

2017 BKA Iaido Bu AGM – Draft Minutes

BKA Iaido Bu AGM – 08/07/2017

The meeting was recorded.

Chaired by Iaido Bucho, John Honisz-Greens (JHG)

Bu officers at table: Events Officer, Anil Sahal (AS); Grading Officer, Phil Henderson (PH); Squad Manager, Karl Gibbons (KG); Senior Advisor, Dave Fanning (DF)

The Bucho declared the meeting open at 12.44 and quorate, having 99 members in attendance (quorate 27)

1. Apologies for absence

Iaidobu Cashier, Hugh Darby; Iaidobu Senior Advisor, Billy Smart

2. Minutes of the 2016 AGM

Agreed (1 against and 23 abstaining)

3. Matters arising from 2016 AGM minutes

None

4. Bu Cho's Reports:

An overview of the published Bu Report was given: relevant additional comments added below. The report can be found at the following url:

<http://www.britishkendoassociation.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2017-Iaido-Bu-Report.pdf>

4a. Bucho's Overview:

- See Bu Report

4b. Membership numbers

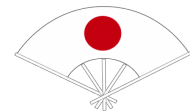
- See Bu Report

4c. Budget report 2017

- See Bu Report
- An additional request was made for an end of 2016 balance. JHG advised it would be around £31,000, but that the Treasurer would provide this in main AGM. The aim is to reduce this amount to the recommended £25,000 threshold and then operate a zero budget.
- Another member asked why the Bu was tightening budget in some areas if it wanted to lose money in other areas to avoid tax costs. JHG advised that if expenditure based on last year was to continue as it was, the Bu would not be financially safe and it would impact on the annual and seminar fees that the Bu currently charges members.

4d. Event Officers report

- See Bu Report for Event Officer's report
- AS outlined the problem of finding venues with suitably sized halls and suitable flooring since attendance numbers are increasing and there are issues of cost and health and safety (floor types, coverings and space).
- AS suggested that having venue rotation of the Iaido Nationals competition with one venue in North, Midlands and South may boost numbers even further than this year's successful Nationals. This idea would be looked-into by the 2018 Iaido Nationals organising team
- AS commented that he was looking at other Northern Venues to host the Northern Seminar event - the event is the Northern Seminar so it does not have to be held in Darlington, which may be a solution to the late confirmation problems.



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4e. Grading Officers report

- See Bu Report for Grading Officer's report
- PH reinforced that for grading purposes temporary injuries are not taken into account though long term ones are.

4f. Cashiers report

Bucho presented a summary of the Cashier's Report for Hugh Derby, who sent his apologies.

- See Bu Report Cashier's report
- Bucho reminded members the Cashier's report had included a commentary on completing expense claim forms and providing supporting receipts.
- It was noted that EIC costs represent 1/3 of Bu expenditure for the 2016 year and whilst the BU EC agree that the EIC is important to attend, spiraling costs need to be controlled and cut as the 2016 EIC had cost the members £12,600 of funds.

4g. Squad Manager's report

- See Bu Report for Squad Manager's report
- One member commented that there are 25 countries in EIC, and suggested that to get bronze means UK in upper 4%.
- KG thanked the Squad Coach Greg Drewe and his assistant Martin Clarke for their support and dedication to date.
- KG said that STS attendance has been excellent and reinforced his desire and strategy to make squad activities available to the widest range of members through improved organisation and communication of venues and dates. KG discussed issues with the cost of venues in London and asked members to suggest suitable (and affordable) venues near London or the Kent area.
- JHG supported KG's task to make EIC as cost effective as possible and so far the budget has been met for 2017. The members discussed various strategies for addressing rising costs. The idea of team members contributing to costs was raised by KG and discussed, but will not be put in place this year. It was suggested that a capped subsistence rate may be used if necessary to stay within the 2017 budget. This would also help the Cashier to reduce his workload as this could be given in advance.
- Andy Watson asked what the 2017 EIC budget was for 2017 and JHG advised this year's budget is £8,500.
- Andy Watson suggested that in the past those on team are ones who have contributed most to the bu and did not feel it fair that they should have conditions imposed upon them. Len Bean (163) supported this. Andy Watson further suggested the £20 subsistence rate should be fine but things should not be clamped down too much. JHG and KG will look at this moving forward but that costs had to be controlled or the number of competitors cut to meet the budget.
- JHG also reminded attendees that the Iaido currently covers all the travel, hotel, seminar, competition and sayonara party fees, and provides a subsistence allowance, and gives team clothing. However, if the Bu EC with the SM aim of working towards working with a zero budget then costs have to be controlled. JHG's 2016 EIC research showed that the BKA Iaido were more generous in paying costs than other EIC countries.
- One member asked about the team being designated as 'GB' or 'UK'. Whilst the EIC lists the team as 'UK' other international events list the team as 'GB'. This sparked a debate. JHG and KG will look into this before uniforms are made.
- David Hickey and AS to look into the rotation of venues for Nationals competition. Bu EC will also look into a possible date change for Nationals.

