

DRAFT

**THE BRITISH JUDO ASSOCIATION ('BJA') ('ASSOCIATION')
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON SATURDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 16:30
LECTURE THEATRE, WA007, WALSALL CAMPUS,
UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON, GORWAY ROAD, WALSALL, WS1 3BD**

Council Members:

Rowena Birch, Honorary President	David Allan, Western Area
Rick Kenney, Vice President	Colin McIver, Vice President
Raymond Taylor, Eastern Area	Fiona Chan, Southern Area
David Rance, Northern Home Counties	

Board Members:

Gerry Gualtieri, Chair	Neil Fletcher, Vice Chair
Russell Brown	Marc Preston
Garth Illingworth	Nicki Tang
Wai Cheung	Ben Quilter
Delia Wright	

In Attendance

Andrew Scoular, Chief Executive	Karen Roberts, Development Director
Tim Ellis, Operations Director	Joyce Heron, Head of Technical & Education

Other Attendees:

Ben George	Terry McNeil	Sarah Newbury
Peter Blewett	Jim Feenan	David Rance
Khaled Simmons	Ian Johnson	Ben Quilter
Jason Woolerton	Rob Price	Anni Price
Kerry Tansey	Iain Reid	Martin Rance
Daniel Hannison	David France	Simon Smith
Dawn Byrne	Dave Duffy	Pat Byrne
Chris Skelton	Andy Parton	Ray Taylor
Rick Kenney	Stuart Cook	James Feenan
Chris Scott	Andy Scott	Dave Clark
David Martin	Janice Graham	Christina Wallace
Peter Blood	Iain Reid	Graham Bayley

Clubs Represented:

Middlesborough Judo Club	Samurai Judo Club	Sheffield University Judo Club
Budokwai Judo Club	Carnegie Judo Club	Pinewood Judo Club
Ippon Judo Club	Quilter Judo Academy	Pudsey Judo Club
HRSC Judo Club	Croxteth Judo Club	Rainhill Judo Club
Hoghton Judo Club	Limavady Judo Club	Melbourn Judo Club
Keidokwai Judo Club	Warjukwai Judo Club	Lancaster University Judo Club
Rochdale Judo Club	Renzoku Judo Club	Retford Judo Club
Miramar Judo Club	Ely Dojo	Galashiels Judo Club
Carnegie Judo Club	Kinsa Judo Club	Cornwall Judo Club
Felixstowe Judo Club	KTU Shin Kwai	Peterlee Judo Club
SKK Judo Club	Melbourne Judo Club	Aberdeen Judo Club

Apologies Received:

Dr Colin Draycott
Andy Moss
Stephen Watson

Brian Davies
Seth Birch
Jim Mackenzie

Robin Newett
Alex Slade

1. Welcome

Rowena Birch (RBi) welcomed everyone to the 2025 British Judo AGM adding that she was pleased to see such a good turn out and hopes that those who attended the Technical Conference found the session valuable and enjoyable.

2. Apologies

RBi advised of the apologies received as noted above.

3. Respects for friends and colleagues who have passed away

Howard Clarke-Melville
Joe Glynn
Roy Topple

4. President's Address

RBi asked if anyone was aware of any members who had passed away during the past year. A minute's silence was then observed in remembrance of those who had passed.

She then reflected on the concept of being "in the zone" — a state of intense concentration and instinctive performance that many competitors experience when at their best. She described how this sense of *flow* can also be seen beyond competition, such as at the North West Open, where athletes, referees, officials, and organisers were all fully focused and engaged, demonstrating both seriousness and enjoyment in their roles.

RBi highlighted the personal and health benefits of achieving this state of flow, noting that it can enhance wellbeing, reduce the risk of dementia, and help individuals feel younger. She encouraged members to seek opportunities to experience this sense of flow both on and off the mat, despite the natural fear of making mistakes or stepping into new challenges.

She shared the inspiring example of Eddie Cassidy, who, at 80 years old attended the IJF programme, illustrating the importance of role models who continue to embrace new challenges at any age.

RBi emphasised the vital role of expert coaches and leaders in creating the right environments and challenges that help participants achieve this state of flow. She acknowledged everyone in the room for their efforts in enabling others to reach their potential — whether through coaching, officiating, refereeing, management, or mentoring.

RBi concluded by offering a heartfelt thanks on behalf of the British Judo Association to all those who dedicate their time and passion to supporting others and helping them grow within the sport.

5. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 2 November 2024

The minutes of the AGM held on the 2nd November 2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record of events.

PROPOSER: Dave Clark, Renzoku Judo Club

SECONDER: Peter Blewett, Budokwai Judo Club

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 2 November 2024

No matters arising.

