



**MINUTES OF THE 17th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH BIATHLON UNION
held in the RLC Bar, (Neuwirt Schule), Ruhpolding, GER
at 16:45 CET on Sunday 26th January 2014**

PRESENT:

BBU BOARD

Mark Goodson	(MG)	Secretary General and Finance Director
Col Jon Campbell	(JC)	Development Director
Carl Carrier	(CC)	Director Special Projects
Eddy Lowe BEM	(EL)	Sport Director
Col Adrian Thurgood	(AT)	Director British Championships

IN ATTENDANCE

Charles Brooks	(CB)	Hon Legal Adviser
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APOLOGIES

André Oszmann	(AO)	Chairman
Brig Neil Marshall	(NM)	Director Combined Services Liaison
LBdr Lee Jackson	(LJ)	Athletes' Representative

90 BBU Members (and 6 non-voting observers) were also present.

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ITEM 1 – INTRODUCTORY business

1.1 Chairman of the Meeting. In the unavoidable absence of the Chairman, the Secretary General asked the Members to agree to the Board's request that Adrian Thurgood (AT) be appointed Chairman of the Meeting. This was agreed unanimously.

1.2 Welcome. AT welcomed all British Biathlon Union members to the 17th Annual General Meeting and congratulated them all on achieving the standard required to attend the British Biathlon Championships. He welcomed a number of non-voting observers including the Director Army Sport Control Board and the Secretary Combined Services Sport Board and thanked both for their continuing support of Army winter sports in general and of biathlon in particular. He passed on apologies from The Chairman and Board Members Brigadier Neil Marshall (who was in Kabul) and Lance Bombardier Lee Jackson (who was at the pre-Sochi training camp in Italy).

1.3 Special Statement on Sponsorship. AT then introduced one additional observer, Mr Mike Moran. AT stated that Mr Moran was the Chief Executive Officer of Aspen Healthcare Solutions (UK) Ltd (ASH). He referred the AGM to the penultimate paragraph of the Chairman's pre-published report concerning the announcement of a new sponsor, and was delighted to confirm that Aspen Healthcare Solutions are the new sponsors of the BBU. He invited Mr Moran to make a statement concerning the sponsorship.

Mr Moran explained that he had been involved in biathlon as a racer, coach and sponsor through the AWSA and RAMC (Royal Army Medical Corps) for over 30 years. He had been coached in his early days in the sport by Eddy Lowe! After some lengthy negotiations through Bob Anderson of RMA Sports (UK) Ltd, it was with regret that he had not been able to complete a plan to sponsor the BBU some 12 months previously. After the November 2013 announcement that the BBU would cease to operate at the end of the current season should a major sponsor not be forthcoming, he and Mark Goodson held discussions which resulted in a Letter of Intent being signed on 20 November 2013. For commercial and other reasons, the detail could not be made public until the AGM.

Mr Moran stated that "there were only two strings attached to his offer". First was that MG should stay as Sec Gen for at least 12 months after his proposed retirement date in Sep 14. Second was that his Board expected the BBU to modernise its governance in accordance with the proposed new Articles of Association, which would be voted on later in the AGM. He expected the initial ASH sponsorship to be targeted towards support for the National Teams and thus ensure that GBR would be represented at the OWG 2018 in Pyeongchang. He did not rule out against additional incremental payments and further stated that it was his intention to network with other like-minded companies and contacts in The City (of London) with sporting interests. If further sponsorship was forthcoming he hoped that some of it could be specifically targeted towards Youth and Development. Through the Moran Sports Foundation he had previously been able to support youth and young adult sporting ambitions, so he had some experience in this area.

Mr Moran concluded by stating that the sponsorship would commence from April 2014. It would be spread over 3 years, although the BBU would budget over the 4 years of the Olympic cycle. In Year 1 the total would be £ 60,000; in Year 2 it would be £ 84,000 and in Year 3 it would be £ 108,000. The total over 3 years being £ 252,000 (or £ 63,000 per year of a 4 year cycle).

Mr Moran received tumultuous applause and AT warmly thanked him as the "saviour of the BBU". AT confirmed that the money would be wisely spent in accordance with the wishes of Mr Moran and the Board of Aspen Healthcare Solutions (UK) Ltd.

