

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

**Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting**  
held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at Horspath Village Hall

**Attachments:**

**Appendix A – Oxford Congress Organising Committee Report**

**Appendix B – Correspondence re. County Duplimate**

**Appendix C – Oxford Junior Bridge Club, report by Holly Kilpatrick**

**PRESENT:**

Robert Procter (RP)	Chairman
John Williams (JW)	Assistant Secretary
Peter Litchfield (PL)	Abingdon
Sandra Nicholson (SN)	Summertown
Richard Sills (RS)	Oxford
Matthew Wilkinson	Oxford

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

Sandra Claridge	Secretary	Claire McDonagh	Treasurer
Nigel Wilkes	Wessex League Sec	Mike Fletcher	Promotion/Youth
Rob Dixon	Chief TD	Peter Briggs	Membership Secretary
John Slater	Selex/County Team	Alison Nicholson	Youth Officer
Jonathan Price	Education Officer	Michael Robinson	Congress Committee
Joan Bennett	Youth Officer	John Fleming	Oxford
Kathy Talbot	Oxford	Lorraine Jones	Summertown
Pat Lewis	Oxford	Peter Stevenson	Oxford
Chris Kerr	Oxford	Neil Higginbottom	Bicester
Marian Day	N Oxfordshire	Peter Bowen	Thame

**2. MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF 16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2015**

**2.1 Accuracy**

Apologies for absence from the following had not been recorded: Chris Kerr (Oxford), Peter Litchfield (Abingdon).

Sandra Nicholson had been recorded as representing Wallingford, instead of Summertown.

*Café Bridge*: this should have been reported as an OBC event, held in Summertown.

*Honours boards*: this should have been reported as OBC honours boards being used as a model, not OBA.

Jonathan Price had written to Sandra Claridge to explain that he had made a statement to the meeting during the discussion on grants which he had expected to see in the minutes. This was to the effect that “An early dividend from County’s Northern towns development project is the EBU registration of Kings Sutton BC after nearly 20 years as an unaffiliated club.” It was agreed that this could be inserted into the minutes even though RP and JW could not recall the

statement being made. Indeed RP had subsequently spoken to Marian Day, chair of Kings Sutton Bridge Club, who told him that this was not in fact the reason behind the club's re-registration.

With the above amendments incorporated, the minutes were signed as an accurate record.

## **2.2 Matters Arising**

None were noted.

### **3. TRANSFER OF WEBSITE OWNERSHIP FROM A. GRUNWALD TO THE CHAIRMAN**

RP explained that Mr Grunwald had originally purchased the site domain in his own name. Ownership was then transferred to RP and direct access to the new site address is now possible without passing through the old site. (*Action point 1: RP will speak to Peter Briggs about sending out a general email advising the change.*)

### **4. OXFORD CONGRESS**

A report from the organising committee had been circulated in advance and is now attached to these minutes.

SN reported that the venue had now been booked. RP said that the key feature was that entry fees would no longer include food and SN added that an option remained to provide limited catering at extra cost. She said that she had offered to manage entries jointly with Claire and added that Stephen Brown had not undertaken to provide an online booking facility. The entry fee for Juniors was agreed at £6, providing this proved to be compatible with the licence fee. PL raised the matter of prizes: he considered that there was no call for a generous scale in terms of either number or value. It was agreed to check with the EBU as to what was mandatory under the terms of our licence (*Action point 2*).

### **5. PUBLICITY OFFICER**

RP suggested asking Lorraine Jones to take on the role of Publicity Officer but SN thought she would be unwilling to take on this wider role. SN suggested instead that we ask Peter Owen-Smith and it was agreed that she would ask him (*Action point 3*). RP added that David Bygott intended to give up the editorship of the Newsletter at some point in the future (he has said he will do at least one more) and we should be looking out for someone else to take this on.

### **6. BEST PRACTICE REVIEW**

RP reported that Kathy Talbot and Diana Nettleton had agreed to move the project forward but Diana had now withdrawn. John Briggs had been asked to take her place and had agreed verbally to do so. (*Action point 4: Kathy to chase up*). RP said that a strand which needed to be pursued was that of governance (as mentioned at the Club Chairmen's Conference). He also mentioned that a register of volunteers should be established and maintained: SN said she would be happy to take note of any information passed to her in this regard.

### **7. CLUB CHAIRMEN'S CONFERENCE**

Feedback from this new event was positive. RS particularly pointed out that it was attended by a greater number of clubs than attended MC meetings. The subjects discussed were how to grow clubs' membership and county governance. Abbey Smith made a presentation about how

her club has developed from her initial venture which was just teaching. She included a number of ideas that are relevant to any club trying to encourage more of its beginners over the threshold into duplicate bridge. RS confirmed that one thing that struck him was the combination of a very caring attitude with zero tolerance to any off-putting behaviour. After that meeting several of those present had agreed with RP that it would be helpful if Abbey could make a similar presentation to teachers setting out a step-by-step approach to integration of new and improving players. Abbey has said she would be willing to do this and will offer a possible date for the meeting. RS suggested that club representatives should be invited to attend (*Action point 5*).

