



Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS

Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



Dawn Bowden MS,
Deputy Minister for Arts and Sport,
Welsh Government,
Tŷ Hywel,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1NA.
By Email.

Office of Janet Finch-Saunders MS,
29 Madoc Street,
Llandudno,
LL30 2TL.
01492 871198
Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff Bay,
CF99 1SN.
Janet.Finch-Saunders@Senedd.Wales

02/06/2021

Re.: Return of Welsh Outdoor Running Events

Dear Deputy Minister,

I hope that this letter finds you and your team well.

I am writing to formally register my concern about the impact of Welsh Government restrictions on the outdoor sporting events sector. From speed walking, to jogging and marathon running, the outdoor sporting events calendar is fundamental to the North Wales tourism offer. In fact, in my own constituency of Aberconwy alone, enterprises such as Run Wales hold the Snowdonia Half Marathon, Conwy Half Marathon and North Wales Half Marathon. These world renowned events draw thousands of healthy participants to the area, working to support our other industries, such as the hospitality offer and accommodation providers. As our community now looks to bounce back from the hardship of the last year, confirmed resumption of these events would come as a boost.

More broadly, the suspension of these outdoor sporting events has been one of the most enduring challenges to our sense of our collective well-being. For many, these races present a target towards which to aim and productively channel their energies. According to a study led by Barts Health NHS Trust and University College London, you also do not have to be a seasoned runner to witness the major advantages of this exercise. Indeed, their research found that those running a marathon for the first time could reduce their blood pressure and the stiffening of the arterial wall. Given our present health concerns, and the impact of extended lockdown periods, taking moves to endorse and resume such sport would ensure that these benefits can be reaped.

With this in mind, I am writing to ask that the Welsh Government urgently review its guidance on outdoor running events, so that there is parity on the guidance with England. At present, organised outdoor activities in Wales can have up to 50 people of any age. Meanwhile, in England, organised outdoor sport activities can take place in any numbers, subject to sport-specific guidance. Firms say that they can now resume with risk assessed, Covid-safe races if allowed. With the benefits of such races plain to see, it cannot be right that Welsh athletic event organisers are held back whilst other parts of the UK resume this important work.

I look forward to receiving your reply in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS