

BVF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held at

**The Harvey Hadden Sports Village,
Wigman Road, Bilborough, Nottingham, NG8 4PB
on Saturday 21 March 2026 at 5pm**



Committee members present: Carl Morris (CM) President, Paul Baillache (PB) Treasurer, Luce Wright (LW) Secretary, Beth Cranston-Selby, Jane Hutchison (JH), Naomi Donaldson, Graham Paul.

Attendees: 26 members of BVF

Apologies: Gillian Aghajan, Peter Eames, Sheila Anderson and Chris Prevett.

Approval of the minutes of the AGM held on 22 March 2025

On a proposal by Luce Wright seconded by Sue Brooks the minutes were unanimously accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the President.

President's Report (appended)

CM delivered his report outlining BVF's activities in 2025. He noted that the social aspect of BVF is not thriving as well as it could and suggested that a social committee might be a good idea.

Secretary's Report (appended)

The report had been distributed and there were no questions.

Treasurer's Report (appended)

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

PB noted that last year there was a large expenditure on the website which will stand BVF in good stead for the future and will not rely on individuals. Costs are continuing to increase and next year will be tougher still.

On a proposal by Naomi Donaldson seconded by Carl Morris, the accounts for 2025 were unanimously approved.

Membership report (appended).

JH delivered the membership report and noted that the Winton Cup is an ideal opportunity to draw new members in. She also commented that medals for the best 80+ fencer in each weapon at qualifying events might attract people to stay fencing competitively for longer.

Increase in membership fees

On a proposal by Graham Paul seconded by Alex Ellison it was decided unanimously to increase fees from £15 to £20 in 2027.

Elections

Luce Wright was elected unopposed as President and Beth Cranston-Selby and Jacqueline Esimaje-Heath were elected unopposed as ordinary members. All will serve a three-year term.

CM thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was closed at 6.04pm.

Luce Wright

BVF Secretary

7 May 2026

APPENDICES

President's Report

This has been another strong and active year for British Veterans Fencing. Membership has remained virtually static with a year-end figure of 621 being just 6 down on 2024. But a greater interest being shown by Cat 1 fencers with the news of World Championship inclusion.

Domestic Season

Leading into our international events, our domestic competitions were all well attended and successfully delivered:

- National Championships – Manchester (the last to be held there)
- Guildford
- Age Group Championships – Nottingham

These events continue to form the backbone of our competitive structure and provide the pathway into international selection.

European Championships – Plovdiv, Bulgaria (May)

We fielded a team of 85 GB fencers.

The team achieved excellent results, including:

6 Individual Gold Medallists. Paul Wedge, Greg Allen, Sheila Anderson, Georgina Usher and Jenny Morris.

Multiple strong performances across weapons and age categories

A tremendous effort from the entire squad. Well done to all who represented Great Britain.

World Championships – Bahrain (October)

As always, a very tough event.

Our results included:

Splendid gold for Paul Wedge - adding to his gold at the European Championships

Women's Team Épée – a brilliant gold

4 Individual Bronze Medals

Team Bronzes in:

Women's Sabre

Women's Foil

Men's Foil

These are outstanding achievements at world level and reflect the depth and competitiveness of British veteran fencing.

I should also give a special mention to Jane Hutchison and Viv Frith for winning European Fencer of the Year in their respective categories.

Finance

We made a small loss this year. However, overall finances remain healthy despite investing in a new website. The old one was beginning to creak and, without the guiding hand of John Mason, this felt like the right time to modernise. It is more versatile and has allowed us to address better ways of renewing subscriptions and competition entry.

That said, we anticipate tougher conditions ahead. Rising cost is becoming increasingly challenging and we cannot ignore the direction of travel.

The cost of running events has increased significantly, particularly:

- Venue hire
- Referee fees and expenses
- Equipment transport and storage

Paul's Treasurer's report covers this in more detail but these increases are structural, not temporary. Venue providers in particular are raising rates year on year, and referee costs reflect both market pressures and the need to maintain appropriate standards at our competitions.

For that reason, we are proposing a rise in membership fees. This is the first increase in many years. The committee have not taken this decision lightly, but believe it to be necessary to ensure future sustainability. We believe this to be a measured step that will allow us to remain financially secure while continuing to provide strong domestic events and support for international competition.

Social

Competition results and medalling internationally is an important part of veterans fencing and whilst our results have been more than creditable given the size of our participating members relative to other countries, what should set us apart from other areas of the UK fencing community is the social aspect of veterans fencing. Many members have been friends over many years and enjoy the opportunity to meet up, socialise and make new friends. Apart from a very successful dinner at the Winton Cup and a small meeting after The Bard's Bash I don't feel that this aspect of our organisation has been too successful and I am open to suggestions how this could be improved. It has been suggested that a separate social committee might generate more activity here so if anyone has any thoughts on that please contact me or anyone on the committee as we are open to any ideas.