#### **8. NORTH OXFORDSHIRE DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

RP referred to a meeting at David Stead's house with a view to setting up a forum potentially involving Bicester, Banbury, Kings Sutton, N Oxfordshire, Chipping Norton, Central Yarnton and Abbey Smith BC. There had been talk of an event being set up in Banbury but nothing had transpired as yet. However, he had written to the Chairmen of these clubs regarding the setting up of a Co-Ordination Group (preferred title) and the response to this had been enthusiastic. SN agreed to take responsibility for setting up the group (*Action point 6*). (*Secretary's note: this has already been done.*)

#### **9. EDUCATION REPORT**

RP reported that the report presented had been written by JP and that RP had yet to discuss it with him (and indeed was trying without success to arrange a meeting to discuss their working relationship). The statement in the report that Peter Finbow had already started on Education tasks was inaccurate. Since receiving the report RP had spoken with Peter Finbow for a second time about roles he might undertake, which included communication about education matters (with RP, Jonathan Price, teachers, clubs etc), organising a Teachers' Conference and updating teaching information on the OBA website. It was agreed to minute the MC's intention to seek a thorough review of education matters.

RS said that OBL was withdrawing from the field in the New Year, with OBC taking over, but there were concerns over marketing aspects. JW read out a statement from Chris Kerr drawing attention to this area. It was agreed that this should be a major agenda item at a future meeting. SN suggested that one way forward was via an advertorial approach, where an article about bridge is published on condition that we also pay for advertising space alongside. However experience of advertising teaching in newspapers had been found to be unrewarding by both Abbey Smith (as reported at the Club Chairmen's Conference) and Marian Day (as reported to RP concerning the North Oxfordshire Bridge Club). Both Abbey and Marian report that their new faces arise through word of mouth. The meeting agreed to minute that funding in the area of promoting teaching was acceptable in principle, once a clear policy has been formulated. However RP pointed out that if OBA are to take a role in publicity for clubs someone would need to be found to take this on.

#### **10. OBA WEBSITE**

RP reported that Stephen Brown had agreed to take over responsibility for the OBA website, with Aleks Lishkov acting as Technical Advisor.

## **11. OXFORD JUNIOR BRIDGE CLUB**

A report by Holly Kilpatrick had been circulated in advance and is now attached to these minutes. A question was posed as to possible re-imburement of OBA funds, in the event that the club became profitable: the decision was no. It was noted that Joan Bennett had written regarding a proposed junior weekend event at Wallingford BC on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> January 2016: it seemed that a grant of £400 was being requested. Whilst the MC endorsed the project in general there was concern expressed regarding costings, which RP agreed to take up with Mike Fletcher. *(Action point 7).*

*(Secretary's note: this was done and it transpired that the £400 was merely an allocation from within the OBA's already approved budget of £1500 for the financial year.)*

## **12. HONOURS BOARDS**

RP reminded the committee that originally £1800 had been estimated as the set-up outlay, with half that sum needed for ongoing updates. There was now some concern that this might be an under-estimate. It was agreed that SN should offer revised figures to the next meeting *(Action point 8)* and that in the interim, RP, SN and Claire should be mandated to authorise expenditure once such figures were known.

*(Secretary's note: SN has reported since the meeting as follows – "I sent through details of 10 competitions, most of which I believe will require two boards so I don't think the total cost would be more than £2000 (allowing a bit extra for installation) and it looks if the engraving in future shouldn't be more than around £20 per board to update, making it very considerably lower than the previous estimate since only board for each competition would need to be updated. If he hasn't got anywhere with a lower price by Christmas, I'm inclined to tell him to go ahead anyway and give us a detailed quotation based on the figures he's got". SN added that in her opinion, JS should be added to the group mandated to authorise action. RP has signified approval.)*

## **13. COUNTY DUPLIMATE MACHINE**

RP reported that Simon Husband had kindly offered a plentiful supply of playing cards sponsored by his company to the county and to clubs but, unfortunately, whilst clubs appeared to have no problem, the cards were rejected by the County's own machine. It was agreed to establish the cost of overhauling the machine and if that was reasonable, to get it done.

Norman Gascoyne was also looking for someone to arrange collection of boards. RP agreed to progress this – also the apparent lack of hand copies supplied on occasion *(Action point 9)*.

*(Secretary's note: this has already been done. RP's note and NG's response are now attached to these minutes.)*

## **14. GRANTS**

Mike Fletcher asked the MC to give him greater clarity as to the circumstances in which the Promotions and Youth Team could award clubs capital grants. The committee agreed that grant applications should be judged on their merits but with appropriate trust being taken into account as to the underlying intention. The original purpose of such grants was to promote overall growth in playing numbers in the county and not just at the expense of other affiliated clubs. RP suggested that clubs should be asked to provide a business plan arguing why their

proposed expenditure could be expected to get new people playing duplicate bridge.  
(Action point 10)

Other written reports circulated in advance were noted as read.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March, 7.30 pm : Horspath Village Hall

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Oxford Congress Organising Committee Report to OBA Committee**

A team was convened in October 2015, comprising:-

Peter Finbow  
Claire MacDonagh  
Sandra Nicholson  
Mike Robinson

Due to absences, the team had not met in person before 3rd November (three members) but have exchanged e-mails on a number of issues. The key first task is to compile a budget as this process forces the resolution of numerous issues. Update is as follows:-

#### **Congress Issues**

##### ***Date:***

11th and 12th June 2016 seem to have been researched and agreed upon before the team was convened.

