



British Veterans Fencing

2022 Annual General Meeting- Zoom

11th March 2023 18.00

Hosted by Secretary – Nicola Hull (NH)

And co-hosted by Carl Morris (CM) President, Paul Baillache (PB) Treasurer and Luce Wright (LW) Committee member

Attendees: 36

Apologies: Henry De Silva, Sam McCarlie,

Introduction & Welcome

After some technical issues CM opened the meeting a few minutes late. He apologised that he couldn't be seen by all, but welcomed everyone and explained how the meeting would run. He explained that attendees would be asked to stay muted but could use the text chat to raise questions relevant to the reports being read. Members had been invited to raise any questions prior to the meeting.

Approval of the minutes of 2021 AGM

CM asked members to approve the minutes by a poll vote. NH launched the poll. Caryl Oliver stated that she thought only members who had been at last year's meeting should vote.

The Vote was as follows: Yes 100%

President's Report (appended)

CM said that his 2021 report had been published on the BVF website and as such he would not be reading it out in its entirety but would like to point out some highlights, which he shared with the attendees on screen.

Committee Activity

- Hardship fund
- Surveys
- Silver swords
- Newsletters
- Competition organisation
- Selection

Competitions

- GUILDFORD 2022
- AGE GROUPS
- HOME NATIONS
- EUROPEAN TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS – Hamburg
- COMMONWEALTH CHAMPIONSHIPS
- WINTON CUP
- BVF CHAMPIONSHIPS (not held)
- WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS -Zadar

Secretary's Report (appended)

NH read out her report. She mentioned the number of committee meetings held, how BVF communicates with members, the documentation they receive and how new members are welcomed. She thanked those who had helped contribute to the newsletter.

A membership report compiled by LW (appended) was published on the website and showed a small decrease of 20 members. Nicola mentioned how the committee would look into increasing membership in view of an over forty category being introduced at the Worlds in 2025, and also how Beth's Silver Sword project would encourage non fencers into the sport.

Nicola mentioned the Hardship fund that was available to BVF members for help with competition entry fees, and thanked everyone for their support and wished her successor a successful tenure.

Treasurer Report (appended)

PB had published the accounts and his report on the BVF website. He thanked Joanne Yeates for her assistance.

PB shared his screen so members could read through the main figures pertaining to the 2021 and 2022 accounts and his summary. He made special mention of membership fees, committee costs, and how the competitions had performed financially. He informed membership that Welsh Fencing had very generously loaned equipment and provided a venue free of charge, but that this could not be relied on in the future and staging events at a reasonable cost will become more challenging.

PB asked members to approve the accounts by a poll vote. NH launched the poll.

The Vote was as follows: Yes 100%

Elections

CM explained that under the constitution all committee members would hold a 3-year tenure, however in order for that to be achievable two committee members needed to stand for re-election. The two members of the committee who were randomly selected to stand for re-election this year were BD and KA.

Two members were standing down. NH was standing down from the role of secretary due to work commitments and LR was standing down from her committee member position for personal reasons.

As LW was standing for secretary her committee member role also would become available.

Voting

Vote One: LW was the only nomination for secretary and was unanimously voted into the role.

Naomi Davidson and Jane Hutchinson were new nominations for the committee positions and stood for voting along with BD and KA

Vote Two: NH ran the voting poll. The attendees of the meeting were asked to vote for their preferred committee member from the 4 people standing:

The Vote Results: KA had the majority vote and was appointed for a 3 year tenure.

Vote Three: NH ran the voting poll. The attendees of the meeting were asked to vote for their preferred committee member from the 3 remaining candidates:

The Vote Results: BD had the majority vote and was appointed for a 3 year tenure.

Naomi Davidson & Jane Hutchinson were appointed as replacement members on to the committee to take the remaining two committee positions.

CM welcomed the new committee members.

Questions

One question was raised by Andrew Brown as to why the Age groups had been held over two weekends. CM explained that this was due to our choice of venue and that the Leon Paul Centre was unable to accommodate the competitions over one weekend. A feedback survey has gone out to members to find out their preference in respect to future events.

A second question was raised by Maggie Myers as to whether the Worlds was taking place in Florida this year, and if so, why no further information was showing in respect to dates. This led to a discussion with both GA and Caryl Oliver explaining about the need for visas and the added complications concerning possible ongoing restrictions due to covid or the potential reinstatement of Russian and Belarusian fencers to competitions which America might be unable to cater for due to their countries political stand point and rules.

CM thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was closed.

