



Commonwealth Fencing Federation News Bulletin: 1 January 2003

Minutes of Meeting of Congress held on the 17th November 2002

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Present

Helen Smith	Vice President & voting member for AUS*
Chris Stamp	Vice President
Neil L'Amie	Secretary/Treasurer
John Ramsay	Chairperson of Technical Commission
Marie-France Dufour	CAN*
Penny Spink	ENG*
Karen Saunders	ENG
Sanjay Pradhan	IND*
Ramamurthy K C	IND
Henry de Silva	IOM*
Nigel Beadsworth	JER*
Sandra Martin	NIR
Jack Magill	NIR*
Mike Westgate	NIR
Keith Mann	NZL
Martin Brill	NZL*
Victoria Lamb	NZL
Robert Gastaldo-Brac	NZL
Bob Jamieson	SCO*
Paul Neil-Maclachlan	SCO
Iain Stewart	SCO
Elvira van Niekerk	RSA*
Peter Stewart	WAL*

23 present representing 11 countries

1. Apologies

Piers Jones – President, Ian Sneddon – NIR, Bill Ronald – AUS, Felix Tan -SIG
The Chair welcomed all attendees and asked everyone introduce themselves to the Congress.

2. President's Report

In the absence of the President, Piers Jones, the following report was read by the Chair, Helen Smith.

'President's Address to Congress, November 2002

Like you, I have been looking forward eagerly to the 2002 Commonwealth Fencing Championships and it is with deep frustration that I have to send you this message from my hospital bed.

For more than thirty years my memories of Commonwealth Fencing Championships have invariably been of friendly competition mingled with conviviality and happy opportunities to renew friendships. The CFF Championships have always been a very special event.

Over the last twelve years we have build further on these strong foundations. The number of individuals and of nations competing has increased at each succeeding Championships and so, inevitably, has the quality of the competition. Women's épée and sabre have become accepted. Indeed, we can be proud that we led the world in the field of international women's sabre. The professionalism of the organisation of the event has steadily increased and reference documents giving clear guidance have been compiled and published. I am particularly proud that in 1992 I succeeded in persuading the Commonwealth Games Federation to award Commonwealth medals for the Championships in 1994, 1998 and again here in Newcastle. It has been deliberate policy to take the Championships to parts of the world other than the UK home countries and I thank most sincerely the Fencing Federations of Canada, Malaysia and Australia for making this possible during my twelve years in office. Although there was no mid-term meeting of Council in 2000, we have developed a structure of four-yearly meetings of Congress with substantial intermediate meetings of Council in widely different venues including the USA, South Africa and Italy. I hope that these more frequent opportunities to meet have increased all Commonwealth countries' sense of involvement.

Such is the structure of world and Olympic fencing that our Commonwealth Championships are developing an ever more important role for the nations of our world-wide community. The promotion of genuine excellence has become more important and your new executive will have the difficult task of balancing this requirement with the need to encourage the development of fencing in smaller and newer countries of the Commonwealth. Neil and I long ago resolved to honour the Commonwealth Games Federation's guidelines on retirement after twelve years in office, but we also feel that these new directions in the development of Commonwealth Fencing require a new team and new ideas. We wish our successors well and assure them of our continued support.

Anyone who has had to give a vote of thanks knows how utterly impossible it is to include everyone and to express one's gratitude adequately. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to fencers and fencing administrators all round the Commonwealth. Thank you all for your help, counsel and friendship. I do not think I shall offend you if I mention by name those with whom I had to work most closely over the last twelve years. Helen and Chris have been wonderful vice presidents and good friends. Chris's predecessor, Bill Cumming, combined a deep knowledge and love of fencing with the most genial of personalities. John Ramsay happily accepted nomination to the chairmanship of the most unpopular committee imaginable and has provided us with a technical structure of real quality. Neil's contribution as both secretary and treasurer simply cannot be adequately expressed. For twelve whole years we have met regularly for working lunches and dinners at local hostelries to thrash out innumerable problems and drink countless pints of beer. The CFF has benefited from his wisdom and love of the Commonwealth and it has been a joy to work with him.

I send you my very best wishes for a successful and enjoyable Commonwealth Championships in Newcastle.

Piers Jones'

IOM moved that the President's Report be accepted, seconded by ENG. The motion was carried.

Get well & thankyou messages were collected from the Congress participants for forwarding to Piers Jones.

3. Statement of Accounts

The Honorary Treasurer circulated two sets of Income & Expenditure accounts.

