

Sport and Physical Activity Network Event

Place and Inequalities – Leading Change



A glass pitcher of water and a green plant in the background.

Welcome to SPAN 2025

Steve Nelson
CEO, Wesport

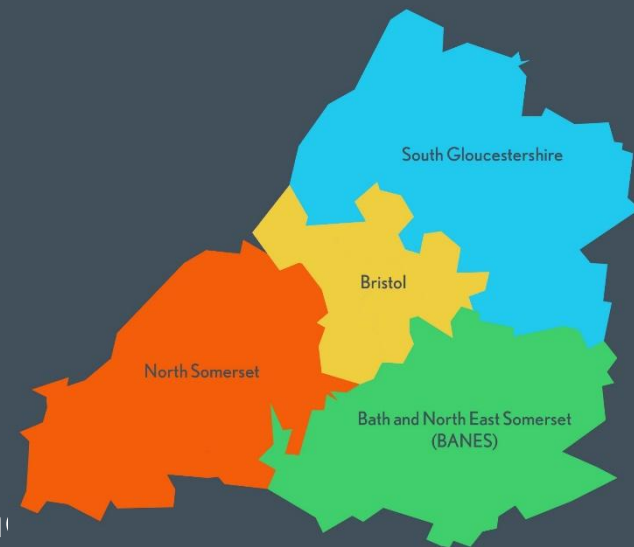
Thursday 27th
November 2025

Who / What is Wesport?

- Local Active Partnership – a Sport England ‘System Partner’
- Advocate for the role physical activity can play, with a focus on **inequalities**
- Connect and influence across systems – **whole systems** approach
- Provide leadership to **create opportunities** for more people to experience the benefits of physical activity and break down barriers
- Part of a **national Active Partnership Network**

Our Mission:

Establish the conditions for long-term change, enabling more people to be physically active, inclusive of all

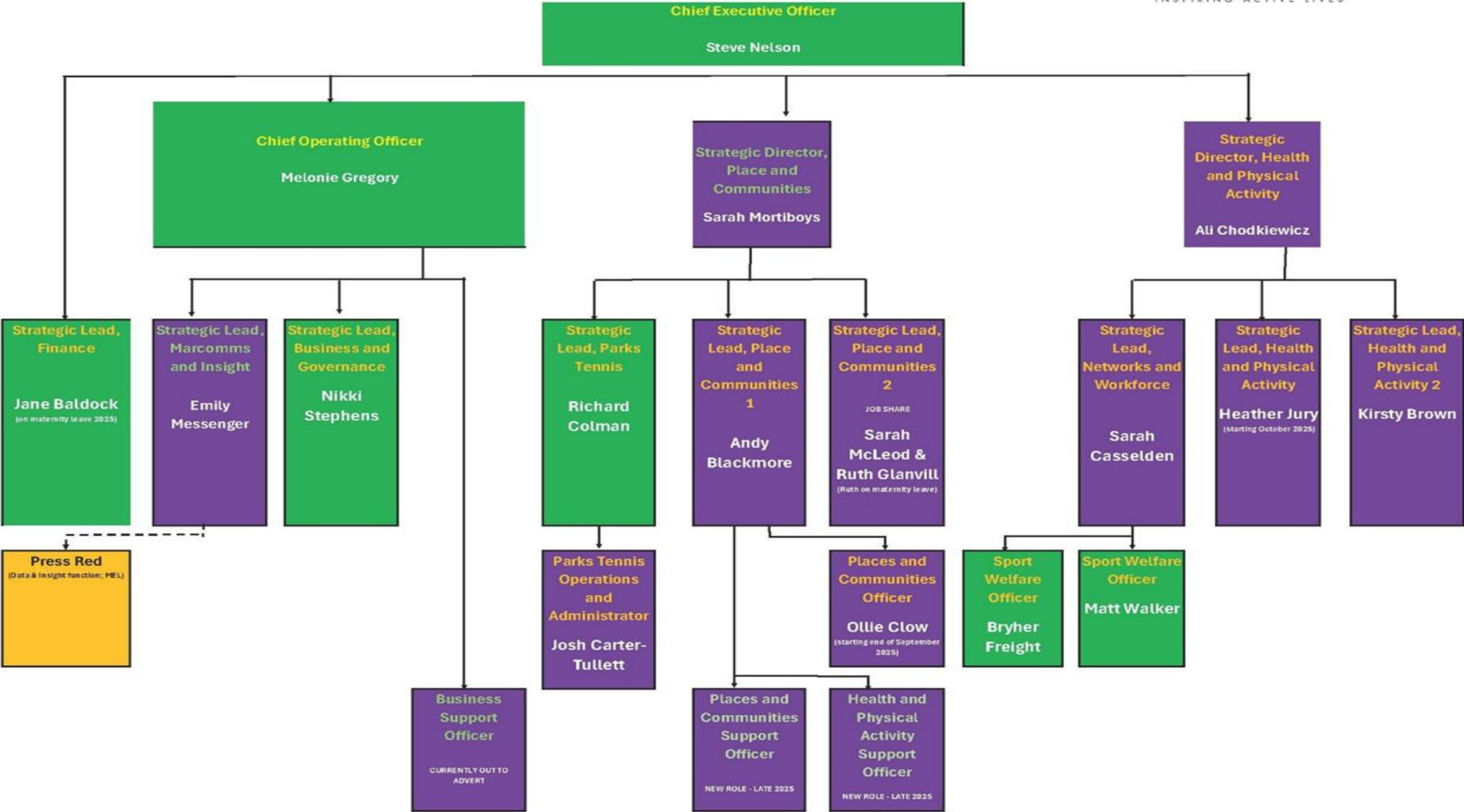


Wesport's three strategic priorities

- Influencing the local ecosystem
- Information and Measurement
- Wesport Delivery (with and through other organisations)
- Underpinned by a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion

A year ago I said... “We were changing our team structure” – **it has now changed**

- Why the change?
 - Our structure evolved linked to projects
 - We need:
 - Focused and clear influencing roles and systems thinking
 - To continue to be ambitious about working in ‘place’
 - A staff team that could work flexibly across key places (and still lead / manage some projects)
 - A balance of roles against our three strategic priorities



This still hold true...

1 PROGRESS MOVES AT THE SPEED OF TRUST

START WITH BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS and TRUST
IT TAKES TIME
THIS CANNOT BE SKIPPED TO MOVE PROGRAMMES FORWARD

3 HOLDING OUR NERVE

BELIEVING IN OURSELVES and STAYING TRUE TO OUR GOALS IS ESSENTIAL TO PREVENT DEFAULTING TO OLD WAYS OF WORKING

2 STUBBORN ON THE VISION FLEXIBLE ON THE DETAIL

BE FLEXIBLE ALONG THE WAY and LET INVESTMENTS BE GUIDED BY NEED

4 BRIDGING THE EMPATHY GAP

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES
PUSHING ASIDE PRECONCEPTIONS AND ADAPTING THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE
SUPPORT CHANGE EMERGING FROM COMMUNITIES

5 SAY 'YES' TO MESS

NO SIMPLE ANSWERS
FLEXIBLE APPROACH THAT CAN RESPOND TO EVOLVING NEEDS, IDEAS and OPPORTUNITIES

7 WE CAN'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM WITH THE SAME MINDSET THAT CREATED IT

DOING THE RIGHT THING CAN BE CHALLENGING
CHALLENGE ASSUMPTIONS, CULTURAL RULES and WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

6 FROM COMMUNITIES GOING WHERE THE ENERGY IS

FIND PLACES WHERE COMMON PURPOSE and ENTHUSIASM EXIST AND START THERE

8 IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE PERFECT TO BE BETTER

TAKE ON REAL BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL INACTIVITY and THEIR ROOT CAUSES
DON'T RUSH TO PROVIDE SOLUTIONS or INTERVENTIONS

And now, we are...

- Working to **embed new roles, relationships and structures** (while to you it looks like business as usual!)
- **Refreshing** the Wesport Strategy for the next five years
- **Getting on with the work...**
 - Place and communities
 - Health and physical activity
 - Sport welfare
 - Core / enabling functions (Marcomms, Insight, Governance, Finance)
 - Focused audiences - women and girls, older people, children and young people, ethnically diverse
 - **Understanding the intersections** across our work as a team (Matrix working),
 - And **how our work intersects beyond** movement, PA and sport

Earlier this year, our team discussed and recorded:

- What have we learnt in the last five years?
- What is important to take forward in how we work in the next five years?
- In the last 5 years, what have we done that we are proud of, do we hold evidence?

What we said:

Our Relationships

- Expansion of SPAN event. Wider network reach.
- Our networks have grown. Health, VCSE, Community, Education
- Increased / reengagement with NGB's.
- Physical activity link workers and other contacts still in post
- TIF / TF. Working with Voscur.
- Opening Schools Facilities (OSF); Physical literacy training
- Tennis – interacted with over 25,000 people through tennis
- Recognition of Wesport and role of **physical activity** within the wider health system.
- Collaborative working with Creative Health & Green / Nature.

Our Process; Our 'How'

- How the team has and is evolving.
- How we adapted and reacted during Covid.
- Delivery of Bristol Girls Can on behalf of BCC.
- Tennis tenders, being brave and going for it.
- Race equality focus work, hugely proud of the work we have done in terms of uncomfortable conversations, Being open and transparent in terms of our focus on race.

- TIF / Together Fund, process of funding; VCSE + VOSCURE ways of working
- Sport Welfare
 - universal delivery offer adopted by the active partnership network.
 - Sport Welfare resource Trello board. Having 3 documents for club visits – Triage, action, review.
 - No Hate Just Sport campaign and resources
- Passed external evaluations
 - governance assurance review.
 - Safeguarding, continually meeting standards to receive Sport England funding
 - Clean external audits

Delivery (With & Through Others)

- Tennis
 - community offers
 - 60% increase in the number of courts we manage
 - Regular ACEZ disability inclusion sessions
 - Excellent feedback scores from coaching courses
 - Training offer and flex
 - ASR groups
 - Imagery telling the new story
- School games inclusion events.
- SGO inequality funding
- Bristol COMF evaluation report. An award winning PASP project.

- Virtual school games during Covid.
- **OSF, almost £1M into schools to enhance provision and community relationships.**
- TIF / TF, over £1M into communities.
- Developed and delivered multiple ageing well projects.
- Promotion of Fallproof – impact, strength and balance classes.
- Set up and the continuation of the Falls Collaborative in each of 3x UA's.
- Impact of BGC campaign so far.