



**Annual General Meeting
Held on Saturday 22 September 2018
at The Park Inn, Telford**

1. Welcome

The Secretary welcomed all members to the meeting on behalf of the Chairman and was delighted to see so many people attending.

2. Apologies

Received from: Geoff Silverman, Marish Silverman, Sarah Budden, Chris Howser, Peter Drummond, Dicky Barton and Diane Austin. There were a total of 81 members present at the meeting.

3. Minutes of AGM 2017

These had been circulated to all members and copies were available at the meeting. These were agreed unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising if not on the Agenda

John Crouch raised two points of order. Firstly, that he considered the fact that nominations for the committee had been asked for one week before the AGM whereas in the past nominations had only been requested at the AGM itself. In response, the Secretary said that the 2013 Constitution did not lay down any preclusion to sending out nominations before the AGM, but merely that the election should take place at the AGM. It was the Committee's wish that the whole membership should have the opportunity to be nominated for an appointment rather than relying upon only a small select minority as had been the case in previous years. The Chairman said that it had always been the case that nominations were asked for in advance to be sent to the Secretary by a cut-off date. John Crouch asked if nominations could be accepted from the floor. The Chairman said that this would be covered at the election of committee members. Secondly, John Crouch was concerned that the new draft constitution was attempting to bring in Electronic Voting which he considered to be wrong. The Secretary informed him that this was being discussed later in the Agenda and he would have the opportunity to vote for or against the new Constitution along with other members.

David Sweeney asked, as a point of order, why the AGM was being held at a selection competition as in the past it had always been at an open competition (the BVF Championships). The Chairman explained that she didn't see it was a problem. As an EGM had been held at the BVF Championships this year it made economic sense to hold the AGM at the Winton Cup rather than have an AGM which was not at a competition event. She also said that attendance at the AGM was the highest that she had seen. Lyn Robinson pointed out that any member could attend the AGM whether they were fencing or not and that it was not a closed meeting. She was applauded. Marcia Stretch said that the biggest attendance she had recorded when she was Secretary was 44.

5. The Chair's Report

The Chairman said she was going to read her report. Moya McNamara said that there was no need to do this as members had received it in advance and had had the opportunity to read it several times. The Chairman said she did not mind either way and asked members present if they didn't want it read. The general consensus was it was not necessary and would save time if she didn't read it. The Chairman agreed to this but said that she would like to draw attention to the thanks section in the report and thanked the 2017/18 committee members for all their hard work, and in particular she thanked John Mason, who was standing down as Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Webmaster for his valued work, support and friendship.

Working parties had been set up during the year to examine new competition and selection formats and to produce a new constitution, There were good medal successes both at Home and Abroad.

6. The Treasurer's Report

John Mason gave his report on the audited accounts. He went through the individual item headings and ended by saying that with a balance of over £25,000 in the account, he was leaving knowing that the BVF was in a healthy state for the future. He was given a round of applause by the membership. The report was accepted unanimously.

John Crouch said that he believed the Committee had had to seek legal advice during the year but it did not show on the accounts. The Treasurer responded that there were no legal fees paid out of this Financial Period. The Chairman confirmed that legal advice had been taken in 2018. The reported accounts were for 2017,

7. The Secretary's Report

The Secretary distributed his report and précised the main points. He had taken over from Marcia Stretch in May upon her resignation. The Committee had met 6 times in Swindon together with an EGM in the summer to discuss the proposed Constitution. He had dealt with the normal flow of email correspondence over this period and thanked the other Committee members for their work in this time. He announced that he would not be standing for the committee in future as the constant level of complaint and abuse aimed at committee members by a small minority on social media was unacceptable. He urged the new Committee to address this problem.

8. The Membership Secretary's Report

John Mason distributed his report on the membership. The membership currently stood at 632 of whom 39 members were new. He mentioned that the Winton Cup always provided an influx of new members but asked that everyone made an effort to spread the word about the BVF in their clubs and beyond. He also mentioned that there were still 23 members who claimed not to have an email address and who were "snail mailers". He and the Secretary would like to see this number much reduced to save on postage and printing costs.

9. Revision of BVF Constitution

The Secretary introduced this item by saying that both he and Jonathan Stanbury had been asked to update the existing 2013 Constitution and bring it more into line with other sports organisations and British Fencing. There had been 9 revisions since 2017 and it had been sent to four separate lawyers for their legal advice and agreement. It had been hoped to have the new Constitution in place for the new committee in 2018. The EGM in the summer had allowed members to discuss and make amendments to the draft document. This had then been circulated to all members with the AGM notices on 13th August 2018 and – after being told by lawyers that any further changes would necessitate going back to the membership again at another EGM/AGM – the Committee were now asking for a simple Yes/No vote on whether those present at the AGM would support its introduction. The Secretary laid aside 15 minutes for further discussion.

