

FINAL

THE BRITISH JUDO ASSOCIATION ('BJA') ('ASSOCIATION') MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER MEETING SPACE 23, SCARMAN CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK, GIBBET HILL ROAD, COVENTRY, CV4 7SH

Present:

Council Members:

Rowena Birch	President	RBi
Colin McIver	Vice President	CMcI
Brian Davies	Vice President	BD
Rick Kenney	JudoScotland	RK
John Gibson	Northern Area	JG
Fiona Chan	Southern Area	FC
David Rance	Northern Home Counties	DR
Andy Moss	Police UK	AM
Jim MacKenzie	Army Judo	JM
Stephen Watson	Royal Navy	SW
Raymond Taylor	Eastern Area	RT

British Judo Association:

Andrew Scoular	Chief Executive	AS
Gerry Gualtieri	Chairman	GG
Justine Lynch	Executive Officer (Minutes)	JL

Apologies:

Dr Colin Draycott	Senior Vice President
Mick Leigh	Vice President
Tony Sweeney	Vice President
Richard Barraclough	Vice President
Nadia Minardi	London Area
Sarah Newbury	Midland Area
Dave Allen	Western Area
John Malkinson	Southern Area
Matthew Clempner	North West Area
Seth Birch	Yorkshire & Humberside Area
Darren Dean	Welsh Judo Association
Robin Newett	Northern Ireland Judo Federation

1 Welcome & Apologies

RBi welcomed everyone to the meeting, adding that she hoped to see them at the other events taking place during the day and evening.

Apologies noted as detailed above.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting on Saturday 17 August 2024

RK advised of two amendments: JudoScotland be changed to one word and "Feed" be changed to Feet on page 5. With these amendments accepted, the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting on Saturday 17 August 2024.

RK also raised amending "Chairman" to Chair through the minutes.

POST NOTE: RBi has raised this with GG.

Proposer: SW
Seconder: JM

3 President's Remarks

RBi updated that she has been involved in the England Areas Review that is currently underway, the purpose of which is to understand how the Areas are operating/being received and if they are still fit for purpose. RBi added that the main themes coming out of this were a passion for judo and a commitment from people, as well as how to make the Areas function more efficiently. This review would also input into the strategy discussions that have commenced. RBi also advised that members were going to be contacted to gather their feedback. RBi wished her thanks noted for the Area Chairs and Committees for their input into this review.

RBi then advised that she had been lucky enough to attend the Paralympics in Paris with Steve Pullen who had been instrumental in getting VI Judo into the Paralympics, first featured in the Seoul Paralympics with 6 countries represented, this had now grown to 43 countries participating. RBi also noted huge congratulations to medallists Dan Powell and Chris Skelley. RBi concluded that this same movement was starting with Adaptive Judo which is seeing significant growth and invites more people to join the judo family.

AS commented that it was great to see the number of people from the other international federations speaking to Steve, especially coaches from the Brazilian team whom Steve had mentored.

4 Chairman's Update

GG advised that it had been an extremely busy last few months with this being his first Olympic cycle as well as attending his first ever Paralympic Games which had been a fascinating and humbling experience across all sports. GG added that we generally only see the spectator side of the Games, however there is a less glamorous side for the athletes as they work hard to qualify. GG had also had discussions with other NGBs where it has been mentioned that judo is one of the hardest sports to qualify for the Games as you have to be in the top 18 in the world, whereas with other sports, qualification is gained on hitting times etc, therefore all of the fighters that did qualify deserved congratulations.

GG then moved on to what comes next, which is a time of "reflect not regret". He has been travelling around gathering feedback as well as attending two online member sessions and one with coaches that have fighters in the Performance Pathway. One of the main points raised has been that grassroots judo doesn't feel connected to British Judo and Performance, however ultimately everyone wants the same thing, which is what is best for judo in Britain. There will now be a lot of work carried out with a review of the Paris Cycle with a focus on the next two cycles through to Brisbane 2032. GG added that he had discussed this with Katherine Grainger, Chair of UK Sport (UKS), who fully understood our situation having gone through a similar experience with British Rowing where they had to reset after the 2016 Games.

GG concluded that he had enjoyed his first year in the role of Chairman, which he sees as an honour and pinnacle of his life in judo, but there is still a lot to do in terms of engagement with the judo family, which RBi is supporting.

