



Southern Area Judo



Southern Area Annual General Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday 15 July 2025

Time: 19:00 to 21:00

Venue: Zoom

Present: JM (Chair), FC (Secy), MR (Vice-chair and Sussex), DH (Coaching), DP (Gradings and Honours), AG (Events), LH (Hants), GH (Refereeing), Ethan Fleming (Priory), Lisa Rivers (Kin Ryu), BB (Jersey), EM (Guernsey), Martin French, Anna-Marie Bridges (Budokan), Anthony Riley, Mogera Tani, Paul Cooper, Carly Dixon

Apologies: Mick Leigh (President), Paul Vella (Holbrook), Adrian Dove (Osaka), Adam Plinston (Tatsfield), Pete Swettenham (Witley), DC (Treasurer)

Clubs

Represented: Medway Park, Kinsa, Osaka, Kin Ryu, Crayford, Horsham, Priory, Jersey, Guernsey, Budokan, Judo Company, Mogera Tani, GB Top Team, Camberley

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

- 1.1 JM opened the meeting and commented that we have reverted to an online format to try to encourage attendance as we are still trying to explore member club preferences to enable participation. Have retained July scheduling but could be any time from May to July. Currently in third year as Chair, appointed at 2023 AGM after a period as interim chair. As ever, very grateful to all the members of the committee for their support and hard work throughout the year.
- 1.2 JM stated that 14 member clubs were in attendance at this AGM. The quorum for an AGM is 4% of member clubs. We have 92 clubs in the Area (according to BJA data) which requires us to have 4 clubs in attendance. We also need 5 members of the Executive Committee (including 2 elected Executive Officials) and therefore JM was able to confirm quoracy. JM commented that if this is your first AGM, its purpose is to receive reports on the activities of the Southern Area over the preceding 12 months from the members of the committee with responsibility for those activities, plus to consider the election of any executive officers (not due at this meeting) or any resolutions received from member clubs (none received).

2. PRESIDENTS COMMENTS

JM advised that ML was unable to attend this online AGM as it requires him to be in attendance with someone else that can dial into the AGM with him and this has not been possible on this occasion.

3. MINUTES OF 2024 AGM

The last AGM was held at K2/Zoom (hybrid) on 9th July 2024. JM commented that a correction needed to be made on the second bullet under section 8 which read 'senior members' and should have been Senior Examiners. The Minutes were proposed by Horsham Judo Club and seconded by Kin Ryu Judo Club.

Matters arising:

- 1.1 Any member clubs present express a preference between online and hybrid AGM?
4. Finance. We are still working on options for card payments; this has been complicated by the need for two signatories on the Barclays account and ongoing discussions have taken place regarding pre-paid options.
8. Second bullet point should read 'Senior Examiners' and not 'Senior Members'.
4. **2024 Reports**

Thanks to AG for uploading all reports to the SA website in advance of the AGM.

Chair's Report (JM)

- JM commented that it had been a very productive year for the Area, with athletes of all ages and officials performing at the highest levels of international judo.
- JM acknowledged all of the volunteers in the Area for their hard work and dedication, for running clubs, supporting players at events, organising events and officiating which are the backbone of judo in the Area.
- There has been the continuation of the Area Action and Development plan, aligned with the domains of the BJA Strategy. The Action and Development Plan also considers longer-term goals throughout the current four-year cycle.
- 92 registered Southern Area member clubs, with an additional 49 registered venues associated with those clubs. Increase of 5 clubs from last year. Area membership has grown over the last 12 months, from circa. 6,000 in April 2024 to just over 6,500 at the end of March 2025 (an increase of over 8%) and a good increase of membership number pre-Covid and a level of growth which is higher than other areas within Judo England.
- The Area has awarded circa £10k of funding to several athletes and volunteers through its open grant application programme. It is hoped that this scheme will be extended into 2025/26.
- The Committee has also approved the establishment of a £10k Grass Roots Club Development Fund, which launched at 2024 AGM, with a goal to provide financial support to Southern Area member clubs for grass-roots development projects that seek to increase participation and growth. Disappointing uptake, with only three applicants, all of whom were funded or funded in part, to a total of £4k. Consider second call later in 2025.
- 41 medals at National Championships – around the same as last year. Athletes representing GB at highest level. Over 25 medals at European Cup events, mostly from Juniors/Cadets, which is encouraging for the future. Approximately half of the medals have been achieved by Chloe Link and Summer Shaw. Special mention to Louie Seguin who won three back-to-back European Judo Hopes (like a pre-cadet European Cup) titles, as part of his extraordinary streak of nearly 30 event wins domestically and in Europe.
- Woking Leisure Centre has been established as home for Area events, with relaunch of an Area Open in October (entries disappointing and ran at a loss) and will be regular venue for the Inter County Championships.
- The Area's international referees also continue to be very active on the Continental and World stage, notably with Lisa Rivers continuing to officiate on the IJF World Tour and gaining selection for a number of high-profile events.
- The Area were also well represented at the 2023 British Judo Awards. Summer Shaw and Fiona Chan named Junior and Veteran (respectively) Female Athlete of the Year, Lewis Hannington and Jim Crompton receiving the Kata Award and United Judo Club winning the Inclusion Award.