The first set was for 1998 to complete the accounts for the last four-year cycle. NZL moved that the accounts be accepted, seconded by CAN. Motion carried.

The second set of accounts for the period 1999 to end of the Championships 2002 was tabled.

IND moved that the accounts be accepted, seconded by NIR. Motion carried.

A lively discussion ensued on the question of whether the affiliation fee should be increased or not, and to what extent. The current standard affiliation fee of £50 per year has not changed since 1994. At the discretion of the Executive, some 'developing' fencing countries have been required to pay only £6 per year.

Many felt that the currently low affiliation fee will need to increase to allow the CFF secretariat to operate at a greater level of professionalism that is expected by governments and umbrella sporting bodies in the 21st century. Others had reservations about their ability to pay. It was agreed that the incoming Executive should consider and circulate to members a range of affiliation fee models based on a strategic plan and budget for the CFF over the next four years. Wales suggested that different affiliation fee 'bands' might be used. Members were invited to continue the discussion over the course of the Championships and invited to forward any suggestions to the incoming Executive.

It was agreed that, upon a suggestion from the Honorary Treasurer, a yearly invoice for affiliation fees should be sent out to each country.

4. The Minutes of the 1998 Kuala Lumpur Congress were adopted as a faithful record of the proceedings.

NZL moved that the minutes be adopted, seconded by ENG. Motion carried.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes.

1. The possibility of merging the organisation of the Commonwealth Veterans' Championships with the CFC every four years was discussed. The Veterans' Championships are currently held every two years. The Chair advised that Australia had proposed holding the Commonwealth Veterans' Championships in Sydney in July 2003.
2. A query was raised as to whether the Awards for Significant Performance would be made at these Championships and it was agreed that they would be. A request was made that the awarding of certificates to all finalists and to referees acknowledging their efforts be considered. The Chair said that she thought that it was the intention of the Organisers to award such certificates at these Championships.

6. Consideration of steps required to be once again included in the Commonwealth Games.

A discussion suggested possible advantages and disadvantages of being once again included in the Commonwealth Games.

Advantages were perceived to be the additional funding from government agencies that would be received and the higher media and public profile for fencing if it were to be a Games sport.

Possible disadvantages were perceived to be that fewer fencers might be able to compete in the Games events due to restrictions by Games organisers. It was suggested that this could be overcome if CFF Championships were held in addition to the Games in the years between the Games.

The major difficulty in achieving a return of fencing to the Games is to persuade the Host Country to include it in their program.

It was agreed that a commission would be established to look at the matter and all countries were invited to send the CFF their thoughts. Those interested in being part of the commission were asked to advise the Executive of their intent during these Championships in Newcastle.

7. Election of Office Bearers

A letter of resignation was tabled from Piers Jones, and in consequence Neil L'Amie, resigning their posts after 12 years in office.

President

The Honorary Secretary advised that there had been one competent nomination received for the position of President. ENG had nominated Helen Smith of AUS. This had been duly seconded by CAN. No other candidate was suggested from the floor and Helen Smith was duly elected as President.

The Honorary Secretary then handed over the previous Minutes of the CFF to the President for safe keeping.

Vice Presidents

Chris Stamp had been nominated by ENG and seconded by AUS. Felix Tan of SIN had been nominated as Second Vice President by AUS and seconded by WAL.

It was suggested that statute 7 of the CFF Rules allowed for the election of Honorary Vice Presidents and Helen Smith as Chair advised the meeting that Piers Jones had been nominated by AUS and seconded by WAL. Piers was duly elected by acclamation. IOM then suggested that if it were possible to have more than one of Honorary Vice President, then Neil L'Amie should be made one too. Mr L'Amie was honoured to accept this nomination. This was seconded by SCO and Neil was elected by acclamation.

[Amendment – 2 December 2004. When these minutes were presented at the 2004 Meeting of Congress, John Ramsay noted that a formal vote of thanks to Neil L'Amie & Piers Jones appeared to have been overlooked in the minutes. The previous minutes were amended. Moved by Chris Stamp and seconded by John Ramsay that the amended Minutes be accepted as a true record – Carried.]

8. Date and venue of the next Congress.

No bid was received but India indicated that they may make a bid to hold the CFC in either New Delhi or Bangalore. It was requested that the bid should be made before 30 June 2003.

It was agreed that the 2010 bid should be lodged with the CFF before 30 June 2005 (ie before the 2006 CFC and Congress). At the 2006 Congress bidding

countries would be asked to make a presentation on their bid and Congress would decide and approve the winning bid.

9. Other Competent Business

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1945 hours.