

Great British Powerlifting Federation – North West Division

General Meeting held on 27/09/15

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| Present: | Jim Blanchflower | Rebecca Avgerinopoulou | James Doyle |
| | Bryn Evans | Leeza Watts | Daniel Staples |
| | Peter Ratcliffe | Michael Giles | Joe Whiteley |
| | Neil Ronaldson | Megan Blunstone | Sam Gregory |
| | Rick Booth | Charlotte Dobson | Emma Stott |
| | Jo Whiteley | Emma Sullivan | Will Wright |
| | Dave Clifford | Ben Dandy | Jimmy Nsouli |
| | Paul Constantine | Danny Taylor | Chris Eaton |
| | Moira Pritchard | Lucy Triggs | Frazer Pennington |
| | Mike Pritchard | Ahmed Kadry | Victoria Eldridge |
| | Kimberley Cowell | Andy Gregory | Andy Foster |

Apologies: Joe Bullock
Aaron Lohan

The Secretary opened the meeting by welcoming all present – a record breaking turnout – and noting that this was the second meeting of 2015 and the AGM will be held at this time each year in future.

1 Financial Report

The General Secretary presented the Financial Report since the AGM in March (attached). The NW account currently shows a balance of approximately £4,500 and, due to increased attendance at events and also Tshirt sales, revenue has increased significantly in the last year. As a result of holding the AGM in March and submitting the minutes and accounts to the EPA, the division received a rebate of £1,200.

2 Election of Officers

It was suggested that the current incumbents be re-elected and this was unanimously upheld as follows:

Chairman – Jim Blanchflower
Secretary – Bryn Evans
Treasurer – Aaron Lohan
Technical Officer – Joe Bullock
Records Registrar – Jo Whiteley

The General Secretary proposed Jo Whiteley for the position of Championship Secretary and she was voted in unanimously.

A request was made for a Media Officer and there was discussion regarding the role and responsibilities surrounding social media and traditional media. Rebecca Avgerinopoulou and Kimberley Cowell were proposed and elected unanimously.

It was agreed to hold a referee's exam early in the year as there seemed to be a lot of interest. However, it was noted that many of the people interested had not yet been members for 2 years. It was agreed that candidates should take their exam at the earliest opportunity and start to referee at events once they had been members for long enough.

The Chairman proposed that the division should institute technical meetings before each comp to further develop some of more inexperienced referees. This was upheld by the meeting.

3 Strategic Plan

The Secretary revisited the strategic plan for the division that he presented in March and commented on the progress that had been made in the areas of volunteers, key man risk and spreading the workload to a wider group. In addition, we are seeing the formation of a network of clubs and gyms throughout the region.

This prompted a discussion of developing a grass-roots level of competition to bring more lifters into the sport. The idea was for inter-club competitions to be held in a normal gym environment with a single person to officiate the lift – entry open to all and normal gymwear allowed. This would be an easy entry into the world of powerlifting without having to commit to membership fees etc. It was agreed that this would be a good area to be explore by the new County Reps.

4 County Representatives

Following on from discussions at the previous meeting and on social media, it was proposed to devolve responsibility and workload to a team of County Reps. These reps would develop their areas in terms of encouraging the formation of clubs, researching new venues for competitions and organise group training sessions. The following people volunteered and were duly elected as County Reps:

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| Merseyside: | Carl Robinson, Danny Taylor, James Doyle |
| Greater Manchester: | Emma Stott, Ahmed Kadry |
| Cumbria: | Barry Scougal, Jimmy Nsouli |
| Lancashire: | Ben Dandy |
| Cheshire: | Matthew Kelly, Neil Ronaldson |

- 5 The issue of not being able to accommodate all North West lifters at the flagship event of the year was discussed. Earlier in the year, when the Lancs & Cheshire Classic Championships were heavily oversubscribed, it was said that anyone that didn't get into the Lancs & Cheshire would get priority entry into the NW Champs. However, on investigation, every single person on the waiting list was, in the end, offered a place. Therefore the meeting decided to put this stipulation aside.

