

**MINUTES OF THE 7TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE BRITISH BIATHLON UNION**

**Held at The Hotel Neuwirt, Ruhpolding, on
Saturday 31st January 2004**

BBU BOARD

PRESENT

Lord Moynihan	(CM)	President
David Cranston CBE	(DC)	Chairman
Andy Cowling OBE	(AC)	Chairman, Army Nordic
Mark Goodson	(MG)	Secretary General and Finance Director
Jeremy Hopwood	(JH)	Marketing and Sponsorship Director
Eddy Lowe BEM	(EL)	Technical Director

IN ATTENDANCE

Jason Sklenar	(JS)	Athletes' Representative
Pippa Cranston	(PC)	Secretary to the Board

APOLOGIES

Charles Brooks	(CB)	Hon Legal Adviser
Graeme Ferguson BEM MBE	(GF)	Membership/Coaching Director

BBU Members: 51 Members were in attendance.

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ITEM 1 – INTRODUCTORY REMARKS	3
	3
ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF THE 7 TH AGM	3
	3
ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING ON ITEM 2	3
	3
ITEM 4 – CHAIRMAN’S STATEMENT	3 - 4
	3 - 4
ITEM 5 – ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 30 APRIL 2002	4
	4
ITEM 6 – RE-ELECTION OF MARK GOODSON AS A DIRECTOR	4
	4
ITEM 7 – RE-ELECTION OF EDDY LOWE AS A DIRECTOR	4
	4
ITEM 8 – ELECTION OF OTHER NOMINEES TO THE POST OF DIRECTOR	4
	4
ITEM 9 – APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS	5
	5
ITEM 10 – FUTURE PLANS FOR BRITISH BIATHLON AND LONG TERM PLAN TO 2010	5
	5
ITEM 11 – COACHING AND DEVELOPMENT COURSES RUN BY ARMY ON BEHALF OF BBU	5 - 6
	5 - 6
ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS	6
	6
ITEM 10 – CLOSING REMARKS	6 - 7
	6 - 7

ITEM 1 – INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming all present to the 7th AGM of the British Biathlon Union. He emphasised that it was in the interests of the biathletes to be a member of the BBU as the BBU exists solely to support and represent the athletes.

He then welcomed Lord Moynihan, President of the BBU, and introduced him to the members, as a very busy man, dedicated to the continuance and furtherance of British Biathlon. Lord Moynihan was thanked for finding time in his busy schedule to attend the Championships.

ITEM 2 – MINUTES OF 5TH AGM

The minutes of the 6th AGM held on 1st February 2003 were unanimously agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and were signed by the Chairman.

ITEM 3 – MATTERS ARISING FROM ITEM 2

There were no matters arising.

ITEM 4 – CHAIRMAN’S STATEMENT

The Chairman congratulated the athletes for qualifying for the National Championships. As a former biathlete himself, he is well aware of the effort, time and financial sacrifice that has to be made to reach the standard required at the Championships. He especially congratulated the National Squad and was delighted that their results to the fore of the races, bore out the selection process.

He then thanked the Army for enabling the National Championships to ‘blister’ on to the Army Championships, as otherwise attendance would be very expensive for the athletes. However there are advantages both ways. Because of the national governing body athletes can enter international competition and the Olympics, which they would not otherwise be able to do.

The BBU has many aspirations for the athletes, and he was delighted that despite severe financial constraints, that it had managed to do as much as it did last year. The National Squad attended World Cup meetings and the World Championships. There was also a squad on the European Circuit, a little smaller than in former years and fewer ladies and they had been given as much support as the limited funds allowed. There had also been BBU sponsored courses at Gordon Seaton’s Biathlon Centre in the Highlands, the results of which have been seen in the racing.

He reiterated his thanks to the Army as the main sponsor of the British Biathlon Union and told the assembled company how grateful the Board is to the Army.

He then asked for help from members as the Board is at least one member short and Carl Evans, the Team Manager, is shortly to return to unit. He would be grateful if members could keep their eyes open and encourage anyone who may be interested in becoming involved as with an ever dwindling number of volunteers, running the BBU is becoming less fun.

