BRITISH POWERLIFTING

Chief Executive's Annual Report 2025-2026

Annual General Meeting | July 2026

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Chief Executive

Chief Executive's Annual Report

Looking back over the past twelve months, I am proud of the progress made across British Powerlifting. The strongest part of the year has been the way people have worked together. Board members, Home Nations, sub-committees, lead volunteers, coaches, officials and competition teams have shared knowledge, supported one another and taken responsibility for developing the organisation.

Members will have seen parts of this work through competitions, international results, Top Up Tuesday, open forums, the new website and policy updates. Considerable work has also taken place behind the scenes. We have reviewed how the organisation is structured, strengthened volunteer management, developed safeguarding and clean sport processes, gathered better data and started building a longer-term strategy.

The scale and complexity of British Powerlifting continue to place greater demands on the people running it. The commitment shown by volunteers remains central to everything we achieve. The year has also confirmed that selected areas now require professional capacity alongside our volunteers if we are to maintain progress, protect wellbeing and provide members with the standard of service the sport needs.

At the June 2026 reporting point

5,245	1,277	534	123
current active members	new joiners in 2026	active referees	active coaches

Membership figures are a mid-year snapshot taken on 17 June 2026 while the renewal window remained open.

A more connected organisation

Improving communication with members has been one of our clearest priorities. Between November 2025 and early July 2026, 29 Top Up Tuesday editions were published. These weekly updates gave members a regular view of competitions, international teams, recruitment, policy development, coaching, clean sport, governance and opportunities to become involved.

The new website has provided a stronger home for announcements, resources, policies and competition information. Feedback has been used to improve the site, and further work is continuing to make information easier to find. Important information is increasingly being held in central documents and sent by email, with social media and messaging groups used to direct members towards the full information.

Open forums have been held on technical rules, equipped powerlifting and the coaching licence. Member surveys, strategy consultation, video calls and conversations at competitions have added further opportunities for people to raise concerns, share ideas and understand the work taking place. I have tried to remain available to members throughout the year, whether online or in person, and these discussions have often helped identify practical improvements.

The quality of our decision making has also improved through better evidence. National competition feedback, international lifter reviews, member consultation, membership analysis and workforce data now provide a clearer picture of the organisation. This has helped us move away from assumptions and focus attention where it can have the greatest benefit.

The membership report prepared in June recorded 5,245 current active members, including 1,277 new joiners during 2026. Of the 6,595 people who held membership during 2025, 60.2% had already renewed by the reporting date. These figures represent a point in the renewal cycle rather than a final year-end comparison. They show a substantial and active community across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man.

Our membership is young, with a median age of 25.7 and more than three quarters of members in the Junior and Open categories. Retaining those members requires enjoyable competitions, safe and supportive clubs, good coaching and opportunities to remain involved beyond their own lifting. The data also shows a clear opportunity to improve participation among younger women, while female representation reaches 50% within Masters 1. These findings will inform future club, coaching and participation work.

Delivering the sport

The national competition programme remained one of British Powerlifting's strongest areas. British championships across Classic, Equipped and Bench Press were delivered for Sub-Junior, Junior, Open, Masters and university lifters. BUCS, the British Classic Bench Press Championships, the British Sub-Junior and Junior Classic Championships, the British Masters Classic Championships and the wider national programme all relied on promoters and volunteers working for months before each event.

Feedback received from national competitions was positive. Across 26 responses, average satisfaction was 4.28 out of 5 and the average likelihood of competing again was 4.92 out of 5. The sample is modest, although the findings provide a useful view of the participant experience. Organisation, eligibility processes, volunteers, referees, spotting and loading teams, commentators and livestreaming were recognised as strengths. Food provision, spectator information, venue flow and warm-up room management remain areas for improvement.

The competition team has continued to develop event technology and planning. The move towards a dedicated Competition Manager role will provide clearer ownership and greater consistency across the national series, supported by a refreshed technical leadership structure. Publication of the 2027 national calendar has also given lifters, clubs and prospective promoters more time to plan.

The Home Nations have continued to develop their own competition programmes. England expanded its championship structure across Open, Sub-Junior and Junior, Masters and Bench events. Its first standalone Sub-Junior and Junior Championships attracted 158 entries and included six anti-doping tests. Scotland reported its largest national championship to date. Northern Ireland delivered a national championship with strong competitive depth and extensive volunteer support. Wales continued to develop its national event and competition

capacity, and the Isle of Man has been building its volunteer base and organisational experience.

Each nation works within different venues, membership levels and resources. The common feature is the time given by people who organise entries, transport equipment, referee, spot and load, manage technology, provide media, support athletes and restore venues after the final session. The standard members experience on the platform is created through that work.

