

BWL BOARD MEETING

REDACTED Minutes

Date: 21 January 2026

Start: 10:00 – 15:00

Venue: SBD Apparel, Unit 2b, Lanchester Way, Catcliffe, Rotherham, S6Q 5FX

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: None

In attendance: Kath Leonard (KL), Tom Whittaker (TW), Stuart Martin (SM), Lisa Smith (LS), Tara Drake (TD), John Harrison (JH), Kate Cook (KC)

Action points arising from this meeting:

Action Item	Owner
Amend and re-circulate minutes from Board meeting on 8 October 2025	TD
Review and update Articles of Association within next 2-3 months	MC / PE
[REDACTED]	■
[REDACTED]	■
Update on potential appointment of new auditor	MM
Diarise Board evaluation of draft Strategic Plan	TD / KC
Proceed with Athlete Committee election	JT
Athlete Committee Operational Review within 12 months	Board
Athlete Committee Structural Review within 24 months	Board
Internal approval of Commercial Contract Management template	MC / JP
Recruitment of Commercial Management Lead (short term contract)	MC / JP
England Committee – Code of Conduct, Skills Audit, member recruitment	JP
Update Board on IWF Constitutional Working Group decision	MC
Gender Identity policy change following Board approval	LS

Provide update on IWF anti-doping re-classification / UKAD procedures for out of competition testing at next Board meeting	LS / MC
Explore GDPR guidance / policy / training for BWL Clubs	LS
Continue work on Risk Register – scrutiny, increased understanding, streamline processes	NA / KL / LS
Risk Register – remove revenue loss and category change as no longer risks	NA / KL / LS
Update following policies following Board approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overseas Competition Results - Overseas Coaches 	MC / LS
Safeguarding [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Safeguarding Case [REDACTED] - [REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
BWL Foundation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proceed with recruitment of new trustees (with fundraising experience) and governance reform - BWL Foundation LinkedIn profile - BWL Foundation rebrand / name change 	RW / MC / MM

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair (RA) opened the meeting, welcoming attendees and noting virtual attendance from SS and LS. No apologies were noted.

John Harrison (Sports Advisor, UK Sport) was welcomed as an independent attendee. Kate Cook (Marketing Strategy Consultant) will be joining virtually to provide an update on the strategic plan and coach education refresh.

Dominic Muhl (Key Account Manager, SBD Apparel) welcomed the Board, providing a brief overview of SBD's ongoing successful partnership with BWL.

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.

3 Minutes from Previous Meeting

RW requested an amendment to the minutes, for clarity on the published statement regarding IWF governance allegations, which was approved by the Board and minutes will be recirculated.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 October 2025 were then agreed as read and approved, to include the above amendment, and will be uploaded to the BWL website with appropriate redactions for confidentiality.

4 Matters Arising from Previous Meeting on 8 October 2025

Action Items from Board Meeting on 8 October 2025	Status
Haysmacintyre to be formally appointed to provide an independent VAT opinion.	Completed
MM to confirm with auditors that the report will be turned around immediately upon receipt of VAT advice.	Completed
Once advice received, Board to reconvene to approve accounts and confirm AGM date.	Completed
Review and update of Articles of Association (timing clauses and dissolution wording) to be arranged with Phil Edmondson and Haysmacintyre	In progress
Clear deadlines to be set with auditors to ensure submission of statutory accounts before 31 December.	Completed
MC to prepare communications for members once AGM date confirmed, acknowledging delay transparently.	Completed
Review of auditor appointment to be scheduled post-completion of 2024-25 accounts. (Board meeting, 28 January 2026)	In progress
Review of auditor appointment to be scheduled post-completion of 2024-25 accounts.	Completed
MC to continue liaison with IWF and report any further developments on alleged governance concerns.	In progress
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Updated Gender Identity (Tier 3) policy paper to be presented at Board meeting on 20 January 2026.	In progress – Agenda Item 12

[REDACTED]

5 Finance

Management Accounts – November 2025

The organisation is facing a worsening financial outlook, with a projected loss of £118,000 for the current year, nearly double the original budgeted loss of £58,000.

