

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

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 26 October 2023 held via Virtual Conference Facility.

Members Present (virtual attendance)

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|------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| A Kinnear | A Holt | A Bovill | A Smeaton |
| B Kettlety | C Hannah | C Murray | C MacDonald |
| D Sawyer | E Hooker | E Muskett | G Whitlow |
| H Bussey | H Gilmore | J Masymor-Gee | J Tong |
| J Roebuck-Slaney | K Leonard | K Sotherton | L Smith |
| M Lynes | M Hill | M Martin | M Curtain |
| N Hanakan | P Edmondson | R Kechacha | R Tawse |
| R Ashworth | S Southern | S Martin | S Ward |
| T Drake | | | |

Apologies

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| C Deacon | E Halstead | H Flannery | K McPhee |
| L Horvath | N Wood | P Borak | T Whittaker |

Welcome

The meeting opened at 7.00pm. A Kinnear, Chairman of the BWL Board, welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting. It was noted that, for the first time since Covid, the AGM is fully virtual. A Special Resolution was passed at the BWL Extraordinary General Meeting on 27th September 2023 to enable BWL to hold fully legal and compliant AGM online and we will continue this going forward to improve access for the national membership. The AGM was called 21 days after the EGM on 4th October 2023, and all relevant documents were published on the BWL website and circulated to members. No proxy forms were received prior to the meeting. Subject to BWL Articles, A Kinnear declared the meeting quorum. It was noted that there are no resolutions which require a vote.

1) To receive the Annual Report in accordance with Article 135.1

M Curtain, CEO of BWL, presented the Annual Report noting that it had been circulated in advance to membership.

The report was published on 4th October 2023 and M Curtain noted that this covers the first full twelve (12) months of his tenure as CEO at BWL. The strategic focus remains the sport of weightlifting and para-powerlifting as the apex, and weight lifting (two words) at a participation level. Over the last twelve (12) months BWL have made steps to improve relevance within the functional fitness sphere whilst also protecting the performance arm of weightlifting and para-powerlifting.

M Curtain referred to the strategic plan “Stronger-Together” which continues to be driven forward, noting the four main pillars underpinning this – Governance and Management, Exciting Sport, Strong Partnerships and Brand, Marketing and Communications.

Governance and Management

M Curtain highlighted the transformation into an athlete-centred organization by means of the following: four (4) Board meetings held in 2023; updating the Articles to allow for fully online meetings for the benefit of the membership; Finance & Audit Committee continue to meet at least bi-annually; M Curtain and M Martin provide financial updates to the Chair on a monthly basis; formal establishment of the Athlete’s Commission, interim chaired by J Tong, which is to be formally announced by the end of October 2023.

Exciting Sport

M Curtain noted that the last twelve (12) months represented a period of transformation. The Commonwealth Games in Birmingham provided a legacy impact, with three (3) flag bearers representing the United Kingdom; Emily Campbell for England, Micky Yule for Scotland and Holly O’Shea for Gibraltar.

M Curtain referred to the delivery of BWL’s first hybrid competition format, the “Battle of the Barbell” at the Strength in Depth Games held at the Birmingham NEC in July 2023. It was noted that this format is still a work in progress but is strategically linked to BWL involvement with the wider strength and conditioning sector.

M Curtain noted that male / female representation across all forms of competition remains 50/50. M Curtain highlighted that BWL have rebuilt their relationship with the Masters community in the last twelve (12) months and continues to move in the right direction.

Strong Partnerships

M Curtain discussed the BWL 2.0 strategy, which is the transformation of this organisation to make ourselves more relevant in the wider community through branding, marketing, communications, and partnerships. M Curtain noted we have made an impact in new sectors including a new partnership with Virgin Active and the recent Coaching Development Course held in Nottingham.

Finally, M Curtain handed the floor back to A Kinnear.

2) To receive the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023 in accordance with Article 135.2

M Martin, Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of the accounts for the year ending March 2023. M Martin noted a surplus of £22,518 highlighting that the Board and management team wish to put as much money as possible back into the sport. It was noted that there has been a large growth in income to £650k primarily driven by funding from UK Sport and Sport England. Income from membership subscriptions remain constant and there has been a 30% growth in overall income over two (2) years. M Martin highlighted the biggest expenditure as competition delivery highlighting that staffing and administration costs are down. He also advised of the improved position of our reserves.

3) To note that there are no elected directors retiring and seeking re-election and that no other nominations have been received

A Kinnear noted that there are no retiring directors, so no further action needed.