A promise had also been made early in the year to give priority entry to anyone who had contributed significantly to the running of an event (spotting, loading, setting up etc). This was with the intention of encouraging volunteers at a time when they were few and far between. This strategy was discussed at length. It was felt that this was not the driving force behind the new wave of volunteers and, although those promises should be honoured on this occasion, we would not go forward with this method for future years.

A number of different strategies were discussed including running the event over 3 days but it was eventually agreed that entry for the North West Championships 2015 should be opened up initially on an invite basis to those volunteers who had contributed to the running of the division as well as any current British Champions and top 3 lifters in the division on Wilks point. This would ensure that our elite lifters were able to compete at our flagship event. The event will be capped at 100 lifters.

6 2016 Calendar

After much discussion and consultation, Jo Whiteley put forward a calendar for 2016 that consisted of county championships acting as feeders for the main North West Championships. Additionally, a Masters & Novice competition was introduced early in the year to allow the division's masters an opportunity to qualify for the British Masters Classic as well as providing a vehicle for any new lifters. However, it was felt that a Masters competition would sit better later in the year to allow both classic and equipped masters to qualify in time so there is a second Masters & Novice competition pencilled in later in the year. Without this, a newbie coming into the sport in July will have missed the opportunity to do a 3-lift competition until the following year. Additionally, some changes were made to the calendar for logistical reasons (ie not having to transport the platform equipment back and forth).

Provisional dates only – not yet confirmed with venues

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| 17 th Jan | Master & Novice comp (NEW) | UTS, South Wirral |
| Tbc Feb | Referee's exam | tbc |
| 6 th March | Team Comp | UTS, South Wirral |
| 1 st May | Manchester & Merseyside (NEW) | UTS, South Wirral |
| 5 th June | Lancs & Cheshire | Intershape, Colne |
| 3 rd July | Cumbria Champs | Sands Centre, Carlisle |
| 31 st July | Roses Cup | tbc (Yorkshire) |
| 4 th Sept | NW Bench Press / AGM | Intershape, Colne |
| 9 th Oct | Masters & Novice comp (if required) | Intershape, Colne |
| 20 th Nov | North West Open Champs | UTS South Wirral |

The meeting agreed that the division would need a huge amount of support from its members to successfully run this many competitions and it was also agreed to defer discussion regarding the exact details of how qualification from county to division level would work.

The Championship Secretary agreed to draft some proposals for a future meeting.

7 Drug Testing

This issue was discussed and a concern was raised that many divisions now do drug testing at regional events and it would not be beneficial to be one of the few that did not. However, these are expensive (approx. £300 per test) and it was felt that the finances could not support drug testing at the moment although this decision would be reviewed regularly.

This led to an in-depth discussion of the pricing of events. It was felt that the entry fee was too low and should be raised. Comparison with other divisions showed that the North West was

one of the cheapest places in the country to enter a powerlifting event. It was decided at length to have a sliding scale for competitions as follows:

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| Novice events/small comps | £10 |
| County Champs | £15 |
| NW Open | £20 |

Increased entry fees would ultimately allow drug testing as well as supporting the division's long-term aim of purchasing platform equipment to enable the establishment of powerlifting centres and competition venues across the region.

8 National Events

The General Secretary raised the question of whether the division should bid for a national event. These have been run successfully in the division before and there was strong feeling amongst the meeting that the North West should indeed play a part on the national stage not least because it is a burden on our lifters for most national events to be at the other end of the country. The General Secretary agreed that he would enquire whether all events had been booked for 2016. If not, we would try for 2017.

9 AOB

A request was made to take a resolution to the EPA/GBPF AGM to remove the obligation for divisional referees to officiate at national events. Although we understand that there is a problem with not enough refs being available for national events, we feel that this requirement is counter-productive and will actually strangle the supply of new divisional referees. Most people in the NW who have volunteered to do the ref's exam on the next possible occasion, are doing so in order to help their division and do not expect to be required to travel many miles to attend a national event in order to validate their status. We should not prevent members from being able to serve their division just because their personal circumstance do not allow them to travel. We do however, support the idea that a national category referee should be required to officiate at national events on a regular basis to maintain their status.

With no other business forthcoming, the Secretary thanked all in attendance and closed the meeting at 5pm.