

Moving forward...

All directors are required to resign every four years but may stand for re-election. This year there has been a big change to the board and something of a re-organisation. TCC&IA thought it would be a good idea to give members a run-down on who our current directors are, what their backgrounds are and how they think

Mark Peters

Having ‘dabbled in a few martial arts Mark Peters came across Danny Connors book *Tai Chi and tai chi qigong*. He says: “It answered all my questions and drove me to want to know more.”

He started training with Nigel Sutton and then one of Sutton’s students John Higginson eventually becoming a ‘closed door’ student of Nigel Sutton. This opened up access to higher level teachers.

Mark says: “Peter Ralston also inspired me in his commitment to effortless power so I travelled to experience this first hand. Seeing and feeling real tai chi skills taught in an accessible way still inspires me to this day. There are no secrets beyond mindful training, in my mind.”

Mark believes that the union can unite practitioners, driving continuous quality improvement: “There are so many people saying they ‘do tai chi’ but few really are. Forms are just choreography. Yang Cheng Fu said: ‘not all tai chi is real tai chi, real tai chi has a different flavour’. I believe that. Qigong is the same. Mindful breathing alone doesn’t really make it qigong.

“The union can improve people’s awareness and understanding of the arts. I believe in the purpose it was originally formed for, felt I could help it continue to develop. There is an old saying ‘No one ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and they’re not the same person’ (Heraclitus). Lockdown proved how flexible members are as well; over 75% easily switched to online. Everything changes and the TCUGB needs to

Tina Faulkner Elders

Tina Faulkner Elders studied kungfu from an early age. But, she says, she was inspired watching her father (Gordon Faulkner) practising tai chi ‘constantly’. She says that she just loved the movements. “I was maybe around 12 when I started with tai chi and qigong. I had already been involved with what I now know to be neidan practices. The feeling of listening and guiding and putting this into movement really struck a chord with me.”



Tina joined the union in 2015 and joined the executive board in 2020. “I wanted to become involved to help raise the awareness of tai chi and qigong. There still seems to be this mystery about tai chi so a great many people shy away from it. The reality is that it does cover a great range from martial to health to spiritual and philosophical. Whatever angle you approach it from, tai chi is hugely beneficial to anyone who takes up the art.”

change too, traditional does not mean static.

“It will continue to be the leading members’ organisation supporting the development of tai chi and qigong, freely without affiliation to one system or style.”

With a background in engineering and mechanical design Mark became an operations director with a focus on operations and change management. This led him to study psychology and NLP. He believes his ‘soft skills’ and change management background will help the union to continue its development and become more customer focused. He says: “As the TCUGB is non-partisan and non-style/system specific, its focus is on inclusion and continuous quality improvement. This means it is best placed to support practitioners of tai chi chuan, qigong and internal martial arts, bringing them together. As part of its CIC commitment, the TCUGB will continue to work to improve public awareness be that in deeper study of the arts and/or mental and physical well-being.”



Betty Sutherland

Betty Sutherland started learning tai chi in 1994 in what she describes as a last ditch attempt to learn how to manage work related stress. She says: “I tried tai chi and fell in love with it instantly, even my boss noticed the improvement. I also had a very bad back due to a horse riding accident and limped into a tai chi class.”



She first studied with Ian Cameron, in Edinburgh, which led her to a 28 year love of tai chi.

For Betty the purpose of the union is to support tai chi and qigong practitioners through responsible and inclusive governance.

She says: “I was encouraged to join the board by a good friend who had been on the board through some dramatic times. I now see that the union has the opportunity to become

more inclusive and welcoming, and working for its members.

“Now that the union is a CIC (community interest company) we are in a position to reach out to people and groups in the community. The union is here to support teachers’ development and offer a safe, high standard of tai chi across the UK.

“I originally came from an equestrian background, where I was working in riding schools and studs, competing and teaching horse riding. However, a serious fall led me to a change of career (and to tai chi). When I’m not practising or teaching tai chi I am riding and doing horse related chores. Tai chi is very good for my core strength (to help with mucking out).”

Ben Morris

Ben Morris has been practising tai chi since 2005. Having practised judo he had become interested in the ‘elusive’ concepts around ‘chi’ and the internal arts. It seemed that tai chi was one of the key arts in this area. There was also an appeal to practising a martial art that did not require a dojo and partners; at times both can be hard to come by.



He says: “I think the union should be a leading representative for tai chi and qigong practitioners in the UK. It should also interact with other governing bodies in Europe and farther afield.