- The main cause is a significant downward revision of course income expectations from £500,000 to £336,000, as the anticipated benefits from course package changes will not materialise this year.
- Cost savings were realised partly because the consultant hired to improve marketing and presentation charged only £19,000 of the budgeted £60,000, and other budget areas such as partnership income and travel saw minor positive adjustments.
- Reserves could sustain between 3 to 6 months of expenses, but the current trajectory risks dipping below the minimum reserve threshold of £200,000.

[REDACTED] Discussions to recommend a new auditor will take place at the Finance and Audit Committee (3 March 2026) and be presented at the next Board meeting on 18 March 2026, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

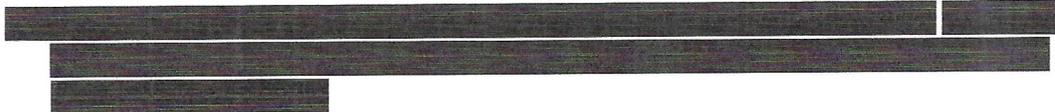
- Commercial income opportunities exist with a healthy pipeline of partnership interests, but the organisation struggles to convert these into immediate cash flow, highlighting operational and structural hurdles.
- Overheads run between £15,000 and £20,000 per month, including insurance (£34,000 annually) and communications (£21,000 annually), which raised scrutiny from Board members.

6 Strategic Plan and Coach Education Refresh

Kate Cook presented an update.

Course revenue shows consistent but stagnant performance, currently tracking at approximately £350,000 for the year, with conversion rates identified as the main bottleneck.

- The team is focusing on improving the website user experience, which is seen as a key barrier to converting traffic into sales, while organic search traffic remains low despite increased marketing efforts.



- Course packaging and value propositions are being clarified, with some courses deprioritised to focus on higher-potential offerings; a sales toolkit including videos and testimonials is being developed to boost engagement.
- A full course relaunch is planned for end of April 2026, alongside a new website launch that will enable better tracking of marketing effectiveness and clearer customer journey insights.
- The brand identity system is set for a refresh to coincide with the website launch, aiming for visual and messaging consistency and flexibility for future sub-branding, especially to support diversification into the strength market.
- New CPD (Continuing Professional Development) courses, including introductory weightlifting and strength conditioning modules, will launch by March 2026, intended to fill the top of the funnel and attract new learners.
- The BWL Foundation Coaching Scholarship Scheme will continue but with a narrower focus and fewer recipients, expected to have minimal impact on course sales.
- Influencer and micro-influencer strategies are being formalized to increase reach and engagement, especially targeting niche audiences like women's strength and fitness communities.
- Need to review course sales targets and explore alternative income streams such as merchandising and membership adjustments to offset revenue declines.
- Data management is fragmented across multiple systems; a new website and potential CRM system are planned to centralize customer data and improve market segmentation and targeting.

Action Point: Board to evaluate draft Strategic Plan / TD to diarise.

7 UK Sport, Systems Masterplan

Item deferred and agreed to be shared following the meeting and questions thereafter.

8 Activities outside the Board Meeting

MC highlighted key activities and meetings undertaken outside the Board cycle, noting ongoing stakeholder engagement and operational priorities.

9 Management Reports

Para Powerlifting

TW presented an overview of para powerlifting performance. Report was shared with the Board prior to the meeting.

Weightlifting

SM presented an overview of weightlifting performance. Report was shared with the Board prior to the meeting.

Operations

The Operational Report was shared with the Board prior to the meeting and was not discussed in detail. Members were invited to submit any questions to KL / MC directly.

10 Reports from Committees

Athlete's Committee

A formal Athlete Committee is being established for the first time, including a Chair and Vice Chair with a clear election process overseen by the British Elite Athletes Association to ensure independence and transparency.

- The Chair will serve a one-year term with mentoring support to build governance skills, while the Vice Chair will sit on the Board as a non-voting member initially, transitioning to voting Chair in 2027.
- The committee aims for broad representation across athlete groups including world class, masters, juniors, and EDI communities.
- The Board agreed on an operational review after 12 months and a structural review after 24 months to ensure objectives are met and to allow adjustments.

- The committee will have procedures to address Chair performance, including the power for the committee to replace the Chair if necessary.
- The formation of the Athlete Committee resolves a prior absence of structured athlete voice, strengthening BWL's governance and athlete-centred approach.

