

**BRITISH WEIGHT LIFTERS' ASSOCIATION (TRADING AS BRITISH WEIGHT LIFTING)**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at 7.00pm on Thursday 15 October 2020 held via Virtual Conference Facility

Members Present

A Kinnear	A Metcalfe	M Martin	R Thomas
T Whittaker	K Leonard	S Ward	S Hilton
M Marshall	A Smeaton	E Halstead	S Doran
O Krzyzston	O Boxall	S Martin	S Sharp
Z Kettle-Metcalfe	J Foster	M Curtain	C Hannah
A Jawad	J Fenwick	N Wood	G Whitlow
G Taylor	R Ashworth	P Roberts	D Rogers
D Kent	J Tong	S Donovan	J Scriven
R Tawse	H Powell	G Evans	D Hembrough
M Lynes	J Farmer	E Campbell	T B Gurung

Apologies

K Sotherton	K Morgan	M Irani	P Edmondson
S Davies	D Sawyer	J Amos	M Hill
T Wilkinson	H Allison		

Welcome

The meeting opened at 7.00pm.

Mr. Angus Kinnear, Independent Chair of the BWL Board, welcomed everybody to the Annual General Meeting. He noted that it was the first time the AGM had been held virtually which was a result of the current Covid-19 pandemic. He requested that all mobile phones were switched off and that no recording was carried out without permission. He advised that the meeting would be carried out in line with the Articles of Association and that following the completion of the AGM, there would be an open forum for questions and answers.

The Chair confirmed that appropriate notice for the AGM had been given in accordance with the Articles of Association, that apologies for absence had been received from several people, there was a quorum present and he outlined the matters of business to discuss.

He advised that despite the current difficult times, he felt the sport had a bright future and thanked the Board members for their oversight of the organisation, the CEO and the Executive Team for maintaining an effective operational infrastructure of the NGB and for the members, clubs and all volunteers for their continued ongoing support.

1) To receive the Annual Report in accordance with Article 130.1

The Chair asked Ashley Metcalfe, CEO of BWL, to present the Annual Report.

Mr. Metcalfe reported that 2019/20 had been a positive year both strategically and operationally, with BWL able to post a further modest but increased profit on the previous year of just over £27,000. He thanked UK Sport and Sport England and other Home Nation Sports Bodies for their continued support and updated on progress against stakeholder targets noting BWL had delivered on or above expectation in all key areas, including the continued growth of its influence in the weight training sector, increased participation numbers, and improved results in the areas of diversity, talent pathway development and commercial income. He provided statistics on lifters involved in competitions over the last three years highlighting the growth in terms of overall numbers of opportunities, volume of entries and spectators and advised the gender split within competition entries was currently a respectable 47% female and 53% male.

Mr. Metcalfe added his personal thanks to the numerous volunteers involved in the sport, including those who run clubs, coach, officiate or contribute in a wide variety of other ways and made a special mention to all the winners of the 2019 Annual Achievement Awards.

He highlighted the continued international success of both Olympic and Paralympic athletes, paying a special tribute to Emily Muskett who had won a Bronze medal at the IWF World Senior Championships as this was the first GB World medal for 25 years. He noted that four females - Zoe Smith, Sarah Davies, Emily Muskett and Emily Campbell - had finished the year in question in the Top 10 of World rankings. He also highlighted the success of the younger lifters at Junior and Youth competitions and the para-powerlifters who had continued to develop successfully and had delivered an outstanding year for medals, with the Manchester WPPPO World Cup deserving a special mention alongside the outstanding performances of Louise Sugden and Olivia Broome in particular.

He reported that the organisation continued to be well governed, maintaining compliance with the Code for Sports Governance, a "Good" rating with CPSU for safeguarding and the achievement of the Equality Standard for Sport at Intermediate level.

