



BPF BOARD MEETING

Sunday 22 March 2026
SUMMARY NOTES

BPF Strategy

Membership numbers have remained relatively stable, and active recruitment efforts will continue. The Board agreed that it is now appropriate to formally close the matter of lifetime membership, which ended in 2005 but continued to be honoured until 2018.

The Board also discussed the challenges of travelling on National Express coaches, particularly for wheelchair users when planning journeys. These and related concerns will be incorporated into the BPF's campaigning programme, working in partnership with other organisations and charities.

Trustee Elections 2026

This year, Trustees Mike Harper, Sue Brown, Linda Davies and Frances Quinn will need to step down from the Board and stand for re-election by members. An online Trustee Information Day, hosted by Kripen Dhrona, will take place on Wednesday, 15 April for anyone interested in becoming a Trustee. Nominations will open from 16 April and close on 15 May.

Members will be invited to vote for Trustees between 1 July and 25 August. Nomination forms will be available in the Bulletin and from the Central Office. Newly elected and re-elected Trustees will be announced at the BPF Annual General Meeting on 17 September.

Report from the National Treasurer

The Board reviewed the Finance report prepared by National Treasurer Terry Blackman, noting that several legacies have been received recently.

Two common misunderstandings among members were also highlighted. First, that funds raised locally 'belong' to branches; in fact, this is not the case, as BPF is the sole legal entity. Second, that loan units do not earn interest; instead, returns are paid as dividends and reflect both gains and losses in line with market performance.

Branch and Region update

The Board noted that some regions span very large geographical areas, which can make it difficult for members to attend meetings. Branches and regions have therefore been asked to submit reports outlining their planned use of funds over the next 12 months. This will help the Board evaluate the level of meetings and activities taking place.

It was also suggested that some regional boundaries may need to be reviewed, although Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland should remain as separate regions.

CEO Operations Update

The Fundraiser position remains vacant and has not yet been actively advertised.

The Board agreed that the office will close for Christmas and New Year from 24 December 2026 to 4 January 2027, covering three working days.

Updates to the Safeguarding policy were approved, and Regional and Branch officers will receive Safeguarding training at the Officer meeting on 25 June.

Registration is now open for the Health and Wellbeing Conference on 4 July 2026 at the DoubleTree by Hilton London Elstree: <https://britishpolio.org.uk/health-wellbeing-for-polio-survivors-conference-day-2026/>

Hydrotherapy pilot

Trustee Frances Quinn informed the Board of initial work undertaken with Carol Levin to explore the potential for establishing hydrotherapy classes for polio survivors at key locations across the UK. To date, they have met with the Northamptonshire branch and the National Axial Spondyloarthritis Society, both of which run hydrotherapy exercise classes.

A set-up process will now be developed, followed by a pilot scheme in Newcastle, supported by the local branch. No central organisational funds have been committed at this stage, although the branch has agreed to fund the pilot if there is sufficient interest from members. The Board welcomed the initiative and approved the project to proceed.

Advisory/Expert Panel

The Expert Panel met on 7 January and continues to monitor relevant research papers. The panel has made contact with several authors to explore opportunities for BPF involvement in their work. This includes the MRI team at Newcastle University, who are expanding their previous research, and the University of Derby, which is investigating wearable diagnostics to track disease progression as part of a long-term management pathway lasting three years or more. A meeting with the researchers is scheduled for 14 April.

The Clinical Advisory Network has also been used on several occasions to address general polio-related queries, with responses proving both useful and informative.

1947 polio epidemic commemoration

An event to commemorate the 1947 polio epidemic in the UK is currently under consideration. A working group has been reviewing potential costs and identifying a suitable venue. If approved, the event would form part of the European Polio Union Annual General Meeting and Conference in 2027.

Orthotics – work with BAPO

The British Association of Prosthetists and Orthotists (BAPO) has asked BPF to support its current awareness campaign by providing relevant case studies and videos. The Board agreed to this request.

Any Other Business

The Board was informed that the Branch Support Fund is running low. Branches will be approached to seek their support.

Next Board meeting

The next formal Board meeting will be held on Tuesday 23 June 2026.