John Crouch stated that he had circulated an open letter to those at the Winton that day. In response, the Chairman said she was not aware of the letter and that she was disappointed that JC had not had the courtesy to give a copy of his letter to her or the Committee prior to the meeting. An outline paper on a possible methodology from John Mason was posted on the website. Further concerns about Electronic Voting were raised by other members including Jane Hutchison, Peter Baron and Marg Oniye; in particular, as to how it would be used and in what circumstances.

Graham Paul voiced his opinion that proxy voting seemed only to be used under the new constitution for an EGM not an AGM. The Secretary pointed out that a proxy vote could be used for both as stated. Graham Paul and David Sweeney went on to say that they thought the number of proxy votes allowed per member should be limited. Graham Paul considered that the British Fencing method of unlimited proxy voting was wrong and should not be followed. Caryl Oliver pointed out that this discussion was all primarily about procedure rather than the wording of the Constitution which could be looked at by the new Committee at a further date. Carl Morris pointed out that he felt the "disinterested Election Officer" should not just be appointed by the Committee but by an outside group of members.

At this stage, the Secretary drew the discussion to a close and invited the members present to vote on the motion that “the AGM supported the introduction of the proposed amended constitution”. The motion was defeated by 63 votes to 18. The Secretary stated that draft Constitution would therefore be placed back in the hands of the new committee for them to take it forward as they saw fit. The Chair thanked the Secretary and Jonathan Stanbury for the work that they had put into the Constitution to date.

10. Election of Officers

All members of the 2017/18 Committee were standing down with only two members standing for re-election. The Chairman announced that there were 10 nominations received by the Secretary by midday 14 September 2018. There were 3 contested posts and 4 nominees for ordinary members. The post of Webmaster had been mistakenly been placed under the heading of portfolio holder when in fact it should have been under ordinary member. She apologised for this mistake.

The Chairman asked the meeting whether they were content to accept nominations at the meeting. Members agreed unanimously but no further nominations were put forward.

The posts were then elected individually as follows:

Chairman. The Hon Sec stated that there was only one nominee which was Gillian Aghajan. She was elected unanimously. Her election was applauded.

Secretary. There were two candidates for this role. The Chairman announced that Lucy Wright had withdrawn her nomination and would thus not contest the role. Marcia Stretch was therefore elected unanimously. Marcia thanked Lucy for her graciousness in withdrawing.

Treasurer. There were two nominees for this role, Duncan Rowlands and Caroline Clancy. The Chairman read out their supporting statements. Both were allowed to speak for two minutes and were then asked to leave the room for the election. Caroline Clancy was duly elected by 69 votes to 5.

International Fencing Officer. There was only one nominee for this role. Graham Paul was elected unanimously.

Domestic Fencing Officer. There were two nominees for this role. Graham Paul declared that he would not contest the post. Lindsay Watkiss was therefore elected unopposed by unanimous agreement.

Ordinary members. There were four nominees for the three posts. Beth Davison, Mike Swiffin, Carl Morris and Lucy Wright. The nominees were asked to leave the room. The Chairman explained that the role of Webmaster was required but was not a role under the Constitution. Graham Paul suggested that the new committee could co-opt the role of Membership Secretary and assign the role of Webmaster. The Chairman agreed that this was a good solution and that this would allow all 4 new committee members to vote. She said that she had previously spoken to the person who had the skills to be webmaster about being co-opted in this way and that if offered he would accept. There was a general discussion and it was agreed that all 4 nominees should be on the committee and it would be easier to vote negatively i.e. show of hands for who was not wanted as elected member. The Chairman read out all of the supporting statements. After a show of hands, Beth Davison, Carl Morris and Lucy Wright were duly elected.

The 2018/19 BVF Committee as elected at the AGM is therefore as shown below:

APPOINTMENT	NOMINEE	PROPOSER	SECONDER
CHAIRMAN	Gillian Aghajan	Paul Wedge	Jane Clayton
HON SECRETARY	Marcia Stretch	Geoff Silverman	Marish Silverman

HON TREASURER	Caroline Clancy	Michele Narey	Jane Hutchinson
INTERNATIONAL FENCING OFFICER	Graham Paul	Clare Halsted	Neal Mallett
DOMESTIC FENCING OFFICER	Lindsay Watkiss	Carl Morris	Lucy Wright
MEMBER	Beth Davidson	Caryl Oliver	Carole Seheult
MEMBER	Carl Morris	Lindsay Watkiss	Neal Mallett
MEMBER	Lucy Wright	Michele Narey	Jacqueline Esimaje- Heath

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.45pm and members went into Dinner.

Signed:

BVF Chair

BVF Secretary