

Minutes of BKA Kendo Bu AGM - 21st July 2018

Officers

Chair / Bucho: Gary O'Donnell (GOD)
Events Officer: Kristian Delacour (not present)
Grading Officer: John Gale (JG)

Meeting commenced at 10:30

32 Members in attendance which was well below the required 5% Quorum figure of 53

GOD Opened meeting and members were notified that the meeting was being recorded to allow accurate minutes to be made. There were no objections to this.

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies offered.

2. Minutes of 2017 AGM

GOD stated the 2016 have been available on line for some time and asked if anyone had any issues with them. No issues were raise.

3. Matters arising from 2017 AGM Minutes

There were no specific matters arising.

The Bucho flagged there were some commitments he made, and these would be addressed in the Bucho report later.

Actions from 2017:

- The Premier Cup would be used for both Men & Women's competitions. (carried)
- Name of winners would be recorded somehow on the cup (not carried)
- Use of Premier Plate for Ladies competition, which will be in use today, (carried)
- Request to have more 5th dan gradings. Suggestion to have one at the British Open but this not carried out as we have an extra one this year at the Summer Seminar.
- Student Involvement has been actioned this is covered as an AOB item today.

Minutes could not be formally accepted as meeting was not quorate but all present in the room were happy they were an accurate record.

4. Bucho's Report

GOD summarized his report which is available on the website.

Outstanding events and seminars ran successfully with good Shiai and informative events. Some of these were private events and we have moved more to a situation where private events are more prestigious than BKA events. Good Shiai at Open weekend but teething issues at the start getting people signed in. Trying to address this by getting clearer information from the entrant information (e.g. Dojo representing so that members from the same dojo can be kept apart in the draw. Also closing event before the Taikai so that the draw can be made in advance. Need to encourage as many as possible to enter. Also, important to arrange helpers in advance.

We have had a couple of grading event failures this year. The University grading was cancelled due to inclement weather (snow) and could not be rearranged, and the Glasgow seminar & grading was not held. We have lost revenue from these.

We are initiating a Summer seminar with 3 Hachidan Hanshi. If this is successful it could significantly raise our international profile and potentially raise the grading to Nanadan. Currently the EKF schedule is reported as full but this could change if our event is seen as prestigious. Grading to Godan but applications are low at the moment. Booking is still open.

The Sensei are interested to know numbers and grades in advance, so they can plan. We can't currently give them this information.

Comment from the floor (Chris Bowden) that the details of the event have been hard to come by and it has been difficult to plan. Suggestion that a Facebook event could have been set up to help with communications.

The event has been publicised on the Web site and recently emails have been sent out. If someone with the knowledge were able to set up a Facebook event this assistance would be welcomed. Although it is recognized this may not have the impact at this late stage.

Item will be discussed later as an agenda item

A Kendo Coaching seminar has been offered in July but there was only one applicant. (Level 1 & 2) Hope to rerun in September. Noted that any regional coach could set this up, it does not have to be centrally run. All should encourage attendance at this.

Jeff Humm Sensei has agreed to chair a coaching board to select regional & national coaches who can run coaching courses. The board will consist of Sensei's Jeff Humm, Malcolm Goodwin, John Hepburn, Gary O'Donnell. Applicants should apply with their credentials & portfolio. It is noted that a coaching portfolio would be useful evidence for Renshi awards later in a Kendoka's career!

We have supported several non BKA events. Some of these have been supported financially and GOD has supported with attendance in some cases, which is expensed.

Squad Practice, GOD has attended several events and seen how the squad has been selected, they have been well prepared. Squad selected on mental ability as well as Shiai performance. If you turn up to Squad Training expect a hard day's training. Hiyama Sensei has Japanese style lots of basic, correct things.

Malcolm Goodwin – Don't associate Basic with Easy!

James Ogle – Encourage as many as possible to turn up to Squad practice. This helps the training, and all are welcome.

Supported Brussels seminar for Refs. GOD was not selected for WKC but 3 others from BKA have been introduced to the international scene (Keith Holmes, Young Park, Gerry Kincaid). Godan and above should write to GOD if they want to be supported and selected for attendance at the Brussels seminar. No competitors were taken this year as there was a large contingent of Japanese attending and the list was full.

Finances are stable, but revenue is down this year due to seminars & gradings not taking place and reduced numbers at others. Increased outlay with International Seminar and we have an expensive event to fund with the WKC in Korea. We expect to make a loss. This year it is likely that the shortfall will be about £9,000. We can wear that, but it is not sustainable. Hence, we are proposing to increase the Kendo Bu membership fees by 25% (£20 to £25 for full members). Recognised that this is a lot, but the fee has not been increased for 5 or 6 years. This would give an additional income of approximately £5,000.