DC then explained to the new members, how and why the BBU was formed eight years ago, that the Ski Federation who had represented biathlon, had decided that they could no longer support the sport, and rather than let the National Squad disband, seven ex- military biathletes had got together to form a National Governing Body for the sport. The BBU is fully recognised by the British Olympic Association, the International Biathlon Union etc. as working on behalf of and

representing the athletes. The Board is fully voluntary and executive, and spend a great deal of their own time and money to keep the show on the road. The Chairman took the opportunity to thank the Board for all the hard work they had put in during the past year.

ITEM 5 – ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30TH APRIL 2003

MG presented the accounts for the financial year ending 30th April 2003. He explained that although the accounts were not presented until nine months later, the Board had looked at alternatives of providing them earlier but discarded them as being impractical. The accounts are audited by an independent accountant and lodged at Companies' House.

The accounts for the financial year 2002/03 were unusual. Because of the Team Manager deploying to Iraq, sums usually held in a military account were given direct to the BBU. The lack of a Team Manager in 2002/2003 season had also resulted in slightly higher office costs. Unfortunately at the end of the year the BBU had run at a £7.9K loss. He reminded the meeting that, for cash flow reasons, there were times during the season when he was a BBU creditor.

He briefly explained that the main income of the BBU came from grants and that £77K has been spent on the National Squads: £28K on summer training for both squads, £27K on the WC Squad and £16K on the EC Squad. Unfortunately this year it has not been financially viable to continue supporting the EC Squad after Christmas and the WC Team are paying for their own travel and having to rely on courtesy accommodation to attend the two World Cup meetings in the US.

This year £5K has been spent on development, but the BBU were fortunate that Gordon Seaton ran an excellent course at minimum cost and that Fred Gee's coaching was free. He stated that the overheads remained the same, whatever the assets, at 14 – 15% of the running costs.

The Chairman expressed the Board's discomfiture that at times the Finance Director was owed money and was unable to reclaim his bank charges, but accepted the practicality of it in order to keep BBU costs down. He then proposed that the accounts were adopted – there were no votes against and the accounts were accepted.

ITEMS 6,7 & 8. The Chairman took these items as one.

ITEM 6 – RE-ELECTION OF MARK GOODSON AS DIRECTOR

ITEM 7 – RE-ELECTION OF EDDY LOWE AS DIRECTOR

ITEM 8 – ELECTION OF OTHER NOMINEES TO THE POST OF DIRECTOR

The Chairman stated that MG and EL wish to continue to support the athletes and that he had hoped for a new member to the Board, but no-one had been forthcoming. He then explained that there were two nominees for three vacancies and informed the meeting that a majority vote was needed for any nominee to be elected to the Board. Members then voted, the votes being taken for counting by two independent tellers.

ITEM 9 – APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

The appointment of King, Morter, Proud & Co., Chartered Accountants of Kings Arms Vaults, Watton, Brecon, Powys as auditors for the year ending 30th April 2004 was put before the floor. As all there were no dissenters, the motion was approved.

ITEM 10 – FUTURE PLANS FOR BRITISH BIATHLON AND LONG TERM PLAN TO 2010

DC introduced this item by quoting the BBU's revised vision. "The BBU's vision is to build a world class British Biathlon Team by 2010 that will be competing in the top echelon of Nations Cup teams; will have regular finishers in the top 30 of an international field with at least one person competing in the medal zone each season and will be head to head with the leading nations at the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in Vancouver."

He then invited JH as Marketing and Sponsorship Director to outline the current plans and actions.

JH commented that after one year on the Board he would love to tell them that he had more sponsorship. He outlined his perceptions during that year:

- a. Army support is the largest the BBU has, that the BBU is mindful of the need to deliver value to the Army, but nothing is certain, including the valuation the Army puts on what the BBU can offer.
- b. That the WC rugby breakthrough proves that results grab attention. At present the BBU have none.
- c. That a sense of direction is needed – what potential sponsors can buy into.

JH said that having visited Salt Lake City during the Olympic Winter Games in 2002, he left with a clear conviction that Britain could have a world-class team by 2010. That conviction has not changed since, but all those involved must have the same conviction: that there will be four athletes who will be getting good results by 2010.