4h. Election of Bu officers

- Anil Sahal remains as EO, with no other candidates being nominated. Vote - no objections and 3 abstentions.



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- Phil Henderson remains as GO, with no other candidates being nominated. Vote - no objections and 3 abstentions.

4i. Subscriptions

- Current plans are not to raise subscriptions for the year. Seminar fees not to change either (max £45). Dependent on finances at end of year.

5. Feedback from the DRC Chair

Bucho asked newly appointed DRC Chair Keith Rose (KR) to chair this part of the meeting:

- Vic Cook presented a case for a vote of no confidence in John Honisz-Greens remaining as Iai Bucho until the end of his term (2018). The reasons given for a vote of no confidence in JHG are summarised as:
 1. Unable to maintain relations with Japan, specifically with Ishido Sensei, Yoshimura Sensei, Matsuoka Sensei & Kinomoto Sensei expressing formal refusal to visit UK for the purposes of teaching Iai whilst current Bucho is in post.
 2. That the Bucho removed a member from official BKA Facebook page and then lied about having done so on the same Facebook page. After seeing the activity log of the FB page does not feel it is plausible that he made a mistake. Asks membership if this behaviour is consistent with the aims of the Association or gives confidence that JHG fulfils the obligations of post.

Requests vote to take this further.

- BKA Vice-chair, Debbie Bevan (DB), advised a vote of no confidence must have been raised 45 days before AGM, if raised on the day it must pertain to issues within 45 days of the AGM date.
- **Beginning the debate re. point 1 above**, Jock Hopson advised that re-opening the 2015 KEBT accounts has led to Ishido Sensei not coming to the UK. Stated that re-opening these accounts had cast doubt on the integrity of Andy Watson and other teachers. This has caused Ishido Sensei to withdraw his support from the BKA and to also ask the other teachers to not support the BKA.
- Debbie Bevan stated the date of the re-opening of the accounts needed to be known.
- Harry Jones offered that Ishido Sensei advised he had withdrawn support for UK during the recent Villengen seminar, and the Facebook issue are both within the 45-day period.
- There followed a protracted debate between the membership and the BuEC about the exact time that Ishido Sensei decided to suspend his visits to the UK and whether the Japanese Sensei have been upset by the Bucho's Report published in January - it was suggested by those raising the vote of no confidence that allegations of financial impropriety had been made implicitly against the Japanese Sensei and that their cultural sensitivities would not allow them to explicitly cite this as a reason for not coming.
- JHG raised the question of why no communication or questions had come direct to the BuEC from Japan if there were concerns, since the Iaido Bu did not see BKA accounts as a Japanese issue and had not involved or implicated them.
- JHG stated that after a face to face meeting with Ishido Sensei in Sept 2016, official communications with Japan about summer seminar logistics had gone through Oshita Sensei who was appointed delegation leader by Ishido Sensei during the meeting. JHG stated the current Iaido Bu EC were never permitted direct email contact with Ishido Sensei and that letters sent to him in Aug 2016 went unanswered. JHG stated that if Ishido Sensei was unhappy then the Iaido Bu EC did not know why or how as they had no contact with him nor had implicated him in any BKA business.
- Andy Watson objected to the "clumsy" nature of JHG's January 2017 report with respect to the 2015 KEBT finances, JHG reminded the meeting that these issues cannot be discussed as an investigation is being undertaken.
- The BKA Vice-chair confirmed that the investigation had not reached a conclusion.



