

**FINAL**  
**BRITISH JUDO ASSOCIATION (BJA)**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY 17 JUNE @ 10:00 VIA ZOOM**

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Gerry Gualtieri, Chair	(GG)
	Neil Fletcher	(NF)
	Diana Hunter	(DH)
	Paul Ajala	(PA)
	Garth Illingworth	(GI)
	Delia Wright	(DW)
	Russell Brown	(RB)
	Rebecca McCreath	(RM)
	Shaun Davies	(SD)
	Ben Quilter	(BQ)
	Marc Preston	(MP)
<b>APOLOGIES:</b>	Alex Slade	(ASI)
<b>IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	Andrew Scoular, Chief Executive	(AS)
	Justine Lynch, Executive Officer	(JL)
	Sarah Walker, Membership Manager (in part)	(SW)

No	ITEM	ACTION
<b>77.1</b>	<b>WELCOME &amp; APOLOGIES</b>	
	GG welcomed everyone to the meeting, and advised that apologies had been received from ASI due to work commitments.	
<b>77.2</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF ANY INTERESTS/CONFLICTS</b>	
	Members were reminded of the need to declare their interest in any items requiring a decision and to remove themselves from such decision making.	
<b>77.3</b>	<b>ANY MATTERS FOR ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	There were a few matters raised for AOB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Step Safe Guidance - MP</li> <li>• Safeguarding Update - RB</li> <li>• Board Structure and EJU Executive Committee – GG/AS</li> </ul>	
<b>77.4</b>	<b>MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON TUESDAY 22 APRIL 2025</b>	
	The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 22 April 2025 were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting. <b>Proposer: DW</b> <b>Seconder: NF</b>	
<b>77.5</b>	<b>ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS (NOT INCLUDED ON THE AGENDA)</b>	
	AS advised that updates to actions were in red on the Actions List.  Key updates highlighted were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low Hanging Fruits (LHF) agenda item to be moved to August (NB: now 3 September) Board Meeting when Karen Roberts (KR) will be able to attend</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive Directors has been tasked with adding tactics to the top level strategy to feed into the separate online Board Strategy Meeting</li> <li>Full list of current policies has been reviewed. Will be rationalising the policies and removing policies that are more guidance documents</li> <li>There will be some British Judo branding displayed. The launch event last year was very successful and this year there will be 2 events with 8 clubs participating. First event is on 28 June and second will be in mid October. This also provides a good opportunity to link in with the French Judo Federation as it is based on their event model</li> </ul>	
<b>77.6</b>	<b>RISK REGISTER</b>	
	<p>AS advised that the majority of the risks remain stable.</p> <p><b>Risk D2:</b> Reduced now that CIMPSA have announced that they will not be increasing the requirements for coaches.</p>	
<b>77.7</b>	<b>CHAIR'S UPDATE</b>	
	<p>GG advised that he had been keeping fairly low key as he had been drawn into tactical discussions during the transition, and that he would be focussing on strategy, development and supporting AS. GG added that there had now been key appointments concluded in the Performance Team, with the Assessment Day for the Performance Director appointment taking place the following Tuesday.</p> <p>GG updated that himself and AS had attended the IJF Congress, which has worldwide attendees. It had been an extremely professional event, however a surprising lack of transparency around budgets and finances, there was just a very high-level update. GG had also spent a considerable amount of time talking with the Japan Judo Federation, as well as other federations and attended a dinner organised by Lisa Allan, IJF General Secretary, so from an international relations perspective, it had been an extremely positive event.</p> <p><b>Home Nations Updates</b></p> <p><b>Welsh Judo Association:</b> SD advised that he had met with GG and thanked him for the warm welcome to the Board.</p> <p>SD continued that the report from Tom Hughes, Chief Executive, was to be taken as read and highlighted a few key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There had been a strategy refresh day with Board members, staff, Sport Wales and consultants. At this, they picked out key points that they wanted to work on. Following on from this, working groups for Participation, Performance and People had been set up with membership from Board and staff. Timelines for deliverables would be set over the next 12 to 24 months;</li> <li>There had been a governance review facilitated by Sport Wales, who completed a good report for us that would go to the Board the following week. Main items were how they can improve and what systems can be put in place;</li> <li>The Performance Commonwealth Games plans are accelerating and looking at what they are going to be doing up to the</li> </ul>	

