

Annual General Meeting of Scottish Fencing Ltd  
held via Zoom  
18.00 on 13 December 2021



**Board Attendees**

George Liston	Chair
Stan Stoodley	President
Sheila Anderson	Director of Operations
David Carson	Finance Director
Hugh Kernohan	Director of Governance
Jude Salmon	Independent Director
Mhairi McLaughlin	Equalities Director

**Staff Attendees**

Vincent Bryson	Chief Executive Officer
Clare Queen	Head of Pathways and Community Change
Liz Anderson	Operations Manager

**Present:**

Sean	Walton	Salle Holyrood
Daniel	Bee	West Lothian Fencing Club
Keith	Davidson	Glasgow West End Fencing Club
Alexander	Pearson	Sancroft Blades
Niall	Campbell	Ossian
Georgina	Usher	CEO, British Fencing
Ruth	Thomson	Sancroft Blades
Jonathan	Jacobs	
Andrew	Brown	Salle Ossian
Clyne	Grant	WFFC
Karen	Grant	West Fife Fencing Club
Gregor	MacCallum	Forth Valley
David	Barbour	Foundation for Scottish Fencing
Iain	Morrison	
Peter	Drummond	Kyle
Matt	Pocock	U/A
Malcolm	Napier-Holford	Scottish Armourers
Sam	McCarlie	
Alex	McLeod	Dunedin Fencing Club
Iain	Fielding	
Keith	Cook	
Jacqui	Dunlop	Minutes

## **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Annual General Meeting. Apologies were intimated on behalf of Paul Vaughan (Director of Talent and Performance), Adam Szymoszkowskyj (Director of Development), Giles Lomax (Independent Director), Ross Morrison, Moya Nelson and Thomas Sorbie.

## **2. Minutes of Scottish Fencing 2020 AGM**

It was proposed by Peter Drummond and seconded by Sheila Anderson that the minutes of the Scottish Fencing AGM held on 10 December 2020 were a true record and this was agreed.

## **3. Presentation of Accounts for Period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021**

David Carson explained that the annual accounts showed a significant improvement with a surplus of £26,700 before tax. In the previous year there had been a deficit of £14,500 before tax, with a small recovery of tax.

The accounts had been influenced hugely by COVID, both negatively and positively. Membership income had halved from £13,000 to £7,000 and coach education income dropped from £3,600 to £1,800. The constant was the sportscotland investment which remained at £97,500.

Additional income had been secured from British Fencing for the pathways project which accounted for £2,500 in 2021 (a 14-month contract) but the biggest element of income during the period had been from COVID support grants, which had included a significant amount of money from Lothian Council of £24,800. It was important to note that £27,300 of the income was non-recurring.

Expenditure had reduced significantly as activities had been truncated due to COVID and there had been a smaller spend on competitions, coach education and national squads; payroll costs were lower due to the reduction in travel.

Admin expenses were £5,000 less, and this included the release of an accrual of £3,000 and a reduction in Board travel costs of £2,000 due to virtual meetings.

David Carson stressed again that much of the reduction in costs would be non-recurring: when activity resumed, all costs would return.

On the balance sheet, the cash balance was high at £62,000 (boosted by the COVID grants and other income), creditors were also high, mainly due to deferred income (ie Project Forte), the British Fencing project and a corporation tax liability. Scottish Fencing had used up all tax losses and corporation tax was due, payable on a surplus of nearly £3,000.

#### 4. Report on Scottish Fencing Activity

The Chair thanked members for their engagement throughout the year. The limitation of fencing activity had persisted throughout the year which was frustrating but staff and the Board team had not been idle and there had been much activity devoted to interpreting and disseminating changing Scottish Government guidance, engagement with other sports' governing bodies had increased through both the Chairs' Forum and the CEO Forum – which VB both attended and Chaired – which worked to provide a unified voice for sport.

Over the year, four Directors and two Independent Directors had been elected and it was heartening to see the number of nominees. The Staff Team had worked hard, led by Vincent Bryson and supported by Liz Anderson and Blair Cremin, who had now left the organisation and been replaced by Clare Queen from Scottish Golf.

Throughout the year there had been a review of the current strategy; following this review, nothing had been removed from the current version but the emphasis on Changing Lives had increased markedly. Unsurprisingly, membership numbers had decreased over the year but had started to recover well.

Looking forward, Scottish Fencing presented the revised Strategy to sportscotland and the accompanying request for investment in late October. The outcome of this was anticipated when sportscotland knew what their funding would be, which was expected to be early in the New Year and the membership would be updated on this once the level of investment had been confirmed.

