

PARTNERIAETH AWYR-AGORED

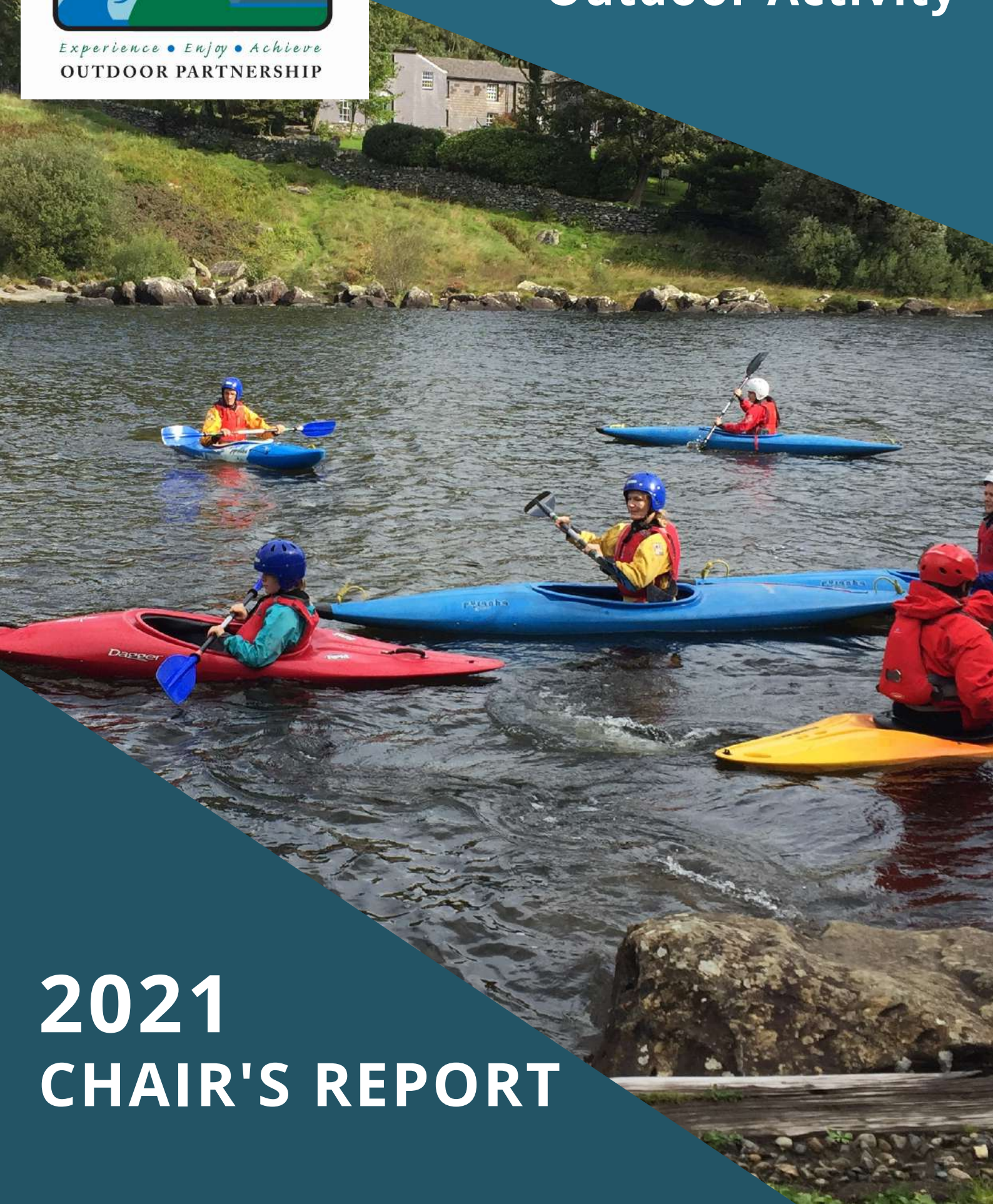
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OUTDOOR PARTNERSHIP

Enhancing People's Lives Through Outdoor Activity



2021 CHAIR'S REPORT

The Outdoor Partnership (TOP) is a registered Charity, established in 2004 to improve opportunities for local people to achieve their potential through outdoor activity.

Each year the charity provides approximately 15,000 opportunities for people to engage with their natural resources through participation, social prescribing, volunteering, training and employability programmes, improving people's health, social and economic well-being.

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2021 has been another incredibly challenging year for our communities, our partner organisations and both the groups and individuals with whom we work. There has however been much to celebrate and I hope this brief report manages to capture a flavour of the positive work that has taken place during the past 12 months.

We are grateful to all of our funders, sponsors, volunteers and stakeholders for their continued support. This has enabled us to continue working throughout the pandemic although it has necessitated adapting the ways in which we work.

Our thanks go to both employees and the partners of TOP who have given their time and expertise to help others during this difficult period.

Collectively the charity has created almost 7000 outdoor activity opportunities for local residents across North Wales, Cumbria, Northern Ireland and Ayrshire as well as an influential role in a number of ground breaking national projects.

Community Development Programme

Led by our Outdoor Activity Development Officers in North West Wales (Anglesey, Conwy & Gwynedd), Ayrshire, Cumbria and Northern Ireland, aims to inspire children, young people and adults to take up outdoor activities as a life-long pursuit.

During the pandemic our Officers have supported schools including Additional Learning Needs (ALN) schools, clubs, local groups and local families creating outdoor activity opportunities during the easing of lockdown for thousands of people.

