

BRITISH WEIGHT LIFTERS' ASSOCIATION (TRADING AS BRITISH WEIGHT LIFTING)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 2.00pm on Sunday 28 October 2018 at the Pateley Room, Queens Hotel, City Square, Leeds LS1 1PJ

Members Present and Apologies

Dr P Roberts	A Metcalfe	M Martin
T Whittaker	K Leonard	Z Kettle-Metcalfe
S Wilkinson	S Ward	F Parton
S McCann	O Boxall	M Marshall
E Halstead	D Hembrough	J Tong
S Sharp	R Kechacha	G Evans
J Powell	G Greenwood	S Doran
D Kent	M Butterworth	

Apologies:

Dr M Irani	G Taylor	K Sotherton
D Knaggs	C Eastham	O Krzyszton
T Wilkinson	S Martin	M Hill
C Williams		

Welcome

The meeting opened at 1410.

Dr Patrick Roberts, the Chair of BWL, welcomed everybody to the Annual General Meeting. He advised that the meeting would be carried out in line with the Articles of Association and company law. He noted that following the completion of the full meeting, there would be an open forum for questions and answers (but noted that he would decide if the questions could be responded to in this forum or whether they were considered to be of a private and confidential nature.)

The Chair confirmed that appropriate notice for the AGM had been given in accordance with the Articles of Association, that apologies for absence had been received from several Board members, there was a quorum present and there were only matters of ordinary business to discuss with no items requiring to be voted upon.

1) To receive the Annual Report in accordance with Article 122.1

The Chair asked Ashley Metcalfe, CEO of BWL to present the Annual report.

Mr. Metcalfe reported that 2017/18 had been a further positive year of consolidation with the organisation building on previous years' successes and strengthening its operational, performance and financial position.

He advised that it was the second year of the current five-year strategy, which had been designed to grow and develop the sport and organisation in line with both the Board's and Stakeholder's objectives.

Highlights for the year included the continued growth of the core market for weightlifting and para-powerlifting, including an increase in active participation at competitions which were continuing to be increasingly diverse and accessible, a newly launched and revamped talent pathway, the organisation maintaining compliance in terms of governance objectives and income streams increasing.

He noted that UK Sport's decision not to fund the GB weightlifting programme had been extremely challenging for the sport. Extremely difficult performance related decisions were having to be made by the Board who, with no historical reserves to fall back on, were having to remain financially prudent to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

He confirmed that Sport England funding had more than doubled over the current cycle but was ring fenced to grow the core market with investment allocated to pre-agreed interventions in line with their Government remit. This consequently prevents any Sport England spend on elite level lifting. Alongside 20 other un-funded sports BWL continued throughout the year to lobby the Government, DCMS and key stakeholders to try to get baseline funding re-instated.

Mr. Metcalfe presented the summary of results against the Sport England dashboard. He reported that:

- Gender equality at competitions had been achieved with a 53% male/47% female split;
- 700 people had been educated on BWL accredited courses (influencing over 74,000 individuals) which was above target; and
- The membership level of 35% at low socio-economic groups had been achieved.

He highlighted the successful preparations for the 2018 Commonwealth Games for both weightlifting and para-powerlifting and made a special mention of Sarah Davies' 6th place at the 2017 World Championships. He advised that attendance at BWL competitions continued to grow with record entries being achieved and the viewing figures for the livestreaming of the BWL Championships reaching 80,000. He noted that membership levels were currently quite low and there was a need to grow this and make the package more appealing to a wider market.

Regarding sustainability targets, Mr Metcalfe advised that the accounts for British Weight Lifting and World Class Lifting had been consolidated. A record profit of £63,000 for the year had been achieved, with non-grant income generated of £362,000 against a target of £338,000. Whilst reserves were now at £100,000 and far healthier than previously, there was a need to remain cautious as in reality this would only cover one month of liabilities. A high level of governance had been maintained with compliance achieved against the Code of Sports Governance, Equality standard for Sport (Preliminary level), the Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation, safeguarding, GDPR and cyber essentials.

Finally, Mr. Metcalfe thanked his operational team and the Board of Directors, wishing Dr Roberts success in his role as Chairman.

A member raised a question about Masters lifting as the category had not been mentioned in the review. Mr. Metcalfe responded that BWL encourage opportunities for lifters at all levels and ages with competitions offered for all age groups, including the Masters and a closer working relationship with the BWLA Masters Committee would be welcomed.

2) To receive the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 in accordance with Article 122.2

Mr. Martin reported that the statutory accounts had been published on the website since 5 October 2018. He advised that:

- A surplus of £63,000 had been generated;
- The reserves were now stable; and
- The percentage of costs spent on staff/administration had reduced.

He explained that income streams, consisting of both Government income and earned income, had grown from £695,523 in 2017 to £1,523,466 in 2018; due mainly to the consolidation of the BWLA and WCL accounts and the growth in the Sport England grant. Expenditure had been well-managed and in line with budget, growing from £670,379 in 2017 to £1,460,200 in 2018. He concluded by stressing that pressure on the budget would remain in order to keep the organisation sustainable and the priority moving forwards was to earn more non-grant income.

