

**Northampton Fencing Club**  
**69<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting:**

Northampton Fencing  
Club Annual General  
Meeting

**Date:** 14/1/2016

**Time:** 8pm

**Location:** Pitsford Sports  
Hall

**Chair:** Robert “Bob”  
Grange (BG)

**Minutes:** Stephen  
Conroy (SC)

**Opening**

President Bob Grange opened the meeting with thanks to those in attendance and re-iterated voting rights.

**1. Previous Minutes**

Stephen Conroy (SC) summarised the minutes of the 68th Annual General Meeting,

**2. Subscriptions**

Paul Drake (PD) handed out copies of the club’s Financial Statement, outlined the current state of club finances and club equipment, and with those points in consideration that the committee recommended that Subscription Fees for 2016 be frozen at their current rate.

Membership passed vote unanimously.

**3. Proposal for Funding Teams Competing at the British Championships**

BG gave way to Abby Brown (AB) to present the case in favour of the club funding teams to compete at the annual British Team Championships, and to PD to present the opposing case. A full and wide-ranging discussion was then held among all members discussing the developmental aspects, financial considerations, and competitive benefits.

AB: that the initiative would be good for development of club fencers, a vote of support from the club to its competing members, and that it would encourage members to do external competitions where otherwise they would not. Abby cited the positive impact on Tessa James that doing the national team championships had had.

PD: Outlined the cost per team as £75, and the number of teams could in theory be as many as six or more, thus increasing the cost to the club and therefore not a good use of club money. Furthermore, PD stated that neither he nor other members who have done the British Team Championships or other team events have asked for entry expenses.

Jamie McClement: agreed in favour of AB's argument, as the nationals are a special case, and if necessary cap the number of funded teams to one men's and one women's.

Stephen Conroy: disagreed with proposal, arguing that there was no link between funding teams to the nationals and developing the club's fencers. Would rather see two NFC training nights a week but finances and demand prevents this. If the club proceeded with the proposal it would require setting competitive performance targets, which he argued was not in the spirit of the club.

Abdul Al-Tayib: argued that the financial position requires looking at most of all in this situation.

Marco Maccaroni: referring to the club Statement the fact that the club had spent more than it had taken in (PD clarified the extra kit purchases made this year added to this).

Mrs Elliot: Pointed out that the Subscription fees would have to rise to cover such funding and because of the loss the club had made.

AB/Rob Appleyard (RA): Abby countered that the self-worth it would provide through club support would convince people to compete, to which RA retorted that such fencers did those competitions anyway despite not getting any club funding.

Grainnie May: suggested that fund-raising competitions could be held to help raise monies to cover entry fees.

Max Houghton: pointed out that the club had made a loss in 2015 on running the county championships, but there is no intention of dropping the hosting of this event. With this in mind, MH asked why the club should make a further loss with team funding?

Graham Beech: in favour of the proposal, or a variation of it such as a bursary award particularly for Cadet Winton Cup selections.

Paul Willmott: agreed that both arguments had valid points, but agreed with Jamie McClement's view about the special nature of the team nationals.

Mark Bampkin: expressed concerns that the teams funded would merely consist of the same people every year, and that a rolling-development selection be implemented in the event of passing the proposal.

Stephen Conroy: argued that using the national team champs.as a development programme would eventually lead to beginners/intermediates going against Olympians, stating that if the proposal were accepted that the teams that go are there to win it.

RA: argued that a one off bursary fund would be too small to make a real difference.

Peter Kelly: argued that the process of how this would work was unclear, and that it was also a question of whether this changed what the club stands for.

Abdul Al-Tayib: argued it would be better to fund attendance to training camps instead.

Lee Robinson: argued that the club as a whole would not benefit from funding individuals to go away to compete/train, and that developing the club's fencers as a whole on a club night is the priority. Such funding would be unfair to the rest of the membership.

BG closed discussion, and asked for votes in favour, against, and in abstention of the proposal.