- Congratulations to Derek Hopkins and Marion Woodard on promotion to 7th dan and Andy Grand to 6th dan.
- We have sadly lost very prominent members of the SA judo community – IJF kata judge Dennis Penfold, Olympic referee and team manager Graham Turner and TNJC head coach Tony Newton. A brief period of silence was held in recognition of their contributions.

Finance Report (MF/DC)

- MF was in attendance at the AGM to present the accounts for the period 2023-2024. In 2023 we lost £2k and in 2024 we had a profit of £2k.
- MF acknowledged the comments made by JM in relation to the grants that have been issued and why the numbers are significantly in the negative for the coming year but advised that we need to ensure that the accounts are independently examined in accordance with the requirements set out by the BJA and Sport England.
- MF stated he was happy to answer any questions for 2023/2024. However, no questions were raised. JM thanked MF for his assistance.
- The approval of the accounts for this year was proposed by the Budokan and seconded by Horsham Judo Club.

JM commented that the opportunity to look at the balance sheet for this year will take place at this AGM when DC can join this AGM call.

Coaching Report (DH)

- Over the last year we have arranged the Hampshire First Aid and Safeguarding and Steve Gawthorpe's Newaza Masterclass.
- We held our National Kata Course with Sensei Iura focusing on Kime-No-Kata and Koshiki-No-Kata and several other kata courses were run in the Area too.
- At the end of June we had 266 coaches. Level 1 – 77, Level 2 – 129, Level 3 – 56, Level 4 – 2, Level 5 – 2. This is approximately 50% less than last year and unsure as to why this is the case.
- The BJA have now implemented a Coach Register which includes the Safeguarding, DBS and Coach Revalidation status but it is not easy to monitor from an area point of view and to predict coaches needs.
- Steve Gawthorpe is not available for the coming year, and the Hampshire First Aid and Safeguarding will not be running due to lack of interest.
- There will be a Finding Your Feet course at Chichester Ronin later this year in October.
- The national kata course will run again with Sensei Iura focusing on Nage-No-Kata, Katame-No-Kata and Itsutsu-No-Kata.
- With the introduction of the new Dan Grade Syllabus, it is hoped to run courses in each County. There will be new 29 tachi-waza techniques and 10 ne-waza techniques to cover off in these courses. LH commented that he has also been working with Dave Clark on this too and has most of the 1st – 5th Dan onto an app and waiting on a few videos for technique combinations to include on it. JM was pleased that the Southern Area has had so much involvement in taking this project forward.

Squads Report (JM)

- Report covers 2024
 - Gold for Men
 - Silver for Minor/Pre-Cadet Girls
 - Bronze for Women
- 2025 Event was held on 5th July and results will be announced at the next AGM.
- We plan to re-establish Area Closed to act as a selection event for Area Squad and used for selections for National Teams.

Competitions & Events Report (AG)

- All 4 counties are active running events which means it gets very busy in the lead up to the Inter Counties with each County running a trials competition to select players for their respective teams. This equates to running more than 1 event per month across the Area which can be problematic for Referees and Officials but manageable.
- The Judo Company in Stockbridge have a venue which can run 2 mat areas for events, which means we have a venue in Hampshire.
- Southern Area events will be held at Woking Leisure Centre.
- Each event we run now needs a Welfare Officer which can be challenging at times as the BJA prefers this role to be carried out by someone not already involved in the event.
- The number of officials remains static. There's been a slight increase at the Timekeeper level. However, we only have a few people at Senior Recorder level which is a concern for succession planning.
- Most Area and County events are full 2-3 weeks in advance of the closing date which means participation levels are increasing.
- We have been awarded the National Adaptive event for August 2026 which will be the first national event that we have run in 3 years.
- Priory Judo raised a question regarding competition entry forms as the last one he saw was a word document and capacity of events. AG commented that most events are now run on Participant (an online system) which enables organisers to see in real-time the entries being received for each event/gradings which reduces the risk of cancelling events due to low numbers. Capacity for events is down to the size of the venue and number of mat areas that we have. The only venue that can run an event with more than 3 mat areas is Medway Park in Kent. We will continue to monitor this to either run more events or be more selective about the banding of events.
- GB Top Team asked about other events for his adaptive players that need to be protected whilst competing as they tend to be mismatched when competing at local events. AG responded to say we could look at the potential of running an adaptive section within our existing events, but this would still impact on our overall event numbers (75 players per mat area). GH advised that British Schools include an adaptive section and the London Area ran their first adaptive event last year as their adaptive numbers have been increasing. JM commented that there is a skillset required to run adaptive events to ensure that players of similar ability are matched with each other, we also have the Area Action Plan which looks at opportunities to provide adaptive events and hopes that this is something we can work on further. LR advised that it is quite difficult to run local adaptive events due to the pool of available players and the variance of ability levels.