Representing Great Britain

British lifters produced a strong year of international performance across Classic, Equipped and Bench Press competition. The results covered every age group and reflected the work of athletes, volunteer coaches, referees, team managers and support staff.

The 2026 World Open Classic Championships produced the best Great Britain team result recorded by British Powerlifting. The women's team won the World team title for the first time and the men's team finished second. The team returned with three World Champions, four World records and further podium places and records across both squads. This was an exceptional collective performance at the highest level of Classic powerlifting.

The World Classic and Equipped Bench Press Championships involved a large and varied Great Britain team. Official results confirm team titles across Sub-Junior, Masters and Special Olympics categories, together with several second- and third-place finishes across Junior, Open and Masters competition. The breadth of those results demonstrates the strength of British bench press across age groups and both forms of the sport.

At the European Masters Classic Championships, a 52-person Great Britain team produced 18 European Champions, 12 World records and 15 European records. Every team finished first or a close second. At the European Equipped Championships, British Powerlifting sent a 51-person squad across Sub-Junior, Junior, Open and Masters categories. The Women's Masters 3 team won five European titles and achieved the maximum 60 team points.

The reporting year also included the Great Britain men's Sub-Junior team winning the 2025 European Classic team championship, alongside further international success at World, European and invitational events. England won the overall team competition at the Luxembourg Invitational, showing the quality present across the Home Nations as well as the Great Britain programme.

International success depends on people working away from public view. Coaches and handlers support warm-ups, attempt selection, equipment, timing and athlete welfare. Referees represent British Powerlifting within international technical teams. Team managers and administrators coordinate nominations, travel, accommodation, documentation and communication. During the year, volunteers stepped into international roles at short notice and supported athletes across long competition days.

The development of officials has also progressed. Four referees achieved Category 2 IPF status, and Kimberley Cowell passed the Category 1 IPF referee examination with a score of 100%. Phil Richards was inducted into the IPF Hall of Fame, recognising his long-standing contribution to British and international powerlifting.

Supporting our volunteers

British Powerlifting is delivered by volunteers. They lead the Board and sub-committees, run the Home Nations and divisions, promote competitions, coach international teams, referee, spot and load, manage safeguarding and anti-doping, maintain records, support technology, create media and answer member enquiries.

One of the most encouraging developments this year has been the collaborative working environment across the organisation. People have shared knowledge, supported work outside their own portfolios and helped solve problems collectively. That culture has allowed a wide range of projects to progress at the same time.

We have also invested in the systems around volunteers. Work has progressed on clearer role descriptions, Terms of Reference, volunteer agreements, recruitment processes and a British Powerlifting DBS checking system. These changes provide clearer expectations, better support and more consistent accountability for people giving their time to the sport.

The workforce data shows substantial capability. British Powerlifting had 534 active referees at the June reporting point, including 36 with international grades. Most remain at Divisional grade, so a clearer development route into National and IPF officiating will be important for succession. There were also 123 active coaches and 87 qualifications awaiting approval. Clearing that backlog would release significant coaching capacity that already exists within the membership.

Recruitment has continued across coaching, safeguarding, competition, performance and specialist roles. We have aimed to advertise opportunities more openly and create routes for developing volunteers to gain experience. The international coaching pathway, equipped development work and committee recruitment all form part of that approach.

The scale of the organisation now exceeds what can reasonably be sustained through voluntary capacity in several areas. The international programme is a clear example, with a large volume of administration and planning concentrated among a small number of people. Selected paid roles would provide continuity, protect volunteer wellbeing and allow skilled volunteers to focus on the areas where their experience adds the greatest value.

Building stronger foundations

Considerable attention has been given to the way British Powerlifting is organised. Work began on updating the Articles of Association and by-laws so responsibilities are clearer and the organisation is better aligned with the expectations placed on modern governing bodies. AGM motions and commitments are now being monitored more consistently, with clearer ownership and reporting.

Development of the 2026-2032 strategy has brought together member feedback, Board and committee experience, competition data and wider sporting priorities. The emerging framework, in the final stages of development before initial publication, is built around People, Places and Platforms. It considers the members and workforce who deliver the sport, the

clubs and competitions where powerlifting takes place, and the systems and partnerships needed to support long-term development.

Safeguarding has remained a priority. Procedures for Sub-Junior athletes have been strengthened through better recording of medical information, parental consent, communication and welfare needs. Policy work is continuing so that competition teams, coaches and volunteers have clear guidance and practical support. The 2026 Safeguarding Policy has now been drafted with the first draft available for use, whilst we work through more of the finer details working towards the final version.

The Disciplinary Committee has managed a substantial caseload and has also advised Board members, divisions and promoters on conduct matters that do not require a full disciplinary process. This work supports member safety, consistent application of the rules and confidence in fair procedures. The committee is reviewing its policies and capacity so that complaints and disciplinary matters can be handled clearly and proportionately.