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- JHG reasserted that BKA accounts should not concern the Japanese nor should they be concerned, also that no one's integrity had been questioned only some accountancy practice, but again at present the issue cannot be discussed.
- Harry Jones stated that the content of the Bucho's Report is irrelevant, and alleges it is the Japanese's reaction to the content in the Bucho's Report.
- Anna Stone (BKA Treasurer) stated that to her knowledge Ishido sensei had withdrawn his support just after last year's AGM, long before any investigation into finances started. JHG confirmed this.
- BKA Iaido DRC Chair Keith Rose (KR) put forward the view that you cannot not investigate an issue, simply because it will impact somewhere else, because that would also be a wrong thing to do.
- BKA Vice-chair (VC) again asked for the date of the Bucho's Report to be confirmed - JHG confirmed late-Jan 2016. The VC reminded the meeting that only information within 45-days was to be considered.
- To close issue 1, JHG put forward a holding statement saying that *"Due to the outcome of the complaints made there is a recommendation made to the BKA NC to look-into how the BKA can do things better in terms of its planning and accounts of events. No suggestion of wrong doing is being made"*.
- **Beginning the debate re. point 2 above**, confirmed as within 45 days of AGM, Oliver Jarvis (OJ) read a detailed summary of the Facebook (hereafter referred to as FB) event: BKA member Lee Mountain (LM) had had a post deleted from FB and was subsequently removed as a member from the BKA FB page by JHG. OJ maintained that this was an abuse of LM's freedom of expression and constituted grounds for a vote of no confidence in JHG.
- JHG stated that the event was an error as he is not very knowledgeable about social media and thought he was merely deleting him from his own FB friends. He also confirmed that, as soon as the BKA Chair clarified to him that he had been responsible for removing LM from the BKA FB page, he had instantly published an unreserved apology to LM on the same BKA FB stream. Also, JHG stated he and the bu officers involved had tried their best to accommodate LM requests and resolve the issue that had led to LM's post in the first place.
- OJ proposed evidence that it was not possible to remove someone from a group by accident. OJ also maintained that once presented with the evidence, that JHG deliberately lied to conceal the true nature of his actions. That JHG had ignored an email sent by Will Heal addressing the issue several days later. Also, OJ also reported that later that evening Steve Martin (a FB moderator for the group) had also been removing and adjusting certain moderators from the group.
- JHG denied allegations of lying, stating that with the assistance of a more experienced FB user he could not see LM on a list of removed users. JHG also reminded the meeting that FB is not an official communication source of the BKA and that he did go on FB immediately after confirmation of the fact that had removed LM to issue an apology. JHG stated he had not responded to WH as he could not understand why WH had become involved or what his stake was in the issue since he had already issued an apology.
- Deborah Bell (member) conceded that even as an experienced FB user who moderates groups herself that it is often difficult to maneuver around FB and errors can be made when you are working with your own FB page or as a member of other FB-groups. But that also members are responsible for tempering their posts.
- There followed a lengthy debate by the membership on the veracity of the above statements and the way FB works.
- BKA Chair, Fay Goodman, commented that she believed both LM, for his original comments, and JHG, for his response, were wrong. She felt that FB should not be used for public arguments as it is a public face of the BKA.
- Harry Jones maintained that LM was exercising his right to free speech, and so therefore could not be wrong in saying what he did.



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6. Any Other Business

6.1 Vote of “no confidence” in the Iaido Bucho, John Honisz-Greens

- The Vice Chair (VC) confirmed article 11.15 of constitution - motion of no confidence can be raised under AOB. If the motion is sustained and achieves the necessary 66%, the officer shall be removed from the post. Secondary motion can be put for censure. It was agreed that KR would oversee the vote.
- The VC asked Vic Cook to clarify the motion that he was putting to the meeting to vote on. Confirmed as “a vote of no confidence in JHG remaining Bucho on the grounds of the FB incident and Japanese relations”. A secret ballot was held. The Prior to voting the Vice-chair noted that the membership of one person at the meeting was under query – the Assistant Membership secretary Roger Pimlot would be able to check that person’s membership status should there be a 1-vote difference.
- A member asked why consideration had not been given to the implications of the Bucho’s Report before publishing it. The Treasurer (AS) answered by suggesting that many of the problems could have been avoided if questions about the 2015 KEBT accounts in question had been answered by the former team when asked.
- *Meeting Adjourned (for votes to be cast and counted) – 14:40*
- *Meeting Reconvened – 14:47*
- KR read votes as a straight majority count: “For” 47; “Against” 52. JHG to remain Bucho.

Bucho re-took the chair.

- Various members spoke in favour of harmony and reconciliation in the wake of animosity.
- Various members supported the notion that while the year had been very successful in terms of seminar attendance and programming, this was insignificant to the damage done to relations with our Japanese teachers.
- Because of the failure of the democratic vote of no confidence and in support of Ishido Sensei’s withdrawal of support from the BKA: Andy Watson withdrew support from bu activity
- Jock Hopson commented that it was “*far more important for us who are Ishido sensei students to support our teacher than to support the BKA*”. This was followed by Greg Drewe, Tony Devine, Alan Lee-Nash withdrawal of support to the Iaido Bu. This withdrawal was positively supported by Harry Jones.
- Dave Hickey made a plea for those withdrawing to reconsider as they are withdrawing support from the student and members, and that the future of the bu is in the students coming-up, and the focus should be on BKA needs, not Japanese needs. Another member commented that she felt it was ‘incredibly wrong’ to withdraw support, also congratulated the bu on well-run events despite the obvious challenges.
- JHG expressed disappointment at the continued divisive effect on the bu that a withdrawal of support from seniors will have, also, stating that it had been unfortunate that there hadn’t been proactive efforts to communicate from those aggrieved parties.
- The BKA Chair said there had been a lot of emotion today. She proposed to host a sit-down meeting with aggrieved-parties concerned and senior members, this was declined. DRC chair advised it is not for the Chair to make an offer of a further meeting. The meeting was today and it is up to people to return when their conscience deems it.
- Bucho requests seniors withdrawing their support to put their intentions of actions in writing to the bu.
- *Meeting closed 15:03*