

Rebranding the Union

With much of the operational work to stabilise the Union's weak systems and website now complete, the Board are looking ahead to the best ways to promote and market the Union for the benefit of all members and the public.

This gives an opportunity to step back and review the Union rebrand to ensure it reflects future plans to be inclusive of all internal arts rather than just tai chi chuan and qigong as has been the case for some time.

It also gave the chance to address the long known and historic anomaly of "Great Britain" when the founders agreed it was a UK focused organisation, something all committees and boards have respected and continued to the present day.

The Annual Review mostly repeats but does expand on the magazine Issue 72 article about the rebrand.

The roll out of any branding exercise takes time and we are only at the first stage of this. We are fully aware of the concerns of members, but as a board we feel that the rebrand is best for the long-term survival of our union.

Please be patient with us, we are working to add and not subtract the value of our arts. In this spirit we welcome constructive comments from the membership. We can be contacted at the usual email at enquiries@taichiunion.com.

For those who would like to know more, below are some details about the recent rebranding of the The Tai Chi Union Great Britain C.I.C.

From The Board

The Tai Chi Union for Great Britain C.I.C.

1. Tai Chi Internal Arts (TCIA) is the new brand of the Union.
 - a. This initiative was the first part of the plan stated in the 2023 Member's Meeting and is in the notes circulated to members in January 2024.
 - b. It was made clear that any new name would reflect the Union's commitment to all the Internal Arts.
 - c. The company name "The Tai Chi Union for Great Britain C.I.C." is still registered at Companies House so the rebrand is an optical change as much as anything.
 - d. The two registered trademarks are in the Annual Review. The process for trademarking completed in September 2024. These are repeated below for ease of reference:



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- e. Launching the rebrand at the same time as the magazine and the members' meeting gave the chance for an explanation for the change. The Annual Review replaced the Members' Meeting because so few were registering to attend.
2. We are mindful of the attachment that we all have towards the abbreviation "TCUGB" which for so long has been a rallying point for us all.
 - a. The board is putting effort behind the TCIA brand but will not object to members referring to TCUGB in their communications; but given that we are not running our promotions through 'brand TCUGB', members may find it more productive over time to align their communications with 'TCIA'.
3. We have taken advice from both a brand and marketing consultant having set a clear budget which was monitored throughout the rebrand process.
 - a. For those interested in the costs, the accounts are always published at Companies House and more detailed accounts for recent years are available on the website.
 - b. 2024 accounts will be available in due course but suffice it to say that costs incurred were at a competitive rate that the Union can afford.
4. For the first time the branding of the magazine and trading name of the Union are aligned. This has meant a slight change to the magazine name which already referred to Internal Arts.
 - a. The magazine is therefore also now called Tai Chi Internal Arts and uses one of the trademarks in its front-page banner.
5. TCIA reflects an evolution and a desire to be more inclusive not only of other internal styles, but the possibility to bring in new demographics as practitioners.
 - a. It reflects the long history of the Union. Including other internal arts, and particularly those more aimed at health and wellbeing, was the clear wish of those who helped set up the Union including respected martial arts practitioners for whom this inclusion caused controversy even then!
 - b. This wish has been respected and adhered to by all committee members and directors ever since.
6. The Union remains a UK focused organisation which again respects the long history of the Union. Some of you may remember Joanna Zoyra who sadly passed away in 2011. She was perhaps the first to point out the anomaly of "Great Britain" in the name when she was on the Executive Committee.
 - a. Those who founded the Union wished to keep it open to everyone in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man.
 - b. Again, this decision was respected and followed by all those in charge who came after.
 - c. We have long had a very few members overseas, but they have no voting rights and cannot stand for the Board. This is how we maintain our UK focus but respect those abroad who wish to belong.
 - d. The branding professional we consulted advised us that including "UK" in the logo would reduce the impact of the rebrand. It would also be yet another anomaly and so was left out.

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7. In the past when we have gone out to members consultation on matters such as tai chi photographs, logos and badges, we have been left in a stalemate position which was neither democratic (in the sense that a majority opinion was heard), nor left the board with workable solutions to implement. Furthermore, no concerns were raised in the 2023 meeting about widening the brand beyond commenting on the need to educate people about “internal arts” (see notes below)
 - a. This historic stalemate problem together with the apparent lack of concern of widening the brand were just two of the reasons behind making the change without further notification.
 - b. We also wished to get a trademark in place before going public rather than find it had been taken, thus risking wasting time and money and delaying the launch of the much-needed marketing campaign.
 - c. We are also unaware of any consultation with the wider membership when the logo was last changed.
8. Education about “internal arts”
 - a. The only comments made at the 2023 meeting about the rebrand were about educating people regarding the use of “internal arts” so we have been taking various steps to educate our members and the public about “internal arts” and will do more when we do more active marketing.
 - b. For example, the front page of the website has referred to “Internal Arts” since it was revamped roughly 18 months ago, our communications over the last few months have often referred to Tai Chi Internal Arts, when we talk about Internal Arts we have often looked to name the main ones, we use the Facebook hashtags for the main Internal Arts etc etc.
9. In line with this we will have a newly designed TCIA t-shirt to reflect this strategic change in your Union.