Action: All member clubs to think about Club Welfare Officers who are available to volunteer to be Event Welfare Officers if they are not fulfilling another role at events/competitions (i.e. coaching, officiating etc.) and a reminder that U18s are not permitted to remove their judo jackets at the side of the mat if they are not wearing a t-shirt underneath their judogi to comply with safeguarding rules. SAC to further consider adaptive/inclusive events to be included on our Area Action Plan.

Refereeing Report (GH)

- It continues to be a busy year for the Southern Area referees, and the number of referees has increased by 18 to 78. 20 of which are active at County/Area and International level.
- Lisa and Martin Rivers are both continuing on the National Referees Commission working on Complaints and Examining, respectively.
- 7 attendees from the training course which ran at Croydon Judo Club need to complete their training.
- We've made heavy investment in the Fair Replay system which is the system used by the IJF. There is an annual cost of EUR100 per device which equates to a cost of £500 for the 5 laptops that we have in use. This system was used at the Kent International and was tested at a few local events beforehand and is better than the old Care System that was in use. The old laptops have been donated to other parts of the Area to help them use technologies that they were not previously able to.

- We had the most young referees selected for the British Schools this year.
- Mogera Tani asked about the BJA Kanji Awards and GH responded to say that these were designed to run within clubs.

Gradings, Promotions and Honours Report (DP)

- We currently have 16 active Senior Examiners.
- We held 2 Technical Dan Grade theory courses which were run at Summit in July and Croydon in February, respectively.
- Richard Stothard (Surrey Police) completed his training and is now a Senior Examiner.
- Our training programme for new Senior Examiners continues with 2 more due to complete next year.
- After many years at Dartford, we had to terminate the venue due to increased hall charges. Kent gradings are now being hosted at Croydon Judo Club. The database of interested persons wanting information on our gradings is now well over 200. Each person is emailed twice before a grading.
- During the next 12 months we will be holding 10 Area Dan Gradings. 4 in Kent at Croydon, 2 in Hampshire at AWE, 2 in Sussex at Chichester and 2 in Surrey at Croydon, all dates can be found on the area website calendar. The introduction of booking in advance has proved to be very successful with a 75% increase in attendance. Unfortunately, the numbers of women attending gradings remains low.

Safeguarding Report (RM)

- RM not present at the meeting. No report available.

County Reports

Adam Plinston – Surrey

- AP not able to attend the meeting but sent a report to be read out on his behalf.
- 2 Dan Gradings and 2 Kata courses have been held in June and July, respectively.
- 2 Competitions Minors and Pre-Cadets in February and Trials in April.
- In 2025, squad sessions are being reintroduced and Cadets and Juniors competition will run as well as a masterclass with Luke Preston – which will be free for all Surrey players and a small fee for non-Surrey players.
- In 2026, increase the number of competitions from 3 to 4 and possibly looking to run a Veteran competition for the first time, increase the number of dan gradings, implement their own Care System and quarterly squad sessions

Martin Rivers – Sussex

- 2 Refereeing Courses resulting in 10 new qualified referees and 4 were promoted. This was followed by a 2-hour randori session with Sussex.
- Sussex took a squad over to Belgium for a training camp (12 players and 3 coaches).
- Kin Ryu ran their own Referees and Technical Officials course (12 attendees on each).
- A group of players were taken over to Bath University for a training camp.
- A number of competitions have been held in the County across different levels.
- Good results at the 2024 Inter Counties (2 Silver/2 Gold).
- 2 Dan gradings were held in Chichester.

John Malkinson - Kent

- Kent International is continuing to run annually and numbers are steadily growing which is good as this event has become increasingly difficult to breakeven (almost at capacity on the Saturday with 400 entries).

Lewis Hannington - Hampshire

- Hampshire Closed was held at the Judo Company's Stockbridge location and has two mat areas and off the back of this there are plans to run more events at the Development Level.

- Regular squad trainings have taken place with an average of 50 attendees per session and are held approximately every other month with good representation across clubs in the County and will be looking to get more guest coaches to offer more variety.
- There are number of kata courses running which will also be coach revalidation events.

