

Cambridge University Karate Club

Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2022

Opening

The regular meeting of the Committee of the Cambridge University Karate Club (CUKC) was opened by Fizz McNally at 2.30 PM London time and took place in person at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.

Present

Fizz McNally, President
Alex Kutuzov Vice-President
Callum Reid, Men's Captain
Alex Shepherd, Social Secretary
Khai Tran, Social Secretary
Daoyuan Qian, Webmaster
Ellie Worth, Welfare and Safety Officer
Millie Johal, Publicity Officer
Christoph Hess, Secretary

Absent

Jasmin Knight, Women's Captain
Ismael Sierra, Treasurer
Tegwen Ecclestone, Old-Karateka Association Officer
Fatemeh Torabi, Non-Student Representative

Agenda

The President suggested eight topics for discussion, in the following order:

1. Invitational competition with the University of Nottingham
2. Non-student membership
3. Training times

4. Member consultation
5. Low training turnout
6. Other small business
7. Unminuted agenda points

The order was approved by the Committee.

Ad 1) Invitational competition with the University of Nottingham

Callum said that the captains had received another invitation from the Nottingham University Karate Club, for which he will circulate a sign-up form shortly. As the competition is taking place in the middle of exam time, the turnout among CUKC members is likely to be low, however.

Further steps: A form will be circulated to the Club shortly.

Ad 2) Non-student membership

Fizz opened the discussion by outlining the issue that, at the moment, there are about 60 student members in the Club and 10 non-student members (here defined as, Fizz later clarified, people having trained with the club in the past year, rather than those who had filled in the membership form). In recent training sessions, often up to 50 per cent of people attending individual training sessions have been non-student members. The general guidance from the Sports Service is that if a club allows non-student members to train with it, there should be good reasons for inviting these non-student members to join. For CUKC, these reasons were that non-student members were bringing revenue and experience, even though CUKC also tries to limit the share of non-student members to no more than 10%. One possible workaround, Fizz suggested, would be to register all or a share of current non-student members as guests. This would, however, affect their ability to compete, even though “guest” non-student members could be registered as members before a competition so that they could meet the entry requirements. Ellie asked if they would then have to re-apply every time before entering a competition. Fizz replied that this would probably not be necessary. She also added that the Club needed a clearer definition of what membership means. Millie expressed a concern that non-student members being registered as “guests” might affect their KUGB affiliation. Fizz replied that what was needed for a KUGB license was an affiliation with a KUGB club, not necessarily actual membership. Being a “guest” would not stop non-student members from being affiliated with the club, and would therefore have no effect on their KUGB license. Fizz also pointed out that, even with a formal workaround, there was a reason why non-student membership should be capped at ca. 10%.

Too large a share of non-students training with the club might change the atmosphere, which, Fizz stated, it in some respects already had. Millie added that Fatemeh as non-student representative should be involved in the discussion to give her input. She agreed that 10% was a good benchmark. Millie also suggested that the Club could consider special classes for non-student members. Fizz agreed that having this kind of specially dedicated class would be a good idea, but also clarified that in her view the issue of non-student membership should be decided by the Executive Committee alone, as alterations to it in the constitution would require an EGM. Christoph stated that the 10% share of non-student members was an important benchmark but should be seen as a mid-term goal around which there would always be some fluctuation. Unless there were any immediate consequences to having a share larger than 10% in any given term or year, it would therefore make more sense to keep monitoring the situation and take measures if the share stays as high in the following years. Fizz pointed out that whilst this was not an urgent matter, ignoring a violation of the constitution is not a good precedent to set.

Further steps: The committee has not decided to take any immediate steps as they will see how membership develops following the freshers drive next term.

Ad 3) Training times

Christoph suggested that the Club might consider returning to the previous 2-hour format for all sessions. The reason for the introduction of shorter 1.5 hour sessions on some days had been to make training more condensed, but, Christoph pointed out, the initial hope of streamlined 1.5 hour training sessions had not materialised. With delays, changing, and breaks, these sessions would often boil down to just one hour of training, which for many members is often not worth a sometimes lengthy commute from home or their workplace. Millie replied that longer training would at the moment also increase the cost for room bookings. Returning to the old two-hour format might be considered for Michaelmas term, however, if the Club can secure college venues for training again. Ellie asked if increasing the length of training sessions would also mean an increase in training fees, to which Christoph replied that since training fees had not decreased when the sessions were shortened there would be no reason for increasing them as they lengthen again, especially since there would not be any additional costs to longer training sessions at college venues.

Further steps: No decision was made to take any immediate steps, but re-introducing two-hour sessions will be considered for next Michaelmas Term.

Ad 4) Membership consultation

Fizz walked the committee through the results of the member consultation. The results of the consultation had been made available to the committee beforehand.

Further steps: The main action points from the form included: (1) Increasing the friendliness of sessions and decreasing unnecessary intensive attitudes (2) Keeping training central, accessible and short (3) A lot of respondents for the form were split between those that appreciate longer, more intense training sessions at further away venues with those who appreciate shorter, more casual classes with more personal instruction (4) roughly 2 instructors/senior grades per 15 person class appeared the optimum for all.

Ad 5) Low training turnout

Fizz brought the committee's attention to the fact that training turnout is very low at the moment, which might have a negative impact on the club both in terms of training spirit but also put stress on the Club's finances. Millie recalled that last Easter Term there had been three training sessions, many of which were outside, which could provide a model for dealing with the current situation. Christoph pointed out that an easy way to increase attendance would be for the committee to train themselves, as the current training turnout had been exceptionally low even by the standards of Easter Term. Dao expressed doubts about this. Fizz suggested that attendance could be increased with a new format for some training sessions, which would involve half an hour of kihon, half an hour of kata and half an hour of kumite, held outside, and with an option for people to come and leave as they please. Christoph was not convinced that many people would show up for just half an hour of training, but Fizz pointed out that of course people would be encouraged to stay for the whole 1.5 hours. Millie suggested that Saturday sessions might lend themselves to the new training format, since current turnout was low anyway. Christoph agreed that this might be an option and added that the sessions might be themed as "stress busting" sessions, as suggested by Tegwen at the last meeting.

As an additional point, Fizz asked Alex if there would be any financial ramifications to cancelling sessions, to which Alex replied that they would likely be modest in any case.

Further steps: The club is considering introducing a new 1.5-hour format for Saturday sessions. Additional training sessions might be cut or moved outside to save costs.

Ad 6) Other small issues

Fizz informed the committee that Jasmin is stepping down as women's captain. The committee will discuss possible replacements after the exam period. In the interim, the responsibilities will be shared between Men's captain, Vice-president and President with Millie stepping in to help with this temporary structure given her experience.

Ellie asked the committee to report anything that makes them or other members uncomfortable to her, even if she is not present at certain training sessions

Ad 7) Unminuted business

The President asked not to have this agenda point minuted. The committee approved.

Minutes submitted by:

Christoph Hess

CUKC Secretary

2022/2023

Approval: pending