

THE BRITISH JUDO ASSOCIATION ('BJA') ('ASSOCIATION')
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON SATURDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 10AM
GEORGE KERR SUITE – BJA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE
UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON, WALSALL CAMPUS, WS1 3BD

Present:

Dr George Kerr CBE	President	GK	Chair
Dr Colin Draycott	Senior Vice-President	CD	
Mick Leigh	Vice-President	ML	
Richard Barraclough	Vice President	RB	

Council Members:

Bill Berry MBE	Judo Scotland	BB
Peter Blewett	Judo England	PB
David Rance	Northern Home Counties	DR
Harry Holt	North West Area	HH
Marion Woodard	Southern Area	MW
Jim Crompton	UK Armed Forces	JC
Matthew Clempner	Police Sport UK	MC
Rowena Birch	Vice President	RB
Alan Stanbra	Yorkshire/Humberside Area	AFS
Roger Houston	Midlands Area	RH
Robin Newett	Northern Ireland Judo Federation	RN
John Thacker	Royal Navy Judo	JT
Steven Fraser	London Area	SF
Darren Dean	Welsh Judo Association	DD

British Judo Association:

Ronnie Saez	BJA Chair	RS
Andrew Scoular	BJA CEO	AS
Joyce Heron	Deputy Sport Director	JH
Justine Lynch	Notetaker	JL

Apologies:

Tony Sweeney	Vice President
Brian Davies	Vice President
Dave Allen	Western Area
Denise Oates	Eastern Area
Stephen Milne	Armed Forces
Jim McKenzie	Army Judo
Stephen Watson	Navy Judo
Nadia Minardi	London Area
Garth Illingworth	Northern Area
Colin McIver	Sport Director, BJA

1 Welcome

The President welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 November 2019

The Minutes from the previous meeting on 2 November 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate report of the meeting.

Proposed: RB

Seconded: AFS

3 President's Remarks

The President commented that this was an extremely exciting year with the Olympics and Paralympics coming up in July and August. GK also passed on praise to RS and AS for the work they were doing in making sure the athletes are getting the best possible support and preparation for them.

GK then handed over to RS to present his report.

4 Chair's Report

RS opened by informing members that during the last few months there had been an external review of both BJA's finance and governance procedures. This formed part of the funding regime from UK Sport (UKS) and Sport England (SE) and all NGBs would be undergoing the same review. Whilst this review is to ensure that systems are fit to purpose, it is also being viewed as a developmental and learning process. Initial feedback has been very positive and BJA is in fact being used as an exemplar.

RS continued with some more detail around the feedback. They have been carried out by a company called BDO, who will submit their final report to UKS in the next few weeks. Initial feedback on our finance processes is good to excellent and on governance it is satisfactory to good. The lower rating on governance is probably because it has taken longer to roll out to the Areas, but this is being worked on now. The overall summary is that there are no major issues, the Association is in a good place for bidding for funding for the next cycle 2021-2025. This bidding process is already underway with Phase 1 complete and working on the Phase 2 at the moment.

Also, running concurrently to the above review, there are Board evaluations being carried out. Again this is to adhere to UKS and SE Board governance guidelines. These evaluations have to be carried out every 4 years. This is being carried out by Sport & Recreation Alliance and once all the evaluations have been completed, they will summarise the results and these will be presented to the Board at the April Meeting.

RS then moved on to Director succession planning explaining that next year may present a challenge as there are 5 Directors coming to the end of their terms – 2 Elected, 2 Home Counties and 1 Independent. This equates to almost a 50% change in the Board and then the following year, after the Commonwealth Games, PB will also be leaving the Board. RS said there was a positive to this too as it was an opportunity to bring in fresh faces but does mean the Board loses expertise at the same time. RS added his own first term also comes to an end next year. RS welcomed members to come forward with any suggestions for candidates that might want to become involved from the Areas.

With regard to the Strategic Plan, RS informed that work had already begun on this for the next 4 years and this will also feed into the funding submissions. Andy Reed OBE (AR) has been engaged to assist as facilitator for this. AR previously worked for S&RA, was an MP and is currently in networking with the Government. AR is also familiar with UKS's strategy which will be very helpful in ensuring our plan aligns to theirs.