ITEM 2 – SPECIAL business

2.1 Adoption of New Articles of Association. The BBU's Honorary Legal Advisor, Mr Charles Brooks (CB) was introduced to the Meeting. Although this was his first attendance at an AGM he had visited Ruhpolding before and explained that he had taken an active interest in all the affairs – not just legal – of the BBU since he had the honour to be appointed as Hon Legal Advisor in succession to Brian Wilson in 2001. As a practising solicitor with a major UK and International law firm, and with a long standing involvement in shooting at Bisley he had had been able to advise the BBU on a number of legal matters over the past 13 years.

He stated that although the AGM was being asked to adopt new Articles of Association which complied with both the 2006 Companies Act and the 2012 UK Sport and Sport England governance for NGBs, it was not a legal requirement to do so. Indeed there were a number of companies in the UK who had not altered their Articles for over a century. However by voting to change, the BBU would not only be in compliance with the current Companies Act (2006) but, by being in compliance with UK Sport and The Sport & Recreational Alliance (SRA) guidelines, be far more likely to receive financial and other assistance from UK Sport & Sport England.

He stated that other than the change from having an all-elected Board (i.e. "the Directors") to an appointed and partially elected Board, there was only one significant alteration to the aims, working practices and legal Articles of the BBU as covered by the existing 1996 "Memorandum and Articles of Association" which complied to the Companies Acts of 1985 & 1989. This significant alteration was the proposed new Article 20.1.7 whereby a Director (i.e. "Board Member") could be requested to resign by a majority of two-thirds of the other members of the Board acting together. This was wholly in compliance with the governance guidelines of UK Sport and effectively prevented any one Director having a veto on the Board.

In answering questions from the floor CB stated that:

- there would still be up to two Elected Directors;
- as the Board could appoint the additional Directors there would be a greater depth of talent and range of experience for them to draw from, than if all Directors could only be drawn from the more limited field of the BBU Members alone;
- the BBU would continue to promote, administer and encourage the development of, and participation of the Sport (biathlon) within the UK amongst all sections of the community; this is no change to the aims of the existing Articles but, as at present, such activities would be governed by the availability of finance;
- the Chairman had commented at the two previous AGMs that it was the intention of the Board to modernise the Articles and working practices after the Sochi Olympic Winter Games. However if the Meeting adopted the new Articles at this AGM, changes could begin 12 months earlier than if the BBU waited until after Sochi. Both he (CB) and the Chairman believed that in view of the announcement of a new sponsor this was a sensible and necessary move.

(Ballot papers (which had been issued to each eligible voting member) for the Special Resolution "To adopt the new Articles of Association" were then collected and the result of the vote was announced at Item 4.5).

ITEM 3 – ORDINARY business

3.1 Minutes of 2013 AGM. The Minutes of the 16th AGM held on 27th January 2013 were unanimously accepted as a true record of the Meeting. No comments or objections were raised.

3.2 Chairman's Report. AT summarised the Chairman's Annual Report which had previously been published on the web and issued in advance, and is attached in full at Annex A. No comments or objections were raised.

3.3 Accounts ending 30 April 2012. MG presented the Accounts (which had been circulated in advance) for the year ending 30th April 2012. He again apologised that these had not been presented, on time, at the previous AGM. He had personally paid a fine for late filing to Companies House. The Accounts showed that the BBU had an operating deficit of £ 34,253 as opposed to a surplus of £ 3,676 the year before. This deficit was largely due to a number of the previous year's expenses being recorded in and carried forward to the 2011 - 12 year. Administrative and other expenses continued to be less than 20% of all costs with almost 80% of all income benefiting the National team athletes directly.

The deficit (operating loss) was covered by an interest free loan from MG to the BBU. The Accounts were unanimously received and adopted.

3.4 Accounts ending 30 April 2013. MG presented the Accounts (which had been circulated in advance) for the year ending 30th April 2013. These had been filed at Companies House. The accounts showed that the BBU had an operating deficit of £ 10,750 as opposed to a deficit of £ 34,253 the year before. This deficit was again partly due to a number of the previous year's expenses being recorded in and carried forward the 2012 – 13 year, and he warned that this trend would continue into the 2013 – 14 year Accounts. It was also the first year without the £ 50,000 sponsorship from Skandia. Administrative and other expenses continued to be less than 20% of all costs with almost 80% of all income benefiting the National team athletes directly.

The deficit (operating loss) was covered by an interest free loan from MG to the BBU. The Accounts were unanimously received and adopted.

