

Minutes of the
British Weight Lifting Board Meeting

Venue: The Tennis Centre, Loughborough University LE11 3TU
Date: Thursday 21 March 2019
Start: 1.00 pm

Present: Patrick Roberts (PR), Ashley Metcalfe (AM), Rupinder Ashworth (RA), Jane Fenwick (JF), Neill Wood (NW), Matthew Curtain (MC) – until point 9g, Kelly Sotherton (KS) – until point 9b.

In attendance: Kath Leonard (KL), Mark Martin (MM), Tom Whittaker (TW) – until point 7, Sarah Davies (SD) – until point 9c, Ali Jawad (AJ) – until point 9c.

1 Welcome and Apologies

PR welcomed everyone to the meeting, noted apologies had been received from Guy Taylor, Mike Irani and David Knaggs and declared the meeting quorate.

2 Declarations of Interest

PR reminded members that the proceedings of the meeting were confidential and asked if there were any conflicts of interest; to which none were declared.

3 Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Board meeting held on 18 December 2018 were agreed as read and **approved** for posting on the website. There were no matters arising.

4 Decisions Taken outside the Board Meeting

PR informed members that the recommendation from the Audit and Finance Sub Committee to dissolve the two dormant companies (WCL and BWLE) was approved electronically (9 responses received by the deadline of 11th March, all affirmative). MM has been asked to action this accordingly prior to 31 March 2019.

5 Minutes and Recommendations from the Sub-Committees

SD advised that the Athlete Representatives did not receive any of the paperwork for the meetings and PR responded that this would be discussed later in the meeting as part of the stakeholder strategy.

PR confirmed that the new Sub-Committees had now been established and asked the Chairs to provide updates.

Nominations Committee – KS reported that the Committee had recently interviewed three candidates for the position of Chair and two further interviews were scheduled. She advised that they were strong candidates, but a decision could not be made until the interview process had been concluded. It was hoped the new Chair would be appointed prior to the next Board meeting. PR thanked the Committee for the time and effort with this task.

Performance – KS advised that she had only just taken over as Chair of this Committee and at the recent meeting there had been discussions about preparing for Tokyo and selection policies reporting that it would be essential to provide clear and timely information for athletes. She noted that minutes of the meeting would be circulated in due course and that the TOR would be reviewed before the next Board meeting. It was noted that ad-hoc meetings were held to discuss team selections.

Commercial and Development – RA reported that the first meeting of the new group had been held on 5/2/19 and minutes and a written update had been circulated to the Board. She advised that the purpose of the initial meeting was to understand priorities and targets for 2019/20. The group had acknowledged that sponsorship income had not been very successful recently, despite trying different approaches, so the need to look at developing sustainable income streams for membership and courses was a priority going forward and this would require a membership review and commercialising of the course offer in order to grow both of these areas. Proposed changes to the TORs for the group had been circulated in advance and the changes were **formally approved by the Board**. It was noted that the group had a large remit so it would be necessary to be very focussed to ensure success.

Audit and Finance – NW reported that the group had met and the primary discussion was around the budget for 2019/20 and the challenges associated with this as stakeholder funding continues to reduce. Other matters discussed included the forecast for this year, Risk Register, IT security, GDPR, presentation of financial data to the Board and the reserves policy, noting a meeting had been set up with the HSBC to discuss investment options.

England – MC noted that group had discussed events and competitions especially with the run up to Birmingham 2022. There was a discussion around hosting the Commonwealth Championships in 2021 which the Board were keen to explore further. Finally, he advised the TOR would be discussed at the next meeting.

6 High Performance, UK Sport and Talent Update

TW presented his report on the annual objectives and progress being made towards them in relation to the World Class Programme (WCP) for Para Powerlifting. He gave updates on the milestones, current rankings and expectations of key individuals; and provided an overview of the UK Sport mission review including strategy, systems, pathway. He also shared the findings of the most recent athlete culture health check, noting that BWL is moving to quarterly surveys

AM presented a report on Olympic weightlifting matters, in particular the England Talent Pathway which was now performing well and in line with stakeholder expectations. He gave an update on recent performances at the IWF Youth Championships in Las Vegas where all five lifters had achieved PB. He noted the largest ever squad was being sent out to the European Seniors Championships in April – 9 athletes had been funded through the UK Sport Aspiration fund with the remaining self-funded.

7 Sport Development, Coach Education and Sport England Review

KL presented her report on operational performance including developments and progress relating to Workforce, Competitions, Communications, Partnership and Relationship Management, Equality, Safeguarding and Anti-doping. It was noted that stakeholder milestones were continually monitored and currently the organisation had received positive feedback and was on track to meet end of year targets. There was a discussion over the current transgender policy and PR agreed to ask Mike Irani to review this in light of recent developments and present an updated draft at the June Board meeting.

TW left the meeting **and the order of the agenda was changed at this point.**

9 Board Matters

- a) ***BWL Stakeholder Engagement Strategy*** – A number of legacy documents had been circulated in advance and PR asked if they were still relevant. It was agreed that the Executive would update the legacy stakeholder mapping and conduct a gap analysis against current stakeholder engagement activities to present at the next Board meeting.