Any marketing campaign must be inspiring for potential sponsors and to that end the profile of biathlon must be raised, such as the centre page article appearing in the Observer the following day.

He proposes to make business leaders look at the sport as an opportunity and the marketing campaign will be offering a business proposition to build an advertising platform. Thirty five thousand people watch biathlon in the UK, and 80 million in Europe, where biathlon is the most watched winter sport. Hundreds of companies market in Russia, Germany and Norway and he proposes to approach these companies first. There are longer-term opportunities in development, not just for youth, but also for greater interaction between the National Squad and young athletes. He thanked the President for providing enthusiastic office support for the marketing campaign and for financing all print and brochure costs.

He challenged the members to take a sponsorship folder at the end of the meeting, which contained a letter, a brochure and a record of acceptance and present them to any contact they may have who could provide sponsorship.

And finally he displayed some BBU merchandise which would be on sale at the end of the meeting which the National Team are selling to fund the difference between what they are funded for their trip to the WCs in the US and what it will cost.

The Chairman expressed his gratitude to JH for re-invigorating the marketing and sponsorship campaign and reiterated that the BBU does want to fulfil all its aspirations and is exploring all available ways and means including further military support.

ITEM 11 – COURSES RUN BY ABU ON BEHALF OF BBU

DC stated that the BBU/ABU proposals for development are being run on 1½ tracks. The half track is that the BBU selection committee will identify a number of potential top athletes. This year the number will be limited to the top half dozen and then there will be an effort to try and find as much money as possible for training ideally at a location such as the East Grange Biathlon Centre.

The other track is an initiative being led by Chairman, Army Nordic, to nominate a Germany based unit to run at least one summer training camp which would be open to all BBU/ABU athletes.

Course dates and information will be published on the BBU website and if possible financial help will be given to enable athletes to attend.

ITEM 12 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Brian Walton commented that only two of the three services are represented at the Championships and asked whether anything was being done to encourage the Royal Marines to begin attending the Championships again. The Chairman replied that he too would like to see the Royal Marines back in the Championships, particularly as there are two Royal Marine athletes in the National Squad. He had written to the Commandant General, Royal Marines at the end of last season, but understandably in view of the military situation had had no reply. He intends to write again at the end of this season.

ITEM 15 – CLOSING REMARKS

Lord Moynihan told the assembly that in politics he makes some 200 speeches a year, but this must be one of the worst times to make one due to the hectic racing and “meeting the VIPs” programme.

Since Michael Howard has asked him to come back as Shadow Minister of Sport he has identified two elements, for which he will fight and which should impact favourably upon biathlon.

- i. The present Government policy has an emphasis on elite sports. He intends to push hard to get the Government to release money into the development of lesser sports and grass roots development in all sports.
- ii. A Bill has been presented to create a specific Olympic Lottery game in order to raise £110 million in aid of the Olympic bid for 2012. The Government wish to launch it next year, but he intends to press for an earlier launch in July this year, in order to raise extra funds to be distributed among all Olympic sports.

He went on to say that since the National Lottery was introduced £1.3 billion has been distributed to sport, but that it was hard to see where it is going.

He reminded the athletes that sports governing bodies are only there to serve the athletes and that they were lucky to have such a dedicated Board. He then thanked and congratulated the Board for all the voluntary work they are doing without which the athletes would not be able to compete at National, International and Olympic levels.

.....

The Chairman then thanked the tellers and announced the results of the elections to the vacancies on the Board:

Mark Goodson 48 votes

Eddy Lowe 49 votes

Both, having achieved a majority vote, were re-elected to the Board of the British Biathlon Union and were congratulated by the Chairman.

.....

In a final closing comment, the Chairman drew attention to the fact that it was the last time Gordon Seaton and Mark (Fred) Gee would be attending the meeting as serving members of the Forces.

Both have been tremendous contributors to biathlon: Gordon as ex-founder Board member and ex competitor, Fred as an ex triple Olympian. He thanked them on behalf of the British biathlon community for their immense contributions.

Signed by D A Cranston CBE _____ Date _____

Chairman British Biathlon Union

Attachment: Board Members with effect from 31st January 2004