Action Point: JT to proceed with election for Vice Chair of BWL Athlete Committee

Operational review of Athlete Committee to be undertaken within 12 months

Structural review of Athlete Committee to be undertaken within 12 months

Commercial Committee

MC and JP are undertaking a comprehensive commercial reset to better define partnerships, sponsorships, and supplier roles with clear contract management and value segmentation.

- Establishment of three tier model: Partners, Sponsor and Suppliers.
- Contract Management Template drafted – awaiting final internal approval
- Heads of Terms template – completed
- Commercial processes and systems are under review.
- A lack of internal resource has resulted in the need to recruit a short-term contractor as Commercial Management Lead to implement strategy, manage key partnerships and build a pipeline ahead of 2026/27 resourcing decisions.

Action Point: Internal approval of Commercial Contract Management template

Recruitment of Commercial Management Lead (short term contract)

England Committee

JP updated on the England Committee re-set. Terms of Reference have been previously approved by the Board and subsequently approved by the England Committee on 5 December 2025. An updated Code of Conduct was present to members, with feedback to be received by 31 January 2026. JP continues to manage the refreshed Skills Audit, emphasising the need for broader diversity. Full revision of the committee is expected by the summer, with an expectation to go to market to recruit members.

Action Point: Code of Conduct, Skills Audit, member recruitment

Performance Committee

DL provided an update. Performance Committee previously approved an updated WCP Selection Policy, Athlete Agreement and revised selection templates (including injury disclosure, fitness verification, pathway progression) to be implemented in 2026.

A need for improved athlete health and welfare was highlighted and the committee agreed to implement stronger medical compliance, weekly performance check-ins, Nottingham physio pilot and the introduction of a £500 support fund for medical-advised withdrawals from competition.

Pathway progression has improved with the inclusion of pathway trials, youth to senior progression models, international readiness requirements and structured competition endorsement.

A coach education framework and 2026 coaching conference are in planning stages. UKAD compliance has been confirmed, and 2026 testing requirements actioned.

International Relations

MC provided an update on Home Nation and Commonwealth anti-doping responsibility following the proposal submitted to IWF in June 2025 regarding amendments to the by-laws. IWF have confirmed that the by-laws cannot be amended without constitutional change. The proposal will be reviewed by the IWF Constitutional Working Group ahead of 2026 Congress, but no immediate rule change has been agreed. The item remains on the BWL Risk Register.

To mitigate risks, BWL have imposed mandatory anti-doping requirements for all athletes competing internationally from the Home Nations, Crown Dependencies and British Overseas Territories, which has been managed by LS and TD internally.

Action Point: MC to update Board on IWF Constitutional Working Group decision

11 BWL Foundation

RW provided an update.

- **Strategic direction:** Trustees reaffirmed the Foundation's community-focused remit (education, inclusion, schools, clubs) and the need to clearly differentiate from performance-athlete funding while remaining complementary across the sector.
- **Governance reform:** Agreed in principle to move to a more independent model (INED Chair + two independent trustees); recruitment process to begin, with CEO/CFO transitioning to ex-officio roles once implemented.
- **Funding priorities:** Approval to proceed with Phase 2 of the Coach Scholarship Scheme (£12k), plus continued development of inclusion, school-based initiatives and club support mechanisms.
- **Income development:** Explore voluntary donations at membership renewal and competition entry (incl. Gift Aid), philanthropic support with Eleiko, and future fundraising routes; refresh Foundation webpages to clarify grants and eligibility.
- **Reporting & accountability:** Agreement to introduce a proportionate end-to-end monitoring and evaluation framework (outcomes, metrics, reporting timelines and financial oversight) as funding activity becomes more structured.



The Board recommended that the BWL Foundation set up its own Linked In profile, focusing on fundraising. It was agreed that at least one of the new recruited trustees should have fundraising experience.

