



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

30th September 2017

Present

Bryn Evans
Jo Whiteley
Joe Whiteley
Kim Cowell
Jon Wilkinson
Dave Clifford
Trevor Walker

Danny Lee
Danny Taylor
Joe Lyons
Clare Patterson
Danny Staples

Apologies

Jim Blanchflower
Rick Booth
Takiyah Daly
Rick Gould

The Chairman opened the meeting by thanking all those in attendance and reading the President's statement.

President's Report

Apologies that I cannot be here today but unfortunately it clashed with a holiday we had arranged.

Thank you all for coming today and supporting the division, your input is valuable and we always welcome constructive debate.

2017 was another year of very strong growth within the sport and it has exceeded all our expectations. This growth is very encouraging but brings with it some challenges in terms of the contest framework accommodating those numbers. I was very pleased to see the enormous support for the NW Championships at Bowlers a few weeks ago, organising these contests away from normal venues ends up being a huge logistical exercise. The whole event went without a single hitch, a credit to all the people who turned up to ensure it did. Thank you to you all and I hope we can have a repeat performance next month at the British Seniors. Our combined efforts to deliver these high quality and very popular events have started to make us the benchmark by which all other contests are measured.

As we look forward to the years ahead it is going to involve more groups hosting their own events across the region if we are to give everyone the opportunity to compete, helping out with contests in any capacity is the surest way to ensure we continue this.

Jim Blanchflower
NW President

Chairman's Report

2017 has been another brilliant year for North West Powerlifting, we conservatively estimated 10-15% growth in membership last year but we are over 20% with still 2 contests to go. This is my 10th year as a NW officer and it seems a distant memory in the pre-Facebook era that we had to ring round clubs and gyms to encourage enough people to come forward to have a small contest. Sugden Barbell was the first real portal to communicate directly the NW strength scene, since then our social media presence has continued to grow across all platforms, this along with a friendly atmosphere at well organised events has helped us to become one of the largest divisions in the BP.

Like other aspects of life sometimes as they grow they can lose their original charm and atmosphere so it's really important that we collectively welcome and support new members particularly at the novice events. This has certainly been borne out in the standard of lifting that has been seen at the last few novice contests.

The last couple of years we have spoken much of the need to help out at events in any capacity and recognising that we need to operate out of several venues around the region if we are to satisfy everyone's contest aspirations. Fighting fit, DJS, Power and fitness and Barrie Mark's along with the well-established UTS have all come forward to host good events. Next year we hope to forge some new alliances with new partners and MGS have confirmed they'll hold 2 contests- one a national which I hope you will all support. With this sudden expansion, to minimise equipment movement and vehicle rental we have bought a considerable amount of equipment and have been lucky enough to be loaned an Eleiko rack from BP.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jo Whiteley for her extraordinary efforts this year in organising the divisional admin and events whilst scoping out new opportunities for growth. Also for recognising that she cannot do everything, so developing good systems then encouraging people to take the task on then handing it over. Kim Cowell has also developed into a key member of the team taking on the running of a couple of the events along with the Media duties.

Huge thanks to everyone who has stepped forward to help in both official roles and at each of the contests. A well engaged TEAMNW has to be this year's success story and ensures a strong future for lifting in the region for many years to come.

Bryn Evans
NW Chairman

Media Officer Report

Kim Cowell, Media Officer, spoke about the developments in terms of social media and gaining greater exposure for the sport and the division. Kim highlighted the growth of the various channels:

Facebook fan page – 1,200 likes

Facebook discussion group – 900+ members

Instagram account – 1,000+ followers

YouTube account – 140+ subscribers

Twitter account – 300+ followers

Press – this was identified as an area for improvement as there is little in the way of local press coverage except in isolated hotspots. Kim welcomed any contacts within the division which she will gladly pursue.

Kim spoke of the success of the weekly newsletter which is widely read across the UK and held to be something to aspire to by other divisions.

Kim thanked the team that work across the various channels, Jord McLaughlin on Instagram and facebook, Jon Wilkinson for competition reports and articles and a new recruit, Chris Eaton who will be developing our YouTube channel.

A final point of praise and thanks to all members of our division who conduct themselves positively across our media channels.

Election of Officers

Aaron Lohan has tendered his resignation as Treasurer and we thank him for his service. Dr Rick Booth took on this role as of 1st September.

Since the last AGM, we have had a number of new officers join the team:

- Emma Stott: Records Registrar
- Rob Mitcham: Merchandise Officer
- Scarlett Portues: Webmaster
- Andrew Rothwell: In-house Designer
- Jord McLaughlin: Social Media
- Jon Wilkinson: Writer in Residence
- Takiyah Daly: Photographer / Videographer
- Chris Hubel: Divisional Referee
- Dean Barton: Divisional Referee

It is gratifying to have so many people come forward and our media team has now set the bar extremely high for the other divisions and we are held to be the gold standard.

Vacancies: Club Development Officer – this is a new role and the purpose is to develop and manage the Club Affiliate Scheme which is still in its infancy. Jon Wilkinson stepped forward to take this on and was unanimously voted in.

Financial Report

The financial year for the division is deemed to be up to 31st August each year.

Full breakdown is on the financial report attached but in summary, we have made good use of the division's reserves to purchase new and second hand equipment for use across the region.

Strategic Update

Key points:

- Organisational Strength
- Growth and Sustainment
- Quality Events

Actions were:

1. Increase number of volunteers
2. Load spread, more devolved executive function,
3. Develop skill level within executive.
4. Engage executive more frequently.

Bryn updated the meeting on the strategic plan. Most of the threats had been mitigated and we have actually succeeded in achieving most of the actions. In particular, the number of volunteers coming forward is extremely gratifying.