Nicola Hull

BVF Secretary

President's Report for the 2022 BVF AGM

2022 was the year that we seem to be gradually getting back to some semblance of normality following the disastrous pandemic. Covid hasn't disappeared and there are an awful lot of other nasty bugs that have been laying people low but on the whole we are in a lot better position than 2021 and our usual events have and are scheduled to be run as normal. Obviously there are still political restrictions on the international scene concerning Ukraine but domestically we seem to be getting back to business as usual.

AGM

As I mentioned in last year's report, to ensure continuity of experience, only three of the committee, including one of the officers, will be up for election at this AGM and the remaining members will have been deemed to have been elected for a 3 year term in 2020 and will serve for the remainder of that tenure. If someone stands down either before or during the AGM we can appoint a replacement who will take on the remainder of that person's tenure.

COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Silver Swords is an initiative headed up by our development officer Beth to introduce older people into the sport and give guidance with appropriate methods of training. The first session to train up Activators was run by Beth, Ev and Gillian in Manchester on 20th November and was very well received. This will be followed up with more sessions and specific beginner sparring sessions - the first of which is taking place on the Sunday of the Nationals.

The Committee introduced a hardship fund should it be needed for individuals to have a funded place for qualifying events. We also introduced a Car Sharing scheme via Facebook to help with the costs of competing and to go towards reducing our carbon footprint.

Newsletter – this has been compiled successfully for the last two years by Nicola. I regret that due to work commitments she has decided to stand down at this AGM. Many thanks to her for all the hard work she has put in. I'm pleased to say that Gillian has offered to take over the reins as editor, so expect to be badgered from time to time for interesting articles.

Selection – Our method for GB selection is constantly under review. In addition to several zoom discussions the committee had a day-long physical meeting in June to discuss the appropriateness of our current process and make any adjustments accordingly. We are aware that different people have different views on selection. Some favour selecting from a range of European events, some from our Senior rankings or from designated senior events. Others prefer our existing system of selecting from 3 nominated domestic events. At present this system has been scrutinised and seems fairest to most people but is under constant review and will be reassessed for the next season. The final selection event for 2023 will be in April which is a little earlier than usual given the World Championships are not till October. The reason for this is the venue for the Worlds is scheduled for Florida and we know people will need to arrange flights and accommodation in good time and at reasonable cost as soon as possible. The same arrangement is likely to be in place for Dubai 2024 for the same reasons.

I must give thanks to our Chair of Selectors **Graham Paul** and his team of selectors who are –

Epee	- Neal Mallett	Marg Oniye
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Foil	- Gillian Worman	Nick Mort
Sabre	- Jane Hutchison	Chris Prevett

EVENTS

Guildford International 8/9th January – As stated in my previous report there was huge uncertainty about this event taking place and a disproportionate amount of time was spent by the organisers to make sure all went well. I am not going to go through the list of people who deserve our thanks for making this such a success as I have already done this in a previous communication but I must give another mention to Graham, Kola and Paul who really went over and above to pull this off.

Age Groups Cardiff & LP London 6th/13th March

Unfortunately we had to split the events over two weekends and two venues with Sabre & Foil being held in Cardiff and Epee in London. Having said that both weekends were successful and it was great to see almost 200 of our fencers participating. Many thanks to **Lyn and Mike Robinson** for their organisation here.

The Home Nations Veteran Quadrangular - Bristol 9th April.

A hotly contested tournament won, by England followed by a dinner much enjoyed by all who attended

Veterans European Team Championships - Hamburg 25th -29th May

The Championships held in Germany were contested by 10 teams from 20 countries (Belarus and Russia absent). The standard was incredibly high but we achieved silver medals for both Mens and Womens Foil and Bronze for Womens Sabre

BVF Nationals - Not held in 2022 for organisational and re-scheduling reasons but scheduled for April 2023 and will be held annually thereafter.

Commonwealth Fencing Championships August 2022

Whilst the Commonwealth Fencing Championships were not a BVF event, many of our members attended. It was an impressive spectacle of fencing with Cadets, Seniors, Vets and Wheelchair fencers all competing together. The Veteran events were represented by competitors across the Commonwealth, fencing at a very high standard. Full results are available on the website but congratulations to Jane Hutchison, Georgina Usher and Mo Mansoori who all achieved gold.

Veterans Winton Cup 24th/25th September

Probably the most popular event on the calendar with 10 Sections competing with South East coming out on top closely followed by Southern. The Gala dinner organised by Marcia and Gillian was well attended and held in the Mercure Hotel. Many thanks especially to Marcia as event organiser, John Crouch and Phil for DT, Peter and Janet Huggins and all who put so much time in to make this a success.

Veteran World Championships Zadar 7th-12th October

Always the highlight of the season Croatia again hosted an excellent tournament. 13 countries participated and GBR finished rather disappointingly in 10th place. But that certainly doesn't tell the story of some great performances because this was rated on gold medals only. In fact on an overall medal count of 12 we were actually equal 4th. Just one gold would have put us in 4th or 5th. So many 9-10 losses, many in the L8 - it was a story of so near but yet so far. Nevertheless it was a great event with some great performances. As usual this was a tremendous event to either participate in or attend and the full results can be seen on the website.

It's very difficult thanking individuals for the work and expertise they put in to make our organisation run smoothly because I am bound to miss someone and for that I apologise up front. It's not always smooth and to use that hackneyed example, we are often like the swan on the surface with our little legs paddling like mad underneath the surface. Although I've already mentioned some of them in all the events above we were indebted to Gillian for coordinating our international events, Pete and Janet Huggins, Mike and Lyn Robinson for the DT and organisation, Graham Paul, and Marcia, and of course Lucy who keeps us all well informed. I've been very fortunate to have such an experienced and committed team of people around to make things work.

In another challenging year my thanks go to your committee Kola Ayanwale, Gillian Aghajan, Paul Baillache, Beth Davison, Graham Paul, Lyn Robinson Lucy Wright and last but not least Nicola Hull who will be stepping down this year – many thanks to her for her past support, we are going to miss her.

And last, but not least, on behalf of all the committee thanks to the continued support of all our members in what has been a very busy year.

Carl

Carl Morris

President BVF

March 2023



Secretary's Report for AGM

We held 7 Committee meetings via Zoom from Jan 22 – Feb 23. Using Zoom continues to be advantageous as it means better committee member attendance, a reduction in our carbon footprint, and reduced expenses.

Many additional meetings were held by groups of committee members responsible for hosting our competitions and special thanks must go to, Lyn Robinson, Paul Baillache, Carl Morris, Graham Paul, and Luce Wright who all put in the hours to make sure our events go ahead.

Newsletters and general updates were sent using Mailchimp, and Gillian Aghajan did a fantastic job as Team Manager organising and informing members who were selected to fence at the European Teams and Worlds.

Luce Wright has compiled the Membership Report. On the whole numbers have stayed steady with a small decrease of around 20 members.

We are hoping to increase our membership and reach out to non-fencers with an initiative headed up by Beth Davidson called 'Silver Swords'. She is looking to train up existing members of BVF to become 'Activators'. The Activators will introduce those above forty to fencing for the first time and be involved in their training. More information on this initiative can be found on the website and/or by talking to committee members.

We will also continue to look at ways of attracting new members especially in light of the Worlds Opening up to an over forty category in 2025.

As a committee we are aware of the tougher financial climate some of our members are facing and have put in place a fund that will help negate the costs of competition entries. Please request access to this fund via the website.

Sadly, due to work commitments I am standing down from my position of secretary this year. I would like to thank all of you for your support and wish my successor a successful tenure.

Nicola Hull

March 2023

Membership Summary for 2022

Membership Summary

	Men	Women	Total
This year	427	176	603
New Members	37	16	53
Not Renewed	58	19	77

By Category

	Men	Women	Total	%
Cat 1 (40-49)	79	37	116	19
Cat 2 (50-59)	140	63	203	34
Cat 3 (60-69)	128	50	178	30
Cat 4 (70-74)	30	14	44	7

Treasurer's Report on the BVF 2022 Accounts.

This report covers the accounts for the year 2022, and comments on the ongoing finances of BVF. It is assumed the reader has read the accounts and supporting notes.

I would like to thank Joanne Yeates who is performing an independent examination of the accounts.

Headline result

Reserves have increased by £6159, £5785 from the excess of subscriptions over administration costs and £374 from the various events that have been run or supported.

Because the Guildford events create income and expenses before and after the end of the year, the accounts have prepayments for 2023 and accruals from 2022 which necessarily complicate the figures presented, and the bank balances are not representative of the actual level of reserves. I have therefore prepared a table showing the movement in reserves from one year to the next, which is much clearer for members.

2022 Accounts

(a) Subscriptions and Administration

Subscription income has held up 2022, although we have steadily lost members since 2018. We anticipate an increase in new 40+ members now that the World Championships will be open to them from 2025.

Overall general administration costs have fallen in 2022 compared to 2021 where there was significant spend on the website. The committee has met virtually in 2022 apart from one physical meeting. It is planned to continue this approach in 2023. Virtual meetings have allowed the committee to meet more often and at short notice to discuss specific issues.

Directors & Officers insurance was renewed for 2022/23, though cyber risk was not renewed as the cost was prohibitive and we have stronger controls now on storage of information. Licences for web services such as Survey Monkey and Zoom were renewed. Maintenance expenditure for the website was not material – the work done in recent years will stand BVF in good stead for some time.