Sean Walton asked when the strategic plan would be available to see and the Chair explained that the Strategy had been enhanced rather than amended, but there was no reason why an overview couldn't be circulated, but until it was known whether it had been supported by sportscotland there remained an element of aspiration of about it, which may not be matched by reality.

Alex Pearson asked when would there be an update on the Community Development Plans from Clare Queen, and it was confirmed that one of Clare's priorities would be to get out and meet everyone before the end of the Financial year. Clare Queen confirmed that it was one of her main priorities to get out, introduce herself to people and see the Clubs in action and she was looking forward to doing that.

Vincent Bryson explained that membership income had decreased quite significantly, which was COVID-related, and while there had been fairly consistent and steady growth since April, the total had not quite returned to the pre-pandemic level, with there being just over 800 members currently. Since July, when adult indoor contact sport had been able to resume, clubs had been able to return to fencing. Vincent Bryson noted that the membership category most beneficial to Scottish Fencing was Adult Compete, but it was important that people were joining the sport, and thanks were expressed to everyone for their work in making clubs welcoming

and enjoyable places for people to attend.

Karen Grant asked who would be taking on the Girls and Women in Fencing work and it was confirmed that this would be part of Clare Queen's remit. Mhairi McLaughlin in the Board Equality role would also be working on, with the intention to recruit and train more women in fencing.

## 5. Approval of Appointment of Independent Directors

Hugh Kernohan explained that the approval of the appointment of the Independent Directors was a formal requirement as laid down in the Articles. Independent Directors were recruited and appointed by the Board and confirmed at the following AGM. A recruitment process had been undertaken early in the year, with the Board appointing Giles Lomax and Jude Salmon. The Annual General meeting approved the appointments.

Sam McCarllie asked when confirmation of their skill sets would be received and it was noted that this information was already available on the website.

## 6. AOCB

George Liston noted that some questions had been received ahead of the AGM, and these would be responded to directly unless the person was in attendance.

- a) **AGM Notification** Hugh Kernohan confirmed that an email had not been issued about the AGM, but it had been notified on social media and the website. He acknowledged that not everyone monitored social media and that members shouldn't have to visit the website in case there was a calling notice, as there was a difference between push information and pull information. He confirmed that the AGM should be in the first category of communication, push information, and that going forward it would be standard practice to issue emails for these meetings.
- b) **Commonwealth Championships** Iain Fielding asked that, as the Commonwealth period had started but with only 12 weeks to go before selection there had been no information about training camps, rankings etc and asked when this information would be available. Vincent Bryson confirmed that there had been some movement in the related organisation and holding training camps is something that Scottish Fencing would like to do pre-selection but the calendar looked unlikely to be able to accommodate this before March. Work needed to be done on this to let people attend.

He explained that Scottish Fencing had been fortunate to secure some private investment which would enable a key position to be recruited to the staff team, a performance manager who would address aspects of related administration, training diaries, behaviours and team performance. This wouldn't end with the competition and it the role would help to put some systems in place and build

for the future. Hopefully this would be a significant position which would allow athletes to gain much clarity around behaviours and types of training in the run up to the event. The position would be advertised and the incumbent would work directly with Clare Queen and Paul Vaughan on performance.

Hugh Kernohan confirmed that he would be assisting Paul Vaughan by putting together the ranking list for the competitions which had taken place and would endeavour to get this done by the turn of the year and have the rankings available by the beginning of January.

- c) **Scottish Student Sport** Matt Pocock noted that in November 2020 Scottish Fencing signed a two-year partnership with Scottish Student Sport to develop student fencing, but there had been no mention of this on the website or social media channels. He asked why Scottish Fencing was so reticent about its partnership with SSS. Vincent Bryson explained that Scottish Fencing was not reticent about the partnership; however, with the pandemic fencing activity had reduced significantly. Clare Queen explained that she had spoken to SSS since her appointment and would pick this up in the New Year and Vincent Bryson would be touch with Matt to discuss this. Vincent Bryson noted that equipment and event access had been managed between the two organisations.

## 7. Presentation of Awards

Stan Stoodley thanked everyone for their contribution to the Awards, with the first two being voted by the membership and the Sword of Merit by the Board. A full list of Nominees and their contribution to the sport was available on the website.

The recipients of each award were confirmed as:

Crosnier Quaich for Performance: Jaimie Cook

Crosnier Coaching Award: Kevin Milne

Sword of Merit: Moya Nelson

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking all the members for their continued support throughout the year and in particular those attending the meeting. There being no other the business the meeting closed at 1840.