This was followed by a detailed discussion around engagement with (elite) athletes. Both SD and AJ felt strongly that more attention should be paid to the athlete voice, and that the Board would benefit from a recently retired athlete being appointed; MC reminded the meeting that the organisation needed to remain athlete-centred. It was agreed that the need for greater athlete representation should be captured in the new Board Recruitment Policy (rather than the Articles of Association). After further discussion, it was agreed that the possibility of establishing an athlete sub-committee should be investigated; and that formalisation of ToRs for the current Athlete Reps be postponed pending a decision on this sub-committee.

- b) ***BWL Membership re-admission following suspension for ADRV*** – The paper which had been circulated in advance was reviewed and it was noted that there were no guidelines from UKAD to follow, although athletes were generally allowed back into the sport in accordance with WADA rules on completion of any period of suspension. AM noted that the BWL Articles do allow for members to be suspended/dis-allowed if they bring the sport into disrepute; however, concerns were expressed about the potential for appeals to CAS. The Executive were asked to enquire what steps other NGBs are employing, source appropriate legal advice (if required) and report findings to the next Board meeting.

KS left the meeting at this point.

- c) ***Management responses to points raised at AGM 2018*** – A paper had been circulated in advance and AM highlighted the key responses to the wide variety of questions posed at the meeting. It was agreed that a number of the points needed further exploration and any proposals should go to the C&D Committee for consideration.

AJ and SD left the meeting at this point.

8 Finance Matters and Update

MM presented a summary of the financial performance up to January 2019 noting that: course sales were ahead of budget, commercial income remained disappointing and that there had been some savings in staff costs due to vacant positions earlier in the year. He explained the simplified reporting method of future management information which was being proposed including a net profit “Bridge Diagram”. The Board approved the proposed structure for future presentations. NW confirmed the key requirement was in a very simple manner to understand the current financial and the expected year end position. PR congratulated the SLT for the financial achievements of the year.

MM gave an overview of the three budget options being proposed for 2019/20, following discussions at the Audit and Finance Sub Committee. JF noted that two of the budgets were still very optimistic especially as new staff would need to be recruited in order to achieve the increased income streams. There was a discussion over the type of role/skills required, highlighting some of the discussions which were being held by the Commercial and Development Sub Committee. The Board agreed to **approve** Budget Option C, which aims for a small profit based on concentrating on the development of education and memberships. It was agreed the Executive would continue to monitor and review further and keep the Board informed of any developments.

9 Board Matters (continued)

- d) **UK Sport Culture Health Check** – It was noted this had been covered in detail earlier in the meeting as part of the presentation with point 6.
- e) **BWL Articles** – AM noted that draft revised Articles had been circulated in advance. He highlighted the key changes and there was a discussion on the balance of elected versus independent directors: AM agreed to follow up with the solicitors to ensure that the wording correctly captures both the need to remain compliant with the Code for Sports Governance and the desire for improved athlete/member representation. The new Articles were **approved**, subject to these minor changes; and it was agreed to schedule an EGM around the British Championships, in order to present the articles to the membership for their approval.

During the course of this discussion, the Board also agreed that it would be appropriate to publish details of the attendance of Board members in the Statutory Accounts from 2019-20 onwards.
- f) **BWL Board Recruitment Policy** – Following the discussions around Board composition (ensuring that there was an appropriate balance between elected and independent directors) during the previous agenda item; the proposed policy was **approved**.
- g) **BWL Matters Reserved for the Board** – The document was reviewed and no changes were recommended.

MC left the meeting at this point.

- h) **BWL Employees' Handbook** – AM advised that the handbook had been reviewed, rewritten where necessary and approved by the organisation's employment law advisors. It was noted that full policies would also be made available to all staff (as referenced in the Handbook). The Board **approved** the new handbook and it was noted this would be effective from 1 April 2019. NW asked MM to clarify whether there was a need to make a provision in the accounts for accrued staff holiday.
- i) **Board Self-Assessment** – The updated Board skills matrix, based on the self-assessment undertaken in Jan/Fen 2019, was presented and discussed in detail. PR thanked all members for their input. It was noted that an external audit would be carried out in the new financial year: AM was asked to explore potential providers and report back to the Board in June.
- j) **Complaints Log** – AM presented the current log noting that one complaint was being investigated.
- k) **Forward Agenda** – The document was reviewed and no changes made. NW requested that electronic diary invites for Board meetings be sent out to the Board.

10 Risk Register Update

The Board reviewed the latest version of the risk register, noting that it had been reviewed by the recent Audit & Finance Committee and only minor amendments had been made since the last meeting.

11 CEO's Update

The latest scorecard had been circulated in advance and no queries were raised. AM showed the current organogram noting that the line management of the finance team had been transferred to KL (from MM). NW asked that MM investigate the possible impact of IR35 in relation to contractors.

12 Any Other Business

PR asked for an update on the proposed discussions with Weightlifting Wales. AM advised that there was ongoing regular contact with Weightlifting Wales but no agreement yet to a date for formal discussions. It was agreed to continue to seek meaningful discussions on a more durable long-term relationship.

13 Date and Time of next meeting

7 June 2019 – time to be confirmed. The meeting will be held at the Ricoh Arena, Coventry in advance of the British Championships. The meeting is likely to be followed by a Dinner and an evening session of Lifting as part of the British International Open competition.

The meeting closed at 6.05 pm.