



Community Leisure UK

Annual Review 2022 - 23

Phil Rumbelow, Chair of Community Leisure UK



"The financial year 2022/23 saw another tumultuous 12 months for Charitable Trusts and social enterprises.

As I write this, the Energy Bill Relief scheme offering financial support from the Government for energy bills has ended, and a great period of uncertainty for our members' survival has begun.

The landscape in 2022 was dominated by the impact of huge increases in energy prices and the cost of living crisis caused by the ongoing war in Ukraine. But even before this, our members were still feeling the effects of the fallout from Covid with fewer returning customers, depleted reserves, and challenges in recruitment and retention of staff.

As ever, I am immensely proud of the work Community Leisure UK does in support of its members. Working alongside and in harmony with partner organisations, we represent member views at the highest level possible.

In Spring 2023, that work was rewarded with acknowledgement from the Government about the importance and challenges faced by pool operators. Sadly, the £63M outlined in the budget represented more of a lifeline than a life-saver for public pools.

Our ability to inform policy has always been thanks to the high quality of information we receive from our member organisations. Where we come together and support one another is our greatest strength. That was never more evident than in the #BigSwimDay Campaign where Trusts worked in partnership, amplified the message and reached out to their individual MPs.

The huge amount of traditional press coverage and social media reach found in this report is a testament to that, and we are extremely grateful to our membership base for making this campaign the success it undoubtedly was."

Kirsty Cumming, CEO of Community Leisure UK



"Throughout this review, you will find key highlights of the work we have undertaken on our members' behalf over the last 12 months.

As an organisation, we have made great efforts to enhance the visibility and increase the representation of our members and the Trust Model at a local and national level.

We have worked with partners to share information and expertise and improved our communication channels to magnify our external messaging and increase participation in our Special Interest Groups and the sharing of knowledge within those meetings.

Our Active Kindness project continues to go from strength to strength, challenging and improving the sector's approach to volunteering.

I am immensely proud of the sheer scale and quality of the work our small, professional team does in supporting our members.

And I remain immensely proud to be the CEO of a members association representing a collective of organisations who do so much to help people in their communities access healthier, more creative lifestyles."



April - June 2022

Sector Landscape

At the start of this period, member feedback revealed a sector "teetering" on the financial brink, and by mid-May we were warning that our members faced a "perfect storm" as reducing management fees from Local Authorities combined with rising costs for energy and stagnation in customers returning post-Covid were creating the perfect storm for Charitable Trusts across the UK.

Swimming was highlighted as an area of particular pressure due to pools' high energy consumption, with the research showing that for every pool, there would be at least a £5 per visit subsidy needed based on 2022 figures, including gas prices from 1st April. As early as March 2022, Chairman of Community Leisure UK, Phil Rumbelow, warned that "the viability of leisure and culture trusts is under serious threat."

Charities and social enterprises started to consider increasing prices and partial and full closures of pools and larger venues during this period.

In June, we joined a coalition of leading bodies from the physical activity sector and wrote to the Government calling for urgent support to save leisure facilities from going under as they face a rise in energy costs of up to 150% on last year.

During this month, we also released our "Landscape Reports: Spotlight On Culture", which highlighted big challenges facing cultural programmes and facilities, including a downswing in public spending confidence, a lack of returning customers post Covid and increased energy costs.

type 2
diabetes

cardio-vascular
disease

April - June 2022 Work Highlights

During this period, we had at least 40 significant partner interactions.
Work highlights included:

- Giving oral evidence on health inequalities as part of the Local Government Association's Commission on Culture.
- Publishing detailed [Landscape Reports](#) for England, Scotland and Wales.
- Publishing [Spotlight on Culture](#) briefings.
- Providing a written response to the Low Pay Commission consultation on the proposed increases to the National Living Wage.
- Writing to the Scottish Government in response to the consultation on a Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People.
- Presented to the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board on the energy crisis.
- Attended the DCMS Sports Strategy Round Table.
- Attended the roundtable on the refresh of the Culture Strategy Action Plan and the development of a Cultural Diplomacy Strategy for the Scottish Government.
- Launched a joint report with the Welsh NHS Confederation, engaging over 40 representatives of the health sector in Wales on [the offer from leisure and culture trusts](#).
- Delivered a Swimming & Aquatics Conference bringing together the most diverse group of partners to date, including Swim England, Swim Wales, the Swimming Teachers Association, The Royal Life Saving Society UK, the Institute of Aquaphobia and the Black Swimming Association.
- Excellent attendance of all our Special Interest Groups (SIG).
- The inaugural meeting of our new Environment and Sustainability SIG.
- Work developing the new Health England Report by the Health England SIG.
- Eight national news articles covering the current financial challenges facing our members.