4) To transact any other business that is included on the notice calling the meeting in accordance with Article 135.5

No other business to be transacted as no requests received. The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and attendance and declared the formal part of the meeting closed.

Open Forum

BWL welcomed questions from the members.

Home Nation Representation on the Board

R Tawse asked whether there had been further discussion on the question asked last year regarding Home Nation representation on the BWL Board, even as an observer. M Curtain confirmed that this was discussed at the first Board meeting in 2023 and the Board agreed as a priority to set up the Athlete's Commission and continue discussion around the practicality of Home Nation representation. Since that meeting, the discussion has been deferred and M Curtain and A Kinnear concurred that it will be readdressed at the next Board meeting.

Qualification Criteria

E Hooker raised some concerns around releasing domestic qualification criteria in a timely manner to enable athletes to prepare for competitions. M Curtain agreed that inconsistencies around this were common and fixing it was a priority when he joined BWL. We now have better qualification standards and a more structured approach to the British and England Championships, and we are likely to move towards an invitational based approach. M Curtain confirmed this was still a work in progress as the biggest obstacle is finding suitable venues and securing dates. M Lynes concurred that this remains a focus, with qualifications linked to venues. She also noted her continued work on the 2024 calendar and whilst there are still struggles to secure suitable venues, it remains a priority. MC advised that we are trying to make the sport more accessible, highlighting the recent changes to the TCRR enabling a more relaxed approach to Tier 3 competitions.

Affiliated Club Standards

G Whitlow asked if changes could be made to the affiliated club standard labels to make it more inspiring for clubs, e.g. Gold Standard. H Bussey agreed about having a more engaging title which also conveys the seriousness of meeting the required standards and will look into this.

Academies / Raise the Bar

G Whitlow asked a question regarding how academies are measured as he believed that after looking at age group rankings, the best lifters are still coming from historic weightlifting clubs and highlighted a need to get lifters from newer clubs to national championship standard. S Martin challenged this opinion and noted that clubs such as Pride Performance and Yorkshire Strength are tracking against our pathways and are evening out in terms of representation. S Martin welcomed G Whitlow to call him to discuss in more detail. He also noted that since he started in 2017, there were on average 50 lifters who met standards compared to now where there are 400-500.

Commonwealth Games

G Whitlow raised a question about the Commonwealth Games. M Curtain responded that the state of the CWG remains unstable and more should be known at the CWG Federation AGM on 14th – 15th November 2023. Currently, no public plan has been shared, but there is a possibility that the games may be deferred until 2027. Currently no prospective host for 2026 or 2031 after Edmonton withdrew. M Curtain and S Martin confirmed that BWL will CWG preparations continue on a funding, performance and operational basis.

Membership

R Kechacha asked about current BWL membership levels, as other sports appear to be struggling, and what the membership plan going forward. M Curtain replied that since Emily Campbell won a medal, membership increased. Membership was 3,200 and is currently 3,500 showing a modest increase over twelve (12) months. M Curtain confirmed that the strategy going forward is to implement the one-day membership connected to hybrid competitions with the hope that one-day membership will convert into annual membership which could generate exponential growth. He noted this is still a work in progress with decisions to be made as to how it will work alongside traditional weightlifting competitions. H Bussey confirmed she is looking at driving Tier 4 and below events within community groups and schools and investigating a gym affiliation membership reaching out to the wider strength market. M Curtain advised that he is exploring the option of Tier 5 competitions or a weightlifting 'league' that can be run on training platforms within gyms and clubs.

Barriers to Entry

H Gilmore raised an observation from a coach about increasing levels of paperwork and costs creating a barrier to entry for volunteers and clubs wishing to open, and if the continual raising of standards depressing growth? M Curtain acknowledged the financial barrier to entry is increasing regarding affiliation, insurance, and safeguarding. H Bussey advised that we are working on a new programme for clubs and technical officials, and also reworking the technical official qualification process whereby we could reduce training costs to zero and TO's would just need to pay for a licence. H Bussey also noted that we hope to have funding available to clubs wishing to run their first competition. H Gilmore offered the suggestion of a volunteer-style course that would enable people to access a free resource to get them assisting in the gym. M Curtain offered his commitment to find a solution and agreed with H Gilmore to take the conversation offline. R Ashworth noted that the Football Association offers a general volunteer course for grassroots football, which would be worth considering.

A Kinnear asked for members to submit any further questions to T Drake or M Curtain. A Kinnear thanked everyone for their contribution and attendance.

The meeting was closed at 8.10.