

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT ON 2021

### FOR THE BVF AGM 2022

I think, given that fencing has been affected in many different ways across the UK by Covid, the Committee has achieved more than I anticipated. Whilst I feel that Zoom committee meetings are not ideal for building camaraderie and not everyone manages to give the sort of input they would in face to face meetings, we have adapted much better than I imagined. Certainly the flexibility to hold shorter meetings without having to arrange a venue is a definite plus. The general feeling is that this will be the way forward, even after Covid has passed, however there is still the need for physical meetings occasionally.

Apart from holding events which were always uncertain, our first priority was finally presenting a revised Constitution. This we did and it was ratified by the membership at the EGM of 20<sup>th</sup> October.

The main changes were:

- Transferring several of the sentences in the old Constitution into the new 'Rules & Regulations', which are available to view on the website.
- Amending the requirements so that AGMs may be both physical and virtual
- Allowing for the appointment of a non-voting Vice President whose sole function would be to assume responsibility should the Committee cease to function.
- Increasing the term of Committee members from one year to three years before they must submit themselves for re-election. This is to ensure continuity of experience. As explained at the EGM, this will mean only three Committee members, including one of the officers, will be up for election at this AGM and the remaining members will serve for either another one or two years.\*

\*For this AGM, due to Lindsay Watkiss standing down, only one of the officers and one of the ordinary members will be up for re-election. Although I am willing to continue in the role for a further term, as I have headed up all of the changes recommended by the Committee this year, I have decided that the correct course of action is to offer myself up for re-election first. Nick Fihosy also kindly put himself forward to do the same. So although there will be three possible positions to fill, only two of the existing committee members are standing again.

Whilst working on the Constitution we have also written a Disciplinary Policy and have introduced a Welfare Policy – many thanks to Mariette Mason for helping us with the latter.

We updated our website. Main thanks to Lucy for driving this through with help from Mike Swiffin and John Mason.

Graham Paul, as Chair of Selectors, increased his team of selectors to six, which helps when individual selectors feel either conflicted or have insufficient knowledge of individual fencers. The team is:

- Epee - Neal Mallett and Jenny Morris
- Foil - Nick Mort and Gillian Worman
- Sabre - Chris Prevett and Jane Hutchison

### Events

**Guildford 2021** - 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021 – We were pleased to be able to hold this event after a very long time away from competitive fencing due to Covid. A lot of thought went into the safety aspects and it was a successful event.

**Winton Cup** – 25<sup>th</sup> / 26<sup>th</sup> September – Arguably the most enjoyable event of the year as there is no thought of qualification and it was great fun. Again, restrictions were in place, but this didn't seem to hinder proceedings. Thanks to Marcia and Lindsay for the organisation, John Crouch and Phil Palmer for DT and also Gillian for organising the Saturday evening dinner.

**Vets Worlds** – 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> October – Were due to be held in Florida but unfortunately were yet again cancelled due to Covid.

**BVF Championships** – 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> October – We decided to go ahead with our Championships and, unusually, made it the first of our three selection events for 2022. In part this was due to the uncertainty of Covid at the beginning of 2022, but also because it does free up a fairly tight schedule in the first quarter. Again it was a very successful event and we all enjoyed Mike Swiffin's new look fencing centre – what a transformation! Well done Mike (he didn't fence too badly either)! This seemed to work well as a selection event. The only issue with holding this event in the preceding year for qualification was that about 10% of the competitors were due to go up a category this year. As I usually compile the Ranking Lists, it was a little more time-consuming than normal, but after quite a few mistakes (by me) and corrections, we finally got it sorted.

**Guildford International** – 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> January – Strictly speaking not in 2021's calendar, but given the timing of this AGM, I have decided to include it as it is worthy of a mention. A huge thanks to all involved in this event. Lots of discussions with EVF over Covid. Lots of uncertainty and a disproportionate amount of time spent by the organisers to make sure all went well. I am not going to go through the list of people who deserve our thanks for making this such a success as I have already done this in a previous communication, but I must give another mention to Graham, Kola and Paul who really went over and above to pull this off.

For all the events above we were indebted to Peter and Janet Huggins, Mike and Lyn Robinson for the DT, Graham Paul, Gillian, Marcia, Lucy for communication. I've been very fortunate to have such an experienced team of people around to make things work.

In a very challenging year my thanks go to your Committee: Kola Ayanwale, Paul Baillache, Beth Davidson, Nick Fihosy, Nicola Hull, Graham Paul, Lucy Wright and, last but not least, Lindsay Watkiss who will be stepping down this year – many thanks to him for his hard work over the past three years.

And finally, on behalf of all the Committee, thanks for the continued support of all our members in what has been a very challenging year.

*Carl*

Carl Morris  
President BVF

28 January 2022