July - Sep 2022 Sector Landscape

September saw the release of the Government's Energy Bill Relief Scheme. Whilst this short-term measure was initially welcomed by many sectors, including the Charitable Trust sector, Community Leisure UK warned that much more needed to be done over the coming weeks and months to prevent public leisure and culture services and facilities from permanently closing.

Following consultation with our members, we identified three main concerns that needed addressing urgently, including; the cap only covering wholesale prices, the cap still being significantly higher than energy payments the previous year, and the timeline for support not reflecting the impact for companies with fixed contracts due for renewal the moment the scheme ends.

A graphic in the top right corner shows two hands, one blue and one white, cupping a blue heart. A large blue curved shape sweeps across the top left and bottom of the page.

July- Sep 2022 Work Highlights

During this period, we had over 30 significant partnership Interactions.

Work highlights:

- We issued a statement on the [Energy Bill Relief Scheme](#)
- We [responded](#) to the "short inquiry into the impact of increasing costs" in Wales.
- A [Single Sites briefing](#) was published to highlight the impact of the energy crisis on independent operators.
- Updated [Landscape Reports](#) were published highlighting the current energy crisis.
- We published briefings on the energy crisis for Senedd members in Wales in partnership with the Welsh Sports Association.
- We gave oral evidence to the Senedd in Wales on the new Procurement and Social Partnership Bill.
- Presented oral evidence to the Low Pay Commission on the impact of increases in the National Minimum and Living Wage.
- We responded to the consultation on "Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan: Discussion Paper and Call for Evidence" in England.
- Responded to the consultation "Budget scrutiny 2023- 24: Funding for Culture" in Scotland.
- Responded to the consultation "Suicide Prevention Strategy and Action Plan" in Scotland.
- We responded to the consultation "Call for Evidence: Grassroots Participation in Sport and Physical Activity" in England.
- Submitted a revised response to the "Reimagining Where We Live: Cultural Placemaking and the Leveling Up Agenda" consultation for England.
- In Scotland, we responded to the consultation "A New Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy" in Scotland.
- In July, we published our findings from the annual Trust In Numbers survey.
- We announced that our Active Kindness was proudly launching Phase 2 of its programme, inviting ten new Trusts the opportunity to build their capacity in volunteer management.
- We launched our new [Environmental Sustainability Guide](#).



Oct - Dec 2022 Sector Landscape

By early October, the first pool closures affecting our members had begun to make headlines.

The latest survey of our membership base revealed that 89% of our members in Scotland, 82% in Wales and 75% in England were now at risk.

And in late December, we sent an urgent SOS letter to the Chancellor calling on him to designate leisure and cultural charity trusts as a Vulnerable Sector as part of the UK Government's Energy Bill Relief Scheme, due to be extended in April 2023.



Oct - Dec 2022 Work Highlights

During this period, there were 45 significant partnership interactions.

Work Highlights:

- We published and issued an urgent [plea to the Chancellor](#) on the energy crisis.
- Released updated [Landscape Reports](#) on the impact of the energy and cost-of-living crisis on public leisure and culture.
- Highlighted the value of members through their support for the [warm spaces](#) initiative.
- We published the Supporting Integrated Care Through Leisure and Culture Report for England.
- Launched a [new campaign](#) to encourage NHS and healthcare professionals to connect and collaborate with their local charitable trust/social enterprise.
- Gave oral evidence to the Cost-of-Living Inquiry in the Welsh Senedd.
- Responded to the Arts Council of Wales' Investment Review.
- We responded to the consultation "Developing a National Framework for Social Prescribing" in Wales.
- Responded to the consultation of the Welsh Government Draft Budget.
- Secured significant press coverage regarding the crisis faced by our members, including ITV, BBC News and BBC Radio.
- Delivered social value workshops covering the Social Value Calculator, the Social Value Framework and Social Return on Investment.
- Our Active Kindness volunteering programme celebrated the success of Phase 1 of its programme, with the results of the interim evaluation showing some fantastic progress towards the overall aims of the project. One hundred sixty-nine volunteers were recruited by the pilot trusts in 2022, with notable improvements in diversity.
- We delivered three Carbon Trust Workshops for members to support them with Net Zero in Context and Carbon Footprinting and Reducing Scope 1, 2 & 3 Emissions.



Jan - Mar 2023 Sector Landscape

In February, we organised the UK's first-ever Big Swim Day. This was a chance for pools across the UK to celebrate their love of swimming and show the Government just how many people love their pools.

Backed by Swim England, Swim Wales, and Scottish Swimming, Big Swim Day was held on Friday, 24th February and generated significant local, regional and national news coverage with more than 300 stories. It also trended on Twitter for almost eight hours and reached 714,000 on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook using the hashtag #BigSwimDay.

We also reported that almost half of the community-run public pools could close as a result of crippling energy costs.

In March, the Chancellor announced a one-off £63M support plan for public pools to help keep them afloat. Although we welcomed the funding, we felt this represented more of a "lifeline than a life-saver" and continued to call on the Government to u-turn and include our members in the April extension of the Energy Bill Relief Scheme.



SAVE OUR POOLS

Jan - Mar 2022 Work Highlights

Work Highlights:

- Submitted written and oral evidence to Senedd's Local Government and Housing Committee on their inquiry regarding Local Authority Library and Leisure Services.
- Responded to the Government's consultation on calculating holiday entitlement for part-year and irregular-hours workers.
- Responded to the Local government revenue and capital settlement from 2023 to 2024 (Wales).
- Submitted a representation for the Spring Budget to the UK Government.
- Submitted a response to the consultation on the Health and Social Care Outcomes Framework for Wales.
- We enjoyed significant media coverage and praise for #BigSwimDay.
- Year 2 of Active Kindness gets underway with ten new Trusts.
- Fantastic attendance of our Special Interest Groups
- Developed a fundraising learning series for Single Sites in collaboration with Sport England's Club Matters.
- Developed a new Special Interest Group focusing on Social Value.



Partnership Working

Throughout 2022/23 we regularly worked and engaged with the following partners and organisations:

England

- Arts Council England & Local Government quarterly partnership meetings
- Culture, Tourism and Sport Board
- Local Government Physical Activity Partnership
- Culture sector fortnightly meetings on Cost of Living / Talent Drain / Energy
- NCVO sector group on energy support

Scotland

- Cross Party Group on Health Inequalities
- Culture Partners Group
- Movement for Health Coalition
- Scotland's Mental Health Charter for Physical Activity and Sport Steering Group
- Strategic Forum for Sport and Leisure

Wales

- Health and Wellbeing Alliance
- Theatre Sector Bodies (UK-wide)
- UK Active Partner Energy Crisis network

2022-23 In Numbers

17

Reports Written

29

Special Interest
Group Meetings

113

Members

6

New Members

300+

News Stories
#BigSwimDay

112

Network Enquiries

169

Volunteers Recruited
Active Kindness

53%

Increase Twitter Traffic

69,420

Website Visits

620

SIG Attendees Since July

527+

Followers LinkedIn

740

Hours of Volunteering
Active Kindness

438

Attendees
Carbon Trust Workshops

70%

Of New
Volunteers
Female -
Active
Kindness

714,000

People reached on Social Media
#BigSwimDay

22

Regional Meetings

36

Evidence Sessions

140

Significant Partner Interactions

Business Partners

LESMILLS

 Gladstone

PLAYFOOTBALL.


Gallagher

Insurance | Risk Management | Consulting

 bigwave
marketing

PRECOR

MHR