our Ladies Open Stroke Play, Welsh Open Youths and our Welsh Amateur Championship.

The Welsh Individual Men's Handicap Championship has been discontinued due to a significant number of qualifiers withdrawing from the National Final on a regular basis. However the Welsh Handicap Team Championship Final will continue to be run but without regional qualifying events, instead county organisations are invited to submit two club teams to the National final using a qualifying process of their choice, this in turn removes the need for clubs to run a qualifying competition for this event.

It is with great regret that this year (2015) will be the last season that the G UW administer the Inter County Championships. It is very much hoped by the G UW that the County Unions will themselves decide to take on the running of these championships.

To conclude the Championship review, the G UW who are committed to the development of Junior Golf in Wales to help grow our game as well as membership at clubs are looking at introducing a number of new events in 2016 in the form of a 'Junior Tour' targeted at junior players of all abilities but particularly those who are unable to gain entry to the most elite junior events.

## **Handicapping & Course Rating**

It has been a busy year for the handicapping and course rating team. The course raters are keeping up-to-date with the 10 year cycle of ratings and with assessing additional courses that have made significant structural changes. Over the past 12 months in excess of 20 courses have been re-rated and issued with appropriate SSS certificates. Most notably, and in attempt to encourage more members to compete in club competitions, the team has rated numerous connotations of 9 hole SSS's, for both men and ladies, at a number of Affiliated Golf Clubs. This has proved very successful with the members and highlights the positive impact of setting up the Golf Course to cater for fun, enjoyable golf.

During 2015 the HCR Committee will be reviewing the current practices and processes relating to Course Rating to ensure we deliver an efficient and professional service to all Affiliated Golf Clubs. A number of new course raters will be recruited and trained throughout the year. The G UW would like to thank those course raters who are stepping down for their work and continued support over the recent years.

The annual CONGU UHS changes have been communicated with clubs and the annual handicap review has once again been completed. The G UW website is now significantly easier to navigate around and contains detailed, relevant information about handicapping for both Club Golfers and Handicap Secretaries. Dealing with handicap queries is now more professional and efficient with all queries submitted via the website which must include the club details so that club handicap secretaries are copied in to all responses (ensuring best practice). This transparent process has proved successful and is simplifying the query

process. It is important to note that handicapping plays a significant role within golf and the fact that people of all standards can compete on an equitable basis is not replicated in any other sports.

The 2014 handicap audit is drawing to a close with the CDH proving to be a useful tool in helping ensure handicap records are up-to-date and accurate. A new process by which members of the HCR Committee are given responsibility for various aspects of the audit has been introduced and proved successful.

The annual HCR seminars have been postponed until 2016 to coincide with the launch of the updated CONGU UHS manual.

The Central Database of Handicaps is continuing to gather momentum and we now have 127 Golf Clubs currently uploaded (83%). Many of the initial teething issues have been addressed with the interface between the Wales and England systems functional along with the G UW tournament software now reporting scores directly to the CDH. A soft launch of the Golfer Registration Scheme has taken place with in excess of 2000 members currently registered. This project will be a key focus area over the coming months.

### **Club Services**

The G UW continues to run the informative annual Club Services Roadshows throughout Wales. During the 2014 Roadshows a number of industry experts delivered on 'Sustainability – working within your parameters'. The roadshows secured sponsorship from both the R&A and Avoncrop Amenity Ltd. giving us the opportunity to enhance the delegate experience. Once again the Roadshows were well supported by Affiliated Golf Clubs and it is fantastic to see Clubs engaging with G UW activity, in particular, educational events. In excess of 70 clubs and 140 delegates attended the roadshows, which were hosted by Conwy, Machynys and Radyr. Feedback relating to content, speakers and interact was positive.

THE Club Services section of the Golf Union of Wales website has had a complete revamp and is now easy to navigate around whilst providing up-to-date, accurate, useful information. I would encourage all club officials and members to take a look at the content to ensure their club is maximizing the services and resources available to them. Notable resources that has proved useful for many Golf Clubs include; R&A Course Tracker, Chairman of Green guide and Xact Health & Safety/HR advice. In addition to the information and resources available we now have the capacity to accept online registration for all future roadshows, workshops and seminars. This ensures we are keeping up-to-date with technological developments whilst offering a more effective and efficient service for Golf Clubs.