	<p>qualification period. MP added that JudoScotland had 12 places confirmed for the Commonwealth Games but had been advised that they could apply for more in January to March 2026.</p> <p><b>JudoScotland:</b> MP advised that the report from Judith McCleary (JMc) was to be taken as read, with key points highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Membership was up in the first quarter by 19% to 8850 which is an all time high, however does still look like the end of year target will not be met. Direct calling to lapsed members etc, had a 29% conversion rate with 103 from 355 called renewing;</li> <li>• The Board portfolio review has been completed and now working on a buddy system between the 10 directors, Chair and Vice Chair. Worked with a consultant Sandy Hodge on this, with ethos of “you can work with the Directors you have or write the dream”. JudoScotland opted for the dream and have linked current directors as closely as they could to this but going forward will look for people they want to fill the roles, commencing after summer;</li> <li>• JudoScotland have now taken over control of the Performance group, MP thanked AS and GG for their assistance in the negotiations for this. However, it has resulted in losing one member of staff but JudoScotland did do exceptionally well to retain the remainder of the staff, given the cutbacks imposed on other sports. Now they will be looking at the system and structure to suit JudoScotland best going forward. Also, MP is visiting the Austrian Judo Federation as they carried out thorough research on a semi-centralised system and MP would feedback following this visit.</li> <li>• On finances, they are not looking great. At the last JudoScotland Board Meeting they had discussed that they had been poor at introducing annual increases so from now on would be looking at small annual increases.</li> <li>• 3 Step Safe is being enthusiastically embraced by JudoScotland with the Board being unanimously behind doing a 6 months promotion programme in order to get the clubs to buy into it. From 1 January 2026, following this promotion programme, it will be made clear that if clubs are not compliant, they will not be able to operate. GG added that the Scottish programme had been managed by SportScotland which made it hard for JudoScotland to manage the standards, and that this was a good step towards even closer collaboration with British Judo with the strong support from MP and JMc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Judo England:</b> GI updated that he had met with the England Area Chairs on Saturday 17 May in relation to the outcomes of the review. It had been a positive meeting with some engagement and feedback had now been received from those Chairs not in attendance at the meeting. Eight key recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition from Commission to Board Model</li> <li>• Regional Reform – Reduction to 5 Regions</li> <li>• Board Structure – Appointed, Not Elected</li> <li>• Regional Core Roles</li> <li>• Financial Governance</li> <li>• Regional Delivery Offer</li> <li>• Administrative Support</li> </ul>	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talent Pathway Alignment</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: AS and GI to meet to discuss the key recommendations from the England Areas Review</b></p> <p><b>Northern Ireland Judo Federation:</b> RB advised that there had not been any major changes and that there were still ongoing issues with the Irish Judo Association. There have been meetings, however no resolution and advised that the NIJF will only get P1 funding (grassroots) not P2 (talent). Also, the NIJF have put in a Freedom of Information request to Sport NI as there are rumours that the P2 funding will go to Ulster Judo.</p> <p>There has also been an implication made that the NIJF is not an inclusive organisation with no Catholics or diversity in membership. The NIJF have had to conduct a deep dive into their membership and have made an assumption on religion based on postcodes. They have also had to ask the Board to declare their religion to Sport NI. The female to male membership ratio is as expected and normal.</p> <p>RB added that there had been another issue following that meeting, in that an individual had posted on social media that NIJF had lost their funding within 30 minutes of the meeting. There are thoughts around who could have provided this information and it has raised queries from parents and there have also been complaints from the parents to Sport NI.</p> <p>RB concluded that they now have 3 actions to complete which are almost done and there was a further meeting with Sport NI the following week.</p> <p><b>Action: RB to provide an update following the meeting with Sport NI and organise an offline meeting with AS and GG if he should require support and/or for AS and GG to meet with Sport NI</b></p>	<p><b>AS/GI</b></p> <p><b>RB</b></p>
<b>77.8</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UPDATE</b>	
	<p>Key updates from AS detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jude Taylor, UKS Sport Advisor, who had attended the last Board Meeting, had been promoted. Our new Sport Advisor is Kevin Ferguson who would be visiting our offices on Friday and we would also do an online introduction to GG that day;</li> <li>Met with the EJU President and discussed the possibility of hosting the EJU Congress in 2026;</li> <li>We will be reviewing the UKS Code for Sports Governance internally, no review planned by UKS. Also, asked for a heads up on when we were likely to be reviewed by BDO as this was now due;</li> <li>Performance Director Assessment Day taking place on Tuesday 24 June. Three candidates (down from 7 in the first shortlisting meetings), 2 with judo backgrounds and one from another sport with a very strong performance background. Two of the candidates may require relocation but that would need to be confirmed if they are successful. NF added that he had been involved in the initial shortlisting round, and all 3 candidates were different but had something to offer, confirming that he would be happy with any of them being appointed with the main</li> </ul>	

