



**In Attendance:**

Caryl Oliver, Milind Pradhan, Alp Orge, Beth Cranston Selby, Lawrence Burr, Sue Brooks, Richard Bernstein, Ev van Gemeren, Fran Nottingham, Paul Ridout, Melanie Rysdale, Fran Nottingham, Neil Skinner, Ismay Cohen, Georgina Usher

**Apologies:**

Alex Tofalides

1. Caryl welcomed those joining the meeting and invited participants to introduce themselves

**2. Minutes:**

The Minutes of the previous AGM, held on 25th November 2023 were approved and there were no matters arising not already on the agenda.

**3. President Report**

The majority of 2024 has been focused on the work involved in formulating a new agreement with British Fencing. This has been somewhat overdue and a result of the changing demands of government funding bodies seeking clarity about the roles played by organisations representing fencing.

As a result of this agreement, it is acknowledged that British Fencing is the National Governing Body for the Sport in Great Britain and that England Fencing has very a very specific leadership role at Commonwealth and Home Country level while also being responsible for bringing together the regions as a community voice on behalf of all England Fencers.

The good news is that the agreement has now reached the stage where it is approved by both BF and EF Boards and will start to be implemented in April 2025. The clarified roles and responsibilities will be circulated immediately after this meeting.

While much of the time and energy of Board members has been taken up by this work, fencing has not been completely ignored and Richard will update us later on activity on this front.

Beth Cranston Selby has been appointed as a Director of England Fencing to fill the position of Regional Director. The England Regions have created a standing committee comprising all the Regions and it is this Committee that has nominated Beth. The first priority will be to identify the skills and experience that we have in the regions and then how we can harness that energy to maximise the engagement of fencers at all levels throughout England.

We are also pleased to advise that England Veteran Fencers will now be more closely aligned with Ev van Gemeren also being appointed to the EF Board.

These two appointments will bring new ideas, enthusiasm and capacity to help us engage more fencers at more levels throughout England with three Directors now specifically focused in increasing engagement of fencers at all levels. We will also seek to form working groups and appoint Officers as required to not only capture the many skills we have around us but to also ensure that the workload is spread less heavily on a very small number of Board Members.

The new agreement brings with it some financial changes which include dipping into our reserves to fund a dedicated BF Club Liaison person with whom we will work along with our Regional Committee. The Board will be meeting after this AGM to review the budget for the coming year.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the work undertaken by Alp Orge, Milind Pradhan in achieving this agreement. I also extend appreciation to Richard Benstein and his network of supporting volunteers for keeping the fencing activities alive and well!

There is much to unpack and considerable work to be done to usher in the new future for England Fencing. I bring a lifetime of passion and experience as a fencer and as an administrator but I need the collective strength of all your lifetimes of skills and experiences to ensure that the England lion has the voice that it should.

No contribution is too small, so please don't be shy about letting us know that you are there and willing to contribute.

#### **4. Financial Report**

Milind presented the accounts for the period ended 30 June 2024 which were accepted. Full copy of the accounts available on the website.

It was agreed to re-appoint Manningtons Chartered Accountants as accountants and to authorise the Board to fix their remuneration.

#### **5. Elections:**

None required to be held for this AGM.

The meeting approved the re-appointment of Milind Pradhan as an independent Director.

The meeting approved the appointments of Beth Cranston Selby as a Director on behalf of the Regions and Ev van Gemeren on behalf of the Veterans.

Caryl advised that standing committees would be formed to link through these Directors to the Board.

#### **6. Representative Fencing & Events**

The meeting formally congratulated the Junior and Cadet Fencers for their performance at the Commonwealth Championships in New Zealand.

Beth advised the meeting about the commencement of activity with the Regions and focused on creating improved connectivity across the borders by means of understanding and sharing skills and experiences. All the regions were invited to contribute ideas as well as concerns where EF may be able to assist.

Ev confirmed that the Veterans had affiliations with all the Regions and were a source of volunteers and officials for younger fencers.

The meeting agreed that concepts like 'tomorrows achievers' would be worth exploring further. The new approach to the regions was welcomed and it was understood that it would take time to build the community.

## **7. British Fencing / England Fencing update**

Georgina Usher advised that the new agreement now signed between British Fencing and England Fencing was a significant achievement. She praised the Board of England Fencing and Caryl in particular for the work involved under difficult circumstances.

Caryl confirmed that this was a new era of co-operation and advised that a precis version of the new roles and responsibilities would be circulated after this meeting. A formal press announcement would be released by British Fencing the day after the AGM.

There was no detailed discussion about the agreement as it had not yet been distributed.

## **8. Any other business**

Caryl advised the meeting of the current status for hosting the 2026 Commonwealth Championships. Nigeria and Australia were the bids currently with CFF. CFF were leaning towards Nigeria but there is a Travel Advisory against travelling to this country so England Fencing is reluctant to put fencers in danger. Ismay advised that she had knowledge of travelling in Nigeria and Caryl welcomed the opportunity to talk further after the AGM.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.01