

## AGM 2025 – Notes on a meeting

### Introduction

At the 2025 Annual General Meeting, our Chair Jacky Miles MBE welcomed and introduced our distinguished guest speaker, Linda Edmunds MBE. Linda serves as the Consultant Nurse for Heart Failure and Cardiac Rehabilitation at the Aneurin Bevan Health Board. Her presentation focused on the significant transformations in heart management within the NHS since the start of her nursing career. She also emphasised the crucial role of actively listening to patients, highlighting how this practice has influenced the evolution of cardiac care throughout her professional journey.

### Development of heart services in Wales

Linda discussed the progressive development of heart services in Wales, paying particular attention to several key initiatives. Firstly, the introduction of advanced information systems has enabled more effective tracking and management of patient data. Additionally, the creation of patient engagement groups has facilitated the collection of valuable feedback, while the establishment of community groups across the health board has fostered greater support and communication. These advancements have collectively enabled cardiac teams to adopt a more targeted and effective approach to both cardiac rehabilitation and the management of heart failure.

### Current initiatives and patient-centred approaches

Presently, the health board is exploring the optimal strategies for advancing cardiac rehabilitation, particularly for patients with heart failure. A major focus is on harnessing patient feedback to shape a broader, multidisciplinary approach to cardiac care. This patient-centred strategy has resulted in notable improvements in self-management among individuals living with cardiac conditions, with increased physical activity being a simple yet impactful factor. The service continues to evolve, with ongoing development of community groups designed to engage and support individuals at the local level.

### Looking ahead: the future of cardiac care

The future of cardiac care within the health board is promising and dynamic. Planned developments include the expansion of community services tailored for cardiac and heart failure patients, the implementation of rapid diagnostic clinics accessible via GP referrals, and collaborative partnerships with Frailty clinics. Additionally, the utilisation of advanced pacemaker services is being explored to

enhance monitoring and tracking of patients. The overarching aim is to establish effective measurement tools that can accurately identify and monitor the most efficient treatment pathways for heart conditions within the health board.

## Chair's Report – a summary of the activities of the North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity 2024/25

### News from the trustees

The board of trustees remains committed to ensuring robust governance and supporting the day-to-day operations of the North Gwent Cardiac Rehabilitation & Aftercare Charity. Alongside the board, a small but dedicated group of volunteers continues to give their time freely, playing a crucial role in raising funds and running classes for the benefit of members.

During the summer, David Owen, who had served as a trustee since 2023, stepped down from his position. The trustees would like to express their gratitude to David for his valuable contributions and support for the charity during his tenure. Consequently, there is now a vacant position on the board of trustees.

The volunteering team also experienced the resignation of Suzanne Indge and Ashella Hale this year due to personal reasons. Both have been instrumental in fundraising efforts and will be greatly missed. The charity extends its sincere thanks to Suzanne and Ashella for their years of dedicated support.

Special thanks are due to Owen Webber for his management of the 200+ Club, to Dianne Spencer and Simon Walter for their work in supporting the charity's media activities, to Kathy Cleveland for handling membership and circulation of the Ticker News, and to Allen Cleveland for his support with the exercise classes. Without their commitment, many of the charity's activities would simply not be possible.

### The role of trustees in charity operations

While the board of trustees is primarily responsible for providing strategic direction and ensuring effective governance, their involvement goes well beyond these core duties. Trustees are actively engaged in the day-to-day management of the charity's operations, helping to ensure that all activities run smoothly and efficiently.

Special recognition is due to Greg Overs for his expertise in managing the charity's finances, ensuring that resources are handled responsibly and enabling the

continued delivery of services. Thanks, are also extended to Nigel Dancer, whose enthusiasm and commitment have been central to supporting the instructor team and overseeing the charity's online resources, which are essential in today's connected world. In addition, the board is grateful to Jacky Miles for her ongoing dedication and leadership, which have been pivotal in driving the charity forward and maintaining its momentum during a period of change.

### Phase 4 Cardiac Rehab Exercise Classes

The charity continues to deliver vital services across the North Gwent area, currently running nine weekly exercise classes in seven community locations. All instructors are professionally qualified through the British Association for Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation (BACPR), which is recognised as the gold standard for cardiac rehabilitation and exercise.

This year, the partnership with the Aneurin Bevan Phase 3 team has been further strengthened. Notably, the Phase 3 referral programme has seen development, and Phase 3 instructors have recently visited some of the classes, enhancing collaboration and continuity of care.

Prospective members are now able to join classes through multiple avenues, including online self-referral, referral by their local GP, or via the Phase 3 programme. Additionally, the charity welcomes partners, family members, friends, and carers to participate in the classes, via self-referral.

Like many organisations, the charity has experienced changes within its pool of instructors. This year, the charity bade farewell to Maja Maraskiewicz and Callum Simmonds, both of whom were highly valued and popular with class attendees. The charity thanks them for their service and wishes them well in their future professional endeavours.

Unfortunately, their departure resulted in the temporary closure of several classes over the spring and summer, but the charity has subsequently strengthened its instructor team and now has a total of five self-employed part-time Cardiac Rehab Exercise Instructors.