	<p>question being around how they would build the team and identify any shortfalls. AS continued that there will be questions around culture, however we have now appointed Jenny Close as Performance Manager, who is tasked with looking at the culture as she led this at UKS. GG added that the new strategy is around technical development and culture is a complimentary skill. Also, GG had been at the National Training Centre recently, and whilst there was still some uncertainty, there was a good energy and good training sessions taking place;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International Combat Centre meetings are continuing with interest from Gymnastics, Fencing and Boxing;</li> <li>• We will be looking into setting up our own preparation camp for Los Angeles;</li> <li>• There is extensive ongoing collaboration work which includes the CRM systems and a data and digital working group with UKS;</li> <li>• Couple of actions from the last Council Meeting were for Rowena Birch (RBI) to also film a video around expected behaviour at events and RBI is also going to meet with us to discuss the British Judo Trust governance and application/due diligence process;</li> <li>• The AGM this year will be at the University and there will also be a two day technical conference with guest coach, Shinji Hosokawa;</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: AS to organise a meeting with the Home Nation CEOs to discuss the funding of British events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In regard to the cases currently with SR, it is hoped that one would be coming to conclusion after a scheduled meeting the following week, however both are now dragging on, and as stated by GG, this meeting would class as new evidence and therefore restart the SR clock at 30 days to update. AS added that he has raised this with Sally Munday as it has been 4 months already, also that we were not the only NGB with this issue.</li> <li>• There are ongoing works in collaboration with the University on the redevelopment of the campus</li> <li>• The Judo Commission is being reviewed following a meeting of the Commission Chairs and it will have more of a focus on being a consultative body for judo related matters. GG added that a key part of the transition was to have clarity around devolved responsibility for the commissions, therefore functional commissions will have devolved responsibility to report straight to Board and technical judo issues will go to the Judo Commission.</li> <li>• In regard to an athlete to athlete complaint, there was a side referral to the IJF but this was discussed with GG at the IJF Congress who are happy for SR to make any recommendations.</li> </ul> <p>AS then sought support for the purchase of a new minibus that we have received additional funding for and would save between £10/£15k over the quad budget.</p> <p><b>Decision: All Board members were in agreement with the purchase of the new minibus, providing expected saving of between £10/£15k</b></p> <p>11:10 to 11: 20 Break</p>	AS
77.9	CRM PRESENTATION	

	<p>11:20 SW joined the meeting</p> <p>AS introduced SW, Membership Manager, and lead on the CRM. SW would demonstrate how the CRM looks from a member point of view and also touch on the system synchronisation project in progress with NEST.</p> <p>SW shared her screen and gave Board a run through of the system.</p> <p>Questions/comments that arose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaising with NEST on a lapsed member monthly report and might be part of the synchronisation project and would include a lapsed report being sent to the club coach</li> <li>• Reminders are sent in regard to membership expiration and direct debits as well as for courses and the coach cycle to auto renew</li> <li>• User issues are raised to the Membership Team for the BJA system but if they are a NEST client, they can go direct to NEST</li> <li>• Synchronisation project is to link the BJA system to the NEST system</li> </ul> <p>AS added that the synchronisation is important as there are a lot of people doing judo who are not a member, one of the actions on the Low Hanging Fruits project. Will also allow NEST clubs to see which of their members are not members of the BJA without having to log into two different systems. Looking at the end of June for completion, following testing</p> <p><b>Action: Look into getting 6 month and 3 month reminders to enable sufficient time to book on relevant courses</b></p> <p><b>Action: SW to contact Nick Shepherd and BQ to be involved in the NEST/BJA system synchronisation user testing as both run clubs</b></p> <p>GG thanked SW and commented that the system looks good and it's positive that NEST are doing more development to link to our system.</p> <p>11:50 SW left the meeting</p> <p>AS commented that there is a lot of complicated work being carried out behind the scenes, however it will be critical as also about getting parents to sign up whilst at the club, and also to be able to have a view of who is not a British Judo member.</p>	<p>SW/AS</p> <p>SW/BQ</p>
<b>77.10</b>	<b>FINANCE UPDATE</b>	
	<p>AS updated on the key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auditors have advised that the audit is clean. One issue around a mis-posting</li> <li>• Expect to end the year with a deficit of £93k but will utilise some of the reserves. Main additional costs were the Performance restructure and events costing more</li> </ul> <p>DH commented that the deficit budget should not be a concern as all decisions made were supported by the Board and to ensure there was the correct structure for the next cycle</p>	

