

Cambridge University Karate Club

Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2020

Opening

The regular meeting of the Committee of the Cambridge University Karate Club (CUKC) was called to order by Alex Russell at 3.30 PM GMT and took place online via Zoom.

Present

Alex Russell, President

Abby Wheeler, Vice-President

Danielle Ball, Women's Captain

Chris Hamilton, Men's Captain (joined at 4.05 PM)

Maeve Brittle, Social Secretary

Daoyuan Qian, Webmaster

Millie Morgan, Welfare and Safety Officer

Eleanor Lee, Publicity Officer

Christoph Hess, Secretary

Olivia Lavigne, Treasurer

Paul Smith, Old-Karateka Association Officer

Absent

Jane Blunt, Senior Treasurer

Agenda

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

1. Constitutional updates
2. Budgets and accounts
3. Fundraising through Old-Karateka Association (OKA) Officer
4. Training attendance and outreach
5. Socials
6. Annual dinner plans
7. Logo change
8. Welfare issues

The order was approved by the Committee.

Ad 1) Constitutional updates

Alex pointed out that the changes to the Club's constitution agreed by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in March had given rise to two major concerns. First, a number of club members felt that the process by which constitutional changes were made lacked transparency, making them feel left out. This especially concerned amendments that were emotive. Second, in the process of reviewing these changes, the President, Senior Treasurer and the OKA Officer discovered that the 2016 version of the constitution (which provided the template for the 2020 amendments) had in fact never been formally ratified by an AGM. This currently leaves the Club with the 2013 constitution, which does not adhere to the standards put forward by the Sports Service. Paul also pointed out that in the 2016 constitution, the conditions for changing the constitution were altered, again without the approval of an AGM. As Paul emphasised, the present Committee should review this issue and examine how to get club members involved in constitutional issues in the future to make constitutional amendments as democratically as possible. Because the Committee alone has no power to overturn decisions made by an AGM, Alex inquired with the Sports Service if the Senior Treasurer has the power to investigate the constitutional issue and to suggest changes. The Sports Service confirmed that the Senior Treasurer has this power. The Senior Treasurer is willing to take the necessary steps and has asked for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) at which the 2016 version of the constitution and the 2020 amendments would be

ratified amid a wider discussion of the proposed changes.

Further steps: Alex, Eleanor and Christoph will draw up a draft constitution, which will be circulated to the Club. Changes will be discussed and approved at an EGM, which will take place online on June 19, 2020, 2-4 PM.

Ad 2) Budgets and accounts (grading discussed as an additional point)

Olivia and Alex have cooperated to finalise the Club's funding application as well as the accounts for the past financial year. Financially, the Club is heading for a rough break-even. Olivia and Alex have applied for additional funding for the coming year, mainly because the Club is facing higher expenses for grading. The past grading examiner Bob Poynton had taken gradings at a reduced rate, but as Bob passed away last month (March 2020) it is currently not clear if future examiners will continue to charge rates in a similar range to Bob Poynton's. As it is not sure if the Sports Service will increase its grant to the Club, the Club is currently looking into alternative arrangements to lighten the financial burden of a more expensive grading on club members. One way of doing this would be to make gradings become part of a longer course on the day of the grading, which club members who do not intend to grade can attend as well. Alex reported that Jane suggests cooperating with other clubs in the region as another potential solution. There are, for example, two KUGB clubs in Essex that could be partners for a jointly-conducted grading. Paul pointed to the difficulty that the grading times of these outside clubs might not accord with Cambridge term times. Alex concluded that joint gradings may be an option if CUKC has only a few members taking the grading, such as Easter Term, but for Michaelmas and Lent Term we might still have to organise our own gradings. Because a grading examiner may be a central symbol of continuity (Bob Poynton took CUKC gradings for more than for decades), Paul emphasised the importance of sticking with one particular grading examiner rather than switching around between several ones.

Further steps: No further action is necessary with regards to the grant application and the budget. Depending on the outcome of the grant application, the Committee will evaluate different options for conducting gradings in the future.

Ad 3) Fundraising through Old-Karateka Association Officer (OKA Officer)

Paul opened the discussion of this point by bringing the attention to the importance of alumni

relations to improve the financial standing of the club. The starting point for these considerations has been the recent effort by CUKC and the OKA Officer to collect donations for a trophy in memory of Bob Poynton. It is expected that the amount of donations will significantly exceed the cost of the trophy. These additional funds may be used to set up a 'Bob Poynton Memorial Fund', which would support club members with competition-related expenses. Such donations have recently been encouraged by the UK government's Gift Aid programme, which allows donors to claim an additional 25p in tax relief for every £1 they donate. The Alumni Relations Office seems to have already set up a portal for people who want to donate to the Club. Alex reported that, according to the responsible person in the Office, they have identified 200 alumni who were associated with the Club at some point. Paul informed the meeting participants that the Office's wealth assessment of CUKC alumni showed that two of them are currently worth at least £25 million.