Tom Stone (Llanfoist, Saturday) continues to play a vital role within the charity and has now joined the Aneurin Bevan Phase 3 team on a full-time basis. The Monday Llanfoist class is led by Phillip Matthews, an Exercise Referral Professional with the Aneurin Leisure Trust, while the Monmouth class is now overseen by Nick Worms, who works for Monmouthshire County Council's Monlife leisure team. Following a successful recruitment process, Will Teague and Joe Lane have joined the instructor

team. Will is a self-employed cardiac instructor with an MSc in Clinical Exercise Physiology, and Joe is an Exercise Referral Professional with Halo Leisure, which provides services for Torfaen County Borough Council.

In a significant advancement for the charity's instructor team, a training stipend has been awarded to Llangynidr-based exercise practitioner Marietta Sega. Marietta will join the charity in January 2026 as a Trainee Instructor, embarking on the BACPR's pathway towards professional qualification as a Specialist Cardiac Rehabilitation Exercise Instructor.

The stipend will cover the cost of the BACPR training, which includes both in-person and online learning and is expected to take around six-months to complete. During this time, Marietta will assist Tom Stone at his classes, with his mentoring ensuring she receives comprehensive support and practical experience during her training period.

## Membership feedback on communication and events

### Overview

In April, the charity sought feedback from its members regarding the organisation's communication channels and events. The survey specifically addressed the use of social media, the effectiveness of the "Ticker News" newsletter, and the value of health awareness events, with responses collected from our membership.

### Social media use

A substantial proportion of respondents (90%) indicated that they use social media in general. However, engagement with the charity's own social media platforms is notably lower, with only 25% of members reporting that they visit the charity's Facebook page and Ticket Network private group. This reveals a clear gap between overall social media activity and specific engagement with the organisation's online presence.

### Newsletter: Ticker News

The survey showed unanimous agreement among members, with 100% stating that "Ticker News" provides them with the information they require. Members also contributed suggestions for future newsletter topics. The themes identified include diet, food labelling, member stories, and new heart treatments.

## Communication

All respondents reported that their instructor communicates information about upcoming events effectively. This method of communication is valued by the entire membership.

## Health awareness events

Although only 25% of respondents have attended health awareness events, those who did attend found the events useful. Furthermore, there is expressed interest among members in attending future health-related events.

## Action items identified by trustees

- Increase engagement with the charity's social media sites: develop strategies to encourage more members to visit and interact with the charity's social media platforms, addressing the current low level of engagement (25%).
- Maintain and enhance "Ticker News": continue providing relevant and useful information, as all respondents find the newsletter beneficial. Incorporate the suggested topics – diet, food labelling, member stories, and new heart treatments – into future editions.
- Promote health awareness events: increase promotion and accessibility of these events, as only a quarter of members have attended previously. Consider organising additional health awareness events, given the universally positive feedback from attendees and the interest in future participation.
- Leverage instructor communication: continue to use instructors as a key channel for informing members about upcoming events, maintaining the effectiveness of this approach for all respondents.

## Fundraising events

The board wishes to acknowledge the remarkable efforts of the fundraising team, whose hard work has enabled the charity to continue providing classes despite challenging financial circumstances. The ongoing success of the charity depends on the dedication of this small team, and the board would welcome any members who wish to join the fundraising team or organise fundraising activities.

Fund-raising events over the past year include the following:



### Love Your Heart – 60s Rock at the Moose (Nov 24) – £700

The “Love Your Heart” fundraiser was held at the Moose Hall in Tredegar, featuring a lively 60s and 70s tribute act, “Now and Then”. Attendees also enjoyed Phil Miles’s Pop Quiz, which added a fun and engaging element to the event.

### Love Your Heart Valentine’s Cash Prize Draw (Jan-March 25) – £1,363

Following strong member support for the 2024 Summer Raffle and other autumn events, the team moved the annual Christmas Cash Prize Draw to the New Year.

### Annual Potato Growing Challenge (March-July 25) – £1,115

Thanks to the ongoing support of Abergavenny Garden Centre, the annual potato challenge continued to attract participants, offering a unique and light-hearted way to raise funds for the Trust. This year saw plenty of new entries, including by the four classes at Llangattock Church in Wales Primary School.

### Clayton Shorthouse Memorial Triathlon (Aug 25) – £1,956

The second annual Clayton Shorthouse Memorial Triathlon was hosted at Ebbw Vale Leisure Centre at the end of August, offering participants the chance to compete and fundraise in memory of local sportsman Clayton Shorthouse. The charity benefited from entry fees and proceeds from a raffle. Trustee Nigel Dancer provided prizes for the Tri winners and for the raffle.

### Monmouth Raft Race Cash Prize Draw (July-Sept 25) – £1,580

This was a new opportunity, initiated by trustee Nigel Dancer. The charity was one of several local organisations invited to sell tickets in the annual Monmouth Raft Race Cash Prize Draw, run by the Monmouth and Abergavenny Rotary Clubs. The cash prizes are provided by the two Rotary Clubs, with the participating charities keeping the proceeds from ticket sales.

