



BVF Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: 14th December 2022

Time: 9.30-12.45

Location: Zoom

Attendees: Carl Morris (CM), Nicola Hull (NH), Paul Baillache (PB), Luce Wright (LW), Lyn Robinson (LR), Gillian Aghajan (GA), Graham Paul (GP), Beth Davidson.

1) Welcome CM

CM welcomed us all. A date was discussed for our next meeting and the minutes of the last meeting were accepted.

2) Previous Minutes

The following items from our last meeting were discussed:

- Car Sharing: LW has set up a Facebook page so fencers can link up with each other with the view of sharing car journeys to fencing events. This was a result of recent discussion on making our fencing more environmentally friendly. Positive comments have been received from members.
- Winton Cup: CM has written up new job descriptions for this event, and will be writing up new rules. LR mentioned that Welsh fencing are able to supply 9 roll out pistes for the event and 20 scoring sets and tables. A van will be hired so they can be transported to the venue. A resounding thanks to Welsh Fencing from the committee.
- Medals: PB has sourced new medals for the BVF International at Guildford and subsequent events.
- Summer Event: The venue in Cardiff is now not going to be available so CM going back to the drawing board.
- Hardship Fund: This was made available for BVF fencers to subsidise their entry fees for the Guildford open.

3) ZADAR World Cup Feedback Survey LW/CM

- Summary: Over 80% of people responded to this survey, a great % which makes the result meaningful. Three areas stood out. Only 28% say they like the current tracksuit with 72% stating that they disliked it; a majority expressed an interest in team training prior to the World Championships; It was noted that only one fencer attended the gala dinner. Over 50% thought it was too expensive and didn't attend due to competing the next day
- For the next World Event a WhatsApp Group will be set up so members can communicate easily with each other, and the Team Captain can send through important messages

- There was no clear direction on fencers wanting individual weapon coaches. About a third said it might be useful with about the same proportion saying that they might be prepared to contribute toward this. Some comments were negative explaining that an unfamiliar coach could be counter-productive. As the competition is run under FIE rules all coaches must be registered, and only registered coaches were initially allowed onto the pistes to support fencers. However, with the permission of DT individuals who were not coaches were allowed piste side to support.
The committee felt the best way forward for next year would be to continue to allow individual fencers to take their own coaches but also look to encourage a buddy mentor system, so fencers were supported in their DE fight.
- This year BVF piloted the introduction of Non Fencing Team captains with the Chair of Selectors announcing who those individuals would be prior to the event. There were 16 clear Yes answers for having non fencing captains and 11 were Yes but depends on the individual! In respect of non-fencing team captains, it was noted by GA that the Women's Foil and Epee teams performed well, but unfortunately there had been some confusion over the Men's sabre captain.
- The response to the question 'How Fencers could improve' the majority felt this was their own responsibility and were not looking for the support of BVF, 2 mentioned fencing in more international competitions would help, and 2 felt a coach at the competition would help.
- Tracksuit: A large majority of our GB fencers do not like the existing tracksuit. So the committee discussed the option of replacing.

It was felt the cost of the current tracksuit and the fact that there had to be a minimum order of 10 meant that keeping the current style might not be a viable option moving forward. PB suggested having a team top and mentioned a Topkit product, he also suggested subsidising the cost for GB fencers. Everyone thought this would be a good idea. GA to look into options and possible tender.

4) Treasurer Update PB

- Winton Cup: We made a loss of £350, the majority of this loss due to the NW not having a full team, which is something we wish to address next year by inviting fencers from other regions to fill in any gaps. The Winton whilst competitive should be an inclusive event and encourage fencing participation. PB will look to keep the entry fee the same as 2022 for the 2023 event and acknowledged our equipment hire cost would be lower due to Welsh Fencing lending us pistes etc. The dinner was well supported and broke even.
- European Teams Hamburg: We were down £1900.00 as this is an event we subsidise. Fencers and their guests are charged a levy and it was felt we should be clear what this levy is for.
- Guildford 2023: Due to high number of entrants we should make a reasonable return on this event dependent upon rail and border agency industrial actions.
- Expenses: PB redrafting expense policy. LR mentioned the Welsh policy on fuel costs per mile and car sharing. This was payment of 45p a mile up to 400 miles and if car sharing the passenger would be paid 25p per mile up to 400 miles. PB to investigate further.

