



Welcome to this latest edition of our newsletter.

I would like to start with the positive news from one of our key stakeholders, Sport England, who confirmed late last Friday that BWL would, alongside other sports, be receiving an extra year of funding to cover the 2021/22 period. With much financial uncertainty around all sports at the moment, this is excellent news and means we can confidently plan for further growth and development of our sport at grassroots and community level.

The last 12 months has seen the sport continue to grow and offer a more diverse audience greater opportunities at all levels. I am delighted that our competition entries are very close to an equal gender split, whilst 37% of our membership is generated from what the Government describe as deprived post code areas. We will continue to ensure that Weightlifting and Para-Powerlifting are sports and recreations that are easily accessible and open to all and continue to play a key role in helping communities stay not just more active but fitter, healthier and stronger.

Last week also saw a further Government statement around a Return to Training for elite athletes. BWL are continuing to review the guidelines issued by both the UK and Home Nations to better understand the impact in relation to community clubs, gyms and our lifters in general. We are currently drawing up more detailed plans, guidelines and best practice advice for our elite lifters and community weightlifting and para-powerlifting clubs taking into account the advice issued by the Government(s). The health and safety of lifters and coaches will remain our number one priority.

We will be looking to share these plans with our respective Home Nation Boards for agreement and publish further advice when we have it. In the meantime, we are keen to remind you all that the current easing of the restrictions does not permit any return to community lifting in clubs or gyms. We ask you to respect at all times the guidance around social distancing and train only at home.

Finally, in these uncertain times, it has never been more important to keep physically and mentally well and BWL are fully supportive of this year's Mental Health Awareness Week. This year's campaign focuses on the power and potential of kindness – something that is prevailing all over the world during these challenging times. It is a great opportunity to explore the positive ways we can boost our mental wellbeing and show support for those around us who are going through a stressful or difficult time.

More details can be found at <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>

I hope you and your respective families remain safe and healthy.

Ashley Metcalfe

BWL CEO