

BRITISH VETERANS FENCING

2020 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - ZOOM

7th November 2020 – 10:00

Hosted by Chairman – Gillian Aghajan (GA)
Co-hosted by Committee member – Beth Davidson (BD)

Attendees: 130
Apologies: Sue Benney, Mike McEwan, Keith Smith

Members in the waiting room were entered to the meeting at 09.58 by BD and GA welcomed as they were seen on screen. She informed those present that the meeting would start at 10.05 to allow for latecomers.

Introduction and welcome

GA opened the meeting at 10:05 and welcomed everyone.

She explained how the meeting would run, as per the published agenda, with a PowerPoint presentation on screen, and polls to accept minutes of 2019 AGM, approval of 2019 BVF accounts and committee elections. She said that attendees would be asked to mute, but could use the text chat to comment or ask any relevant questions. Minutes would be recorded by the Secretary.

She asked the Secretary to record apologies and then read a message, as had been requested by Mike McEwan:

“Please pass on my apologies - along with my thanks for all that you (GA) have done for Veterans in general.”

GA handed over to BD to explain some points about Zoom.

BD gave a comprehensive explanation of the options available to facilitate usage of Zoom then handed back to GA.

Approval of the minutes of 2019 AGM

GA reported that no questions on the minutes of 2019 AGM had been received in advance and asked for approval by poll vote.

GA launched the poll and asked if all members could see the poll on screen. There were some comments in chat that a few could not see the poll, so she asked BD to explain some options.

No further comments followed so GA ended the poll and shared the results:

YES – 80%

NO – 0

ABSTAIN (not present at 2019 AGM) – 20%

Minutes of 2019 AGM approved.

Reports

GA said that 2019 reports had been published on the BVF website and that all members had been informed and sent links to the documents, therefore she would not be reading them out, but would like to point out some highlights of 2019, shown on screen and read these out:



2019 – some highlights

- 15 medals at Individual European Championships, Cognac – 8th on medal table
- Team match GBR v GER in Bath
- BVF International Guildford set up – EVF ranking event and GBR selection
- 8 individual and 2 team medals at World Championships, Cairo – 2nd on medal table

GA said that GBR had the second highest number of weapon entries at the World Championships in Cairo.

She thanked Graham Paul and Jane Hutchison for their work on GBR v GER match.

There had only been two questions submitted in advance:



Submitted questions

- GBR selection – guarantee of not including European competitions?
- Constitution – current situation?

Alard van Westarp had asked if the committee could guarantee that European competitions would not be used for GBR selection.

GA said that the current committee would not have used European competitions for selection for 2020 if the European Team and World Championships had been held. She said that Carl Morris, Chairman-elect, had stated on his nomination form that he is against including European events for selection but that she nor he could not offer a guarantee as this would be up to the new committee.

Lawrence Burr had asked what the current situation was with the constitution.

GA said that over the last few years, she and committee had tried hard to implement changes to the constitution (2013) which included allowing all BVF members to vote electronically or by proxy, but that this had not ended as she had wanted. However, the constitution was still being reviewed and had not been put on the back burner. She said that it will be reviewed by the new committee, and that she had discussed this with Carl.

Approval of 2019 Financial Accounts

GA reported that the financial accounts for 2019 had been published and no questions had been submitted. She handed over to Caroline Clancy (CC), Treasurer, to present the accounts on-screen.

CC reported that the accounts had been reviewed by Jean-Luc Janet and read out a statement from him:

“This is to confirm that I have reviewed the latest version of the accounts and have concluded that these provide a true and fair view of the financial position of BVF in 2019.”

CC gave a report of P&L Balance Sheet and notes and asked that any questions could be answered after her presentation.

Yvonne Walls raised a concern (voice) about the loss made on the GBR v GER match and whilst she understood that it was a benefit to international relationships, she asked if other competitions were subsidising the loss. She said that the European Championships had made a big profit and asked if the loss was proportionate.

CC said that some competitions make a loss but that the German match was an historical event, alternating with GBR and GER hosting and that it is an event that is used to maintain and build on our international relationships and the event did not seek to break event.

Jane Hutchison commented (by chat) that the committee had set a budget for this event, and it had finished under budget.

GA confirmed this and emphasised that the event is a good benefit to international relationships. The Germans had paid their own entry fees for the Bath event. The Italian Veterans had been invited but this fell through at the last minute.

CM said that the new committee would discuss at committee meeting.

Jacqueline Esimaje-Heath asked (voice) if overall events are making a loss met by income, going forward is this sustainable. Could there be other options.

John Mason commented (by chat) that BVF has a reserve of £30K.

GA said that with a reserve of £30K that BVF is not in a difficult position, but agreed that making consistent losses would be a problem. She said that the Germans had spent a huge amount on the last match that they hosted, much more than BVF committee could commit to a budget. International relationships are important and there is potential to expand the event to include Italy and possibly France. She said that COVID-19 had made things very difficult globally and that BVF would not be in a position to hold this event for a few years. The new committee would be able to consider options.