	<p>GG further commented that the figures are healthy, apart from the pre-approved spend on the restructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income is slightly below what was expected but more than the previous year</li> </ul> <p>In response to NF's comment about some larger operators having a reduced grading scheme, AS confirmed that this was being looked into and an incentive to take out full membership. The reduced grading scheme is for new members only for one year so do need to look into if the scheme is being manipulated. Also, critically, looking at clubs that are operating their own grading scheme, which falls under 3 Step Safe and means they are not accredited or recognised by the NGB.</p> <p>BQ commented that if clubs are adding a considerable amount to the cost of gradings for their own profits, it could be putting off a keen member. AS agreed and confirmed that some clubs do charge more.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership is up by 1,200 on last year. Still growing but would like to expedite this by addressing the LHF</li> <li>Deficit budget has been produced for 2025/26 but expecting the opportunities noted to materialise and reverse this</li> </ul>	
<b>77.11</b>	<b>JUNE BOARD REPORT &amp; ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN</b>	
	<p>Report taken as read, with the following points raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Crisis Comms Plan:</b> RM advised she had reviewed this and just had one further comment in regard to commenting on social media posts as sometimes the best option is to not reply to negative comments. With that amendment made, RM commented that it was a nice clear document. MP also going to speak to Judith McCleary about producing something similar. AS confirmed he was happy for all the Home Nations to utilise it to produce their own.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: JL to request Ben Pollard to amend the Crisis Comms Plan in regard to responding to negative social media comments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Digital Statistics:</b> DW commented that the social media report has improved and much better presented, however some of the %s are incorrect</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: JL to speak to Ben Pollard in regard to checking the %s in the social media report</b></p>	<p><b>JL</b></p> <p><b>JL</b></p>
<b>77.12</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	<p>MP raised the 3 Step Safe guidance and requested that there be one amendment where it refers to "internationally recognised grades" and that this be changed to BJA or Home Nation recognised grades. AS confirmed that this change could be made and would tie in with our Byelaws that state that clubs should be using the BJA grading structure.</p> <p><b>Action: AS to speak to Karen Roberts in regard to amending the wording in one section of the 3 Step Safe guidance where it refers to internationally recognised grades</b></p>	<b>AS</b>



	<p>RB provided a safeguarding update, in that when incident reporting was moved on to the MyConcern platform, reports had not been shared with Howdens insurers, however Marina Dain has now rectified this and is providing Howdens with a quarterly report.</p> <p>GG then raised Board structure and the option we have to change one of our 3 elected Board members to an appointed Board member. GG's request was that we utilise this option when the next elected member moves on as this would provide the opportunity to appoint on skills and experience, whilst still being from the British Judo membership.</p> <p><b>Decision: The Board unanimously approved GG's proposal to utilise an elected Board member position for an appointed in order to address skills gap on the Board</b></p> <p><b>Action: AS/JL to circulate the skills matrix for Board members to complete</b></p> <p>GG then raised the recent IJF Congress and World Championships, where himself and AS had been called into a meeting with the EJU President, in regard to Ronnie Saez's position on the EJU Executive Committee. They were advised that there were question marks around RS's level of commitment and communication. It was therefore agreed that we would strengthen our governance around the communication from and to the EJU Executive Committee. GG added that the role on the Executive Committee, is to represent British Judo and we have the optionality in the future to refresh that role and the candidate.</p> <p><b>Action: AS to speak to Ronnie Saez in regard to his role on the EJU Executive Committee. Formal updates to be added to AS Board reports going forward and added on to the Board Annual Agenda</b></p>	<p><b>AS/JL</b></p> <p><b>AS/JL</b></p>
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