The Committee approved funding the Silver Swords initiative – success will be monitored before more funding is approved.

(b) Events

EVF Guildford made a small surplus of £859 – in the circumstances this was a very fortunate outcome as the event had a large number of withdrawals due to covid, and we lost almost all the foreign entries. Withdrawals amounted to £1700, and fortunately we were able to reduce some of the equipment hire and other costs.

The Age Groups event was split over two weekends at two venues – the Leon Paul Centre and Cardiff. The Leon Paul event just broke even, and the surplus of £2600 arose from the Cardiff event. This was because all the equipment and venue hire were provided at minimal cost by Welsh Fencing – many thanks to them and Lyn Robinson for arranging this.

The Winton Cup made a small loss of £521 because two teams did not enter complete teams materially reducing entry fees. Next year BVF will coordinate with team captains to ensure this is not repeated. The gala dinner broke even as expected. Thanks to Marcia Stretch for managing the costs of this event.

The cost of the **European Team Championships** was £1921. This is because BVF covers the entry fees, team costs, and the team manager costs not covered by participant levies. The overall cost is in line with previous events.

The cost of the **World Championships** was £724. This is because BVF covers team entry fees and costs, and the team manager costs not covered by participant levies. The cost was slightly less than previous events.

Across all events in 2022 BVF has fully refunded withdrawals due to Covid. This has led to uncertainty in income but has been the correct thing to do. We will have to see whether this approach can be continued.

Significant entry income (c£17k) was received for Guildford 2023 in 2022. I will only note here that this event was much more successful than the 2022 event.

(c) Other

Last year the Denis Hunt Fund was established from donations – two donations in agreement between BVF and Marcia were made to sabre related causes.

BVF also agreed to establish a 'hardship fund' to support members in difficulty by covering entry fees. Whilst no specific sum has been put aside, requests will be considered as they arise, and one free entry was granted to Guildford 2023.

The future

(i) Subscriptions

The subscription rate of £15 has been unchanged for many years and should probably have been increased by now. However, we are mindful of the economic circumstances and BVF finances remain in good health. Whilst we have no immediate plans to increase subscriptions, it remains a possibility if finances deteriorate. A payment of £814 was made to England Vets fencing for two years' worth of home country members subs. A catch up for the other home countries will be made in 2023.

(ii) Entry fees

We will try to maintain entry fees at the current level and be consistent across events. However, we will have to react to increases in expenses particularly in venue hire, and general levels of entry fee for non-veteran events. Entry fees for EVF Guildford are set in line with EVF rules.

(iii) Medals stock.

The remaining medal stock has been recovered from our previous supplier who is no longer making new medals for us. The existing stock (value c£500) will be run down where possible, and eventually written off. New medals will be produced with a new supplier (this was the case for Guildford 2023). BVF will avoid building up huge stocks of medals, and order on demand, or hold supplies sufficient to cover the next few years.

(iv) Future Events

The most significant cost of events is venue, refereeing, and equipment hire. We have been fortunate in 2022 (and 2023) that Welsh Fencing have loaned us so much equipment for little or no cost. This has effectively given windfall surpluses on a number of events. BVF is immensely grateful for this, and wishes to thank Welsh Fencing, and Lyn Robinson in particular, for this support. This arrangement cannot be relied on in future of course and such surpluses not anticipated.

We can expect all competition costs to rise in the current economic climate.

In 2023 we have the European Individual Championships in Thionville. It is likely that the participant levies will exceed BVF management costs for the event, and as usual any surplus will be carried forward to offset future costs arising from international fencing. We also have the World Championships in Florida in 2022, and Dubai in 2023, where BVF costs are expected to be higher than usual.

(v) Level of BVF Reserves

The level of reserves is very healthy, at nearly £50,000. BVF will continue to aim to increase reserves each year by at least breaking even on every event, whilst covering any losses from the excess of subscriptions over administration costs. BVF may also choose to subsidise small non-ranking social fencing events.

Members may question what such reserves are then needed for. BVF last hosted a major international event at Medway in 2014 for the European Team Championships, and the World Championships in Bath in 2006. Whilst there are no immediate plans to host events like these, as a major veterans fencing nation, BVF are likely to do so at some stage, and as the financial commitment would be material it is therefore only prudent to build up our finances beforehand.

Conclusion

BVF remains in good financial health. In 2022 normal service has resumed across all competitions and activities. BVF is not immune to the increase in costs due to inflation, and it is expected that it will become more challenging to run events cost effectively.

Paul Baillache

Treasurer BVF