Further steps: Alex reported that the Alumni Relations Office has asked the Club to enter into a data sharing agreement, in which the Club would agree to share with them a list of as many of our alumni as the Club's records allow (no further contact details, however). The online portal for donations must be updated with a new photo and a blurb, and should also be linked to the website to make it more visible. The website layout should be improved to make it accessible to people who want to get engaged with the Club or specifically make donations (good examples seem to be the swimming and the hockey clubs' websites, according to the Alumni Relations Office).

Ad 4) Training attendance and outreach

The discussion of this point was opened by Danielle, who suggested that the Club could get involved in Anglia Ruskin University's fresher's events next autumn to engage more of their students. Millie pointed out that Bill, one of our current members, is a student of Anglia Ruskin University and could be a potential springboard for the Club to reach out to the Anglia Ruskin student population. Eleanor suggested that we might ask the Sports Service for assistance, in which she was seconded by Alex.

Next, Danielle suggested that the Club might make training registers public to add a competitive incentive for members to attend more training sessions. Chris voiced concerns over potential privacy and security issues with this. As a way to avoid these issues, Danielle suggested that the registers might be made public only once or twice a term, without divulging the specific times and dates when a person

has trained. In this she was seconded by Chris and Eleanor.

The last issue brought up by Danielle with regards to training concerned online training sessions. Attendance in these sessions is not satisfactory. Eleanor raised the point that not many people know about these sessions and that people might be more inclined to attend if the sessions provide a clearer structure.

Further steps: Link up with the Sports Service for relevant contact details of Anglia Ruskin University. Christoph will try to set up a system of public registers that would protect members' privacy while maintaining the competitive incentive of these registers. Eleanor will advertise the online training sessions on social media, and Danielle try to work out a more structured session plan for online sessions.

Ad 5) Socials

Maeve informed the Committee that she was planning another one to two socials before the exam period starts. One of these socials will take place the weekend on Sunday, 3 May, and will be a brunch-themed event to engage members who are less fond of drinking as well as those who are living in time zones east of GMT. Ideas for the next event (roughly around 16/17 May) include a film night and a karate-themed quiz.

Further steps: Maeve will go ahead organising these events, which Eleanor will advertise on social media. Alex suggested that Maeve might want to send out a term plan for this term's socials with her next e-mail.

Ad 6) Annual Dinner

Alex informed the Committee that there will be no organisational or financial issues with cancelling this year's Annual Dinner, which was initially scheduled to take place in June. The Club can now decide whether it wants to cancel the Annual Dinner for this year altogether or move it to a later date, potentially in Michaelmas term. Dao suggested that we might organise a less formal Christmas Dinner instead of the Annual Dinner. Alex added that it would be better to avoid the pre-Christmas price hike and have the dinner take place at an earlier date towards mid-term. Paul called attention to the problem that it would be difficult to hold the usual Annual Dinner-awards ceremony if the Dinner, in whatever form, would take place this late. He therefore suggested that the President might want to present the round-up speech of the past year, usually given at the Annual Dinner, as part of a dedicated

online event this year.

Further steps: Alex will cancel the Club's booking for this year's Annual Dinner. As soon as an alternative is up and ready, Maeve will e-mail the Club about the cancellation and alternative arrangements. Dao and Eleanor emphasised that certain trophies such as the Bob Poynton Award should not be awarded online but rather in person at a later date.

Ad 7) Logo change

Dao suggested that the Club might introduce a new, more martial logo. Paul complemented this with a short history of the present logo. Christoph pointed to the costs that a logo change would entail.

The next point presented by Dao related to publicising vintage karate photos. Dao unearthed a collection of Club photos from 1985, which might become an important stepping stone to get alumni involved. Alex suggested that the photos be uploaded on a Google Drive first and that the Club might then work to set up a more systematic archive for old karate photos.

Further steps: Dao has set up the Google Drive. The OKA Officer will present the collection to alumni.

Ad 8) Welfare issues

Millie presented a short report about welfare-related issues. First, the Club needs to organise an annual safety review to check if training and equipment are in line with KUGB guidelines. Further, the Sports Service now requires that all training venues must have a first aider on site. Millie will review all training venues accordingly and check if there are any first aiders among the current members of the Club. Next, just as Jamie did last year, Millie proposed an anonymous wellbeing survey. Last, Millie brought up the question if the Club could do anything to improve the wellbeing of club members in the current situation. Alex suggested that this might be included as an additional question in the wellbeing survey.

Further steps: Millie and Abby will organise the annual safety review. Millie will review all training venues accordingly and check if there are any first aiders among the current members of the Club and will shortly send out the wellbeing survey.

Additions to the Agenda

A short discussion of this year's Blues awards followed between point 7 and 8. For men's Blues only, this year's application will include both the Blues applications for this year and for last year.

After the discussion of Point 8 was concluded, Abby asked what the Club could do to improve attendance and attract more newcomers. A short discussion followed, but it was agreed that the topic was too large to be dealt with at the end of the present meeting and should be discussed in a future Committee meeting.

Minutes submitted by:

Christoph Hess

CUKC Secretary

2020/2021

Approval: 23 June 2020