Future Vision:

Increase Partnership organisations – we are developing a brand new partnership with Manchester Grammar School and hope that this is the first of many.

Develop independently organised events – we have our first franchised competitions happening in 2018

Sustain the engagement of support – look after and celebrate our hard working volunteers

Increase referee numbers – we have 2 brand new referees since the AGM, Danny Smith and Stu Nicholson. The next ref's exam will be in February and we hope to welcome a number of new referees.

National Events

Jo Whiteley spoke about the importance of putting on national events so that our lifters do not have to travel to the ends of the earth in order to compete.

British Men's Classic 2017 - Arrangements for this competition were discussed at length.

British Women's Classic 2018 – Jo spoke about her visit to Manchester Grammar School and their enthusiasm for hosting powerlifting competitions and developing their powerlifting club. It is hoped that this will be the start of a beneficial partnership with them and perhaps an opening to encourage powerlifting in schools.

Future – the meeting agreed with the importance of putting on a national competition most years to support the national federation as a whole and also for the benefit of our own lifters.

2018 Calendar

Jo presented a provisional calendar for 2018 (subject to the national calendar being finalised).

Qualification for the North West Champs was discussed. The meeting agreed to maintain the system of the top lifters being given preferential invitations. However, this year, preferential invitations would be limited to 50 out of the 100 places and the winners of each weight class at the previous year's North West Champs would be included if they did not fall naturally into the top group.

Franchised competitions. This is a new idea for the North West. Currently all competitions are run by the NWPL Exec. In 2018 we are looking to franchise out some of the competitions. The promoter would take the entry fees and be responsible for all aspects of competition organisation from taking entries to buying trophies and organising volunteers. NWPL would receive 20% of the entry fees. The competition would need to be run to strict guidelines under the aegis of NWPL and the promoter would be able to borrow any equipment owned by the division as long as they transported it themselves. The current Exec are at breaking point even with the number of volunteers coming forward on an ad hoc basis and this is the only way we will be able to provide the number of competitions required by our growing membership. Already Taylor's Strength and Liverpool Barbell have come forward to franchise competitions and we would welcome more promoters, especially in poorly covered areas such as Cumbria.

Competition pricing – it was agreed that all competitions would be £20 with the North West Championships being £25 with sub-juniors receiving a 50% discount.

Affiliate Club Scheme

2017 – this was the first year of the scheme and attracted 8 affiliates, Liverpool Barbell, Fighting Fit, OSG, Taylors, Blanchflower Performance, DJS Fitness, Strength Factory and Primal. Due to workload and time constraints, some aspects of the scheme did not get up and running. However, we have run an affiliates' league during the year which will culminate in the presentation of small shields for Best Women's Affiliate, Best Men's Affiliate and a larger shield for Best Overall Affiliate. Additionally, all the affiliates bought into the idea of pull up banners to be displayed on the platform at big competitions – cost was split 50:50 between the affiliate and the division.

2018 – as we now have a Club Development Officer, Jon Wilkinson, we hope to develop the scheme to include features on affiliates, inter-club competitions and more.

Proposals for EPA AGM

- National AGMs to travel around the divisions/country. Currently both the EPA and the British Powerlifting AGMs are held in Northampton in the southern half of England. It would be fairer to rotate the host division and would give members in northern districts a better chance of being able to attend.
- Referees who officiate at 2 national championships in a year be given free membership for the following year. Currently, we do not adequately support or celebrate our officials who work hard for the federation. This would be a good thank you for their efforts.
- Referees' expenses to be increased:
 - £10 for 100 mile round trip, £20 for 200 mile round trip, £30 for 300 mile etc
 - £50 overnight expenses when 100 miles away from home and officiate 2 days runningThe current £20 per day expenses do not even begin to cover the out of pocket expenses our officials suffer in order to officiate at national events.
- Communications Officer to be appointed to the Board and to be responsible for development and execution of a communications strategy. One of the biggest failings of this federation is in the area of communication. The average member has no idea what the Board is working on or where they are up to with any of their objectives. Eg there has been no communication regarding our progress towards NGB status in two years. The lack of any kind of official social media presence is frustrating for the lifter who has a query/problem and the insistence that each individual member should independently email the Board with any questions is badly flawed and creates a huge burden on the Board members, resulting in many unanswered emails. This creates frustration amongst the lifters and gives the impression of a distant and aloof management team. In this regard, other federations do better than British Powerlifting and we should seek to close this gap. The idea is that someone who sits on the board will be responsible for acting as a bridge between the Board and the membership to facilitate communications in both directions. This role could be combined with Chair of the lifters commission as long as that person is committed to an effective communications strategy and has the skills to deliver it. Otherwise a new role should be created.

AOB

There were several questions and suggestions made during the course of the meeting which have been summarised here.

- Suggestion: have training sessions for platform crew. It was thought that this could be run in conjunction with an equipped taster day to be held in early 2018
- Question: what can we do to encourage older lifters? After much discussion, it was decided that there wasn't any real need to target this demographic
- Suggestion: a video be created for our YouTube channel demonstrating each of the 3 lifts. If anyone would like to take on the creation of this video, then we will promote it and give it a platform on our social media channels
- Storage: this is a huge problem for members of the Executive who store most of the division's equipment in their homes and given the amount of equipment we have bought in the past year, this is no longer sustainable. Additionally, it does not support the move towards different promoters having access to divisional equipment. It was agreed that we would seek out a storage solution, even though it was acknowledged that this would have a financial cost.

As there were no other issues forthcoming, the Chairman thanked all for their attendance and input and closed the meeting.