

## **Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021 9.30 – 13.00

**Location:** Zoom

**Present:** Carl Morris (CM), Nicola Hull (NH), Paul Baillache (PB), Kola Ayanwale (KA), Lindsay Watkiss (LEW), Lucy Wright (LCW), Beth Davidson (BD), Nick Fihosy (NF), Graham Paul (GP).

Invited guest : Georgina Usher BF CEO (GU)

**1) Welcome:** CM welcomed GU and introductions were made.

**2) Treasurer's Report PB:** Because of Covid very little outgoings due to lack of competition activity over 2020/2021. Membership subscriptions have accrued at £1,500 but this amount is lower than usual due to around 164 members not renewing. PB confirmed he now had access to the account and that Nat West has credited the account with £100 due to their poor service in getting this action completed.

**Action to be taken:** PB to ensure CM has access to the accounts and the previous treasurer taken off.

**3) BVF and BF working together:** GU gave a very informative overview of the relationship between BVF and BF and answered many questions from the Committee.

### **Main Points discussed:**

**i) Working together to help attract and increase membership of fencers of qualifying age.**

- Engaging parents of fencers
- The health advantages which combine both cardio and strengthening of muscles, plus balance.
- The enthusiasm and longevity of more mature fencers in a fencing club environment and how increasing adult membership of clubs also increases volunteers needed to run the club.
- Science behind coaching veteran fencers

GU suggested the committee should look at its strategy for this initiative and talked through how the Muslim Girls fencing project was successfully piloted by BF. This pilot showed that gathering tangible evidence measured success, which enabled them to demonstrate how similar projects could be run before applying for external funding.

**Action to be taken:** alongside utilising the help of BF, the committee will discuss and put in place a strategy to look at increasing the numbers of over forties fencing and possibly explore running a pilot which can be used to apply for funding.

**ii) Insurance:** GU advised that BVF should look to arrange its own Directors and Officers insurance and a general conversation took place concerning cover provided by BF.

**Outstanding Action:** PB to investigate and help arrange D&O insurance.

**iii) Communication with fencers over forty was discussed:** the practicalities of how to contact them and communicate with them via webinars, articles, newsletter, major events, face book. It was noted that there was a huge opportunity to encourage current fencers over forty to fence in the Veteran Commonwealth Games.

**Action to be taken:** NH to ensure BF has copies of our newsletters so these can be accessible to BF members.

The committee will need to discuss and put in place a strategy in respect to communications with existing members and potential members.

**iv) Sport 80:** the advantages of Sport 80 managing the BVF membership and members being on a direct debit system was discussed, alongside competition entry and how the system would help with COVID and Sports 80 ability to contact all those who have been at an event.

**Action to be taken:** LCW to contact BF to look into working together with Sports 80 to manage BVF membership and report her recommendations back to the committee as to if and how we utilise Sports 80.

#### **4) Competitions:**

##### **i) Guildford International:**

- GU advised the committee on the current situation of running an international event and the framework for 'elite sport'.
- The committee was made aware that the EVF have cancelled their up-and-coming events due to COVID.
- It was felt Guildford would be best run as a 'Home Event' and be open to all members of BVF in line with BF protocol. It was decided that international fencers will not be invited, nor will the event be run as an EVF Circuit event.
- The organising team would have to await guidance from the government before decisions could be made in respect to the running of the event.
- BF would support and guide and GP and KA have already been in discussions with Claire Halsted, our Covid advisor.
- Mention given to vaccinations, testing, bubbles of fencers, and running a competition under current guidelines.

**Action to be taken:** KA/LCW to send out survey/information to members about fencing under COVID guidelines and to gauge participation.

If Guildford is to be a selection event the selectors will need clarity on who is eligible to represent GB at the worlds and make sure all fencers are aware of eligibility requirements. Action : GP

**ii) World Championships:** Discussions took place about how current restrictions were being applied to international events due to Covid. In light of possible restrictions it was suggested we would survey potential team members to gauge their intentions should they be selected.

**Action to be taken:** LCW to purchase a Survey Monkey package. Ongoing surveys to ascertain who would be looking to compete in Florida should the event take place. It was acknowledged that several surveys may be needed as the situation is constantly changing.

**iii) Nationals:** Committee still undecided when this event should be run. Whilst September had been proposed it seems a busy month with the Winton Cup and Hampshire already scheduled.

**Action to be taken:** LEW to discuss October with Manchester Fencing Centre.

**iv) Winton Cup:** LEW has been liaising with Marcia Stretch who has booked venue and hotel. Our intentions are to run the event.

CM brought to our attention an email received from Sue Brooks, and related phone conversations on the same subject with Jonathon Stanbury from the SW regarding their thoughts and suggestions regarding the event. It was agreed that not being aware of the likely entrants this year, that their views of not being too stringent in the makeup of the teams was very valid.

**Action to be taken:** LEW will keep us updated. The running of Winton Cup will be dependent on government guidelines at the time of the event. It is too early in the year to make any meaningful decisions.

**5) Proposed name change and update on constitution & rules:** CM updated the committee as to the Disciplinary Policy which is now complete and Welfare Policies which is underway. For the welfare policy he is utilising the advice of Mariette Mason who has expertise in working with vulnerable/elderly with the NHS.

The membership will be consulted, and the new constitution and name change will be put to the vote at an EGM.

The committee has agreed to host a forum so people can explore the issues surrounding a change of name and host a zoom call for those who wish to discuss the matter before an EGM is proposed.

**Action to be taken:** GP to set up forum, CM to agree dates for Zoom meeting and EGM. LCW to use this as a mechanism to explain why the proposal for a name change has been made and the history around the last vote.

**6) Selection:** GP advised that the selection committee has confirmed Guildford would probably be used as a selection event for the Worlds in 2021 but no decision has been made on how many places would be allocated from this competition and how many would be discretionary based on past performance.

**Action to be taken:** Decision on selection from Guildford will be determined on how and if we can run the event. We may need to formulate two plans: one based on

Guildford taking place and one based on it not. Mention was given to finding out which members are intending to attend the Worlds in 2021 should they qualify.

**7) Website:** LCW shared details of the website and talked the committee through what would be included. It was proposed that the launch should perhaps be delayed until after the EGM on the name change however most of the committee decided the website launch should be asap. KA asked that a link could be provided so competitors can enter competitions online.

**Action to be taken:** Biographies and photos requested from all members. BD to provide LCW with some action shots. LCW to share link to website to the committee for comments. LCW to ensure link available to enter competitions.

**8) Newsletter:** NH. Item to be discussed more fully in next meeting but second part of April newsletter going out shortly and it was proposed that the Summer edition would focus on an Olympic Special.

**Action:** NH to launch second part of April Newsletter and share with BF

**9) Co-opting the Team Manager onto the committee:** CM proposed that Gillian Aghajan, in her role as Team Manager and as our EVF representative, should be co-opted onto the committee as a non-voting member.

**Action Taken:** All agreed.

## **10) AOB**

i) LCW suggested we should give consideration to welcoming new BVF members, particularly when they attend competitions for the first time, possibly by meeting them beforehand (maybe in a hotel or similar) to advise on competition procedure and introduce to other members etc.

**Date of next Committee meeting Wed 26th May 7-9pm**