



ANNUAL REPORT



2021

EDWARD CROZIER

Dear Members,

It is my honour to address you all as the **Chair of Netball Scotland**. During my 9 months in post I have been impressed and encouraged by the real growth potential for Netball in Scotland across all levels of the sport, from grassroot Clubs, to Strathclyde Sirens and the National team. This potential combined with the focused ambition of all sectors within the sport, were the key motivational factors for me in accepting the role of Chair at Netball Scotland and it is a privilege for me to undertake.

I'm a firm believer in the delivery of the operational pyramid system and that the foundation of an organisation is what energises it's development, sustainability and ultimately its measured success. To that end I am so grateful to our grassroots members who have stuck by us through the past 18 months ensuring we have a strong foundation at Club level with which to recover and rebuild.

And, to the peak of the pyramid - the shop window of our sport – the **Strathclyde Sirens**, whose performances in the **Vitality Netball Superleague** this season brought new interest and profile to our sport here in Scotland.

Thanks are also due to all of our commercial partners, in particular to the **University of Strathclyde** and our National Agency **sportscotland**, whose financial support and professional guidance we are so appreciative of during such an uncertain and turbulent period.



A special note of thanks to **Freda Hutcheson MBE** our new **President of Netball Scotland** who brings a wealth of experience, insight and real hands on connectivity across our membership to enhance the leadership of this organisation through direct member representation.

I've been so very impressed with **Strathclyde Sirens** this season led by **Karen Atkinson** and **Lesley MacDonald**, and we were so unfortunate not to make the playoffs . But this is just the start of great things for the Club who I'm sure that by building on the success of this year will be real contenders to challenge winning the League in the coming seasons.



Of course we all now have one eye on the upcoming **Commonwealth Games** being held in Birmingham next year so now more than ever our elite performance both domestically and Internationally is critical to us realising our strategic ambitions on the court.

At NS we are so fortunate to have a committed staff and executive who despite working under some extremely challenging working conditions over these past 18 months have guided the business of the organisation through the various stages of the pandemic and now look onwards to a successful operational return both on and off the court. Sincere thanks and acknowledgement are due to them collectively on your behalf.



As are my personal thanks to Netball Scotland's Board, not only for their governance support and advice but also for welcoming me so openly to the organisation. A special note of thanks must go to **Pam Radage** who stepped into the role of **Interim Chair** before my appointment and did so with such professional oversight and delivery to lead us all through the onset of COVID

At Netball Scotland we have in our **CEO Claire Nelson** an inspirational, focussed leader of international class who is recognised as such not only in our own sport but across the wider spectrum of all sports! Claire is leading from the front in our national return to sport with a focus on health, ongoing development, wellbeing and inclusion. Claire is more than a role model and mentor but also someone who enacts what she proposes. Complemented with the recent appointment of **Stephanie Karvelis** to the role of **Chief Operating Officer** we now have two senior executives who are exemplifiers of best practise in their sectors and will exponentially springboard our sport to new and exciting levels.

Moving forward, in order to help achieve our growth ambitions and overcome the tough challenging present conditions we do need to increase our commercial focus. We will endeavour to achieve this but we will not compromise on our service delivery to members or our focus on supporting grassroots and community.

For me, I will lead this sport with your Board to ensure that netball thrives post COVID, bringing my past learning and expertise from Rugby, the creative sector and business to help drive new thinking and capitalise on opportunities whilst maintaining a safe, inclusive and well governed sport.

Claire **NETBALL SCOTLAND**

CLAIRE NELSON

Dear Members,


This has been a year (and a half) like no other and one that I hope we can all start to put firmly behind us as we emerge into better days for all. This time last year I wrote to you all in the midst of this new pandemic that was wreaking devastation across all of our lives as well as our sport. At that point I was hopeful that we would come through it quickly and we would all be back on court enjoying the sport that we love in no time. A year on, and 18 months since the suspension of all domestic and International netball activity, we are still facing significant restrictions and challenges to a full return to sport.

However, with every crisis comes an opportunity and we have seized all that we can from this situation with both hands to create a strategy that we believe will not only allow us to recover and rebuild but will in fact set us on a more powerful and ambitious path for our sport and organisation. This has been a truly defining year for myself as CEO – at times uncomfortable, uncertain and incredibly challenging, but mostly one full of insight, clarity and focus on what HAS to be done to strengthen our business model, unlock our potential and move to the next level.

This Annual Report outlines our response to COVID-19 from the initial impact to how we developed new ways of delivering programmes and services to our members. It also shares details of new plans, approaches and key areas of focus that we have identified and created to lead us through the second half of this investment cycle and onto realising the critical organisational outcomes that we need to achieve in order to execute an ambitious growth strategy from **2023** onwards.




Some key highlights, achievements and deliverables from the past year are:




Improved Membership affiliation process with discounted rate and flexible payment options. Thank you to every Member who affiliated with us despite the inability to be able to train and compete with your Clubs and Teams. Your unwavering support for the sport enabled us to continue to plan for our collective future in the face of incredible uncertainty.




Completed the **Local Association (LA) Consultation** with enhanced meaningful engagement across all LAs. The support, contribution, feedback, challenge and ideas received from the **LA Chairs** and their **Committees** has been utterly invaluable in our response activity and planning. We are now in the process of taking our NS x LA Partnership to the next level with the appointment of co-funded **Netball Development Officers** in 3 key LAs and will be looking to build on this local workforce and infrastructure over the coming Season. This is a truly game changing piece of work for our sport and a major strategic focus for this cycle, so it's fantastic to see how this has been accelerated over the last year.



Enhanced our portfolio of digital products and programmes to remain engaged with our Members through lockdown and whilst we remained off the court. This included skills challenges, fitness programmes, specialist workshops, **Return To Netball** support, modified game guidance, expert led sessions and education courses. Our Members have reported feeling more connected to the sport and our community than ever before and so we will continue to build on this area of the business.



Launched and executed an emergency outdoor facility access and equipment response project which is now being developed into a longer term strategy. What the pandemic showed us is that we need a better infrastructure of indoor and outdoor courts across the country to not only adequately support our existing Membership, but to also support our growth ambitions. Our vision is to have netball accessible to, and played by, all communities up and down the nation, so we need to ensure that we have the facilities and space to enable that.



Reviewed every single programme, product and objective across the business to create a more focused plan which we refer to internally as **Destination 23**. This plan reflects what has to be done/achieved by the end of this cycle to ensure that we have the right organisational business model, financial model, people, plans and partnerships in place to take this sport to the next level. This process included a full organisational restructure with a specific investment into people – creating roles and remits that reflected individual skills and passions whilst aligning to business objectives, implementing smarter ways of working and reporting, and more emphasis on leadership and accountability across key priority areas. As part of this we have also enhanced the senior leadership skills and expertise in the business through the promotion of **Karen Atkinson** to **Performance Director** and with the appointment of **Stephanie Karvelis** to **COO**. Stephanie will support me by managing the day to day operations of the entire business enabling me to focus on partnerships, influencing, commercial activity and business growth.

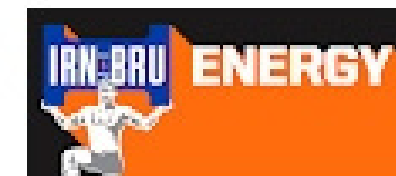
Our focus for the next two years is clear. We need to get our Members back onto court and to restart our full domestic pathway, which has to be strengthened and enhanced through our workforce, partnerships and facility infrastructure. We need to increase our commercial streams and strengthen our financial model to effectively support the business. We need to perform on court – through the **Vitality Netball Superleague** and on the world stage as we head into the **Commonwealth Games in 2022** and **Netball World Cup in 2023**. We need to increase engagement and participation across all ages and abilities, with particular focus on building a strong and meaningful network of young players, fans, volunteers and leaders. And we need to deliver a consistently powerful health and wellbeing impact to all, reducing inequalities and leading the way for greater representation of, and access to opportunities for, women and girls. To achieve this, we will work smarter in sport development within the Governing Body, we will invest time, focus and resource into growing the Strathclyde Sirens business which is critical to our profile and commercial growth, and we will launch a charitable foundation to access new funding streams in order to improve lives, increase participation and reduce inequalities across communities. This is going to require a significant amount of work, but with the backing of our Members and Partners we are ready to take on the challenge – our sport and our future depends on it.

I am able to think like this – ambitious, optimistic, motivated, confident – because I am backed by the most incredible support system. **To our Board**, thank you for your belief, support, guidance and calm approach to our organisational response to the pandemic. Now, with the introduction of our ambitious and driven new Chair, Ed Crozier, myself and the Executive team feel empowered to tackle all that lies ahead of us as we emerge into this next critical phase of evolution and development.

My Staff make me proud to lead this organisation every single day. They inspire me to be the best I can be for them, the sport and our people, and they have shown immeasurable levels of positivity, resilience, courage, adaptability, creativity, drive and innovation over this past year. I am grateful to them all.

Our Partners have kept this sport afloat whilst we navigated the roughest of uncharted waters. Without sportscotland's support, flexibility, belief and investment we literally would not have survived.

And without the backing and security of our principle partnership with the **University of Strathclyde** we would not have been able to put our **Strathclyde Sirens** team into the Superleague this season. To them, and to all of our new and existing Partners, stakeholders and friends – **Nike**, **PSL**, **Capital**, **Irn Bru**, **Adeo**, **Tigerbond**, **Brendan McGinty**, **John Oates**, **Odoom Brothers**, **Princes Square**, **Woosh Media**, **Murphy Wealth**, **sportscotland Institute of Sport**, **SAMH**, **Breathing Space**, **VNSL**, **England Netball**, **Welsh Netball**, **Netball Northern Ireland** – words cannot convey the magnitude of our gratitude and appreciation.





I cannot reflect on this past season without unashamedly gushing about our truly phenomenal **Strathclyde Sirens**. What this team achieved this year, on and off the court, has been nothing short of remarkable. Nobody really knows the challenges that were faced behind the scenes – maybe one day we'll tell the full story – but how they came together to find solutions, to support one another and to deliver the results that they did is a true test to their strength of character as individuals and as a team. On the court things finally clicked and these magnificent players started to feel and believe what many of us fans have known they are capable of for so long. They inspired not only their own **#SirensTribe** here in **Scotland**, but attracted legions of new fans from across the UK and wider global netball community too. This growth and improvement on the court helped to drive and accelerate our off court profile, attracting new interested partners and media coverage.

I was proud to lead the **#HeadlinesNotSidelines** campaign championing better quality and quantity of media coverage for our sport which resulted in regular weekly national coverage and with Sirens being **THE** most talked about women's sports team in the UK. The achievements of this year have given us the foundations we need to really push this Franchise forward, but it requires your support. Please buy a Season Ticket, bring your school/club/friends/family to games, follow our social media channels, download the app, buy the merchandise, talk about the team and consume the media coverage. Together let's make **Sirens** the most popular, successful and game changing women's sports Club in the UK!

This next year is going to be tough. We are trying to grow a business off the backdrop of a financially and operationally destructive period. There will be change and some of that change might feel uncomfortable, but I ask for your trust in the plan and for your support in bringing it to life. It's time to make a step change and we want you all to come with us on the journey. Our small but mighty nation has the potential to be a powerhouse both here in the UK and on the world stage but there's work to be done to get there, so who's ready to roll up their sleeves and get stuck in with us?

I can't wait to see you all back on court or in the stands cheering on our Sirens and Thistles in the very near future. Until then, stay safe, be kind to yourself and others, and keep spreading the good word of netball!

CEO **NETBALL SCOTLAND**

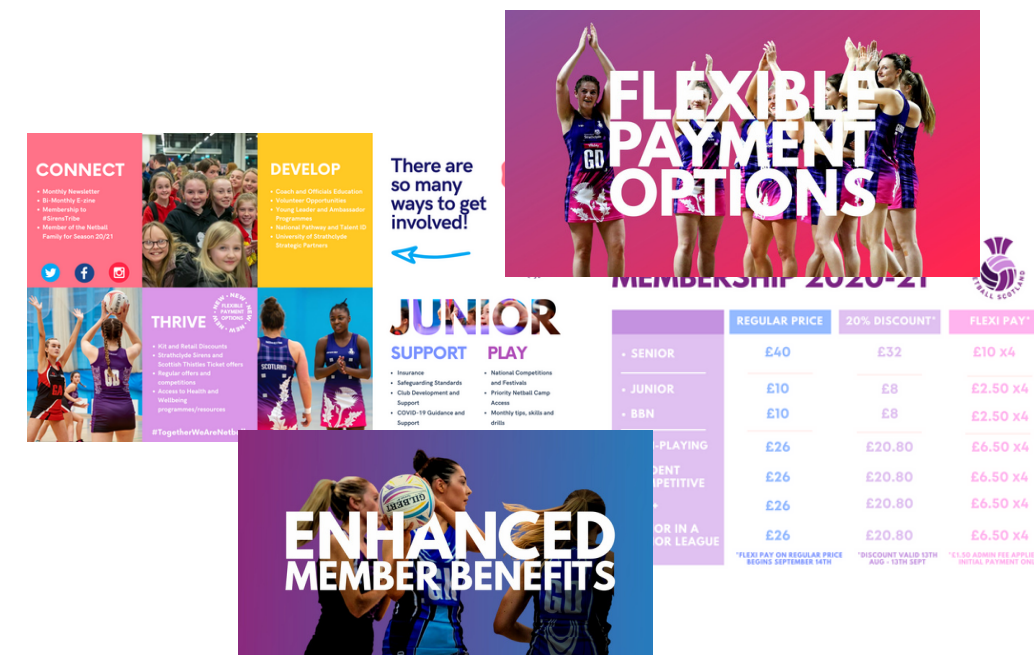
MEMBERSHIP

5,197
MEMBERS

**-33% LESS THAN
PREVIOUS YEAR**

Membership Enhancements

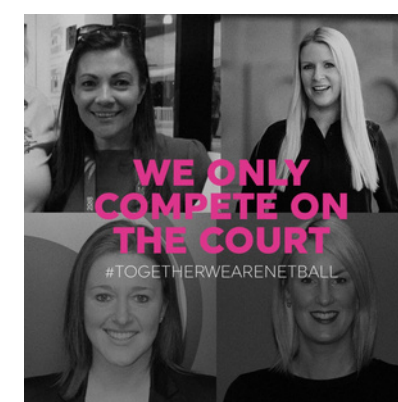
- Improved Club and Member Guidance
- Developed Individual Affiliation process
- Improved Family Module process
- Added Flexible Payment Options for every Individual Member Licence



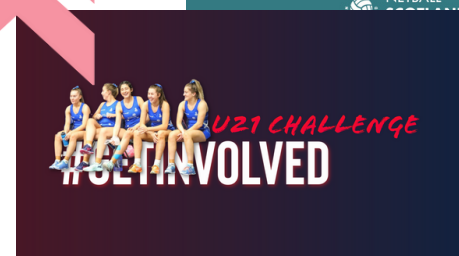
Digital Engagement

- Online fitness challenges for all ages
- Primary School fitness programme for teachers to access
- Series of online webinars to keep members engaged in all areas of netball
- #NETBALLREADY launched to support and encourage safe return to netball in Scotland

Home Nations Campaign



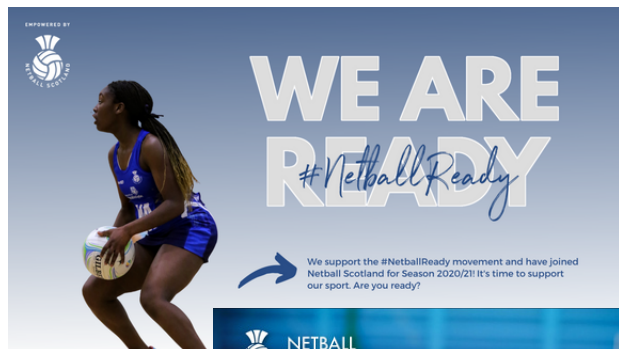
- #TOGETHERWEARENETBALL
- Collaboration with the four home nations
- Awareness campaign to encourage members to continue supporting their sport



CLUBS Supporting you to get back on court

#netballready

- #NetballReady hub created on website
- Guidance, support and resources for clubs to support compliance
- Clubs receive NS endorsement



Modified Game

- Developed by England Netball
- Adapted version of the game to allow COVID-19 safe match play
- Approved by sportscotland for outdoor use in 2020
- Webinars to provide full support for clubs, players & umpires



#netsgooutdoors

- Facilitating outdoor netball access across Scotland
- Funding provided for equipment meaning more clubs could return



LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

Enhancing your Netball Infrastructure

LA Empowerment Strategy

- 15 month process concluded March 2021
- 12 Local Associations participating
- Monthly LA Chairs meetings established
- LA Framework developed
- Improved collaboration & shared learning between Local Associations



Club Development Series

- Supporting club volunteers to manage a thriving, safe & developing club
- Launched online in May 2020
- Series of 5 x 60 minute CPD online workshops



LOCAL ASSOCIATION CONSULTATION

LA Consultation

- Supporting club volunteers to manage a thriving, safe & developing club
- Launched online in May 2020
- Series of 5 x 60 minute CPD online workshops



EDUCATION *Coaching and Officiating*

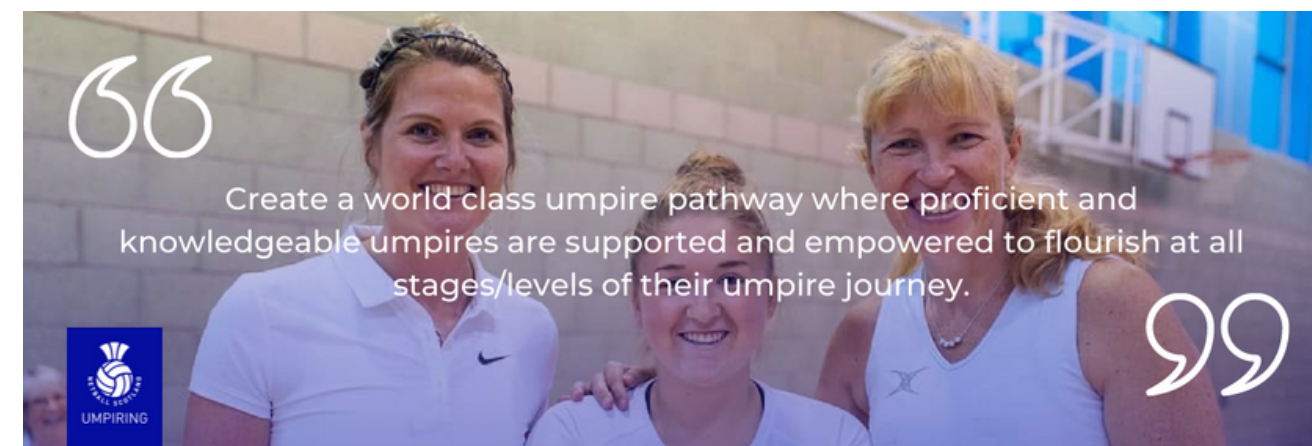
Digital Strategy

- Key focus for continued successful delivery of education programmes
- Level 1 & Level 2 Coaching courses now 100% online
- Online coaching assessments now offered meaning complete digital delivery of courses
- C Award Umpiring course now delivered digitally with Netball Scotland being the first in the European region to offer this



Webinars

- 21 webinars delivered
- Developed with support from NS workforce
- Varied CPD offering



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Reducing Inequalities Through Netball

Equality Advisory Group

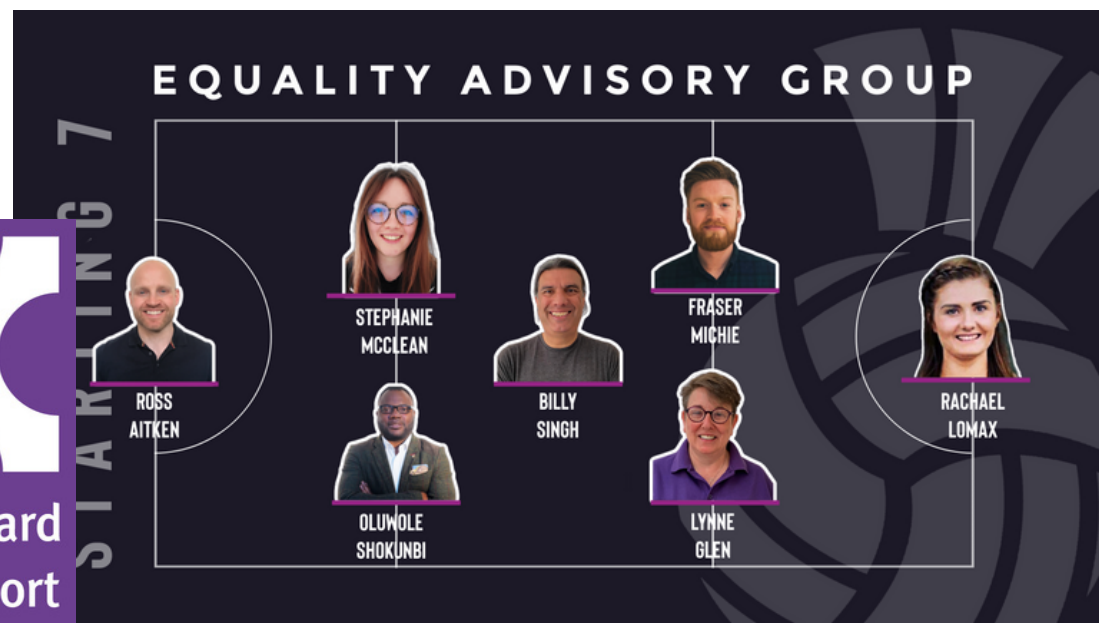


Kieron Achara MBE
EAG Chair

- EAG established to guide Netball Scotland on all areas of Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- To provide practical, strategic and operational support
- Scottish & GB basketball player Kieron Achara, MBE appointed as EAG Chair

Children & Young People

- Ambassador Programme launched
- 15 young ambassadors selected out of 63 applicants from across Scotland
- 15 mentors selected to support
- Young People's Forum launched October 2020
- Online forum to give young people opportunity to discuss, share & learn



STRATHCLYDE SIRENS

#WeAreTheBigGuns



Vitality Netball Superleague

- 2021 Sirens most successful league performance since 2017 inception
- 10 wins, 2 draws
- Narrowly missed out on top 4 finish

Awards

- VNSL Coach of the Season awarded to Karen Atkinson
- VNSL Players' Player of the Season awarded to Towera Vinkhumbo
- Towera also selected as GK in VNSL All Stars VII

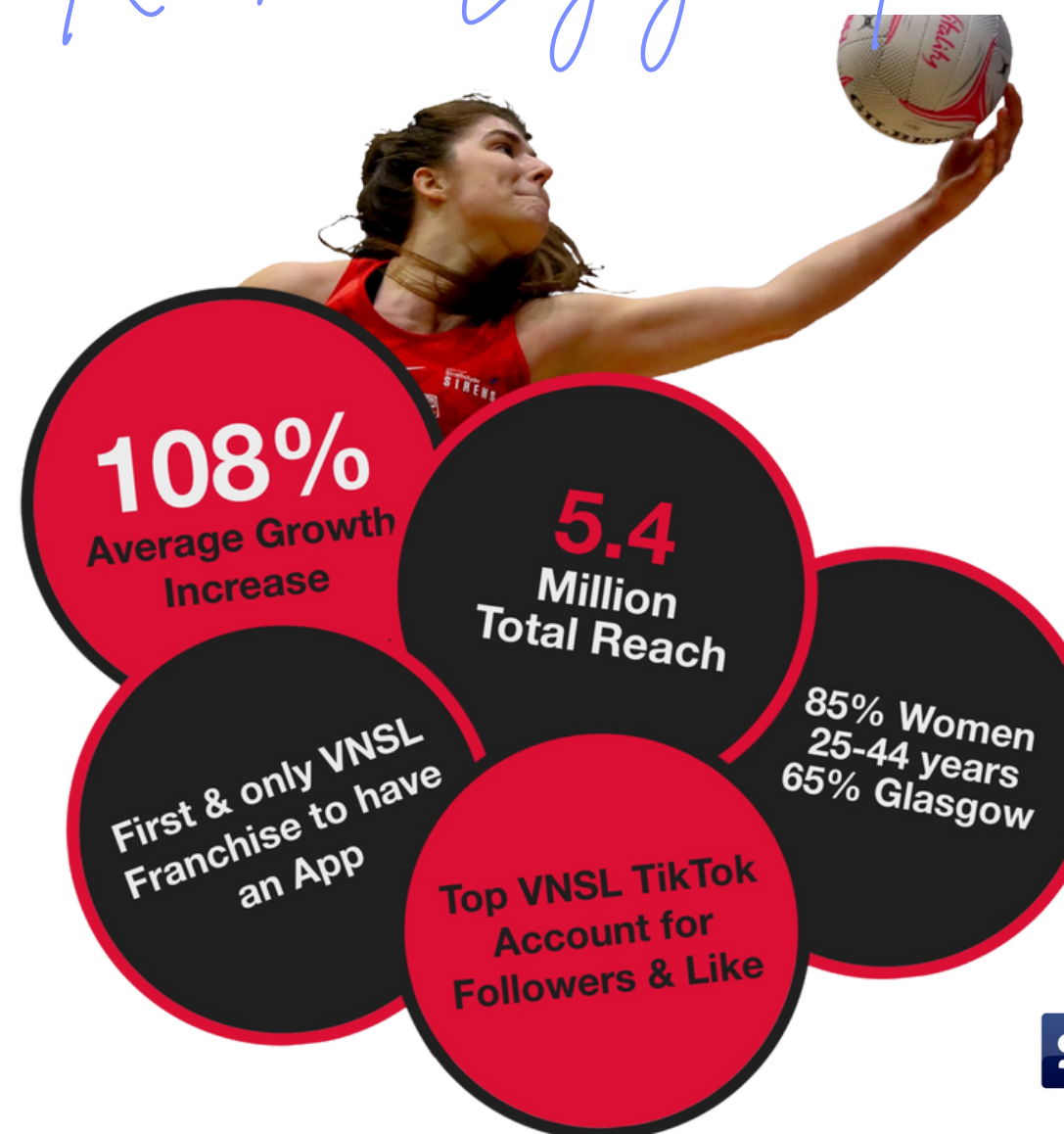


STRATHCLYDE SIRENS

#WeAreTheBigGuns

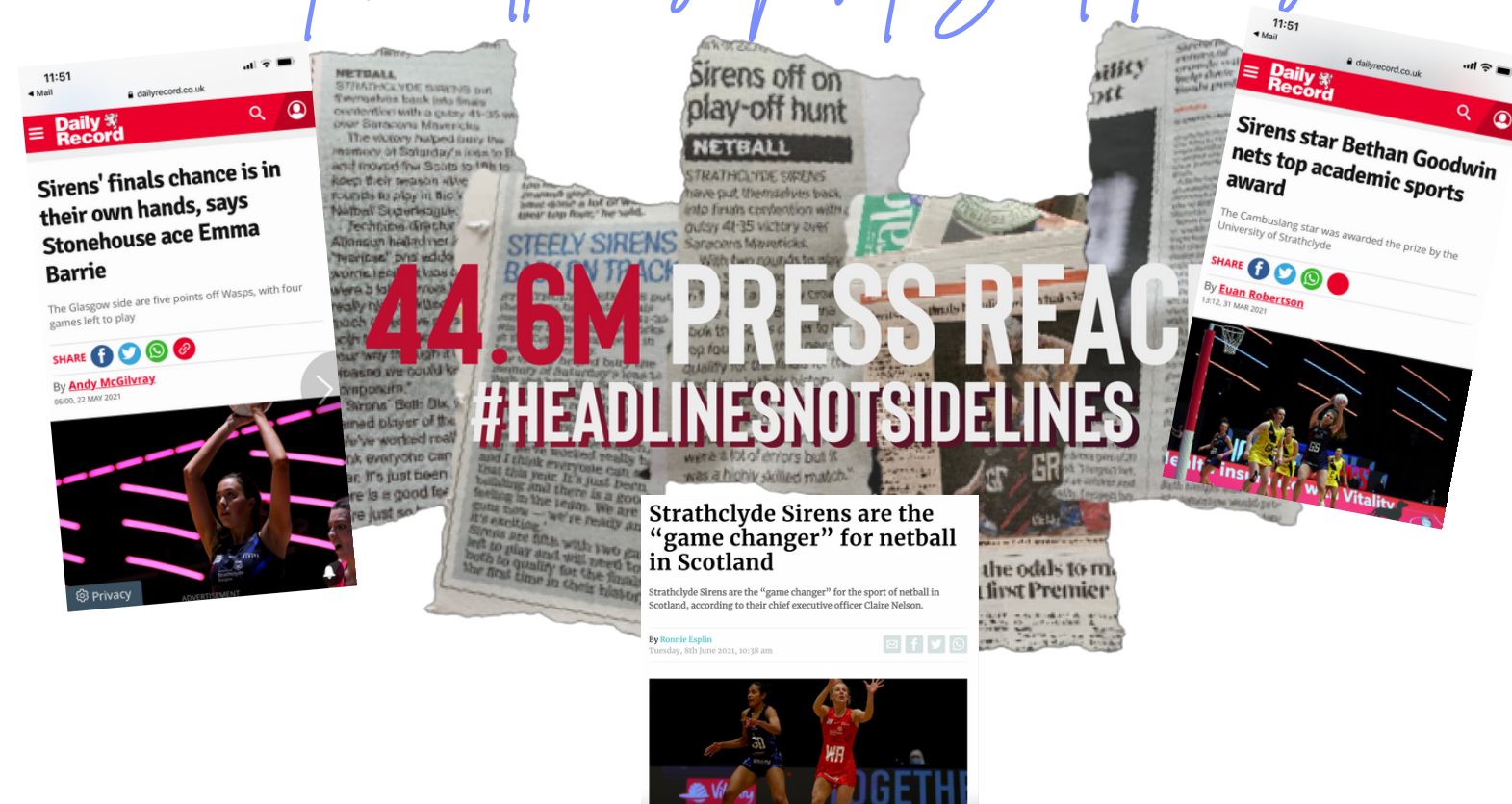
Reach & Engagement

#HeadlinesNotSidelines



353k VIEWS ON

sky sports YouTube



University of
Strathclyde
SIRENS

University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow



PSL TEAM SPORTS

105-106
CAPITAL
FM
SCOTLAND'S NO.1 HIT MUSIC STATION

AEO

IRN-BRU **ENERGY**

PRINCES SQUARE

PERFORMANCE *Building a World Class System*

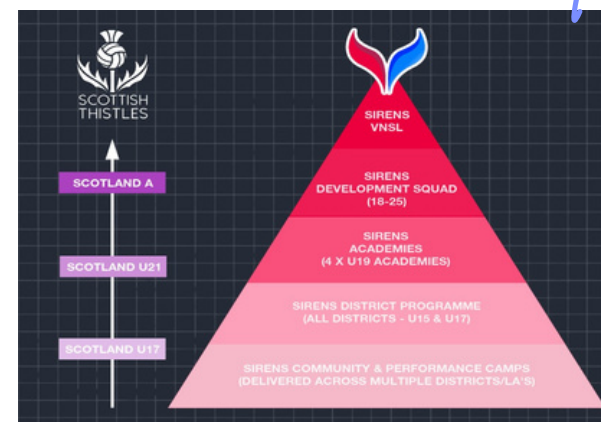
Coaching Team

- Karen Atkinson, MBE, Performance Director
- Tamsin Greenway, Head Coach, Scottish Thistles
- Lesley MacDonald, Head Coach, Strathclyde Sirens
- Rachel Cremin, Coaching Futures Apprentice Coach



Pathway & Competitions

- Creating an aspirational pathway
- Opportunities for players to compete & train regularly
- Aims to bring competition to the forefront
- Creating an achievable link to Sirens & Thistles programmes



Road to Comm Games

- Maintained 8th in World Netball Rankings
- International match play suspended throughout 2020 due to COVID-19
- Preparations underway for 2022 Commonwealth Games
- International match play calendar confirmed 2021-22
- Target top 8 finish at Commonwealth Games 2022



Players Advisory Group

- Launched October 2020
- Scottish Thistles, Strathclyde Sirens, U21 Coaches & Captains
- Collective player voice
- Supported by Netball Players Association (NPA)



GOVERNANCE

Building a World Class System

Wellbeing & Protection

- Compliant with Standards for Child Wellbeing & Protection in Sport
- Policy review undertaken, Wellbeing & Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy for Children and Young People updated
- Safeguarding embedded within Club Development Series, delivered digitally to members
- Launch of Young People's Forum & Young Ambassador Programme to ensure the voice of young people is listened to in our sport

Anti-Doping

- Netball Scotland Anti-Doping Policy updated to comply with the major update to the WADA 2021 Code
- UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) new Assurance Framework for NGBs adopted to ensure WADA Code - Netball Scotland participating in a pilot project for Assurance Framework
- Netball Scotland Education Strategy updated and appointment of UKAD Educators to the Anti-Doping Team to work alongside the Anti-Doping Lead