A member asked about the split of commercial income earned and further details were provided.

3) To note the appointment of Dr Patrick Roberts as Interim Chair in accordance with Articles 39 and 122.3

The members noted the appointment of Dr Patrick Roberts.

4) To note that no nominations have been received for elected directors

The members noted that no nominations had been received.

5) To transact any other business that is included on the notice calling the meeting in accordance with article 122.5

No other business was raised.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the formal part of the meeting closed.

Open Forum

The Chair then invited questions from members on any matters not covered by the Annual General Meeting.

Finance

Ramsey Kechacha – asked as the organisation had more reserves, what investments could be made by BWL? Mr. Martin responded that the executive were currently preparing a Reserves Policy for consideration at the March 2019 Board meeting and this would be available for all members to see once signed off.

Gareth Evans – asked about ways of generating additional income, suggesting that charging for livestream at the British Seniors event, which had attracted a large audience, could be an income stream? Mr. Metcalfe agreed and added options for “commercialising” a variety of BWL opportunities were currently being investigated.

Ramsey Kechacha – suggested inviting a craft brewery along to a competition to increase the experience for spectators. It was agreed to explore the possibilities but also noted that most venues were often tied in with existing suppliers which may make it difficult.

Competitions

Dan Kent – highlighted a desire for more regular team competitions; he mentioned that the German Bundesliga was successful and enquired if a similar venture could work in the UK? Mr. Metcalfe explained that the topic had been explored and feedback from current clubs and cities was that there was insufficient support or funding to run a successful national league at this stage. It was agreed to monitor the idea and review the status in the near future.

M Butterworth – raised a question about whether a national knock-out competition was viable whilst noting the decline in clubs in certain areas meant had a negative impact on the number of competitions available in some areas.

Ramsey Kechacha – asked why an U17 individual could not win an U20 or U23 competition? He added that as the weight or age groups are often combined in competitions due to low numbers in each category, it is confusing for spectators if the person who lifts the most doesn't win. It was agreed that the rules and competition format would be reviewed and new ideas explored.

Jenny Tong – felt there was a need to grow membership numbers in order to make the sport more competitive. She also suggested separate medals for the Snatch and Clean & Jerk rather than a total in each category. It was agreed that there was a need to keep all competitors engaged and motivated.

Steve Sharp – felt that there should be more uniformity with the competition calendar and for dates to be published earlier. It was noted that this was being addressed for 2019 and it was aimed to release the full calendar of national competition dates earlier, however, there was no restriction on when clubs could run their own events.

Giles Greenwood – asked whether anything had developed with the Varsity league. Mr Metcalfe responded that the original organisers had struggled to maintain the concept and it was sadly in decline.

Development

Dan Kent - said that he was having difficulties engaging with young people as there is no organised weightlifting curriculum for schools: it was noted that a new programme for teachers was being investigated by BWL.

Jenny Tong – suggested that campaigns be developed to educate parents about the sport and build on the success of the Sport England and Women in Sport campaigns/brands which had become well known. BWL outlined the recent successes of their #strongisnotasize campaign and the positive partnerships with UK Active and DW Sports.

Dan Kent – suggested that fees for membership and competition entries be reviewed and whether a short term temporary membership (rather than an annual fee) could be purchased for someone who wants to try out a competition. It was also raised whether a discounted rate could be given to students. It was noted that the membership scheme was under review and revised proposals would be launched in due course.

Miscellaneous

Dave Hembrough – suggested that there would be value in BWL seeking feedback on the challenges that clubs and individual coaches face. He specifically highlighted reliance upon volunteers, little succession planning and high facility costs. He also noted competition from low cost gyms which had modern equipment but did not have the appropriate coaching expertise. It was agreed that all clubs and especially those promoting best practice need increased promotion.

Steve Sharp – noted his club was quite new, was within a multi-sport facility in a deprived area and that he would appreciate more assistance from the NGB. He also noted he felt the cost of BWL coaching awards were quite high and presented a barrier to his coaches progressing. It was noted that a new team of Regional Relationship Managers were in post with a remit to build and improve relationships with clubs, whilst supporting their growth and development.

Jenny Tong – noted that Welsh Weight Lifting require their athletes to compete in National Competitions and whether this should be replicated in England as this might help attract more spectators. It was noted that the funding situation was different in Wales which helped facilitate this, as leading Welsh lifters still received performance-based funding, which was not the case in England. J Tong felt that all international athletes should be expected to lift in national competitions and that they should also help to inspire children to take up the sport by perhaps carrying out appearances at schools.

Steve Sharp – raised a question about Talent Academies, regional talent squads and the regional youth competition series. It was agreed that more communication/awareness around these programmes would be beneficial for clubs and assist the future development of the sport.

Dr Roberts thanked everyone for attending, added that BWL were currently recruiting non-executive directors and asked anyone with the right skills to apply before the closing date of 9 November 2018.

The meeting closed at 1620.