5 Business Plan 2nd Quarter 2024 to 2025

The Business Plan was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

6. Chief Executive Update

AS's presentation had been circulated prior to the meeting with additional detail provided on some points noted below:

- Currently working with Walsall Council Chief Executive and the new Vice Chancellor at Wolverhampton University on a new multi-sport facility. Next step is to employ a Programme Manager which the Council are funding. Discussions are also taking place with the new American owners of Walsall Football Club who are in the process of purchasing land around the football club to develop. Any new development will include a dojo, strength and conditioning facility, office space and accommodation. This is a long-term project but will be factored into the upcoming strategy discussions;
- On an international front, we are working closely with the French Judo Federation with some opportunities for collaboration re club twinning. Also, keen for us to be involved in a non-EJU team event so no rights fees and utilising a different scoring system. GG added there had also been discussions around sending more of our cadet and junior athletes to France for training;
- We have also been successful in several appointments to EJU Commissions as well as Ronnie Saez remaining as a member of the EJU Executive Committee;
- A new Affiliation Agreement has been drafted by Brabners Solicitors for the British Judo Council (BJC) and Amateur Judo Association (AJA). The main focus of the new agreement is to ensure that both the BJC and AJA are aligned to our 3 Step Safe guidance which is about safeguarding judo. GG added that this is a fundamental goal about setting judo standards regardless of the membership body. Meetings are being arranged to discuss and finalise the agreement. GG added that he has a good relationship with Bernard Richmond, Chair of BJC, and he is fully committed to working with us and working together;
- The Nominations Committee and Board have signed off new appointments to several Commissions and once the Byelaws and Commission Terms of Reference have been finalised they will be published on the website;
- At the AGM there are some minor amendments to the Memorandum & Articles to be ratified but nothing contentious, mainly around allowing us to move to more digital communication in regard to the AGM and Annual Report which helps with sustainability and a potential cost saving of approximately £6.5k;
- Staffing changes in the Marketing & Communications Department, Jarryd Dunn has resigned and appointed a graduate Tom Llewellyn who started in mid October;
- Received an indicative funding figure from UKS for the next cycle with the final decision due to be announced on 13 December. Also, following the recent budget, UKS have been awarded an additional £9m from DCMS. It is thought that some of this will be for Athlete Performance Agreements, however we will be applying for some additional funds for coach development;
- Sport England (SE) funding for systemic and governance elements runs out in two years, however Talent has received a small uplift. Also, with the Commonwealth Games 2026 being in the UK, there may be some additional funding available for talent development in the run up to the Games. With there only being 10 sports in these Games, there will be some high profile exposure on terrestrial TV and at UK time. We will also look at events such as pre and post camps around the Games;

- On events, we will be hosting the European Junior Cup again in 2025, however moved to July from June and we have been awarded the slot that Berlin used to host and hoping for higher entries. Also was good to see a European contingent participate in the Adaptive Judo event in Wales recently. We have been asked by the EJU to host a European Open Senior, however costs could be prohibitive but it was agreed at the Board Meeting the previous day to do further research into this. Finally on events, the Commonwealth Judo Association had approached us in regard to hosting their 2026 competition, however again costs for hosting this mean it is not possible. Apologies have been given to the Chair, RK.
- The new website has been launched. There were a few expected teething problems but most have now been addressed. So far, there has been positive feedback across social media but keen for further feedback. The next phase of the website will include a member only sign in section;
- In regard to our relationship with NEST, we have now hit the financial threshold which means that our charges have reduced by 1/3rd. We are also about to finish some of the phase 2 elements of improvements, including introducing direct debits and being able to add gradings in bulk has now been added.

AS then requested feedback from the Council on the new format for today by way of including other events alongside the AGM and Awards Dinner and any suggestions for other items to be included.

SW commented that including the Club Accelerator Day and Masterclass had generated more interest. DR added that with Kata gaining more popularity, a Kata demonstration could be considered.

FC commented that she found the NEST club system brilliant and had received a rebate in light of the fee % being reduced. AS added that if we reach the next threshold with NEST, there would be a further reduction in fees. Also, NEST are onsite today and looking to engage and explain the system to clubs. FC remarked that there needs to be clear communication that the NEST system for clubs is different to the CRM as people are connecting it and it is tarred by the issues there were with the CRM when first introduced.

AS then continued with his presentation:

- The Kanji Awards programme is proving successful. CMcI added that new resources have been completed for Mon & Kyu up to green belt, with brown and blue belt due to be completed by January. These are now more child friendly, digital and interactive. Also, now the syllabus is consistent across all four home countries. Positive feedback has been received on social media;
- Following the Games, athlete roadshows are being organised;
- There are now only 8 clubs that do not have a Club Welfare Officer (CWO) which equates to only 198 out of 24k members not covered. As of this week, clubs without a CWO will not be able access their member information, this was an action agreed at Board. GG added that the clubs were given sufficient notice of the consequences and had an extension from April to October to comply;
- The Child Protection in Sport Unit review has been carried out and we received a "Met" status which is the highest standard and important for our funding;
- 3 Step Safe Coaching Register has been launched which allows anyone to send in a request to check that a Coach is fully qualified etc;
- Club Finder has been launched;