During this period **94** outdoor clubs have been supported representing **5424** members.



Volunteer Programme

The identification, training and rewarding of volunteers has been led by our Volunteer Officer allowing local people to develop their potential at a relatively low cost and, for some, providing a foundation for employment.

This year **225** volunteer leaders received NGB awards, of which **39** people were new to volunteering. In partnership with the Snowdonia Society, National Trust and the Snowdonia National Park Authority, the Outdoor Partnership has supported a volunteer programme to help manage visitor impacts in 2021.

Over **120** new volunteers were recruited in the summer to support the Caru Eryri volunteer project. The commitment of you, our volunteers is astounding. If the same contribution had to be purchased it would cost a minimum of £1.7m per annum.

Pathways to Employment Programme

Our North Wales Trainee Scheme uses the outdoors to engage and support local people on a pathway to employment and is managed by our Training Officer.

This year the scheme has supported 27 participants (15 Male / 12 Female) with 10 progressing to full time employment, 6 volunteering, 8 into further learning and training, many of which have gained NGB qualifications.





'This Girl's Adventure'

This project aims to address the inequalities of women in the outdoor sector workforce (instructors, managers). **820** women engaged in the 'This Girls Adventure' programme virtually via social media platforms during the pandemic.

Health and Wellbeing/ Social Prescribing programme

Funded by the Healthy and Active Fund, the Health and Wellbeing programme has engaged with **59** people this year improving peoples mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Eleven of which have entered further learning and training gaining National Governing Body Awards and **17** into sustained employment including one person being employed by The Outdoor Partnership in a full time role.



Inclusive Adventure

Aims to improve access and opportunities for people of all types of disability in the outdoors as there is currently a significant under provision. This is managed by our Inclusion Officer.

This year, **84** disabled people have benefited from this project with three new clubs established catering for disabled people.





The coronavirus crisis has meant major changes to the way the charity operates ensuring the safety and wellbeing of its employees, members and participants. TOP have had to take difficult decisions and has followed Governments' advice and guidance to save lives and protect our NHS.

Following the Prime Minister's Statement on the 17th of March stating people who "can work from home" to do so, all employees (12 full-time and one part-time) of TOP relocated to work from home. Staff supported each other with IT issues and office set up at home. Bi-weekly Zoom meetings were set up on the 23rd of March for the staff team as well as regular zoom meetings with Delivery Partners and Board Members.

The decision not to furlough staff was taken early on mainly due to the support of TOP's key funding partners and the need to maintain support for our communities. There was also an eagerness not to lose momentum in a major new expansion project with new members of staff recently appointed in Northern Ireland, Cumbria and Ayrshire where their early work (gap analysis/ research) could largely continue in a modified form under lockdown.

TOP quickly established a Covid-19 section on its website to share knowledge and provide advice and support from key agencies and government bodies for its members, participants and key delivery partners.

<https://partneriaeth-awyr-agored.co.uk/en/>

During the Black and Red phases of Welsh Government TOP's CEO has played a key role on a number of forums, including the WSA, Outdoor Alliance Wales and ASW, providing advice and support to Welsh Government as the country slowly moves out of lockdown and continue to contribute to these as one of several multi agency groups.



The Outdoor Partnership is well placed to help divert people from the NHS improving peoples' mental health, increasing physical activity levels and reducing diseases such as obesity and diabetes.

TOP can create community cohesion by supporting existing and creating new community-based outdoor clubs and hubs and capitalise on the fantastic volunteer workforce that has evolved from this pandemic and ensure opportunities are inclusive to all.

The Outdoor Partnership's work has been cautious and sensitive to the local communities. The Charity's work is locally based where the focus is on local people in their local communities.

The Outdoor Partnership's role as we slowly learn to live with the virus will be to ensure that our programmes strictly follow Government advice, guidance and measures in each of the home nations; work closely with the Outdoor Alliance, WSA, ASW and National Governing Bodies to provide interpretation and advice for our members to ensure an appropriate level of safe activity can resume; have specific measures in place to identify if and when activity re-start needs to be reversed and be flexible to allow for this.

We're now almost **2 years into our 7 year UK Expansion project.**

Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund the project will work in Scotland, England and Northern Ireland to establish programmes which will inspire more people to regularly engage in healthy activities outdoors. The project is managed by our new Programme Manager and supported by our Delivery Partners RPT Consulting and Aqua Marketing.

We are already seeing examples of sharing knowledge and good practice across all four home nations.

FINAL WORDS....



This year the charity's efforts to become a fully inclusive organisation were rewarded by becoming the first Third Sector organisation in Wales to be awarded the Disability Sport Wales Insport Silver Accreditation. We are currently on our journey towards Gold.

THE NEXT STEPS...

I would like to thank our Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible for driving and leading the partnership strategically and operationally. Thanks to her and all the staff team on behalf of the Board for their tireless work. This year has been an exceptional challenge and they have proved to be an exceptional team.

Next year we will continue to look for opportunities to influence nationally and share our experience with other regions across Wales and the UK, without losing focus and the impact we have in the North of Wales. This pandemic has taught us all just how important it is that our communities access the outdoors, the importance of nature and the natural environment and that that we all could do with a little help with using it sensibly, safely and in a sustainable way.



Our success is due to our Members, Volunteers, Trustees and our Staff Team.

DIOLCH YN FAWR - THANK YOU