

Gerry Gavigan – Manifesto for President.

The BGA has achieved a great deal through the efforts of generations of volunteers. Clubs, tournaments, youth activities, publications, ratings, and international events all exist because people have given their time, energy, and expertise to build something larger than themselves.

My decision to stand is informed by over ten years of thinking about and working towards ensuring the longevity of the London Go Centre. During that time I have learned that developing a succession strategy, building goodwill, and widening participation in organisational matters is neither quick nor easy, but it is essential if organisations are to thrive beyond the individuals who currently lead them.

I hope to be able to reuse some of that experience to develop a succession strategy for BGA.

The UK Go community is small, and our future depends on making the best possible use of the talent, experience, and enthusiasm that already exists within it.

I believe there are three key areas where we can make progress.

Youth

The future of British Go depends on attracting and retaining younger players.

The BGA has invested significant effort into youth development over many years. While many ambitions have not yet been realised, the need to make Go more visible, accessible, and appealing to younger generations remains as important as ever.

The way people discover activities has changed. The BGA website remains one of the first points of contact for many potential players, yet it is still not mobile friendly despite most web traffic now coming from mobile devices. We need to simplify our outward-facing presence and make it easier for curious visitors to discover, learn about, and engage with Go.

At the same time, we should continue to support schools, youth clubs, summer camps, and other pathways into the game, learning from both successes and setbacks along the way.

Widening Participation

The greatest resource available to the BGA is the enthusiasm of its members.

Many people want to help, but contributing can sometimes feel difficult, unclear, or intimidating. The challenge is not simply to ask more people to volunteer, but to create an environment in which people feel welcomed, supported, and able to contribute in ways that match their interests, skills, and available time.

My experience at the London Go Centre has reinforced the importance of treating organisations as shared endeavours. No individual can build a lasting institution alone. Strong organisations are built by communities of people who contribute in different ways and at different levels.

The BGA should actively foster a culture in which contribution is visible, appreciated, and meaningful. Volunteers should know that their efforts matter and that they are helping to shape the future of British Go.

Open Governance

A healthy organisation depends on trust, participation, and transparency.

The BGA should work hard to ensure that decisions are informed by its membership and that more people feel ownership of the organisation's future.

At the same time, we should recognise the value of institutional memory and the contributions of those who have helped build British Go.

One of my first encounters with Alex Rix was when he approached me about including the David Ward Trophy in the London Open. At the time I knew little about David Ward, but I sensed that the request was important and readily agreed. The experience taught me that organisations depend not only on current volunteers, but also on preserving the stories, traditions, and contributions that connect us to those who came before.

More recently, the passing of Jil Segerman reminded us of the same lesson. For many years she quietly made an enormous contribution to British Go through her work on the BGA newsletter. Contributions like hers deserve to be recognised and celebrated, not only in retrospect but throughout the life of our community.

A culture that visibly values contribution is one that encourages future contribution.

If elected President, I will seek to widen participation, support volunteers, strengthen governance, and build on the achievements of those who have contributed to British Go over many years.

The future of British Go should be shaped by all of us.