3.5 Budgets 2013 – 15. MG stated that the cumulative effect of the loss of Skandia sponsorship was a major factor in the announcement in November 2013 that the BBU would cease operations as we know them at the end of this current season, unless a new sponsor was forthcoming. Even before AHS sponsorship was confirmed, costs had been cut (placing more financial burdens on the athletes) and income from athlete subscriptions more than doubled. However, the Board had been in no doubt that in order to break even at the end of the current season it was more than likely that the international season would end after Sochi; fortunately this was not now the case although by accepting the sponsorship and thus continuing into next season, it means that somewhat ironically there will again be a deficit at the end of the current season.

MG commented that even with the generous support of AHS the total income of the BBU next year would be less than in the best days of the former sponsorship. This was due to a reduction in the AWSA non-public fund grant of approx £ 15k. Income would be further reduced if we failed to maintain 2 male start places in World Cup and with two IBU Cups in Canada travel costs would be increased next season.

3.6 Appointment of Auditors. The appointment of King, Morter, Proud & Co., Chartered Accountants of Kings Arms Vaults, The Watton, Brecon, Powys as auditors for the year ending 30th April 2014 and authorisation for the Directors to fix their remuneration was unanimously accepted after Proposal by Amanda Lightfoot, seconded by Tom Clemens.

ITEM 4 – CLOSING business

4.1 BBU Lottery. AT thanked Nicola Walker for all her work in administering the BBU Lottery and invited her to make a short statement. In response she thanked all those who were members and implored all BBU supporters to encourage more to join. Although the winnings were not colossal it did not cost much to join and every single penny went to the BBU. Current net income is approx £ 3k p.a.

4.2 Development. JC reported that once again the National Development Squad (NDS) and the Biathlon Academy had been based at 39 Engr Regt in Kinloss in 2013. He was most grateful to 16 Regt RA and to 17 P&M Regt RLC for releasing Sgt Shane Clash and Cpl Ben Woolley as Coach and Assistant Coach and to 39 Engr Regt for providing the infrastructure and to and Gordon Seaton for continuing to facilitate the NDS at his new Cullerne Biathlon Range.

However, and notwithstanding the very welcome input of sponsorship from Aspen Healthcare Solutions, the Board had decided that it was simply not practical for the “BBU” to run the NDS. Whilst development was, and always had been, an important factor in the life of the BBU it was not core business. The BBU had no staff or facilities to implement development and even with the AHS sponsorship, precious little funding. Almost all the athletes selected for NDS were serving soldiers and four years ago the BBU had asked the Army if they could take on the coaching and administration of NDS. At that time Army had said “No” but with 39 Regt RE taking over the former RAF Kinloss this position had now changed. It had thus been agreed that all military (including RN/RM & RAF) development athletes would be part of the new Army Biathlon Development Squad (ABDS). In many ways the ABDS would be the same as a civilian club, albeit a large one, and thus open only to its own members. JC did hope that in future it may be possible to include civilians but that this was not possible at present.

With the ABDS officially based at 39 Engr Regt it would be possible to make use of many more military facilities and utilise military support and infrastructure. The athletes and staff selected for the inaugural ABDS would be announced at the end of Ex Rucksack, and joining instructions will be issued in due course.

Afternote: The names of ABDS students were published on the BBU website on 13 Feb, It was also confirmed that the head Coach will be SSgt Adele Walker 29 Regt RLC assisted by Cpl Ben Woolley 17 P&M Regt RLC.

4.3 International Biathlon Union (IBU) Report. MG surmised that on current form GBR should just keep our 2 male & 1 female World Cup and the 4 male and 3 female IBU Cup start places next season. He congratulated the athletes, especially the more senior ones who had willingly “dropped down” to race some IBU Cup races in order to score all important Nations Cup points.

He stated that the next IBU Congress was due to be held in Kiev in September 2014, although given the situation in Ukraine a decision on the venue was expected in April At the Congress it was expected that a new “FIS Points” type of seeding and qualification would be introduced for World and IBU Cups, replacing the current percentages system.

He briefly mentioned the favourable media coverage of the GBR Olympic biathletes, both in the UK during the BOA kitting out where Amanda Lightfoot had received considerable media attention. Together with Lee Jackson and the support staff Marc and Simon Allanson she was now at the final training camp in Ridnaun Italy which Sky News would be visiting. Ridnaun marked the end of a long 4 year training and selection process prior to The Games. MG concluded by saying that the overall amount of biathlon related media interest for Sochi was approx four times that for Vancouver in 2010.