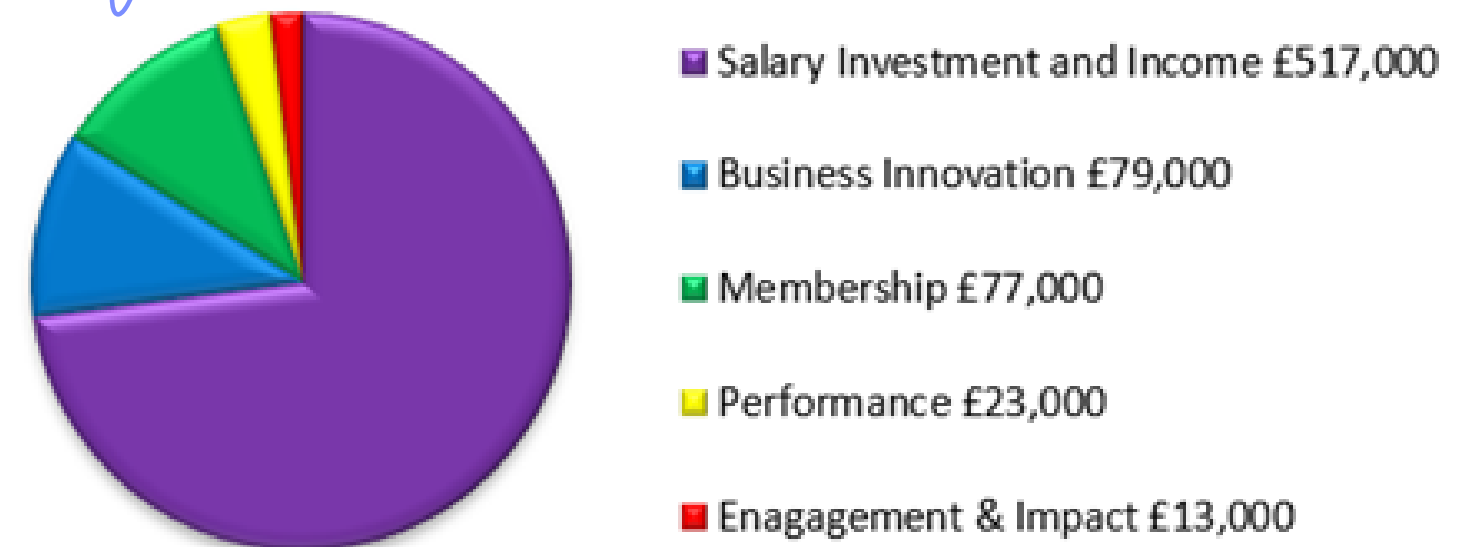
FINANCE

The Numbers

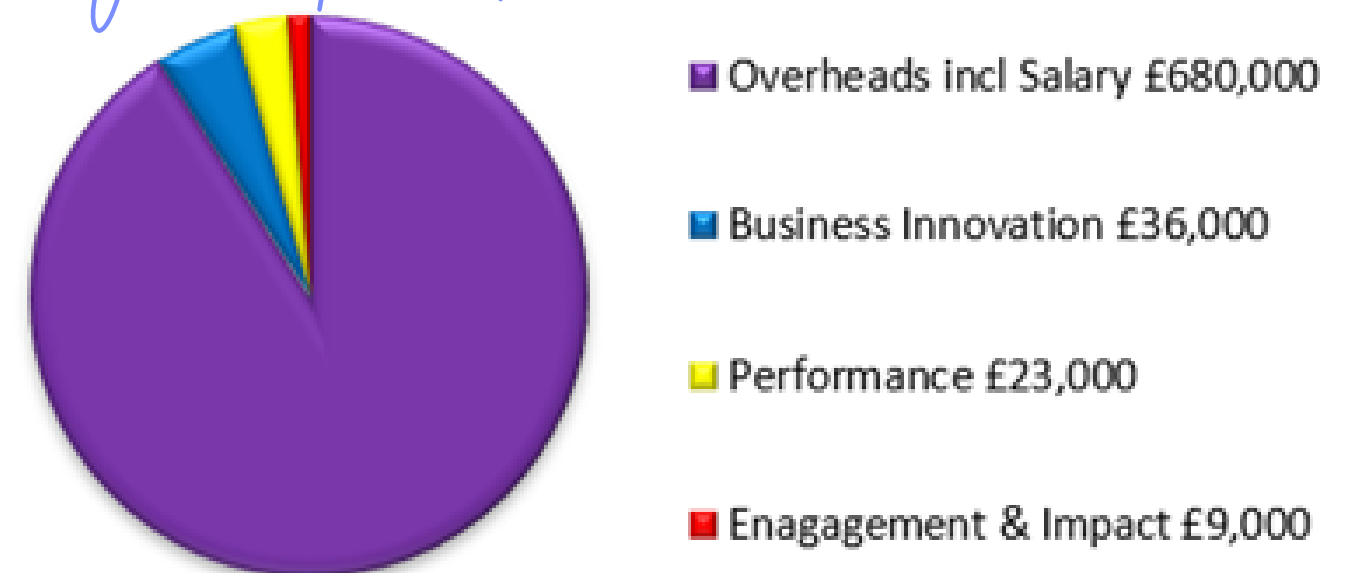
Navigating a Pandemic

- Investment from **sportscotland** remained stable at £602,100, with additional investment of £30k for the Coaching Futures Fund
- Commercial income reduced in key areas by almost £100k, which includes a reduction of £46k for affiliation
- Focus on mitigating financial risk and overhead reduction amounting to £53k reduction for YOY overheads
- Operated at a loss, finishing -£37k, with a positive balance sheet and stable cash flow
- Full accounts can be viewed [here](#)

Key Income 2020-21



Key Expenditure 2020-21





Thank You