Greenkeeper training grants were awarded to a number of clubs during 2014 helping ensure our greenkeepers further developed their skills and knowledge whilst remaining up-to-date with new methods within the industry.

The focus moving forward is to continue to provide educational opportunities whilst improving our communication with clubs and looking at ways of adding value to the services we offer. Collaboration and creating shared value are imperative to an organisation our size and we are constantly looking to continue developing our relationships with key partners to offer a wider range of services and resources to the Golf Clubs throughout Wales.

### **The Future Financials Welsh Golf Awards**

The 2014 Future Financials Welsh Golf Awards were presented at a luncheon at the Celtic Manor Resort in early January 2015 and we were delighted to have among our guests Ryder Cup star Jamie Donaldson, Ladies European Tour Rookie of the Year Amy Boulden and Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Culture Sports and Tourism.

These awards would not be possible without the support from sponsor Future Financials. 2014 was the fifth year they have sponsored the awards and they have already committed to 2015. Future Financials is a Cardiff based Welsh company which provides Golf Clubs with a facility that enables their members to pay their annual subscriptions by monthly direct debit payments, rather than in one large annual payment.

**Welsh Golf Club of the Year** – The 2014 winner Tenby had submitted a very good application a few years ago and were subsequently shortlisted however at that time a number of their initiatives were ongoing and although showing promise had not reached fruition. During 2013 and 2014 all of these projects reached successful conclusions with the highlights being the opening of a driving range and state of the art teaching studio with the help of a match funded grant from Sport Wales – this has helped expand the existing schools link programme and enable year round provision of lessons and introductory schemes. Club junior and women and girls schemes are going from strength to strength with numerous women actively engaged in schemes and considering membership options and 40 juniors who have been through these schemes are set to join the club in April 2015. Following the success of the 3 original dormy rooms the club invested in a further 4 with the help of an innovative member’s loan scheme. They can now cater for 14 golfers and hence offer very successful “play and stay packages”. The Clubs Marketing Committee is now in full flow after the club enrolled in Golf Development Wales Business Support Scheme in 2013. This has led to the introduction of an active social media marketing campaign, new flexible membership packages, an online tee booking system and welcome screens and electronic information boards for visitors around the clubhouse area. The club has also created customer focused areas both within the clubhouse and on renovated patio area overlooking the 1<sup>st</sup> tee and 18<sup>th</sup> green.

**Welsh Volunteer of the Year** – The winner of the 2014 Volunteer of the Year Award Grace Roberts has been an enthusiastic and passionate member of Pwlllelli Golf Club for a number of years, however, the transformation which has occurred at the club since she took over as Junior Organiser has been immense. When Grace took over the position as Junior Organiser in 2008 there were 4 junior members, now there are nearly 100. She readily admits that she had no idea what the role involved when she took over however she researched through the Golf Development website and implemented the section based on their guidance. Grace attended a GDW Junior Golf Leader’s Course and also undertook and passed the PGA Level 1 qualification. Grace contacted local schools both primary and secondary and she organises various competitions throughout the School holidays for experienced and beginner juniors. In 2010 Pwlllelli gained the G.U.W.’s Junior Golf Cert and it has since become one of the few clubs to attain the Higher Level Junior Golf Cert and during 2014 the club became a Golf Roots Centre only the second in North Wales.



**Grace Roberts & Rob Holt**

As well her work at the golf club Grace is also Junior Organiser and Youth’s Manager for Caernarfonshire & District County and she also helps children at her school experience golf and other sports through a 5 x 60 scheme. The Club Captain at Pwllhellli said the following about Grace “it has become obvious to me that Grace is totally committed to our junior section and if all clubs had a Grace Roberts then their future would be assured and the game of golf much stronger for it. She is fully deserving of consideration for any award which recognises volunteers in this way.”

**Welsh Amateur Golfer of the Year** – Conwy’s Evan Griffith was presented with the 2014 Amateur of the Year Award by G.U.W. President Celia Bartlett. Evan was the clear winner of the Pinnacle Welsh Men’s Order of Merit thanks to a string of consistently strong performances the highlight of which was his win in the Welsh Amateur Championship at Pyle & Kenfig. He also won the Trubshaw Cup, the Clwyd Open and was runner up in the Aberconwy Trophy. Evan made his senior debut for Wales in the European Team Championships and was also an integral part of the Welsh Team which so nearly won the Home Internationals at Southerndown during August, at the end of an exciting week Wales came a very close second to an outstanding Irish team.



**Evan Griffith**



**Andy Ingram & Jamie Donaldson**

**Welsh Tour Professional of the Year** - Jamie Donaldson who hit the winning shot in the 2014 Ryder Cup at Gleneagles Golf Championship was rewarded for his excellent season by winning the Golf Union of Wales tour professional of the year award for the fourth successive year.

It was the first time Jamie had been able to attend the awards for a number of years and it provided an excellent opportunity for guests to pose questions to him on his recent successes during the Q&A session

which followed the formal presentations. He recounted his days in Welsh amateur squads and the positive impact they had on his subsequent career.

Since he regained his full card on the European Tour in 2008 Jamie has progressed steadily up the Race to Dubai rankings 89<sup>th</sup> in 2008, 59<sup>th</sup> in 2009, 46<sup>th</sup> in 2010, 38<sup>th</sup> in 2011, 19<sup>th</sup> in 2012, 5<sup>th</sup> in 2013 and a career high 4<sup>th</sup> in 2014. He finished 2014 at 24<sup>th</sup> in the World Rankings thanks to 8 top 10 finishes on the European Tour including a win in the D+D REAL Czech Masters and a runner up spot in the WGC Cadillac Championship.

Jamie is a product of the Welsh golf system, winning the Welsh Amateur match play and stroke play championships while being a regular Wales international, he also represented Great Britain and Ireland in the World Amateur Team Championship of 2000 alongside Luke Donald and Paul Casey. Jamie was presented with his award by Andy Ingram recently appointed Chairman of the GB&I Selectors and a former Welsh Team Captain.

**Golf Development Wales Professional of the Year** – Nicola Stroud, Gower Golf Club was presented with the 2014 award by Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Culture Sports & Tourism Chairman of Golf Development Wales.

The modern professional is so much more than a coach but a person who can drive the whole of the golf club in the right direction and ensure everyone around them is enthused to do the same. Golf Development Wales and Wales as a whole are fortunate to have some excellent professionals to work alongside but Nicola Stroud has taken the role to another dimension in terms of developing new golfers and helping the game grow in her local community.



**Nicola Stroud & Ken Skates AM**

Nicola was Community Coach of the year for Active Swansea for her work in the local schools and communities and also on the shortlist of 3 for Community Coach of the year at the Wales Sports Awards for her work in disadvantaged areas. She attained her Advanced PGA award in 2014 and delivered the Golf Roots and Golf Roots Plus programmes in partnership with the Golf Foundation and she was a key part of the team driving the Business Support Scheme at the club.

Nicola also completed the Disability Sport Wales Insport Ribbon meaning the club is an inclusive site which was further demonstrated with the delivery of disabled golf sessions and the New2Golf Scheme.

## **Conclusion**

There has been considerable research and consultation in the development of the G UW's Strategic Vision 2020 and it is intended that it lays out a number of clear objectives and actions which will ensure that the resources available to golf in Wales are directed towards shared ambitions and targets. We firmly believe that our best chance of achieving success with this Vision will be through the commitment and support of all golf's stakeholders.

Whether we achieve all the objectives outlined in this Vision within its lifespan, we cannot say, but we can say with certainty that achievement of at least some of these objectives will put the game we love on a surer footing and better able to tackle the future.

Golf is still experiencing a difficult time and it is more important than ever that moving forward we remain ambitious in setting our future targets and totally focused on achieving them.

**Richard Dixon**  
**Chief Executive - April 2015**