5) AGM and Elections CM

- The date for the AGM has been set for Sat 11th March at 6pm
- NH will be stepping down after the 2023 AGM due to work commitments so her position will need to be filled. LW expressed an interest in standing for the Secretary's position.
- Under the constitution, two members of the committee also need to stand for re-election due to the terms of their tenure, this will be between LW, KA, GP and BD however if LW is voted in as secretary her committee position will also be available.

6) Competition Update

AGE GROUPS CM

- Communication with John Willis who is organising the event has been difficult due to his other commitments. Normally this is a closed event to BVF members only and run as a poule unique in Age Group categories. This year the event will have to be 'open', to a limited extent and will be run similar to the BVF International in Guildford. Depending on numbers Cat 1&2 and Cat 3&4 will fence together in poules and be split out into age group categories for DE fights seeded on poule results. At the moment LP are unable to run the whole Age Group event on the same weekend due to their Saturday morning commitments so it was suggested that the committee review options for the event in 2024.
- NH to survey after the event for members feedback to see how they felt about the change in format

BVF INTERNATIONAL (GUILDFORD): GP/LR

- GP to discuss presentations of medals with Brian Speight who has some innovative ideas.
- LW to request members help in setting up venue.
- GA has volunteered to help with check in on Sunday and will check to see if Marcia Stretch can also be available.
- PB will sort out sandwiches for the referees
- We will endeavour to use the back entrance for access to the event but also put-up direction notices for fencers entering through the main entrance. PB will sort out signage.
- We will have 17 pistes and GP will book squash courts for bag storage. No large fencing bags will be allowed in the fencing hall due to space.
- The event is at full capacity with a waiting list. This has caused a few issues with fencers from other countries who are using it as a selection event and forgot to enter in time. The EVF committee are aware of the issue.
- Weights & Gauges will be used and LR will remind referees to bring their own.
- LR is hoping the event will be mainly paperless with poule sheets being available on phone apps. Also encouraging no single use plastic bottles.
- GP to discuss the fee due to BF for foreign fencers with Georgina Usher.

BVF Championships: LR

- All referees have been confirmed.

7) SILVER SWORDS BD

- The committee congratulated Beth on her first event. On the 25 Nov 22 Silver Swords used EventBrite to set up their first activator session. 9 people were booked to attend the Manchester Fencing Centre, with one dropping out. Event organisers were BD, GA and Ev Van Gemeren. GA observed, assisted and documented the event. BD & Ev were educators.
- Articles to be shared include: warm up exercises for veterans; podcasts – Sarah Budden provided some good links to relevant podcasts; why fencing is a good activity in later years; lesson content. It was agreed that a webpage should be set up on BVF site so this information can be easily found.
- Feedback from participants very good, and attendees were very inclusive helping to shape the project.
- BD stressed that an important aim is for herself, and activators developing partnerships with local clubs and sport development bodies with a view to securing funding. Next steps to focus on would be funding with National Sports bodies. As each Silver Sword Activator Event would cost in the region of £2000 per event.
- BD also discussed running Sparring competitions alongside BVF competitions, if practicable, to encourage participation at entry level and engage people. The weapon would be epee due to ease of refereeing and each fencer would stay on the piste for 2 minutes. This activity could involve up to 12 fencers split amongst 3 pistes for 3 hours and costed at £15-£20 per fencer.
- The committee discussed running a Sparring event after the sabre at the Nationals and also hiring an extra Hall for Guildford 24 at a cost of @ £500.

8) AOB

- Selection Committee: Jenny Morris has decided to resign, and GP has asked Marg Oniye to take her place as an epee selector.
- Team Training Day. PB felt holding this at the Winton Venue on the Friday before the weekend would be a good idea, and NH suggested putting some feelers out for coaches/speakers to help us prepare for team events and be updated on rules etc
- CM brought to our attention that under the constitution the committee should elect a Vice President. Several names were suggested and the decision was put back to a later meeting.

Meeting ended 12.50

**Nicola Hull
BVF Secretary**