4.4 Other External Agencies Reports. MG reported that:

- the BOA was still reducing the numbers of its HQ staff post London 2012. A new CEO (Bill Sweeney) had been appointed and the BOA had been very pro-active in supporting and educating the athletes and support staff;
- UK Sport had nominated a dedicated Performance Advisor for biathlon, but with their “no podium - no compromise” stance the prospect of receiving funding in the short term was extreme in the least, especially as the BBU would have to match part of any grants;
- UK Anti-Doping (UKAD) had taken a pro-active approach to all potential Olympic athletes. All our four possible Olympians had received a number of Out of Competition tests and for the first time there had been testing by UKAD at Ex Rucksack. The BBU was grateful to Terry Hall who has recently retired from the TA and has taken on the role as the BBU’s (volunteer) Anti-Doping Officer.

4.4 Any Other Business. There were no questions or further comment from the floor.

4.5 Chairman of the Meeting – Closing Comments. AT announced that the result of the vote on the proposal to adopt the new Articles of Association was:

94 in favour, 1 against (no spoiled ballot papers).

He stated that the new Articles would come into force as soon as CB had forwarded the appropriate documents to, and they were accepted by Companies House.

He again thanked those Members who had attended and wished them all success during the rest of the Championships. He concluded by offering the best wishes of all Members to the athletes and support staff selected for the forthcoming Olympic Winter Games and the Biathlon Youth & Junior World Championships. The Meeting closed at 18:00 CET.

Signed by:

Chairman
British Biathlon Union

Date.....



BBU AGM 2014

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

This time last year in the afterglow of London 2012, we were all looking forward with eager anticipation to Sochi 2014. I am delighted to report that the BBU has achieved its four year goal and, on behalf of all our Members, warmly congratulate Lee-Steve Jackson on selection for his second Olympic Winter Games; and Amanda Lightfoot on her first. Amanda is only the second British female biathlete selected for Team GB and had the honour of being the athlete to model the Team GB kit on nationwide TV and in the press last Monday 20th January. They will be supported in Sochi by Marc Walker and Simon Allanson - I wish them all every success in Russia next month.

Sporting Review

The 2012 – 2013 Season was the third of the current IBU quota and qualification system. This means that to even qualify for our quota of 2 men and one woman in World Cup, the athletes had to regularly achieve “15% or under” in Sprints or Individual races at IBU Cup, and “15% or under” in World Cup to maintain their qualification.

Through the efforts of the athletes and their support staff, this was achieved throughout the season by the Men’s team who finished last season in 24th place in World Cup Nations Cup rankings. They have maintained their 2 start places for the current season and look on course to do so for next season as well. The Women finished last year in 29th and, although this meant they dropped out of the World Cup, they achieved automatic promotion back from the IBU Cup – a scenario which will almost certainly be repeated at the end of this season.

In the IBU Cup Nations Cup both the Men and Women achieved top 20 finishing places. This gives GBR four start places during the current season. Competition in the IBU Cup has never been fiercer but with some astute management of athletes and their willingness to sometimes race both World and IBU Cup in the same week, both Men and Women may just stay in that Top 20, although we currently only have 3 women in the GBR squad!

On an individual basis two men (Lee-Steve Jackson and Kevin Kane) both achieved 4 x Olympic Qualifying Standards during the World Cup season, with Marcel Laponder gaining one. Amanda Lightfoot recorded three during a difficult season where she was plagued with illness and injury, but she did have an excellent World Championships in Nove Mesto, Czech Republic, with two Top 50 finishes in the Sprint and Pursuit.

Special mention must be made of Scott Dixon from Cairngorm BNSC who made his World Cup debut at the age of 18, and of Adele Walker and Nerys Jones who both had a very good IBU Cup season. During the summer Pete Beyer, Paul Birmingham, Carl Gibson, Steve Hill and Calum Irvine hung up their international skis, whilst Martin Glasgow, our wax man for a decade, also retired. I thank them all for their enthusiastic support and hard work over many accumulated years.

The National Development Squad (NDS) was based, as always at Kinloss, now the home of 39 Engr Regt who kindly provided much support to our coaching staff Sgt Shane Clash and Cpl Ben Woolley.