Action Point: Proceed with recruitment of new trustees (with fundraising experience) and governance reform

BWL Foundation LinkedIn profile

BWL Foundation rebrand / name change

12 Governance Report

LS presented an update on the following:

- **Code for Sports Governance:** BWL remains compliant (since Dec 2024); formal external Board evaluation now due (last in 2020) and being progressed with the Sports Governance Academy; DIAP review nearing completion (end Jan 2026) and aligned to the new strategy.
- **People, welfare & ESG:** Full review of the People Plan underway (culture, benefits, engagement); Welfare & Safety Plan aligned to CPSU safeguarding framework; ESG work completed to carbon-footprint and draft action-plan stage, with Sport England now supporting next steps.
- **Anti-doping:** UKAD assurance compliance confirmed with positive feedback; no new sanctions in 2025; BWL/GBR reclassified by IWF from Category C to B (testing & education implications) – recorded on risk register and under discussion with UKAD.
- **Risk, GDPR & policies:** New quarterly risk register embedded; no ICO-reportable GDPR breaches; major policy updates completed (social media, codes of conduct, event photography/video, privacy), with complaints process and modern slavery policy in final development.
- **Governance operations:** Internal Governance Group meeting quarterly (CEO/COO/LSO/Finance) overseeing safeguarding, EDI, anti-doping, risk and Foundation matters; governance training booked Jan 2026 and ongoing engagement in national governance networks.

Safeguarding

LS & KL provided an update with Board decisions required on some of the following cases:



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

GDPR

BWL have updated the GDPR and Privacy Policy which can now be shared with stakeholders. Internal GDPR training will be rolled out to all staff members via the HR Portal in the next month.

A question was raised around GDPR policies for BWL clubs. It was agreed that this would be good practice.

Action Points: LS to explore GDPR policy and/or training for BWL Clubs.

Gender Identity

Decision required (policy level): Confirm eligibility of transgender men in male category; consider additional criteria (e.g., testosterone treatment), category naming (Male vs Open), and application to higher-tier events.

Required to reduce the gap in current guidance regarding female to male transition, with a live case currently ongoing.

- **Legal context:** Equality Act 2010 protects gender reassignment; Section 195 allows sex-based categories where fairness/safety requires it. April 2025 Supreme Court ruling confirmed "sex"

means biological sex at birth, reinforcing exclusion of transgender women from female categories in gender-affected sports.

- **Position on transgender men:** Trans men (female-to-male) do not gain male-puberty advantage; UK law and Sports Councils guidance support their inclusion in male categories without restriction.
- Current BWL policy gap: BWL policy protects the female category (biological females only) but does not yet formally address transgender men competing in male categories; previous discussions indicate support for allowing this.
- **Operational next steps & timeline:** Registration (Sport80), equipment (15kg bar), weigh-ins/changing facilities, rule updates and communications to be agreed. Target: policy by 31 Jan, operations by 6 Feb, implementation by 13 Feb 2026

The Board approved the policy change.

Action Point: LS to proceed with Gender Identity policy change

Anti Doping

BWL remains compliant with UKAD Assurance Framework.

IWF have recently reclassified BWL/GBR from Category C to B (testing & education implications) – applicable for IWF Junior & Senior World Championships only which have implications for out of competition testing. BWL remain ahead of the curve as we already expect athletes to undertake mandatory ADEL education. There will be significant cost implications for additional testing. Full athlete details are currently being compiled for submission to UKAD. Matter recorded on risk register and under discussion with UKAD.

Action Point: LS / MC to provide update at next Board meeting

13 Risk Register

The Risk Register was circulated prior to the Board meeting. There were no significant risks to report. LS recommends a higher level of scrutiny is required for the Risk Register, to enable better understanding and streamline process. LS is working with NA and KL on this.

RW noted that Revenue Loss and IWF Category Change have crystallised and should be removed from the register and should not be considered as risks.

Action Point: Continue work on Risk Register – scrutiny, increased understanding, streamline processes.

Remove Revenue Loss & IWF Category Change from Risk Register.

14 New BWL Policies – For Approval

The following two (2) policies were presented to the Board prior to the meeting, and both were approved by the Board:

- Overseas Competition Results
- Overseas Coaches

15 Any Other Business

Hall of Fame

The BWL Hall of Fame is currently being reviewed and renewed and will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting.

BWL Board SharePoint

A BWL SharePoint system is currently under development, which will allow Board and Committee members access to historical and current files, enabling more efficient sharing of information. An update will be provided via email in due course.

2026 Commonwealth Games

MC updated the Board accordingly. Accommodation costs will be considered as part of the 2026/27 budget. MC will also explore accreditation arrangements with the IWF.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the BWL Board is scheduled for 18 March 2026.

It was noted that there may be a change to the Board schedule to allow for a meeting in alignment with the British Championships 2026 (16-17 May, Telford). An update will be provided.

The meeting closed at 15:15.