Eddie Mann – Guernsey

- Main focus is on participation – they are the only club on the Island with some competitors in the club aiming to get to more competitions as in two years' time there is the Island Games which is being held in the Faroe Islands and judo is included. It was missed from the Guernsey and Orkney Games.
- Every 2 years, Specsavers run a youth scheme which participants can choose 6 weeks free participation in circa. 30 different sports. 18 people chose judo and more than half of them enquired about joining the club.
- Revalidation took place in Jersey with Bill Baker and hoping to repeat this again.

Bill Baker – Jersey

- Our update follows the layout of our sports development plan for Jersey Judo, which was endorsed by British Judo Association and Jersey Sport (our local government body) in early 2022. In July 2022, Jersey Judo secured funding from the Jersey Community Foundation to support our sport development plan for a 3 year period.
- Performance - It was a quiet year for our senior athletes, but judo has been selected as one of the sports for the 2027 Island Games in Faroe Islands. We aim to send a senior judo team as part of Jersey's multi-sports team.
- Participation - We held local club festivals in November 2024, March 2025 and July 2025, to provide on-island experience for our members and referees.
- Our juniors have attended various events during the year in UK including: Hampshire, Surrey, and Coventry. We are very grateful for the continued hospitality and support from event organisers on the mainland for welcoming our young athletes.
- During the year we developed a partnership with the Jersey girls rugby team, to build their physical confidence. This was very successful and covered by local ITV and press.
- In June 2025 we supported a "cross-sport conversations" evening in conjunction with Jersey Sport to promote inclusion in sport with Rowan Kinsella from the GB Adaptive Judo squad.
- Officials - Coaches and Referees In March 2025, we completed a coaching revalidation course in Jersey delivered by Llyr Jones and Peter Powell, which was attended by one of the coaches from Guernsey.
- Our referees have supported our local club festivals and Southern Area Open during the year. In October Mike Bisson qualified as a National C referee.
- We attended a BJA online seminar on the new rule changes in Feb 2025 and we are planning to run a referee course in Jersey in later in 2025 to reinforce our understanding of the latest rules.
- Our club stalwart, Tony Palmer, was recognised by BJA for 40 years of service to Judo in Jersey including coaching, refereeing and various committee positions. He'll be stepping down in December for a well-earned rest and his story was picked up by local BBC TV and press. G
- Governance In January 2025 we completed our "sport health check" with Jersey Sport, which entitles us to funding from Jersey Sport. This health check covered a range of standards including safeguarding, safety, insurance, governance, volunteers and data protection. In Q4 2025 as part of a wider plan from Government of Jersey, we expect to permanently relocate from Fort Regent to a new sport centre to the north of St Helier that will have a purpose-built dojo.

5. **BJA Council and Judo England Updates (JM)**

- Meetings of the BJA Council are approximately once per quarter and those of the Judo England Commission are around the same frequency. Always try to ensure SA representation at these, either by the Chair (Judo England), Vice-chair or Secretary (Council). All English Areas produce a quarterly report of their activities and finances, submitted to British Judo.
- Area committee contributed to an independent review into the role and function of Judo England Commission. Report in early 2025. Acknowledged dedication and good work of all Area, especially as on voluntary basis. Recommended that engagement/communication with member clubs could be better to understand role and activities of Area committees. Some Areas more focused on established judo community rather than grassroots. Event organisation is a key role, but hampered by venue cost and availability of volunteers, calendar clashes. Should align with BJA strategy areas. Judo England identity needs to be strengthened. Will be working group to take recommendations forwards.
- Has been discussion on merits of reconsidering boundaries/number of English Areas, which were established a long time ago. May help improve pooling of resources and providing opportunities to member clubs. May also involve changes to governance, with appointed chairs on a Board rather than current commission, plus same kind of structure as now with key appointments in each Area (coaching, events, refereeing, etc.). Still early stages of discussion.
- Area completed action plans for EDI, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Safeguarding. To contribute to Judo England/BJA action plans. Area action plans include establishing dedicated pages on the website to signpost clubs to resources. We will email all member clubs when this is complete. Reiterate that it is mandatory for all clubs (with u18s) to have a CWO, with support from the BJA to help all clubs to reach compliance. CWOs get free or reduced membership and free membership of a child. Nearby clubs can partner up to share CWOs.

6. **Election of Officers**

No business to consider here as no elections are due at the current time.

7. **Resolutions**

No resolutions have been received from member clubs.

8. **Any Other Business**

Before the meeting closed it is customary for us to present the Jack Cook Award for Volunteers and the Cliff Baker-Brown Spirit of Judo Award, usually presented to coaches or players.

Nominations have been opened to member clubs to present these awards at a later date.

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

May-July 2026.