

**Minutes of the**  
**British Weight Lifting Board Meeting**

**Date:** Wednesday 22 July 2020  
**Start:** 13.00  
**Venue:** Video Conference Call

**Present:** Angus Kinnear (AK), Ashley Metcalfe (AM), Neill Wood (NW), Guy Taylor (GT), Matthew Curtain (MC), Mike Irani (MI), P Edmondson (PE)

**Apologies:** Rupinder Ashworth (RA), Kelly Sotherton (KS), Jane Fenwick (JF), Kath Leonard (KL),

**In attendance:** Mark Martin (MM), Tom Whittaker (TW)

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

AK welcomed everyone to the meeting, noted the attendance and that apologies had been received from RA, JF, KS and KL.

AK welcomed PE to the Board, declared the meeting quorate and explained the purpose of the meeting was to ensure the organisation was reacting both effectively and appropriately to the impact of Covid-19. He added the Board's role was to provide a critical lens and thanked everyone for their continued support through these challenging times. He hoped that the next meeting would be a held face to face in more normal times.

AM paid tribute to former GB and England Head Coach John Lear, one of the most influential individuals over the last 50 years in the growth and development of weightlifting in this country, who sadly recently passed away. It was widely agreed that he will be hugely missed by all who had the pleasure to meet him and **AM agreed to explore the possibilities to ensure his impact would not be forgotten.**

**2 Declarations of Interest**

AK reminded members that the proceedings of the meeting were confidential and noted no new conflicts of interest.

### **3 Minutes from Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 June 2020 were agreed as read and **approved** for posting on the website. There were no matters arising that would not be covered in the meeting.

### **4 Decisions Taken outside the Board Meeting**

Sport England 2021/22 funding agreement – AM advised that the rollover funding from Sport England (same amount as in year 4) had been approved by their Board and new agreements had been signed. Although previously approved electronically, **the Board formally approved the decision to confirm the funding of £531,037.**

UK Sport Aspiration Fund – AM advised that variation letters had been signed by both parties. **The Board approved the decision to accept the added support of £46,400 to cover the period 1 July 2020 – 31 March 2021.**

Appointment of Philip Edmondson – Following the earlier electronic decision, **the board formally approved the appointment of PE to the Board for an initial term of 4 years.**

### **5 Minutes and Recommendations from the Sub-Committees**

England Committee – MC noted the Committee met for a second time this year on July 21 and he advised that all members were in attendance. He noted that all members were starting a second term of 3 years in line with the new TOR. The Committee had recognised the long and impactful work of John Lear as well as providing its support and endorsement for the recruitment plan to scope an Athlete Representative for the Committee. The Committee also noted operational reports concerning Birmingham 2022, both in terms of Games planning and delivery and the proposed plans for the preparation of Team England weightlifting and powerlifting. The next meeting was scheduled for September.

There were no further reports from the other Sub-Committees.

### **6 CEO Overview on COVID-19**

AM provided an overview of the operational progress since the last meeting, updating members on the executive's contingency plans since lockdown. He emphasised that all aspects of the organisation continued to be closely monitored and following the initial review of the expected impact presented at the last meeting, a number of immediate changes to the current operational strategy had been implemented, including the acceleration of the digital transformation programme enabling suitable platforms for online educational courses and virtual competitions.

AM outlined a number of course were now available online and virtual competitions had also recently been launched. Feedback and numbers of sales had been encouraging and above forecast expectations. The executive team would continue to add further course and CPD options as soon as possible.

AM also added that the on-going engagement with members and clubs remained a key priority with increased demand for communications explaining the very latest guidance around return to training options and the re-opening of facilities.

AM explained there had been considerable work over the past 4 weeks on current and future funding submission opportunities, including:

- UK Sport Paris Cycle including current Aspiration Funding for the Tokyo cycle
- Sport England Commonwealth Games 2022 Medal Support Programme
- UK Sport Continuity Fund
- Leeds City Council Small Business support

AM also added that both UK Sport and Sport England had recently announced that after 3 years there would be a review of the Code for Sports Governance, with a focus on potential changes around equality, diversity and inclusivity. It was also noted that Sport England are also reviewing their overall strategy with plans to re-launch a new 10-year vision to shape the future and create healthier, happier & physical more active communities.

AM concluded that a number of the previously discussed changes had been implemented since the last meeting and had helped mitigate further financial and operational risks. Cost savings from the executive restructure, the positive financial impact of online courses and a grant from Leeds City Council had boosted the short term financial results, whilst successful annual reviews with Sport England, NSPCC (safeguarding) and the Equality Standards would be covered later in the agenda.