Strategy & Future of the BBU

In April 2013 a Biathlon Strategy Day was held at, and kindly hosted by, the BOA. Several stakeholders and advisors from other NGBs attended and their contribution was warmly welcomed, as was that of the entire Board and several retired and current athletes. We took a very pragmatic approach to our sporting future and concluded that without a considerable increase in funding over the next 8 - 10 years, we would probably continue much as at present, and it was unlikely there would be any discernable improvement to our overall results. However, should an annual sum of between £ 500,000 and £ 1,000,000 be forthcoming, this could lead to a potential podium place at the OWG 2022. As a result of the Strategy Day we now have the plans in place to improve our international results; to provide more specialist support staff at all levels of the sport in the UK; to increase civilian participation – especially at the development level, and to implement a GBR coaching programme. I do however reiterate that this is all dependent on a very substantial increase in funding.

Sadly, by October 2013 the Board appreciated that the sums of money mentioned above were not a realistic option at present. Moreover, since the conclusion of our last significant sponsorship deal 2 years ago, the BBU has only been able to continue operate thanks to an interest free loan from one of the Directors. This loan will not be extended after the end of the current (2013 – 14) season. So, reluctantly, the Board concluded at our October 2013 Board Meeting that unless a major sponsorship deal was signed by the end of this current season, the BBU could no longer operate as we know today. This decision was published on the BBU website and relayed to the international athletes in person by Colonel Adrian Thurgood the Army representative on the Board.

Following this announcement, many of our fans made suggestions and comments of support on Facebook and by Email. As a result we are delighted to welcome a few new members to the BBU, who have joined through their suggestion of an electronic application form. We still encourage anyone who has expressed their support to join the BBU, and we will look for ways to harness that support in a practical way. We are also grateful that many members continue to support The BBU Lottery; if you have not already joined, please do so. My thanks go to Nicola Walker for her unwavering effort in whipping up support for, and running of, the Lottery

I also wish to publically acknowledge the support and resources given to the BBU in particular and to the sport in general by the British Army. Put simply, without the Army there would be very little biathlon in the UK.

Governance

At the last two AGMs I have reported that it was the intention of the Board to modernise our structure under the terms of the Companies Act 2006 and to bring our governance into line with the requirements of UK Sport and the Sport & Recreational Alliance (SRA). Hopefully you will have read the “Key Changes” Summary of the proposed new Articles of the BBU, posted on the website. As recommended by UK Sport and the SRA, and to bring the BBU into line with modern good governance principles, the Board believes that its future composition would be best served by a mix of:

- Specialist roles into which Directors with the appropriate skills are appointed* (e.g. Finance, Performance, Operations, etc.)
- Independent (i.e. no previous connection with Biathlon) Directors who will be appointed* to bring useful external experience to the BBU and adds to the skills on the Board.
- A small number of elected Directors to provide input from, and serve the interests of, the wider membership.

(* New appointments will usually follow an open recruitment process).

The other key changes are contained in the Summary.

The Board had originally agreed that such changes (i.e. the “new” Articles of Association) should not be implemented until after Sochi. However as the vast majority of the Members of the BBU will be attending the AGM in Germany on Saturday 25th January 2014, at no financial or logistical expense to the BBU, we concluded that it will be in the best interests of all Members, and for the very future of British Biathlon, to vote on the proposed changes at this AGM.

Once proposed at this year’s AGM, a 75% majority of the Members present will be required to vote in favour of the new Articles.

The Board believes that voting in favour of the changes will enable the BBU to continue to support biathlon in the UK amongst all sections of the community and particularly at international and Olympic level. Conversely, if these changes are not approved, it may prove very difficult for the BBU to operate effectively in the future.

Accordingly, on behalf of the Board, I strongly urge all Members to vote in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

I started this report with very good news concerning the Olympic Winter Games and I am delighted to conclude with equally good news about sponsorship. Although I referred earlier to what we could do with a seven figure sponsorship income, I also commented on the realities of our future with no sponsor.

However, I am delighted to say that at the AGM we will be announcing that we have at last succeeded in securing a substantial sponsorship deal and details of this will be announced during the AGM. Full details will also be published as an after-note to this report and on the website.

I wish all athletes every success in Ruhpolding during the British Championships, and thank all of you who support British Biathlon, and especially our new sponsor.

André Oszmann
Chairman

26th January 2014

After-note: I am delighted to confirm the very generous sponsorship and support offered by Mr Mike Moran Chief Executive Officer of the BBU's new sponsor **Aspen Healthcare Solutions (UK) Ltd**, as announced at the AGM on 26 Jan 14.