7. Reports

7.1 Chairman's Report

GC highlighted that it had been a year of change, during which the organisation had become more outward-facing and increased engagement with clubs and members. While travelling, he had received some fantastic feedback, although he acknowledged that there is still room for improvement.

GC also had the pleasure to present a posthumous 6th Dan to Craig Fallons (mother & son). It was also noted Irakli Goginashvili achieved a huge success at the championship, winning the first male gold in 25 years. In addition, there were some great placings throughout the event, demonstrating great progression in our junior programme

GC outlined recent changes to the board, noting that Diana Hunter and Rebecca McCreath had stepped down due to business commitments, their positions have now been filled by the following two new members

Nicki Tang
Wai Cheung

It was also noted that Paul Ajaja has decided not to seek re-election and will be stepping down, thereby leaving a vacancy on the board. GC noted that the board agreed that it would invoke the board's ability to appoint a new Director rather than hold a full election. The vacancy will be advertised among the Judo membership.

GC went on to highlight the work being done to reinvigorate the British Judo Trust, by including new opportunities such as Patron Scheme and the 500 Club, as well as the engagement of Sajid Hussain to identify and apply for grants to support Judo activities.

GC concluded his report by stating that he believed the Association was in good shape and would continue to develop and improve its work.

7.2 Chief Executive's Report

AS shared a presentation and highlighted the following key points:

Governance

- Work on the strategic plan is well underway, with a focus on collaboration across the four Home Nations, and is expected to be finalised shortly.
- Significant work on the England regions has taken place and is being led by Chair Garth Illingworth.
- We continue to maintain strong and positive relationships with our shareholders UKS/SE as well as internationally with IJF/EJU.
- Following a performance review, we restructured the organisation in early 2025, with additional changes planned following some resignations of key staff.

Development

- The key focus has been to maximise Judo contribution to society, using the following steps:
 - 3 step safe
 - Find your feet
 - Supporting clubs – through club accelerator days.

Technical

- There has been good progress in coaching, kata, grading referring and technical officials.
- The number of coaches has increased to 1611.
- Kata engagement has grown by almost 100%.
- New digital resources have been developed, alongside a soft launch of the Dan Grade syllabus.
- More referees have been put forward to the European programme, with Dan Harris completing his EJU.
- Memberships across Britain has increased by approx. 2000 level programme, although the gender balance requires improvement, with female participation currently at 29%.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding and inclusion continue to improve, maintaining the organisation's high standing within sport is high and ensuring compliance with the relevant parties.
- This year, over 1,000 competitors have entered the National Championships across all age categories, which is an increase from previous years.
- A shift from the awards dinner to local presentations has been implemented to recognise the achievements of volunteers and clubs, this new approach will be reviewed and evaluated.
- CRM functionality – has seen significant improvements, with more planned for the coming year, where we will be more advanced with the digital license cards.

Operations

- A new merchandising website has been launched, offering new clothing creating opportunities for clubs and members.
- Anti-doping work has continued, and efforts are underway to ensure that all referee fighters in GB and Home Nations comply with regulations.
- We now have 2 minibuses to support the athlete attending competitions and hosted events.

- As part of our funding requirements, we are monitoring and reporting on our carbon footprint.
- Some key points and learnings were highlighted
 - e.g. BJA does approximately 2.1 million air miles and around 4000 hotel nights.

Pathway

- There had been some excellent development performances especially within the cadets and juniors, this has continued.
- The talent programme restructured now that we have engaged C Cowan as GB Home Nation Coach, supporting the HN coaches and programmes in a collaborative way.
- In addition, the England programme restructured the staffing to have 6 part time contracted coaches.

Performance

- Some of the key performances were highlighted, in particular the world bronze medal won by Emma Reid.
- The final investment from UK Sport for the Olympic and Paralympic programmes was confirmed at £8,075.00.
- The Paris games proved challenging, with no male athletes qualifying and no Olympic medals achieved, however the Paralympic programme secured a silver for Dan Powell and a bronze for Chris.

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Marketing and Communications

- A new website has been launched, featuring a fresh design, updated team pages, and a suite of accessibility and language tools.
- There is now enhanced storytelling around clubs and event coverage.
- A shift towards video and visual story telling.

AS then asked if there were any questions, to which there weren't.

8. Approvals

- **BJA Annual Report & Accounts included in the Annual Report**
Approved with no votes against or abstentions
- **Approval of Sedulo as the BJA auditors for year 2025/2026**
Approved with no vote against or abstentions

9. Any Other Business/

No items raised for Any Other Business.

17:25 RBi thanked everyone for giving up their time to attend, the meeting then closed.