“Joining the board was suggested to me for several years. I finally decided that now was a good time to offer my time and efforts to realising the goals of the union. I feel that with so many board member changes over recent years there is now an opportunity to reboot the union and return to some of the early vision.”

Ben is a senior lecturer in psychology and a researcher in

the area of health and wellbeing. In recent years he has focused some of his research time on understanding the benefits of mindful practices and tai chi. He says that he hopes to produce guides on how to interpret findings from research being produced globally on tai chi.

He says: “The union’s more recent CIC restructuring will also give a more regional voice to members and support them in their own projects where there is clear benefit to the promotion of tai chi and qigong. This can only be positive in my mind.”

Peter Ballam

Peter Ballam spent some time seeking a tai chi teacher eventually joining Ian McMillan in Hove. After attending workshops run by Dan Docherty he says: “I was hooked.”



He sees tai chi as a no nonsense martial art but with elements of training that are also beneficial for physical and mental health.

An early member of the union, joining in 1992 (his membership number is 36) he became a committee member in 2010.

Peter says: “I liked the idea that tai chi practitioners could come together as a community. There has been a massive increase in the interest in tai chi chuan and qigong and the numbers of people teaching. There is much less emphasis on tai chi chuan being taught as a martial art and it has become more commercially focused.

“I think that the differences between tai chi chuan and qigong have become confused. I would like to see tai chi chuan and qigong reclaim their own identities and dispell the current confusion. They are both a good form of exercise and in the case of tai chi chuan, an effective martial art for those seeking and prepared to commit to the training.”

CIMSPA: your questions answered

We collated the comments and questions from members and from the TCUGB FB forums which has led to this document to better explain the aims, purpose, and potential impact for our members

First a brief history as some may not be aware. Working with CIMSPA (Chartered Institute for Management of Sports and Physical Activity) was proposed by Keith Sharp in 2017. At the 2016 AGM he highlighted the need to work with the department of health and others as part of the TCUGB aims and visions under our CIC responsibilities. At the 2018 AGM an update was given and, at the 2019 AGM, CIMSPA made a presentation and answered members’ questions. The partnership between the TCUGB and CIMSPA was agreed in September 2019. A standards development committee was formed to include representatives of the TCUGB, CIMSPA, and allied professionals. The BCCMA became involved in 2020. Draft standards went to public consultation and have gone through many refinements to ensure quality and inclusivity. Covid slowed progress. The two standards were formally issued in May 2022. The next step is to identify assessors and set up pathways.

It seems that some members believed this partnership

will restrict or control the teaching of tai chi chuan and/or qigong. But from the very beginning we have always been clear it is intended only to be a quality improvement process in the sports and physical activity sector (e.g. gyms) and NHS patient rehabilitation sectors. Plus, the standards intentionally do not cover weapons, martial application, push-hands and other areas of the complete arts. It will not affect community classes run in church halls, parks or similar. It will not affect practitioners of traditional Chinese martial arts. For anyone familiar with REPs (register of exercise professionals), CIMSPA is replacing all of that to bring the industry together. Industry leading organisations such as EMD UK are members of CIMSPA.

For those interested in attending or providing courses that meet the standards, there are two parts:

- 1) Core coaching – for example BCCMA coaching course, and group exercise instructor course.
- 2) Technical standard – tai chi and/or qigong technical

CIMSPA FAQ

standards.

Core coaching is how to teach, safe-guarding, A&P etc.; Technical standards are the course content.

The Q&A listed below is intended to answer specific questions from members; they have been answered by CIMSPA and TCUGB as appropriate. More information will follow as it becomes available.

CIMSPA / TCUGB Q&A's re new standards

1. I have applied to CIMSPA for membership and there is currently no tai chi category, they suggest I could possibly apply via a coaching category. I have reported I have an advanced instructor's certificate and am waiting a reply. Is there a specific method of applying for CIMSPA membership with regard to TCUGB membership?

Not currently; CIMSPA and TCUGB are working out the best way to provide the service to you, so you don't have to have two separate memberships. Please retain your membership with TCUGB as they are best placed to look after you.

