

Minutes of the
British Weight Lifting Board Meeting

Date: Wednesday 16 September 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), Rupinder Ashworth (RA), Kelly Sotherton (KS), Jane Fenwick (JF)

Apologies: Philip Edmondson (PE)

In attendance: Kath Leonard (KL), Mark Martin (MM), Tom Whittaker (TW), Ali Jawad (AJ), Sarah Davies (SD)

1 Welcome and Apologies

AK opened the meeting, noted the attendance and that apologies had been received from PE. AK welcomed everyone to the Board, declared the meeting quorate and explained the purpose of the meeting was to review the financial and organisational robustness in light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, review the annual accounts, consider stakeholder funding cycles and to set up a strategy planning group.

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 22 July 2020 were agreed as read and **approved** for posting on the website. AM advised that following the tribute paid to John Lear at the last meeting, a project had commenced to establish a Hall of Fame to recognise key individuals involved in the sport. There were no other matters arising that would not be covered in the meeting.

4 Decisions Taken outside the Board Meeting

AM advised that the following decisions had been taken:

- i) Approval to support the nomination of Sarah Davies to become part of the IWF Athlete Commission and she was congratulated on her appointment as Chair of this group
- ii) Approval of the nomination of Mike Irani for the IWF Anti-Doping Commission
- iii) Amendments to the articles of the BOA to allow an extended term for Directors due to the associated Covid-related difficulties of holding election
- iv) Agreement of the terms of reference for the BWL review following the McLaren investigation into the ex-IWF President, which will be undertaken by PE.

5 Minutes and Recommendations from the Sub-Committees

McLaren review – AM provided an update from PE regarding his review, noting that he had concluded his primary interviews and considerations with a first report/recommendations expected by the end of September.

Audit & Finance – Minutes of the recent meeting had been circulated and NW provided an overview from the meeting. He reported that the audit report had been considered and the year had ended in a healthy financial position, the audit had been carried out by new auditors which had resulted in a clean audit, there were no issues regarding BWL as a going concern due to current levels of reserves, future funding and despite the challenges the positive start this financial year. He noted that the risk register had been reviewed and that this was dominated by Covid-19 related risks as expected during the pandemic. Unfortunately, the establishment of the Foundation had been delayed by the Charity Commission who had advised the objectives may need to be more focussed and they had raised concern over the proposed name. These matters were being addressed and information would be re-submitted before the deadline of 13 October. In the interim, NW was investigating potential other legal structures for the Foundation. Finally, he noted that a review was ongoing regarding BWL's employment contracts and performance management structure, which included future proposals for the 2021/22 appraisals and bonus scheme.

Commercial – RA thanked the Executive Team for their efforts through the pandemic and noted the difficulty in engaging with the membership at present especially with no ability to run physical competitions which was impacting commercial developments.

England Committee – MC reported from the latest meeting, noting the Committee had congratulated Sarah Davies on becoming Chair of the IWF Athlete Commission, support had been offered to BWL regarding the new strategy development with two members offering to assist and agreement had been made to recruit an athlete representative onto the group. He also noted that a Birmingham 2022 focussed marketing plan would be forwarded to BWL to enable a centralised plan to be developed. Finally, it was confirmed that Sam Coffey had been appointed Technical Delegate by the IWF for Birmingham.

International – GT noted that there was nothing to report from this group.

6 COVID-19 Update and Operational reports

Covid Update

AM informed the Board that the impact of Covid-19 continued to be closely monitored and whilst there was still some concern, the organisation had adapted appropriately with the headcount being reduced by four, development of an online education offer which had achieved positive results although it was noted it had been difficult to generate positive engagement with the virtual competitions. He advised that the Sport England funded project with Winners was continuing to review BWL's current CRM system, the potential of its databases, including cleansing and analysis and other digital channels. AM confirmed the current levels of grant funding which had been secured, including Sport England, UK Sport Aspiration and a new grant from UK Sport's Continuity fund to assist with the organisation's future digital transformation. Funding to assist Sport Scotland had also been achieved. The application for UK Sport's Paris cycle funding would be finalised before the deadline of 16 October. In addition, funding had been submitted to Sport England for Commonwealth Games Medal Support and to UKS to cover further requirements needed to remain compliant with the Code for Sports Governance and outcomes were awaited. AK confirmed the Board's support for the steps taken to ensure all funding submissions were completed in a timely and professional manner.