**It was agreed that that the board would continue to regularly monitor the on-going appropriateness of the operational strategy.**

## **7 Finance Matters and Update**

MM gave an overview of the June Management Accounts and the first quarter of the financial year, which showed a modest surplus of £5,500 on turn-over of £320,000. This was £8,000 better than budget and reserves had increased to £135,000.

Management Accounts for June 2020 – MM reported a surplus of £10,000 in June against a budget loss of £7,500.

MM explained this was due to an outstanding month for online course sales which had reached £38,000. MM added that this was most encouraging but when questioned could not commit accurately to longer forecasts at this level as there was no track record to compare online sales with and July's figures were at this stage were positive but still somewhat lower.

MM added that a grant from Leeds City Council of £10,000 would also boost income in July and ensure that with the cost savings associated with the restructure, it meant that the forecasted loss for the year remained at £57,000, which was in line with Board expectations and ensured that reserves remained available for future years.

MM shared a diagram detailing the key financial risks and opportunities facing the organisation over the next 12 months. In comparison the previous month it highlighted a reduction in risks, although uncertainty remained around revenues for courses and membership and a potential rise in new opportunities with the prospect of lockdown easing.

MM highlighted that cash flow would remain positive throughout the two-year period as the majority of income (grants, course and membership revenues) is received in advance of any expenditure.

The forecast for 2021/22 remained unchanged at this stage, still showing a loss of £54,000.

NW raised a question about staffing costs in 2021/22 and MM responded that these remained as per the new structure but was predicting a small amount of support from the BWL Foundation.

AM added that the forecasts did not currently include any additional funding that may be generated from performance-based opportunities currently being explored.

AK added it was positive to see an improved position for the first quarter and the Board **agreed to accept the revised 2020/21 forecast, as well as the 2021/22 forecast.**

## **8 Operational Reports**

### Performance

Return to Training - TW presented an amended update on the return to training process for both Weightlifting and Para-Powerlifting. He advised that all elite athletes were still set up to train from home and latest advice had been shared with them via online case conferences. During this period, training programmes had been set with ways to minimise injuries and monitor athletes daily with more online coaching, mobility and planning.

Ongoing engagement with stakeholders – Loughborough University, EIS and UK Sport remained work in progress with return to training planning and frameworks fully aligned to the latest Government guidance and other key experts and partners.

All documentation /procedures that needed to be put in place and signed off before the team can return to Loughborough had been further updated to ensure the health and well-being of lifters, coaches and support staff remained the number one priority. During Phase 1 it had been decided not to return due to social distancing rules which would need to be adhered to. In Phase 2 there was a need to address further changes and further consider athlete options. It was felt weightlifting could return and be of value, i.e. being able to have face to face coaching from 27 July, but powerlifting would be delayed until September 1, as individual health concerns were still paramount and several actions still needed to be addressed.

**The Board agreed to support our Return to Training and Return to Work strategies and proposed timescales.**

World Class Programme (WCP) for Para Powerlifting – TW noted that plans were being adjusted due to the new date for the Para Games in 2021 (Aug 24 – 5 September) with a new qualification window set ( 1 November – 27 June 2021). There are currently three lifters in the top six of the rankings (two others 7<sup>th</sup>) and the medal target remains 1-2. Individual updates on various athletes were provided. He noted all the athletes were currently fit and healthy and training from home and were making good progress ahead of more rigorous evaluations scheduled for December. He reported that there were still 7 athletes on the Confirmation programme and 3 on the National Development Squad but it was challenging to attract and recruit larger numbers at present.

Regarding the Phase 3 of the Paris WCP funding submission, he reported work was progressing positively with a new deadline of 16 October for final submissions.

GT asked if there was an opportunity to reassess any submission post Tokyo and TW explained that Games time performances, alongside a further developed academy cohort would be critical ahead of any future Annual review processes.

GT enquired as to whether TW had managed to monitor performances or progress from other competitive countries and TW responded by saying the impact of the pandemic had varied around the world but he was expecting the totals required to win medals to have increased with an extra year's preparation.

Following a final question from GT, TW confirmed that the WCP budget was on track and sufficient to ensure all lifters would have the best opportunities to qualify.

#### Olympic Lifting and Talent Pathway Update

AM reported that a provisional team and coaches had been selected for the EWF Juniors and U23 competition on Finland in October, although he added that it was not guaranteed to take place due to the on-going impact of the pandemic.

As regards Tokyo 20/21 AM added that Emily Campbell was recovering well after recent surgery and was now back in light training.

AM outlined that the 4 leading female athletes remain on-track with opportunities to qualify in-line with previous reports although there were still outstanding requirements for each of them to satisfy the necessary ranking positions.

AM confirmed BWL had been advised by UK Sport to pursue a Progression focused submission for the Paris cycle and beyond, which would allow BWL to lay the foundations for a future World Class Programme without expectations to win medals to maintain funding post the Paris Cycle.