Next RS updated on the England Area Constitutions advising that we are currently trying to bring all 9 Areas aligned and all operating from the same constitution. This has taken some time but good progress is being made now. There are 3 Areas already signed up and 1 more is imminent. Slight tweaks have been allowed to accommodate local circumstances but they are almost identical. This is good for our progress towards complying with the Governance Code. Also, it allows us to look at what Areas are doing well and disseminate best practice, share ideas, potentially run interworking courses, joint gradings etc.

GK thanked RS for his update and welcomed any questions.

DR enquired if there were still any Areas voicing concern. RS responded that there are no major concerns. It has been discussed at the England Judo Commission Meeting where recommendations have been raised. These have then gone back to the Areas for discussion. AS added that at the last Northern Home Counties Area Meeting, some changes had been made to the constitution document and these have modelled the constitution for all. North West and Yorkshire and Humberside Areas have their AGMs scheduled for March and North East is imminent. MW informed that the Southern Area AGM is scheduled for 14 June but the constitution is approved in principal.

RBi then raised a query with regard to the high turnover of Board members - whether this was likely to happen again; if it something that needs to be addressed; if the terms can be varied and if there was an option for changing terms for the Directors leaving next year. RS responded that it is possible to vary the terms for each Directors and this would be looked at so that it doesn't happen again. With regard to next year, it was not possible as they would have reached the end of a second term, so total of 8 years, and it is more difficult to extend than shorten. Also, PB will have served 9 years but that is with special dispensation because of the home Commonwealth Games. AS added the only way is to phase the next terms.

There being no further questions, GK requested AS to update on the Quarter 3 Business Plan.

5 Business Plan Quarter 3 Review

AS advised that he would just give a summary of the highlights.

Paris Submission: Phase 1 is complete and Phase 2 is being worked on by Performance and Finance and will include a full budget. The deadline for submission is 28 February. UKS have requested very in depth information. With the growth of the Performance Pathway, 31 funded athletes and 40 full time at the Performance Centre, the submission is for £12m funding which is £4m more than for the last cycle. Although, we are not expecting to be awarded the full amount.

Strategic Plan: As RS had already mentioned, we have engaged AR as a facilitator for drafting our next Strategic Plan. AR is also working on the SE strategy and with England Swimming. Although the SE strategy has not been released yet, we do know it will be aligned to UKS. Also, it is likely that the funding will be at the same level as the last cycle with potentially more money for governance and safeguarding as these are two areas they are focusing on.

Budget 2020-2021: First draft budget had been produced. Last year there had been a deficit budget but this had now been fully repaid and it was expected there would be £250k in a separate reserves account by the end of the financial year. The Association is doing well and financially stable.

History Project: Work on the History Project has commenced. A Professor in Sports History from Wolverhampton University is working with us on this and is currently putting together a bid to submit to the West Midlands Heritage Fund. Walsall Council have already agreed to provide space for a Judo Museum. Also, a history website will be developed. Hoping to tie this in with the Commonwealth Games with an exhibition/fan zone.

International Relations: With funding from UKS to develop the Commonwealth and International Relations, Joyce Heron and 2 athletes had visited South Africa in January for a training camp.

Events: Initial discussions have taken place around hosting a Grand Prix but this is unlikely to be until 2023 and 2024 prior to the Paris Olympics. As hosts, you are able to enter 4 not 2 athletes into each category. The IJF has insisted this would have to be in London and UKS have tentatively said they would have £0.5m for each event.

Junior European Cup: Successfully secured a Junior European Cup for 6 & 7 June. This would be held at the university and followed by a training camp. There will be unlimited entry for Home Countries and will be good to have athletes from other countries here too. Also, the Talent Programme is now aligned and sits under Performance.

Digital Transformation: Digital is now a key focus and we are working closely with SE and Seven Leagues, digital specialist company.

Membership: As of 31 January, membership is slightly ahead of where it was at the same time last year. Currently 500 away from year end target but should get there in the last 2 months of the financial year. The balance between renewals and new members has slightly changed – got better at attracting new members but need to look at retention. Also, looking at how to improve the male/female ratio of 76%: 24%.