- On income, both Membership and Gradings are tracking behind budget but are ahead of last year. General trend of being quiet over the summer months but expecting income to pick up in the latter part of the year;

DR queried whether there were conversations taking place on how to increase the membership and gradings income. AS responded that it will be included in the strategy discussions, however the thinking is that we have reached a glass ceiling and need to look at how we promote judo and engage more people, what other initiatives such as Finding Your Feet we can do and how we work with clubs to generate members. Also, introducing direct debits should address some of the issues with gaps in membership renewal. AS added that SE statistics state that there are 83k people doing in judo in England and we have just under £25k members excluding BJC and AJA so keen to explore where these people are. BD added that one issue is that if you do not wish to compete or grade there is no need for a licence.

DR then raised the issue of some clubs not wishing to grow and not being available 5 days a week. AS responded that we are conscious of this as well as the issue that some clubs lost their venues to other sports after Covid. GG added that there are multiple elements to this and the Young Leaders, who joined the Board Meeting the previous day, had highlighted leveraging judo through schools. Also, need to address the lost connection with the Areas and explore hosting more team events.

In response to CMcl's query in regard to the ratio of senior/junior membership, AS responded that it is currently 60% below the age of 16.

AM commented it is about how to attract more membership and increase income, adding that the French model has been to integrate with Brazilian Ju-Jitsu (BJJ). AM added that BJJ has now been realised as a Police sport, SW confirmed this was the same in the Armed Forces. AS responded that the French are now having to separate the two disciplines under direction from the IJF. However, we can look at collaborations and are currently working with Wrestling.

CMcl commented that judo membership is unlikely to grow via collaboration with BJJ or Wrestling as it is more common for participants in those two disciplines to come to judo to learn to throw and then return to their sport, and therefore better use of time and resource to reach out to those already doing judo that are not members.

There was then general discussion around attracting new members;

- More involvement in schools
 - Potential zero cost depending on where they are in the country
 - Obtaining data on where people are that are doing judo and targeting the prospecting
 - Clarity on membership levels (AS added there is membership rationalisation work being carried out currently)
 - More communication on the benefits, pushing the value proposition of membership
 - Using judo values as a selling point
 - Look at the reasons people start judo
- Introduced new competition software, Judo Manager, which we received funding from SE for;

- Been good to see the Paralympic fighters on various shows following the Games. The new cycle has already started and medals won at Grand Prix;
- Large group of fighters in Japan for 3 weeks;
- Starting Performance Paris Cycle Review;
- Working with Adidas and Team Elite on new clothing ranges. Clubs will be able to order from Team Elite and have their branding on clothing;
- Waiting to receive the new anti-doping guidance.

RBi thanked AS for his update and confirmed there were no further questions.

7. Notification of people who have passed away

RBi advised of the people who had passed away listed below, adding that a minute's silence in their honour would be observed at the AGM later same day.

John Dearden	Tom Cotton
Pete Salisbury	Brian Daley MBE
Harry Hobbs	Paul Johnson
Jonathan Goodwin	Phil Smithson
Marc Aguilar	Dennis Penfold
Harry McIntyre	Andy McKenna
Ian Grant	

8. Any Other Business

AM had submitted an item prior to the meeting in regard to Adaptive Judo, however advised that he had resolved the issue prior to the meeting.

BD advised that they had been looking at succession planning within the British Judo Trust and with that in mind, Peter Blewett has joined the Trust with a view that he would take over the mantle from BD in due course.

BD then outlined the support that the Trust has given to both VI and Adaptive judo judoka. Also, that every judoka that has won an Olympic or Paralympic medal over the past 5 years has at some point benefited from support from the Trust. GG added that there have been discussions around setting up benevolent donations and about the tax benefits of personal donations. There is a need to think about how to publicise this and use the Trust as the conduit. GG added that it is not possible for commercial sponsorship to go through the Trust. FC suggested using electronic Christmas donations, possibility of sponsoring a player directly or raffle at the Awards Dinner.

FC then raised female dan grades and tabled a request to get half points if you fight someone of the same grade or lower as there is a lack of players with the same grades to fight. CMcl agreed with this suggestion. RBi commented that the same issue has been raised by male veteran athletes also.

FC also raised the issue of female Senior Examiners, whereby she was aware of some females expressing an interest in taking on this role but have been advised that they can't.

With there being no further items raised, RBi thanked everyone for their time, hoped they were able to enjoy the other events taking place and looked forward to seeing people at the Awards Dinner that evening.