Performance Update

TW provided an update on the progress of athletes returning to training noting many of the WCP athletes had now returned from home training to the Loughborough facilities and that all the athletes remained healthy and well. From a performance perspective, he noted that all athletes were in good shape and on track whilst Olivia Broome was currently training and performing above expectations and had positively moved into the potential medal zone alongside 3 of her colleagues. However, he noted there were still a lot of Covid-related health and well-being uncertainties around the Tokyo Paralympic Games which the BPA and other key stakeholders were closely monitoring. He advised that the culture health checks remained important and that the team were continuing to engage with this process. Finally, he gave an update on the future UK Sport funding strategy.

Olympic Lifting and Talent Pathway Update

AM provided an overview of the plans to prepare Team England lifters to deliver success at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth games and provided an update explaining Sport England's expected performance objectives for the Games. He confirmed that the Talent Pathway was continuing to develop and grow in line with expectations and considering the current difficulties. SD asked if there would be a female coach to accompany the Tokyo team as the previous staff member had left BWL. AM responded that it remained a real priority to continue to provide opportunities to upskill talented female coaches and ensure that all International teams were supported appropriately with high quality coaches and support teams.

Operational Update

KL provided an update on the proposed return to work plans for mid-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. KL 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. There was a discussion over the challenges of delivering physical competitions during 2020 and the Board agreed that virtual competitions were appropriate at present.

7 Finance Matters and Update

MM gave an overview of the July Management accounts noting a positive result for the month due to high online course sales (£30k) and a Covid-support grant from Leeds City Council (£10k) resulting in a surplus of £5k against a budget loss of £14k. The year-end forecast remained at a loss of £56k due to the uncertainty of future income generation opportunities. He also provided details of the current and forecast reserves, bank balance, cash flow and financial risks/opportunities. KS asked if a best-case scenario could be quantified but it was felt this was difficult with the number of unknowns at present. MI asked if the Home Countries would be eligible for IWF Covid funding and AM agreed to follow this up.

MM reported that the audit had been completed smoothly by the new audit firm with a year end position of £27k profit. **The Sedula audit report, draft statutory accounts and annual report were reviewed and approved by the Board.** The accounts will now be presented to the AGM for final approval.

8 Board Matters

Risk Register – The updated risk register was reviewed and approved.

Complaints Log – The current complaints log was noted.

BWL Foundation – This matter had been covered in the earlier update (Audit & Finance Committee update).

CEO Report – The Operational Scorecard for August was reviewed and no comments were raised.

Forward Agenda – The forward agenda was noted.

BWL Policies – The updated policy review document was reviewed and approved.

UK Sport/Sport England's Future Funding – These matters had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Governance Action Plan – The action plan was reviewed and approved.

AGM Confirmation – Oct 2020 – There was a discussion over the date and format for the forthcoming AGM. It was proposed to hold the meeting virtually during the evening of 15 October, providing the Articles allowed for a virtual meeting. It was noted that members needed to be informed three weeks in advance of the agreed date. **Following a point raised by RA, AM agreed to check with PE the legality of hosting a virtual AGM.**

BWL New Concept Competition – A paper providing an update on the proposed new concept had been circulated and the Board accepted the recommendations in conjunction with the proposed future strategy (see point 9).

BWL Review post publication of IWF/McLaren Report – In the absence of PE, AM had provided a brief update on the review earlier in the meeting.

9 BWL Future Strategy

RA reminded the Board that the new concept competition was aimed at an extended audience but it had proved difficult to move this forward due to the current funding, resources, knowledge and Covid situation. It was thought that accessing the continuity fund might allow external support and expertise to be engaged to assist in driving the project forward.

RA noted that that now was the perfect opportunity to start working towards a new BWL strategy as the current plan was due for review and recommended that a Strategy Design Team be established to progress this. She further noted the need to be creative whilst embracing digital technology, aligning to Sport England objectives, tackling inequalities, meeting performance objectives and growing the core sport in a much more diverse and broader market.

The Board approved the recommendation to form a specific working group.

NW volunteered to support RA and AM and **RA agreed to draft terms of reference** for the group. AK noted that the group would need to be focussed and pragmatic whilst being ambitious and not be afraid to challenge convention. He encouraged the rest of the Board and in particular the sub-committees to engage with the process when asked in order to ensure the project moved ahead in a timely manner.

10 Any Other Business

There was no other business raised.

11 Date and Venue of Next Meeting

It was noted that the AGM would be Oct 15 and it was agreed to meet after this in December. AM to propose dates.

The meeting closed at 3.10 pm.