Acknowledgements

It was a sad year in that we lost two of our longest serving and most supportive members:

John Crouch

John Mason

Their contribution to veteran fencing over many years cannot be overstated.

I would also like to thank –

Graham Paul as Chair of Selectors and his team of

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

Theo Ayawale, who has provided valuable support on the committee over the past few years and has decided to stand down this year

Lucy Wright, who in addition to her secretarial duties has devoted, and is still devoting, an enormous amount of time to the new website
Gillian Aghajan who does such a professional job as EVF rep and Chef de mission.
All members of the committee who have supported me throughout the year

Closing

Membership is holding steady. International results are strong. Our domestic events remain well supported. While financial pressures are increasing, the organisation remains healthy and forward-looking.

Thank you to everyone who continues to make British Veterans Fencing what it is.

Carl Morris – BVF President

Secretary's Report

Four full committee meetings have been held since the last AGM, predominantly via Zoom, but we also held one physical meeting at Cophorne which proved very productive. As well as full committee meetings there have been various meetings to further organisations of events and to discuss matters in-depth.

General updates were sent throughout the year using Mailchimp and the newsletter has now been discontinued as the nature of disseminating BVF news changes.

The main project this year has been the design of the new website which was launched in January, after Guildford had taken place. This has been a huge task, for which I was mainly responsible, although I have had a lot of input from other committee members. I particularly appreciate the support and help given by Carl Morris, who has been a sounding board, tester and adviser throughout the process. The final result has had teething problems, but does have great scope to provide BVF with a robust solution for membership and entry which can be managed well into the future. With the sad loss of John Mason earlier in the year, the timing of the new website is poignantly apt.

Thank you for all your support over the last year and I look forward to communicating with you all over the next 12 months.

Lucy Wright – BVF Secretary

Membership Report

Membership Summary for 2025

	Men	Women	Total
2025 year	452	169	621
New Members	38	12	50
Not renewed	34	22	56

We are just 6 members down on last year
2024 – 627 members

By **Category**

	Men	Women	Total	% of membership
Cat 1 (40-49)	70	25	95	15
Cat 2 (50-59)	135	49	184	30
Cat 3 (60-69)	142	56	198	32
Cat 4 (70-79)	68	29	97	16
Cat 5 (80+)	32	7	34	5

There are 7 male members over 90 yrs who are listed in the 80+ category. There is still not an 80+ category in fencing so they have to fence in the 70+ category in competition. This may change in future as the number of older fencers is growing but the feeling is there are not the numbers of active fencers to make separate categories worth doing.

By Home Country

	MEN	WOMEN	Total	% of membership
ENG	350	125	475	76
WAL	22	14	36	6
SCO	33	15	48	8
NI	7	2	9	1
CI	3	7	10	2
None	22	9	31	5

Jane Hutchison - Membership

Treasurer's Report

This report covers the accounts for the year 2025, and 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 once again performing an independent examination of the accounts.

Headline result

Reserves have fallen slightly by £297, (increase of £2,865 in 2024) primarily due to the costs of redeveloping the website and associated systems of c£5,000, offset by c£5,000 from the excess of subscriptions over administration costs, the other events and activities run by BVF in aggregate breaking even.

2025 Accounts

Because in any one year the P&L includes material cash flows (both income and expenses) for mainly the Guildford event in the following January, and similar cashflows for other events we pre-pay for 2026, the surplus of income over expenses shown in the P&L account is not often representative of the change in BVF funds.

The Balance Sheet correctly allows for all the assets and liabilities, and the closing balances are the true BVF reserves.

I have included a table showing the movement in reserves from one year to the next, showing the contribution from each event and other activity which is of much more use to members, and I recommend focusing on this, alongside the Notes to the accounts.

(a) Subscriptions and Administration

Subscription income has fallen in 2025. We have lost some members, and part of the drop may be due to timing of payments.

The committee has met by Zoom in 2025 apart from two physical meetings. Virtual meetings allow the committee to meet more often and at short notice to discuss specific issues. Directors & Officers insurance was renewed for 2025/26. We are now also paying a specific web hosting fee for the website. Licences for web services such as Survey Monkey, MailChimp, and Zoom were renewed, and these amount to a material cost of running BVF.

We have had the website, entry, and payments systems fully rebuilt by an external software company, so that it is fit for the long term. This cost c£5000.

(b) Events

EVF Guildford made a surplus of £1555. Guildford is the most complex and expensive event we organise – there is significant cost of referees, accommodation for officials, and good quality equipment, the costs of which are ever increasing. On this event we must set entry fees under EVF rules.