AM also confirmed BWL had submitted proposals to Sport England for CWG22 medal support and it was hoped to hear confirmation of funding by late August.

The Talent Pathway remained on track with training and support transferred online.

Looking forward to CWG 2022, AM re-emphasised the depth of the potential England squad with potential opportunities for a similar number of medals as achieved in 2018 or more. Squads, coaches and support teams would be announced and engaged as soon as Sport England release further information on their medal Support programme.

GT enquired as to what funding was available to qualify for Tokyo and did it include male and female lifters? AM explained UK Sport had kindly extended their Aspiration Funding which meant those with opportunities still to qualify would receive support for their preparations. However, he added that unfortunately no male lifters were in a realistic position to qualify.

#### Sport Development and Coach Education

In KL's absence, AM presented her report on operational performance focussing on the recent team restructure, which had been required to achieve previously approved budget savings. It had seen headcount reduced by two but the removal of three positions (one moving to cover performance requirements), whilst two other historic vacant positions were not being filled in the short term. AM confirmed that with new learnings and efficiencies around the new digital offering, the structure was appropriate and would not jeopardise delivery of projects or the ability to achieve our revised stakeholder targets.

AM covered the proposed return to work plans for September onwards, consultations and the monitoring of Government advice, ensuring the health and well-being of all was paramount and the office environment was Covid secure.

#### **The Board agreed with the proposed return to work plans and the restructure.**

AM then covered further operational updates, including developments and progress relating to Workforce, Competitions, Communications, Relationship Managers and Governance matters.

It was noted that there had been several positive developments with online products for courses and competitions and an increased number of external communications implemented to maintain engagement with the membership. BWL had achieved the Equality Standard Intermediate Level and the annual review with the CPSU for safeguarding had produced a "Good" rating.

AM confirmed that Sport England had confirmed a year 5 funding rollover at the same levels as 2020/21, which was most positive and allowed the organisation to plan for the following year more confidently despite the impact of the pandemic. He also confirmed that BWL's annual review had been positive with the organisation achieving on or above Sport England milestones. There were no issues raised.

MC asked if the English Championships were forced to be cancelled in 2020, would they be re-scheduled for early 2021 or later in the year. AM responded that venues were difficult to confirm at present and all options were being explored including a possible Festival of Lifting at Liverpool in June 21.

MC added that with the Birmingham 22 CWG approaching, it may be advantageous to hold the English early in the 2021 calendar and as a final selection qualifier in the first quarter of 2022.

## 8 Board Matters

UK Sport Paris Funding Submission – AM explained the two options available for BWL in regard to any potential Paris cycle funding. There was the traditional World Class Programme route, focussing on medal potential and delivering strict targets or the opportunity to explore Progression Funding – a new UK Sport option for sports that do not have current WCPs and require investment in infrastructure, environment and pathway development. AM added that UK Sport had recognised the Paris medal potential for 4-6 leading lifters and part of any new submission would include specific short-term support for this group. BWL had been requested by UK Sport to confirm its preferred strategy and **the decision was approved by the Board to proceed with a Progression Funding submission as if successful this offered the best potential over the next 12 years.**

BWL Privacy Policy – **The Board approved the minor amendments around broadening the scope of the policy to include webinars and other online platforms.**

Complaints Log – AM noted there were no new complaints since the last meeting and no outstanding issues to report from any previous issues raised.

Risk Register – The register remained unchanged from June, with those risks identified as higher due to the impact of pandemic still highlighted and being continually monitored.

AM repeated that the Register would be thoroughly reviewed by the Audit Committee ahead of the next Board meeting in September. AM to update further at the next meeting.

Operational Scorecard – The June report had been issued with the Board papers and key points had been covered earlier in the meeting under the operational report. There were no further questions

## 9 Any Other Business

BWL Foundation – AM confirmed that the Governing document was awaiting submission to the Charity Commission once sign off had been received from Companies House allowing BWL to use the word “British” in its title for the Foundation. Once received the application could proceed and AM would keep the Board updated at the next meeting.

IWF/McLaren Report – AM confirmed that the internal review agreed at the last meeting would commence imminently and the Board would be updated once completed.

BWL New concept competition – AM thanked RA for her support and presentation which had been distributed prior to the meeting. The Board agreed that the latest iteration portrayed an exciting opportunity and would hopefully appeal to a much broader and more diverse audience. **The Board approved further work to be undertaken and presented at the next meeting to include details of a pilot event once competitions are permitted under Government guidance.**

## **10     Date and Venue of Next Meeting**

To be agreed – AM to forward date options for the September meeting, which AK hoped may be face to face rather than virtual. AM also reminded the board that in line with its Articles, the AGM accordingly needed to take place prior to the end of October.

The meeting closed at 3.15 pm.