Finally, he updated on the impact of Covid-19 noting the NGB had undergone a period of review and reset, implemented contingency plans and a number of immediate changes. He advised that the Executive had undergone a re-structure which had unfortunately seen an unavoidable reduction in the size of the team, whilst there had been a larger emphasis on digital transformation with online courses and competitions launched as an alternative option for lifters. He reported that Sport England had confirmed roll-over funding into 2021/22 and the final preparations to funding bids for the UK Sport Paris Olympic and Paralympic cycles were on track. He confirmed that the next generation strategy for BWL needed to be developed over the next few months and advised that there would be extensive consultation with all key stakeholders including members and clubs as part of the process. He also noted that key new initiatives would include the launch of a new BWL Foundation and a new concept competition aimed at the broader functional fitness market.

Mr. Thomas raised a question, in light of the current changes at the IWF, if weightlifting was removed from the Paris Olympic Games, would UK Sport still support BWL. Mr. Metcalfe responded that he felt it would be unlikely as their current strategy focusses on Olympic and Paralympic success as a key priority.

There were no further questions and the Chair concluded that the report had been received.

- 2) To receive the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 in accordance with Article 130.2

It was noted that the accounts had been published on the BWL website since 4 October 2020. Mr. Martin reported that a surplus of £27,000 had been generated against a breakeven budget despite Sport England funding being reduced in the year. He reported that both income and expenditure had increased from the previous year mainly due to a successful bid for UK Sport Aspiration Funding to cover Tokyo qualification plans and increased revenues from the British International Open competition at Coventry, which had been elevated to an Olympic qualifying event. He provided a high-level analysis of income and expenditure and provided an update on the current position of the reserves, projected through to 2022. Mr. Martin noted there were no cash flow issues, there had been a “clean” audit and that the reserves had shown further improvement at just over £135,000 at the year-end, which was most positive especially in these times of continued uncertainty.

There were no questions for Mr. Martin to answer.

- 3) To note the appointment of Philip Edmondson as an Independent Non-Executive Director in accordance with Articles 39 and 130.3

The members noted the appointment of Philip Edmondson and there were no questions.

- 4) To note that there are no elected directors retiring and seeking re-election and that no other nominations have been received

The members noted that no nominations had been received.

- 5) To transact any other business that is included on the notice calling the meeting in accordance with Article 122.5.

No other business was raised.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and declared the meeting closed at 7.40pm.

## Open Forum

The Chair then invited questions from members on any matters not covered by the Annual General Meeting.

D Kent – asked about the current position at the IWF and what would BWL expect the impact to be following the appointment of Dr M Irani's as Interim President? A Metcalfe congratulated Dr Irani on his new position and added that he hoped he would be able to drive forward the necessary governance changes demanded by the IOC and many other Member Federations, whilst offering a suitable platform for the athletes' voice.

J Farmer – asked if Dr M Irani represented BWL on the IWF Committee and if so, how did he vote regarding the removal of Ursula Papandrea? G Taylor responded, as Chair of the International Relations Committee at BWL, noting that an internal governance review at BWL was currently being undertaken following the allegations made against the IWF Executive Board in the recent McLaren report. The review would also seek to make recommendations relating to BWL's future strategy in terms of International representation. He reported he was unsure of how Dr M Irani had voted as this had not been discussed in advance.

A Metcalfe re-iterated that Dr Irani's appointment was still breaking news and it was difficult to fully respond at present. However, he added International representation was extremely important especially when BWL was continuing to lobby for a cleaner sport and much improved and more transparent governance.

G Whitlow – noted concern over the previous response and also noted that Dr M Irani had not attended many BWL Board meetings over the past year. A Kinnear responded that the newly appointed BWL Board Member and lawyer (Philip Edmondson) was responsible for the previously mentioned review and Mr. Kinnear confirmed Mr. Edmondson had received advice from UK Sport and that he was confident that the report which was due imminently, would address the findings of the McLaren report in relation to BWL and provide an appropriate set of "best practice" guidelines for all future BWL International representatives to follow.

