



## BWL BOARD MEETING

### Minutes

**Date:** 8 October 2025

**Start:** 16:00

**Venue:** Virtual

**Present:** Rupinder Ashworth (RA), Matthew Curtain (MC), Phil Edmondson (PE), Sheona Southern (SS), Josh Payne (JP), Nikki Absolom (NA), David Leith (DL), Rebecca Wainwright (RW), Jenny Tong (JT), Mark Martin (MM)

**Apologies:** Kath Leonard (KL)

**In attendance:** Tara Drake (TD), Lisa Smith (LS), John Harrison (JH)

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#### Action points arising from this meeting:

- Haysmacintyre to be formally appointed to provide an independent VAT opinion.
- MM to confirm with auditors that the report will be turned around immediately upon receipt of VAT advice.
- Once advice received, Board to reconvene to approve accounts and confirm AGM date.
- Review and update of Articles of Association (timing clauses and dissolution wording) to be arranged with Phil Edmondson and Haysmacintyre
- Clear deadlines to be set with auditors to ensure submission of statutory accounts before 31 December.
- MC to prepare communications for members once AGM date confirmed, acknowledging delay transparently.
- Review of auditor appointment to be scheduled post-completion of 2024-25 accounts. (Board meeting, 28 January 2026)
- MC to draft written public statement regarding IWF allegations for approval by the Board prior to circulation.
- Board approved public statement regarding IWF allegations to be published on BWL website (actioned 11 October 2025).

- MC to continue liaison with IWF and report any further developments on alleged governance concerns.

- Updated Gender Identity (Tier 3) policy paper to be presented at next Board meeting.

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## **1 Welcome and Apologies**

RA opened the meeting and noted apologies from KL. The meeting was declared quorate.

## **2 Declarations of Interest**

Standing conflicts of interest remain as follows:

NA – daughter is an active member of the weightlifting performance programme.

RW / MC / MM – Trustees of the BWL Foundation.

DL – declared acquaintance with the staff member subject to suspension (item 7); confirmed no conflict of interest.

## **3 Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23 September 2025 were agreed as read and approved and will be uploaded to the BWL website with appropriate redactions for confidentiality.

## **4 Finance**

### Audited Accounts 2024-25 – Update

MC and MM presented an update on the late-arising VAT issue raised by the auditors. MM outlined that auditors had questioned BWL's not-for-profit VAT status at the final stage of audit, citing two specific points: staff bonus payments and annual charitable donations. Haysmacintyre, a specialist firm, had been engaged to provide an independent opinion; initial feedback indicated the matter is low likelihood but high potential impact.

NA and SS both noted that bonuses and charitable donations are consistent with sector practice and should not compromise BWL's non-profit status. JH confirmed that other NGBs operate similarly, and Haysmacintyre are experienced in this area.

The Board discussed auditor performance and noted concerns about timing and communication.



Outcome: Haysmacintyre to undertake a full review and issue written advice. Accounts approval and AGM scheduling deferred pending their report.

Action: MM/NA/MC to oversee appointment and follow-up with auditors once opinion received.

## 5 Date of Annual General Meeting 2025

The Board discussed options for holding the AGM given the unavoidable delay.

PE advised that missing the “seven-month” clause in the Articles posed no legal risk beyond a technical non-compliance. The Board considered whether to inform members immediately or wait until a date was confirmed.

Following discussion between JP, RW and MC, the Board agreed to announce the AGM date once confirmed, acknowledging transparently the delay at that time. The aim is for a December 2025 AGM, ensuring filing before 31 December.

Outcome: Deferred until VAT clarification received; BWL to communicate clearly with members once date set.

Action: MC/RA to draft communication; MM to secure auditor turnaround assurances.

## 6 IWF – Alleged Poor Governance

MC briefed the Board on the recent media reports alleging poor governance practices within the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF). The articles included unverified claims of inappropriate behaviour and comments attributed to senior IWF officials, including remarks suggesting a reduction in female representation on the IWF Board.

MC reminded the Board that BWL has historically been one of the leading advocates for reform within the IWF, having taken a public stance on transparency, integrity, and the need for governance change. Since joining the IWF Executive Board, MC has worked to ensure that BWL's values are reflected internationally and that British representation supports progress and integrity within the sport.

RA acknowledged BWL's longstanding commitment to good governance and noted that the organisation has built significant credibility over the past five years by demonstrating leadership and accountability. She stressed the need for a careful, proportionate response that reinforces BWL's principles without unnecessarily escalating tensions within the international body.



A dark gray, almost black, rectangular image with a thick white border. The image is heavily pixelated and shows a faint, abstract pattern of horizontal and vertical lines, suggesting a distorted or heavily processed photograph of a document or a scene.

### Actions:

- MC to prepare a draft communications line for use in response to any media or stakeholder enquiries, for approval by the Board.
- MC to update the Board at the next meeting, or sooner if significant developments occur.

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## 8 Gender Identity

LS presented an overview of the ongoing work to update BWL's Gender Identity and Participation Policy in line with the latest UK Sport and DCMS guidance on fairness, safety and inclusion. The focus was the Tier 3 participation level (competitive events and qualification standards) and how the proposed policy aims to ensure both inclusion and competitive integrity.

IS summarised that the updated framework would:

- align BWL with UK Sport's Policy Framework for Gender Inclusion in Domestic Sport;
- introduce tiered levels of participation (1 – non-competitive, 2 – developmental, 3 – competitive performance);
- clarify eligibility for transgender and non-binary athletes under each tier;

- emphasise athlete welfare, privacy, and data protection considerations; and
- include a defined medical review and appeals pathway.

Board members discussed the proposal in depth. Key points included:

- RW highlighted the importance of transparent communication to members and athletes, ensuring that policy changes are clearly explained and not open to misinterpretation.
- DL asked whether legal counsel had reviewed the proposed language to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010;
- LS confirmed that initial legal advice had been sought, and further review would be commissioned before publication. PE offered legal services to review.
- JP noted the reputational importance of adopting an evidence-based policy that protects athlete welfare while demonstrating BWL's commitment to inclusion.
- NA stressed the need for education materials and guidance for event organisers to implement the policy consistently at all levels.
- MC emphasised the value of collaboration with the Home Nations and UK Sport to maintain policy alignment and consistency across the weightlifting community.

The Board recognised that this was a sensitive and evolving area and commended LS and MC for their consultative approach.

Outcome: The Board welcomed the direction of travel and requested that a full draft policy and implementation plan, including communication, legal review and timeline for roll-out, be presented at the next Board meeting.

Actions:

- LS and MC to finalise the Tier 3 draft policy and circulate to Board members ahead of the January 2026 meeting.
- LS to obtain confirmation of external legal review and equality compliance.
- MC to coordinate stakeholder feedback from Home Nations and UK Sport for inclusion in the final paper.

JH left the meeting at 18:07

**9      Operational Scorecard – 2025 Q2**

The 2025 Q2 Operational Scorecard was circulated ahead of the meeting, for noting only.

**10     Private Meeting of NEDs and INEDs**

A private meeting was held.

The meeting closed at 17:55.