2. How do I apply for Assessment and Certification through the partnership? *You can't currently; information on this process will be published when available.*

3. Are TCUGB gradings transferable? *TCUGB is working on mapping across the grades and will advise in due course.*

4. What does it cost to be a CIMSPA member? And annual ongoing? *Practitioner membership is £30 annually, plus the annual CPD requirements.*

5. How do I submit training courses? *You can apply to be a training provider partner of CIMSPA here: Become a CIMSPA Training Provider Partner. Course will need to align to the core coaching requirements and technical standards. More details to follow.*

6. What is the cost? Initial and ongoing? *£250+VAT application fee £250+VAT per course you'd like endorsed. £250+VAT per course annually to renew your endorsement.*

7. How should the membership involved in the health and well-being sector respond to the new TCUGB CIMSPA professional standard? *Clearly, there is an opportunity for those involved in teacher training to get their provision accredited. We would advise people delivering training to align to the new standard and seek CIMSPA endorsement. TCUGB will work together with CIMSPA to provide an individual membership package that means individuals will not need to join each organisation separately and incur two sets of fees. This may take some time but graduates of endorsed training courses should be directed to TCUGB membership while CIMSPA and TCUGB develop the opportunity for individuals.*

8. Have the standards now been published and where? *Here: Professional standards library (cimspa.co.uk) links for each are tai chi standard and qigong standard.*

9. Is the idea that TCUGB members should also join CIMSPA? *CIMSPA would prefer a partnership approach with TCUGB, rather than requiring individuals to have two separate memberships and two sets of fees. Involvement with CIMSPA and the standards is not a requirement of TCUGB membership and may not be of interest or suitable for many TCUGB members.*

10. Will CIMSPA membership be compulsory? *Definitely not. As stated in Q9 above, CIMSPA membership may not be suitable or of interest to many TCUGB members.*

11. Can CIMSPA education partners just offer courses against the tai chi and qigong standards? *All courses need to be assessed/mapped against the standards before provision. All providers would require endorsement for their graduates to access TCUGB and CIMSPA's membership registers.*

12. Many of us have worked in the health and well-being sector for decades, yet do not have CIMSPA membership, or certification from any CIMSPA accredited instructor training programme, or a BCCMA coaching award. Is there any advice for this cohort of TCUGB members? *This is currently under review between TCUGB and CIMSPA to identify transferable experience and qualifications (APL). CIMSPA have a similar situation with chartered managers and here is the approach they have taken so everyone can access chartered status (www.cimspa.co.uk)*

13. If an individual, delivering tai chi or qigong, can now apply for CIMSPA membership then why would they need to continue to belong to the TCUGB? *TCUGB is the expert in tai chi and qigong; the value you get from it will be far greater than anything you would get from a non-specific governing body or membership organisation.*

14. Who will be deciding/agreeing the standard of the tai chi or qigong being delivered by the person delivering a CIMSPA-approved course and how will that happen? *CIMSPA will endorse training providers who deliver TCQ courses, with support from TCUGB on all technical elements. The TCUGB will have to sign-off on the technical elements.*

15. What qualification/certification will be available? *A range of opportunities all aligned to the professional standard the TCQ experts have written.*

16. Are we to become persona non grata unless we become accredited by CIMSPA? *No, it is more important you are recognised by TCUGB.*

17. I am unclear about who is going to assess and decide on the actual tai chi qigong standards. I am hoping for some clarity about that? *The standards have been written and agreed by leading experts in TCQ. Assessments for mapped courses is yet to be formalised as it will require suitably experienced people with assessor qualifications.*

18. What level do the standards start? Will there be different levels of teachers? *The standard sets the minimum benchmark, many people will exceed it but there are no further levels planned for development.*

19. Does CIMSPA's higher level chartered membership indicate that the member is considered an expert in their field? *Yes. Criteria will have to be met to achieve this and is currently under development.*

20. How are the new standards likely to affect typical TCUGB instructor's ability to trade and make a living as a tai chi/qigong instructor? *If TCUGB instructors were not affected by REPs then they will not be affected by CIMSPA as the standards apply to specific settings and contexts.*

21. What teaching settings are CIMSPA certified instructors likely to target? *Gyms, leisure centres, and special rehab settings based on their specific skillset (e.g. acquired brain injury, COPD, cardiac rehab, and falls prevention).*

22. Will teaching tai chi and qigong through the CIMSPA process lower the quality being taught? *No, TCUGB core standards will apply*

We hope this has gone some way to put your mind at rest over the value and purpose of the standards and TCUGB CIMSPA partnership. The project is ongoing, and more updates will be issued as they become available. Please note, should any 'loss of trading' seem to occur due to CIMSPA regulations, the TCUGB board should be alerted immediately. The TCUGB is not responsible for any members' earnings but would want to assess the reasons and changes that could have led to any impact. 🌐