G Whitlow then asked how many conversations had been held with Dr M Irani recently and A Metcalfe responded that he was in regular contact with Dr M Irani. A Metcalfe also advised that in line with the IWF constitution, once an individual is appointed as a member to the IWF Executive Board or Committees, it is for the four year cycle ahead of the next electoral congress and it is a voluntary and independent position which does not require the support of the member federation.

G Whitlow noted that he had welcomed the recent statement from the BWL CEO requesting the immediate resignation of all current members of the IWF Executive Board and requested that the BWL Board continue to drive this matter forward appropriately. A Metcalfe responded that BWL was committed to clean sport and has a zero-tolerance approach for doping. He hoped having Dr M Irani as Interim President would provide a greater opportunity for change.

H Powell – asked if BWL will be one of the nations supporting a no confidence in the IWF Board? A Metcalfe referred her to the previous BWL statement confirming that despite Dr Irani's appointment, BWL were not amending their views, which had clearly called for the whole of the IWF Executive Board to step down with immediate effect and allow a new, more appropriate and diverse set of individuals to be appointed. He felt this would provide an opportunity for the IWF to re-build its reputation and take the sport forward ensuring positive opportunities for both the sport and its

athletes. G Taylor re-iterated that the NGB was very much behind the original statement and A Kinnear confirmed the Board was clear on its intent and objectives to seek International change.

D Rogers – enquired if the Commonwealth Championships are held in 2021, is there a venue or host city? A Metcalfe firstly congratulated D Rogers on his recent appointment as Chair of Weightlifting Wales. He then advised that a host city yet to be confirmed for the Championships by the Commonwealth Weightlifting Federation but BWL had been in discussions with them but in light of the current pandemic it was impossible to commit to any major International events at this stage. He added that if it ran it was likely to be in the third quarter of 2021 and as it would be advantageous from a performance perspective for all Home Nations to host it in the UK, he would be looking to discuss in greater detail with all parties in the near future about a possible collaboration of support to ensure the viability of any such event.

D Kent – asked whether there were plans to continue running virtual competitions with physical events not likely at present. A Metcalfe noted that whilst it had been hoped to return to running physical competitions, in the current climate, virtual alternatives were more appropriate and the only realistic option. Whilst feedback had been mixed to date on the virtual competitions, they do provide an alternative solution for members and lifters of all ages and standards. It is planned that the next physical competition will be the British Championships in June 2021 and which are currently scheduled for Liverpool Arena. Further communications will be sent to members in due course.

BWL's Performance and Talent Manager, S Martin also noted that virtual competitions provide good opportunities for younger athletes as they evidence real time results essential for the monitoring of athlete performances and training to ensure they remain on track from a personal development perspective. J Scriven noted the positive benefits of virtual competitions, especially for athletes in Jersey.

J Farmer – noted that BWL will remain under scrutiny whilst Dr M Irani is involved in the IWF Executive Board. A Metcalfe acknowledged that it would not just be Dr Irani's reputation at stake, but it would also impact on BWL and UK sport in general.

G Whitlow – asked about athlete attitudes/relations especially in light of current issues within other sports around safeguarding/doping matters. A Metcalfe responded that recent BWL surveys had resulted in positive feedback and that there were no current outstanding Safeguarding, Anti-Doping or cultural issues within the programmes. However, he added BWL could not be complacent and the health and well-being of all athletes, coaches and clubs was a key priority. He noted that the current culture health checks and processes implemented as part of the para-powerlifting World Class Programme continued to provide good results and it was the intention to introduce and replicate similar programmes within weightlifting squads. BWL Performance Director, T Whittaker advised that whilst medal outcomes were critical to UK Sport they appeared to be broadening their view on how elite sport is managed and that performance programmes are assessed more holistically with good practice/governance and the welfare of athletes of paramount importance. S Martin commented that as part of the next funding cycle submission process, there had been a period of consultation with athletes and coaches, with an emphasis on how best to develop an athlete centered culture for any future programmes.

As there were no more questions, A Kinnear thanked everyone for attending the AGM and for the questions raised. The meeting was closed at 8.30pm.