Gradings: Slightly down at same time on last year but fully expect this to pick up in the next 2 months.

Clubs: The rebates paid to clubs have increased and receiving rebates on gradings. At the moment clubs are grading at 1.4 per person per year. Need to increase this as it is a good retention tool. The issue is that when members get to a certain age they switch from Mon to Kyu Grades as they are cheaper and this potentially misses 6 Mon Gradings. JH added that at the moment they only change belt colour every 3 Mons so we are going to introduce changing the belt colours with every grading, which will hopefully be implemented in the next 6 months. This makes grading more of an event. RS commented that this already happens in Scotland and has made a significant difference, now up to 1.6 gradings per year. The belts have definitely helped with motivation.

Finance: Income is slightly down but this is due to phasing. The income and expenditure is balancing. Also, some money has been kept back for the Olympics. Expenditure is better than had been expected, despite not receiving the £70k funding from SE for Destination Judo (DJ). DJ is now performing better and is expected to break even at the end of the financial year and expecting an £80k input from DJ into the budget for next year. The Commonwealth Judo Championships were very successful and made a surplus. Also, we had budgeted for break even at the VI Grand Prix in April and it now looks like this could make a surplus too. Investment has been made into purchasing equipment for events which creates a saving on hiring costs. Income from membership is expected to peak for the remainder of the year. Generally in a good place financially with a £450k reserve target which is being worked towards and is held in a separate bank account.

Marketing: Our product range on JudoStore has been increased and is generating income. It is now possible to personalise purchases for clubs and Performance, and delivery is within 3 days. Also looking at bamboo eco friendly materials. Back patches can also be ordered and personalised. DR commented that this is something that the younger members would like. Also looking at making the membership pack more interesting and promote the benefits scheme as membership fee can be recouped using this. We are currently putting a lot more content on social media including athlete videos and looking at interviewing original coach and club once the Olympic and Paralympic Teams have been announced. We have also budgeted for a new staff member, a Digital Officer as this is where we see the most growth and we will potentially get SE funding for this. Applications for Athlete Volunteer Appearance events had to be closed after 2 days due to the volume of applications received.

Performance: Very much on target with only one area reported as amber which is with regard to the extension at the university. Got a bronze at the Paris Grand Slam so back on track, just the juniors who did not get the expected results. Also, starting to see some strong boys coming through. With regard to Tokyo preparation, every athlete is being tracked and looking to be able to get enough athletes qualified to enter a team event. The girls are well on track but we do have the challenge of 4 <63kg girls going for one place and 2 <70kg. Hoping for 8 and possibly 10 athletes to qualify which would put us in the top 6 countries for number of athletes qualified. In VI, Chris Skelley is currently ranked No.1 and we are expecting him to medal. Expect to have 4 VI athletes qualified in total.

Safeguarding Review: This will be published on the website along with the recommendations. SE have given positive feedback on the review and have just touched on some developmental aspects but no major issues. Also, now cases are being recorded on a SE centralised system with free access to Sport Resolutions.

To sum up, AS said it had been a challenging year but we are now building a platform to better support clubs and members.

GK thanked AS and opened the meeting up for questions.

AFS referred back to the History Project and advised that he had the original minutes from KATA meetings held in the 1950s which he would be happy to pass to Head Office. AS thanked AFS and added that we do also have original minutes and memorabilia in Head Office and that Bath University were allowing us access to their collection. The plan is to digitalise all this information.

CD commented on the athletes visiting clubs and that he thought this was a great move forward.

6 Any Other Business

MW enquired why referees have to pay for exams but competition officials don't. Action: JH to look into this and revert.

GK concluded the meeting by mentioning that as this is an Olympic year, the Awards Dinner this year should be an extra special event. Adding that the venue has been changed to West Bromwich Albion Football Club which brings it more central and closer to both the Centre of Excellence and Head Office. The date is still to be confirmed but it will be either Saturday 7 or 14 November. GK asked that members keep both dates free and that he hopes it will be well supported by all the Areas.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 11:30am.