A discussion ensued. With points being made that Central Services, Iaido, Jodo may also increase fees. There could be a big increase for people who practice multiple arts.

As this meeting is not quorate an EGM will need to be convened to vote on this issue and the budget. This could be held at the weekend of the Open/Bowden when we can expect a minimum of 100 to attend.

A discussion ensued about holding future AGMs at the Open, it was pointed out that some people actively avoid the AGM.

Errol Blake proposed to accept in principle the raise, so it can be taken as a proposal to an EGM, John O'Sullivan seconded. **This was put to a vote, 31 in favour, 1 against.** But recognized this is only a show of feeling of the meeting as the meeting was not quorate.

Membership numbers

We don't have the actual figures available so cannot report but numbers are slightly up year on year. Figures are available however via the membership secretaries report.

Complaints Committee

Have been asked to consider two complaints from the lai bu this year

5 Event Officer's Report

Kristian is not here today and has withdrawn from the post. There is no report, but this is summarized in the Bucho report.

JOS spoke about the Summer Seminar, he has taken on the role of publicising this. We are aiming for 100 attendees. Please book and encourage others to attend. Dojo's in the South East (Reading, Camberley, Southampton, Portsmouth, Mumeishi) will be not having practices that week to encourage attendance. There is an open invitation from JOS for Kendoka to camp at his Farm for the period at no charge. This is 7 miles from the event. Anyone interested should contact JOS. (KendoDRC@BritishKendoAssociation.com).

Discussion with suggestions about making a Facebook event (Chris Bowden). Clarity needs to be given as to who the event is aimed at, beginners or whatever (Tatos). Clarity of Timetable (Philip Cox)

There will be 3 teachers teaching in three separate rooms (can be joined but probably won't) We need to get the message that this is open to all levels but be aware that Hanshi are used to teaching Nanadan level not beginners.

Info from John Howell Sensei that Ko sensei has already travelled to Tokyo to meet with the others to plan. An indication that they are taking this very seriously and we need to ensure attendance matches this commitment.

Action JOS will take this forward and action as appropriate.

6 Grading Officer's Report

The 2nd Godan Grading point has already been covered.

This year we are moving Junior Grading to Watford (22/09) to link in with the Junior Seminar being hosted by Kodokan. The grading has not been well attended at Tsubaki dojo in the last 2 years.

Its proposed that Mumeishi grading this year will not have an Ikkyu grading as last year there were 120 applicants across all grades which gave logistical problems. Instead it is proposed to hold an Ikkyu grading at Tsubaki (Carshalton) the week before. Points were made against this and a desire to centralise gradings was expressed the Bu to consider this.

Question (James Ogle if this coincides with Nenriki's Lidstone Taikai

Point from the floor (Rossana Riches) that often seniors in a dojo travel up with Ikkyu candidates. (James Ogle) that there needs to be a separate warm up facility for big grading events. This not an issue at Cranfield College but is at the British Airways club that has been used previously.

John Howell Sensei asked why juniors could not be graded at the same time, but obviously not mixed with adults.

Jeff Humm Sensei expressed an opinion that it is important that Juniors grade at BKA events and not at local dojo events as they are members of the association and should be treated as such. Similar sentiments about university gradings.

John Howell Sensei concerned about the fragmentation that is happening at that we should endeavour to support grading events that cater for all.

Action GOD/JG to discuss grading strategy moving forward.

7 Budget and fees for 2018

Malcolm Smalley (Cashier) summarised the key premises of the budget and the state of the finances for the past year. Copies will be published on the BKA web site.

Headlines: In 2017 we made a loss of c£2000, but this was what was budgeted and is not a concern.

This year, the lack of the University grading and Glasgow seminars together with a much lower than normal surplus from Watchet (£250 rather than £1,200) Stoke numbers are down. On top of that the Summer Seminar is a big risk, currently we have spent c£12,000 on this event and income is not going to cover that with the numbers booked so we will probably take a big hit on this. Also, the WKC Taikai in Korea is costing more than expected as the flight costs are not going to benefit from the deal that was done with Turkish Airlines on the Japan event in 2015 (due to a souring of the relationship).

Hence, we have two massive risks to our budget and this is why we are proposing to take precautionary action and put the fees up for 2018.

8 Squad Manager's Report

Squad Manager not present a report was received but too late for inclusion. This was summarised in the Bucho Report.

9 Election/co-option of New Event's Officer

We need a new events officer, we cannot elect one today, but we can co-opt for a year. There have been no applications for the position, so we need to encourage someone to take on the role.

Question (Ruben Bryant) Is there a Job Description – this is in the Constitution. It's a liaison role with people organizing events and taking the lead on running BKA events. It's not required to be at all events and there are lots of people who will help.