The **Age Groups** event was held in Nottingham. The event was run over 2 days this year, and as a result made a profit of £1072 compared to the big loss in 2024 when it was held over 3 days. Events run over 3 days make a loss due to higher costs of venue, kit hire, and hotels, for no material increase in entry fees.

The **BVF Nationals** were held at the Manchester Fencing Centre for the final time and made a loss of £337. This loss is acceptable and in line with previous years.

The **Winton Cup** made a small loss of £159. As indicated last year the return to Lilleshall with higher venue costs was likely to lead to a loss, as other event costs have also risen. This is the largest non-selection event attended by many members, we do not aim to make a profit and making a small loss is reasonable.

The **European Individual Championships** held in Plovdiv made a small loss of £358. A lower entry in Bulgaria than the previous championships in France raised less administrative levies to contribute towards event costs.

The **World Championships** in Bahrain led to a loss of £842. Fortunately costs in Bahrain were lower than might have been expected. Whilst we received more fencer administrative levies due to the increased numbers of fencers from 40+, BVF had to pay double the team entry fees as there are now both veterans and grand veterans teams, and pay for more team gifts.

The **Bards Bash**, is run by Shakespeare Swords, however BVF collected the entry fees on their behalf, so the event is shown in our accounts. The small surplus arises from the social BBQ that was held by BVF.

(c) Ad-hoc use expenses in 2025

Some one-off but not material expenses are covered under administration costs.

(d) Other

BVF established a 'hardship fund' in 2022 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 a couple of free entries were granted in 2025.

No disbursements were made from the Dennis Hunt Fund established in 2021 in support of sabre related causes.

The Future

(i) Subscriptions

The subscription rate of £15 has been unchanged for many years and should probably have been increased by now.

However, as the new payment system where fees are collected through Stripe, costs BVF a small fee, and we anticipate losing some passive members by moving to the new system, we are considering an increase in 2026.

(ii) Entry fees

We maintained fees at £45 in 2025 across all events, although entry fees for EVF Guildford are set in line with EVF rules. We will try and avoid increases; however, it is clear from events in 2025, and bookings for 2026, that our costs for venues, equipment hire, hotels and refereeing are rising significantly. We can continue to subsidise loss making events from reserves (ie from subscriptions received in excess of administration costs), but this is not a long-term proposition. Also as noted above now that payments are collected through Stripe we are now incurring a small payment fee. We have decided to use a payment system as the previous manual method was becoming far too onerous and time-consuming to maintain.

(iii) Medals stock

We order medals on demand and only hold supplies sufficient to cover the next few events, hence the small increase in medal stock in 2025. The remaining 'old' medal stock (value c£500) from the previous supplier will be run down where possible, and eventually be written off if the medals are not considered usable.

(iv) Future Events

The most significant costs of events are venue, refereeing, and equipment hire. We have been fortunate Kent Fencing have loaned us equipment for little cost. BVF is immensely grateful for this, and thanks Kent Fencing, through Peter Huggins, for this support. This arrangement cannot be relied on in future of course and external equipment hire costs are likely to continue to increase.

We have seen all competition costs rise in the current economic climate, and we have seen increases in venue and hotel costs. It should be noted that the cost of venue and equipment for the Nationals in the new venue will be significantly more than we paid in Manchester. Costs of referees are higher, as we have made efforts to ensure events are well refereed, particularly EVF Guildford. It is highly likely that we will make losses on some events this year and we will have to subsidise them from reserves.

The European Team Championships will be held in 2026 in Cognac. As usual BVF are likely to subsidise the event as fencer contributions will not cover entry fees and team manager costs, as in

previous events. Unfortunately, no surplus was made in Plovdiv to help cover this, and that is likely to recur next year with the Individual Championships being held in North Macedonia and possibly less fencers attending.

The World Championships are planned to be in Tbilisi, so should incur slightly less team management costs compared to previous events.

(v) Level of BVF Reserves

The level of reserves is very healthy, at £61,904. BVF will continue to aim to maintain reserves by trying to break even on events, whilst covering any losses from the excess of subscriptions over administration costs. BVF may also subsidise non-ranking social fencing events, or other initiatives.

Members may ask why such reserves are needed. We have as indicated in 2025 invested material funds in rebuilding our online systems, such that they are fit for the long term. BVF last hosted a major international event in 2016, the European Team Championships, and the World Championships in 2006. Whilst there are no immediate plans to host major events like these, should BVF ever need to do so, the financial commitment would be material, and it is prudent to build up our finances beforehand.

Conclusion

BVF remains in good financial health, but is not immune to rising costs, and it is becoming increasingly more challenging to run events cost effectively at the level of quality we have all become accustomed to.

Paul Baillache, Treasurer BVF