Clean sport work has included face-to-face athlete education, sport-specific Clean Sport Week communication, greater visibility at competitions and developing use of data to support intelligence. UK Anti-Doping shared British Powerlifting content during the campaign. The year has also shown where education must improve, particularly around athlete responsibilities and whereabouts. Earlier and more accessible education will reduce avoidable breaches and strengthen the clean sport culture across the membership.

Coaching standards have continued to develop through the coaching licence, coach education, Approved Clubs and safeguarding requirements. The 2027 Approved Clubs nomination pathway has been developed in response to member feedback and will provide a practical route for clubs while maintaining minimum expectations around safeguarding, anti-doping and DEI knowledge. The coaching licence now sits within a wider framework designed to support athletes, coaches and safe practice in clubs, competitions and online coaching environments.

Coaching education continues to thrive with successfully delivered CIMSPA endorsed Assistant Coach courses and the new Lead Coach course. The development of coaches in British Powerlifting is integral both to the success of our athletes, the development of the sport at grass roots level and our long-term strategy for growth and international success. We continue to work on future educational items such as the High-Performance Coach course and engaging with other parts of the federation for specific courses, such as the British Powerlifting Safeguarding course.

The Assistant Coach course passed the first quality assurance assessment from CIMSPA and is currently undergoing the first QA for the Lead Coach course. The guidance, resources and strategic direction provided by CIMSPA have helped maintain the high standard of our coaching courses. They support the development of skilled future coaches while providing positive learning experience for people who are committed to the sport. The courses offer a meaningful route for continued learning and professional development, with practical value that extends beyond gaining the qualification itself.

Club development and equipped powerlifting have also received attention. Equipped taster stands and sessions allowed lifters to try equipment with experienced support, and work has begun to map equipped coaches, facilities and equipment. Engagement with the Association of Colleges, development of affiliated club benefits and discussions with partners all support the aim of creating stronger local environments for lifters to train, learn and remain involved.

The next stage

The work completed this year has given British Powerlifting a clearer understanding of its strengths and its pressures. The next stage will focus on turning that understanding into a funded and measurable plan.

Member and workforce data provide several clear priorities. We need to support retention, particularly among younger lifters; improve participation among younger women; clear the coaching approval backlog; develop referees through National and international grades; and standardise annual reporting so decisions can be compared accurately over time.

Clubs will be central to this work. A strong club system can support coaching standards, safe practice, first-time lifters, volunteer development and long-term membership. Development of affiliated and Approved Club benefits will continue alongside work to create useful opportunities for clubs, coaches and members.

Our established partners have made an important contribution to competition delivery and the wider operation of British Powerlifting. SBD has continued to provide essential support to the federation, particularly across Classic powerlifting. Eleiko provided two complete British Powerlifting-branded competition sets, which were introduced at the British Sub-Junior and Junior Classic Championships in May. The ongoing relationships with both organisations provide a strong base for further development across competitions, clubs and athlete support.

A new partnership with BULK will create opportunities for member discounts, competition prizes and further benefits. We have also been working with a wider range of prospective partners to diversify the support available to members, Approved Clubs and international athletes. Our focus is on long-term relationships that provide clear value to both British Powerlifting and its partners, support sustainable growth and strengthen the organisation for the years ahead.

The proposed paid High Performance Lead role responds to the size and complexity of the international programme. Clear leadership and dedicated capacity would allow athlete support, coach development, selection processes, communication and long-term performance planning to progress more consistently. Similar consideration will be needed across other areas where essential work has become too large or specialist to rely on a small number of volunteers.

We will continue strengthening relationships with Sport England and the wider UK sporting system. Strong governance, reliable data, safe participation, club development and a clear strategy will place British Powerlifting in a better position to secure partnership and investment opportunities that support both grassroots and international powerlifting.

One of my own lessons from the year has been the importance of using the Board and sub-committees earlier and more consistently. At times I became too absorbed in the volume of work and did not seek enough support. I have changed how I work in response. British Powerlifting is strongest when responsibility is shared and people are trusted to lead their areas.

There remains a considerable amount to do. We now have a clearer evidence base, stronger working relationships and a better understanding of the capacity required. That gives the organisation a firmer direction for the coming year.

Closing reflection

I would like to thank every athlete, volunteer, Board member, Home Nation, division, committee, club, coach, official, promoter, partner and member who has contributed during the past twelve months. The progress described in this report reflects their time and experience.

Our athletes have provided visible evidence of what this community can achieve, from enjoyable national competition to historic World and European individual and team results. British Powerlifting enters the next year with clearer direction and stronger foundations. We understand the areas requiring further work and the support needed to deliver them. I look forward to continuing that work with the membership.