Point from JOS that Stephen Martin is prepared to assist the new Event's Officer.

7 AOB

Hamid-Reza Danesh-Azari handed out a proposal for University Representation for the BKA and presented his thoughts. Attached as appendix

Key points

1. Co-opt a BKA universities rep to act as a coordinating point
2. Establish a Website subpage for university students and identify which dojo are university clubs.
3. Assistance in founding new clubs. There a few key universities that don't have kendo
4. Coordinate funding from other sources and compare examples between universities that do this successfully.
5. Kendo currently not included in BUCS (British University's & College Sports) try to re-establish this.
6. As part of this establish a National Kendo League. Regional feeding into National level

Jeff Humm sensei suggested this had already been done in the past with BUSA recognition. James Ogle commented that BUSA had refused to recognize tis in the past few years, so it may have gone stale.

Hamid-Reza was co-opted as University's Representation Officer.

Errol Blake proposed a vote of thank to the officers for their work.

GOD reminded of the need to have an EGM to ratify the decisions and to encourage attendance from the membership

Meeting closed at 11:30

University Representation for the British Kendo Association

Dear Members,

Universities offer an indispensable source of new talent; with simple and plentiful recruitment together with independent sources of funding, further development in this sector would strengthen British kendo.

Although as a body we provide excellent opportunities for university students, I believe that there are a number of relatively simple ways we can build upon our successes:

1. BKA Universities Representative

The establishment of a BKA Universities Representative would give university club presidents a single point of contact for all university-related enquiries, reducing the burden on other BKA volunteers and making it easier for university students to know whom they should contact for higher education-specific queries.

Similarly, the representative would be a point of contact for the BKA to all UK university clubs. The key advantages of this could include increasing the number of registered university dojos and encouraging more students to pay their BKA membership.

2. Website sub-page for university students

The representative could also assist in making the BKA website easier to use for university students, such as creating a dedicated 'University Students' sub-page and collating a list of all university clubs for the directory. University clubs can be further distinguished on the BKA map with a unique icon (an independent version has already been created).

3. Founding new university clubs

Close to my own heart, the representative could support students wishing to establish new university kendo clubs at their own institutions; firstly, by ensuring they have the appropriately experienced teachers and support to uphold BKA standards, and secondly by acting as an intermediary to other university club presidents who can provide advice from their own experiences (thinking of the recent success at Durham). This may eventually take the form of student-centred documentation for starting a club.

4. Funding support for university clubs

Due to the high turnover of university club management, there is a tendency to 'reinvent the wheel'. We could (through the representative) assist clubs in finding and securing external sponsorship/funding, for example Sportivate (the University of York Kendo Club has successfully received several hundred pounds from this).

5. BUCS

British Universities & Colleges Sports (BUCS) is the national governing body for Higher Education sport in the UK and organises leagues for most major sports in the country (including many martial arts). University clubs which take part in BUCS receive significantly greater funding from their Student Unions; for example, in the academic year 2015/16 the University of York Kendo Club received a grant of ~£800, whereas The University of York Fencing Club received ~£5000, for a similar membership size. By working towards kendo eventually joining BUCS with BKA support (both for gravitas and to ensure that ideal standards of kendo are maintained), university-level kendo (and thus kendo as a whole) would receive greater national attention and interest from young people.

6. Establishing a National Kendo League

To support this, in 2015 university club presidents organised a network and discussed starting a National Kendo League to support a BUCS application (but importantly also to have more opportunities for students to practice with each other and enjoy taikai). This has successfully been piloted in Scotland and the North of England (the latter of which is now in its third year), and with BKA support could hopefully be proliferated throughout the country.

Costs associated with implementation

Fortunately, most of these changes require no financial input, with the exception of section 6. Ideally, BKA financial support will be for initial start-up costs; primarily related to providing shinpan. The end goal is for almost full funding to be provided through the universities themselves, to ensure sustainability. In the meantime, university clubs usually have access to Student Union funds supplemented by potential sponsorship, though this will not cover the whole sum. Assuming 5 regional competitions (e.g. Scotland, North of England, Midlands & Wales, South of England, London) and a Finals, up to £2400 could be needed to reimburse shinpan travel (budgeting up to £50 average each for 8 shinpan per competition, with 6 competitions), in accordance with the BKA 'Travel & Subsistence Code' (2014), though this may be affected by *de facto* practices. For information, a regional competition could cost ~£350, not including shinpan or competitor travel.

Thank you for your time in reviewing these proposals. The unique environment of university kendo clubs makes the smallest details in their backing have a disproportional influence on how well they flourish. As the national governing body of kendo, the BKA's support of this nascent environment can help create a sustainable pool of young and eager talent for the development of kendo in our country.

Yours,
Hamid-Reza Danesh-Azari