### Tredegar Orpheus Male Voice Choir Remembrance Day Concert (Nov 25) – £1,000

This was another new collaboration, initiated by trustee Neil Gregory. The Choir offered its services for a special Remembrance Day Concert which took place at their hall in Tredegar, with the charity booking special guest singer, Stephanie Webber. The event was a sell-out and, masterfully compered by the Choir’s secretary Sheridan Jeffery. The Choir presented the charity with a cheque for £600 – proceeds from ticket sales. And the raffle and Christmas card sales brought in an additional £400. Many thanks to trustee Gareth Davies and his wife Andrea for providing the raffle prize – a magnificent hamper of Welsh-made goodies.

### Monmouth Class Coffee Mornings

The Monmouth Class has consistently supported the charity through their regular coffee mornings, led by long-standing member Mary Wakeling. Held at Monmouth Priory, these events create a welcoming space for members and others to gather, socialise, and contribute to fundraising efforts.

The charity also extends its gratitude to all organisations and individuals who have generously given their time and energy to support its work and its members throughout the year.

### 200+ Club

A special thank you is extended to Owen Webber for his continued commitment in organising and managing the 200+ Club during the year.

### Donations and acknowledgements

The charity has been fortunate to receive several generous donations over the past year. We wish to express our sincere gratitude to all individuals and organisations who have contributed to our cause. Each donation, regardless of size, is deeply appreciated and directly assists in supporting the activities and services we provide to our members. The ongoing kindness and commitment of our supporters is vital to the continued success of the Charity, and we are immensely thankful for every contribution received this year

### Media team and promotional activities

The media team, consisting of Dianne Spencer and Simon Walter, has devoted substantial time and energy to enhancing awareness of the charity's goals and objectives. While this support is provided on a paid basis, it forms a vital part of the charity's ongoing commitment to improving its services for members and the wider community. Their dedication is clearly demonstrated through the extensive range of promotional activities they undertake across various media platforms, ensuring the charity's message reaches a broad and diverse audience. This concerted effort plays a crucial role in supporting the work of the charity and furthering its mission throughout the year.

Through their work, the charity's positive impact has been regularly showcased in local news articles, helping to foster greater understanding and recognition within the community.

The ongoing success of Ticker News exemplifies the charity's efforts to communicate effectively with both its members and the wider public. This publication continues to expand its reach, providing readers with valuable guidance on health topics such as the relationship between alcohol and heart health. In addition, Ticker News promotes the benefits of friendship fostered through the charity's exercise classes and regularly highlights upcoming events, ensuring members remain informed and engaged. The newsletter acts as a vibrant communication hub, celebrating the many achievements and positive developments within the Trust.

In addition to print media, the charity maintains an active presence online. Social media platforms are updated on a regular basis, sharing information and the latest news with followers. Furthermore, the professionally managed website serves as a comprehensive resource, offering a wealth of information for anyone wishing to learn more about the charity and its ongoing work.

### Planned Actions for 2025/26

Looking ahead, the trustees are eager to see the charity continue to progress in the coming year. The board meets every six weeks, discussing a wide range of matters and giving their time freely in support of the charity's membership. Planned actions include.

#### 1. Strengthen collaboration with Phase 3

The charity intends to enhance its partnership with Phase 3 by engaging in regular communication with the newly appointed nurse lead for Cardiac Rehabilitation, Emma Davies. As an initial step, the plan is to distribute information leaflets and copies of Ticker News to the cardiac wards and monitor the response from patients and staff. This initiative aims to foster closer working relationships and ensure that essential information reaches those who would benefit most.

#### 2. Ongoing support for the Clayton Shorthouse Memorial Sprint Triathlon

The charity will continue to support and contribute to the development of the Clayton Shorthouse event. By maintaining involvement, the charity hopes to encourage participation and further promote the positive impact of physical activity within the community.

#### 3. Grow participation in the Annual Potato Challenge

Building on previous success, the Potato Challenge will be repeated, with an emphasis on increasing involvement from local primary schools. This activity not only promotes engagement but also strengthens connections with young people, families and educational institutions.

#### 4. Consideration of the Rotary Draw

The Charity will explore the possibility of repeating the Monmouth Raft Race Cash Prize Draw. By assessing interest and feasibility, the intention is to determine whether this initiative should be included in the upcoming year's programme of activities.

#### The Treasurer's report

The accounts for 2024/25 were audited by Catherine Williams Ltd and signed off by the trustees at the 2025 AGM. Income from the previous year is down as is our expenditure. Income for the year was £34,584.73 and expenditure was £37,467.15. This gives a deficit of £2,882.42. This is an improvement on the 23/24 financial year where we recorded a deficit of £11,617.86. A full breakdown of the charity accounts can be found on the [charity commission website](#).

#### Election of trustees

All the trustees are happy to continue with their roles in supporting the charity. A position is currently available for any community member interested in contributing to the ongoing success of the charity's work.

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