CC pointed out that the BVF International (2020) had made a profit and that the nature of events determined profit and loss.

There were no other questions on the accounts.

GA thanked CC for her very comprehensive report and thank her for all her work during the time that she had been Treasurer. She also expressed thanks to Jean-Luc Janet.

GA explained that CC was standing down as Treasurer at the end of the AGM as her busy life meant that she could no longer give as much time as she would like to. GA thanked co-opted Treasurer Paul Baillache for taking on the role and said that CC would work with him as transition.

All current committee members would stand down at the end of the AGM and the newly elected committee would then be in place. She said that there would be an option for an informal chat meeting for all after closure of the AGM.

GA launched the poll to approve the BVF 2019 Financial Accounts and then shared the results:

YES	98%
NO	0
ABSTAIN	2%

BVF 2019 Financial Accounts approved.

Committee Elections

GA reported that there had been some very recent changes and that the only contested positions were now Secretary and Elected (ordinary) Members and that she would launch a poll to vote for Secretary – Nicola Hull or Marcia Stretch.

(Duncan Rowlands commented by chat the reports had not been presented.

GA thank him, but said that earlier in the meeting that no questions had been submitted on the published reports and that she would not be reading them out, just the 2019 highlights of Chairman's report.

She said that the Secretary's report showed how many committee meetings there had been and that 'snail mail' had been sent to those who do not have email.

She asked Lucy Wright (LW), Membership Secretary, if she would like to say anything about the Membership Secretary's report. LW said that there had been no significant change in numbers but 2020 would be a concern.

Some comments were made (chat) on low numbers for Cat 1 (40-49) i.e. how can this be improved.

LW said that with Worlds entry at 50+ this has always been a problem, but it is an ongoing piece of work.

GA agreed that with Worlds at 50+ and Europeans at 40+ that this had always been a problem and that there have always been issues with 40+ being able to compete at events – work, spouses, young families. The current committee had set up a Participation Sub-committee who had been been investigating participation and she hopes this will continue.)

Clare Halsted asked (chat) for a list of current nominations for elections.

GA said that Graham Paul (GP) had withdrawn his nomination for International Fencing Officer and Membership Secretary and would only be standing as Elected Member. She read out a statement from GP as had been requested:

“I welcome the addition of the younger fencers onto the committee, and feel that they have much to add to BVF.

I have trained and fenced with Kola a number of times and admire his enthusiasm. I am confident that he will he will put the same enthusiasm into the role of International Fencing Officer.

For these reasons, I wish to withdraw my nominations for IFO and membership secretary, and will stand as an ordinary member of the committee.”

GA explained that there were potentially 5 nominations (as on the website) for the 3 positions of Elected Members, depending on the results of election for Secretary. There would be 3 separate (identical) polls for Elected Members to vote one at a time.

GA said that the committee had spent time on the deciding the best way of voting and that she had also taken legal advice.

Election of Secretary

GA asked membership to vote for Nicola Hull or Marcia Stretch and launched the poll.

Result

Nicola Hull	54%
Marcia Stretch	39%
Abstain	7%

Nicola Hull appointed as Secretary.

GA asked if she would accept and hence withdraw her nomination as Elected Member.

GA thanked Marcia for all the work she has done for BVF in the 10 years that she had been Secretary and congratulated Nicola.

Election of Elected (ordinary) Members

Nominees:

Beth Davidson

Nick Fihosy

Nicola Hull

Graham Paul

Mike Swiffin

POLL 1 – GA asked members not to vote for Nicola Hull – only one vote permissible

Result

Beth Davidson – 43% (of 4)

POLL 2 – GA asked members not to vote for Nicola or Beth

Result

Graham Paul – 61% (of 3)

POLL 3 – GA asked members not to vote for Nicola, Beth or Graham

Result

Nick Fihosy – 60% (of 2)

Appointed – Beth Davidson, Graham Paul and Nick Fihosy.

GA congratulated all three members and said that she hoped that there would be another option for Mike Swiffin.

Election of Unopposed Positions

GA explained that usual past practice at AGMs has been to vote for the whole committee (unopposed) en bloc and that the poll for the rest of the committee positions would take this format with YES, NO or ABSTAIN.

Nominees;

Chairman	Carl Morris
Treasurer	Paul Baillache
Domestic Fencing Officer	Lindsay Watkiss
International Fencing Officer	Kola Ayanwale
Membership Secretary	Lucy Wright

Result

YES	100%
NO	0
ABSTAIN	0

All appointed.

GA thanked all past committee members and volunteers she had worked with over the years and thanked everyone for their support. She congratulated the new committee and said that she was sure that they would move BVF forward in a positive way.

She explained that about the informal meeting, to be hosted by the New Chairman, Carl Morris and formally closed the AGM

Meeting closed at 11:14