Votes for: 9

Votes against: 13

Abstentions: 5

Proposal in not carried, the club will not fund entry of teams to the annual British Team Championships.

#### **4. British Fencing Codes of Conduct and Ethics**

SC updated the membership on club welfare issues and outlined that the new membership form will include an agreement to adhere to the principles and practices of the BFA Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics.

Passed unanimously.

#### **5. Officer's Reports**

- i) **Captain's Report**  
 Graham Beech (GB) announced his final report as Captain. He expressed his praise for the club's competitions, particularly how the Challenge Shield events have gone from having a handful of entries to becoming full-scale competitions in their own right; very pleased at the addition of a team competition, and thanked AB for establishing this. He expressed his pride in the 2015 County Championships, particularly in having six matt pistes laid out for the occasion. He listed the club's various achievements competitively, noting that the sheer number of them meant that not all could be included in his speech due to time constraints. Special congratulations were given to Jamie for achieving his Level 5 Epee Coach Diploma, Ben Warwick for being awarded his Level 1 Sabre Coach qualification, PD for the new website, SC for his email updates, Lynda Norrie for her historical efforts in establishing the junior presence we now have, and Rob May for his extraordinary comeback from illness and operation. GB finished saying that last year's Captain's Challenge of trying a new weapon has been a success, and that this year the challenge to members is to learn the rules better and refereeing signals.
- ii) **Secretary's Report**  
 SC presented his report on club communications, noting that the year had been disappointing in terms of Beginner course intake, however the new website looks set to help address this concern. He thanked members for reading his email updates, and thanked BG and AB for their efforts in assembling volunteers for the Hollowell Steam Rally, with the club receiving £1,000 from the organisers in a record-breaking year.
- iii) **Treasurer's Report**  
 PD reiterated previous comments regarding finances such as the continuing disappearance of kit, and the loss made while hosting the county championships. AB asked for clarity on what sundries are, to which PD explained the meaning.

## **6. Election of Officers**

Election of Officers took place, with no positions contested. Therefore, the following officers were voted in unanimously:

- Chairman: Paul Drake (replacing Paul Willmott)
- Secretary: Peter Kelly (replacing Stephen Conroy)
- Treasurer: Abdul Al-Tayib (replacing Paul Drake)
- Captain: Rob May (replacing Graham Beech)
- Vice-Captain: Stephen Conroy (replacing Rob May)
- Women's Captain: Abby Brown (re-elected)
- Welfare Officer: Helen Gaskarth (re-elected)
- Ordinary Member: Paul Willmott (replacing Barney Byron)

## **7. Confirmation of Honorary Auditor**

PD announced that due to him not being Treasurer anymore that the Honorary Auditor represented no conflict of interest with the new Treasurer. Proposal to continue with the services of Gill Cheney as Honorary Auditor passed unanimously.

## **8. Presentation of Trophies**

BG gave way to Paul Willmott to introduce the Jane Daniel Sportsmanship Award, and PW in turn informed/reminded members about Jane's role and story within the club. BG presented the award for Sportsmanship to Grainnie May.

BG then presented the Most Improved Fencer Award, noting how close the vote was this year so much so it had gone down to the night of the AGM itself. The NFC Most Improved Fencer for 2015 was Abdul Al-Tayib.

## **9. A.O.B.**

PD proposed a change to the Constitution, a passage of which states that contacts details of all members can be accessed on request by any member. Motion carried unanimously in favour.

PD requested the membership approve a further change to the Constitution for which to grant Honorary Life Presidents a vote at AGMs, a right they currently do not have. Motion carried unanimously.

PD asked for further ideas for the new website, and to come to him in that regard in the future.

BG thanked Barney Byron and Graham Beech for their efforts and commitment while on committee.

BG announced that two Honorary Life Presidents had been appointed by the Committee; Graham Beech and Lynda Norrie, in recognition for their services to the club and developing the sport in Northampton.

Meeting closed at 21:30