Below is the report from the Ladies Director, it describes the current climate for Women’s chess and highlights a few achievements from the last year.

Women’s chess continues to thrive in Wales and this is due to the powerhouse of up and coming girls that we have. Previously it has been dominated by Cardiff and Monmouth pupils but it is now great to see pockets of serious chess happening in other areas such as Chepstow, Swansea and North Wales. This has led to more competitive chess at the Welsh Girls Championships and titles being spread over a larger geographic area. The girls have also proved their calibre by many of them winning or coming in the top three of the Welsh Junior Championships.

On a UK level we had success with Imogen at the British Chess Championship. She achieved the girls prize for the U15s and U16s and was awarded the Roy Clues trophy for best performance by a Welsh player at the championship. Howells school continued to dominate the National Schools Girls Championships by winning both the U11 and U19 title. The U11 team consisted of Nayana, Susie and Venetia and U19 team Alyssa, Neya and Shayanna. Good luck to Howells School who have qualified for the 2017 final in April.

The Olympiad took place Baku in September and consisted of a mix between the up and coming juniors (Imogen, Shayanna and Venetia) and the more experienced ladies (Lynda and myself). It was a pleasure to see the girls perform so well at their first Olympiad, to have some such strong team spirit and hopefully inspire other juniors coming through. Thank you to Lawrence Cooper, who captained the team and helped us perform better than our ranking and finish on equal match points with England. The three juniors all managed to obtain WCM titles.

Another huge achievement is that Helen Sherwood has been awarded the ICCF WGM title.

A challenge that we do face is to ensure that the girls maintain their enthusiasm and drive to play competitive chess throughout their secondary school and then to continue this through adult life. Nevertheless, I look forward to seeing what they can achieve over the next year.

Due to work commitments and living in Oxford I am unable to commit as much time as I would like to this role. Therefore, if someone would like to step forward for the position I am happy to stand down.