##### ***Venue:***

Marlborough School is thought to be a good venue and PF will approach them to agree a price and other details.

PF to investigate whether they have upgraded chairs so that we don't have to hire extras. It is anticipated we will have to commit the smoking will not be allowed anywhere on site. Agreed to carry out a review of other options for 2017.

***Catering - food:*** Last year's catering costs were at an inappropriate level. The team have decided that food should not be included in the price. It should be either optional or not offered. MR and SN to meet with the caterers to discuss options (Diana Nettleton arranging).

***Catering- drinks:*** Not yet resolved whether tea and coffee would be included or separate. Will listen to the caterers first and research other possible providers.

***Pricing and Prizes:*** Working on £24 per player per day without food or tea/coffee. If we decide to include these refreshments, the price would be £25.

***Prizes:*** EBU scale as last year.

**Directors:** MR to speak to Stephen Brown- hoping to explore the option of 3 rather than 4 directors.

**Organiser:** Haven't yet spoken to Gary Conrad. Not aware of any other reasonable options. MR to contact ASAP.

**Juniors:** Interested to hear opinions as to what we can do to encourage juniors. At a minimum a heavily-reduced entry fee for under 20s.

**Marketing:** SN to produce the flier/ brochure. Planning on 2 ads in EBU quarterly. This may be impacted by the electronic nature of the document. To discuss- others' thoughts welcomed. SB has added congress to OBA website. It is on EBU site but more details will be needed on both in due course. To explore on-line entry with SB.

**Licensing:** MR to check position with EBU.

**Organisation Issues:** Entries Secretary CM is concerned at the workload. SN and MR to take over or assist as required. To discuss.

**OBA members:** To discuss mobilisation of these nearer the time.

**M Robinson – November 2015**

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Correspondence between the Chairman & Norman Gascoyne re the County Duplimate Machine**

**From Norman Gascoyne to Robert Procter**

We are in contact with David Stead with a view to get the machine serviced.

He is due to play in Oxford on December 6th and our plan is to get ALL the sets of boards for the rest of the year dealt before then to give time to get things sorted before next years onslaught. We usually supply boards for Tuesday OBA nights in Oxford two months at a time. This means 8 case fulls at a time plus often 2 more for County Matches. Special events are played by ear (a bit easier if I am playing).

I have been in the habit of delivering boards on a Monday or Tuesday morning when access to the OBC is easy but now that my brother has moved from Kidlington I have no reason to go in that direction any more. I have gone out of my way the last 2 times to ensure that there are boards in the Club but with winter fast approaching am not that keen to do it again.

Earlier in the year I indicated that I would not be travelling in that direction once my brother moved saying that it would take me an hour of my time plus the cost of fuel but that seems to have got lost in translation.

I am sorry to say that hand records and printouts are the bane of my life and I thought that we had overcome those problems but have slipped back into chaos.

I may be able to get the boards to Oxford delivered as usual but I think that the courier would expect a nominal payment of say £10.

Hopefully the New Year will see everything back to normal (Bridgewise)

As ever, Norman

### **Response from the Chairman**

I told the Management Committee of the problem with the duplimate machine and the new cards and that I had approved the expenditure on the machine's overhaul.

One club was reported to have had its machine serviced at reasonable cost, but in another situation repair had proved expensive.

Could you come back to me if it turns out that we need more than a routine service, please?

I passed on your request for some help with transportation. There was only a small turnout for our meeting and no-one there was able to help themselves or suggest an alternative. I will raise the issue on a Tuesday night when perhaps I can encourage someone who plays at Wallingford or Abingdon to get involved. Can you advise me how often they would need to bring a carful of boards over?

One club mentioned that they have recently had boards from you without hand copies. I know too that Stephen Brown was explaining the lack of hand records on the OBA website for a recent Tuesday as being because he had not received the relevant files from you. Is there a problem?

Sorry it's all questions - **the service you give is much appreciated** and my only wish is to ensure that everyone gets what they want!

Best wishes,

**Robert Procter**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Oxford Junior Bridge Club**

The Oxford Junior Bridge Club continues to thrive and grow. This term we have five new children from both state and independent schools around the city and county. Frequently, we have 10 children learning mini-bridge and bidding and, following a meeting of volunteers, we now have a curriculum for the bidders, following the EBU book, "*Really Easy Modern Acol.*"

After much debate, we re-structured our fees and now charge £5 per child with the first visit free of charge and a maximum of £10 per family of three or more children and adults.

(Sometimes families start off together).

Our 'regulars' continue to improve, and on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November I took Max, Thomas and Jacob Potter and Aidan Saunders to Andrew Robson's Club for a junior competition, with teams scoring, for 'children still at school'. Max and Thomas came a staggering 4<sup>th</sup> out of 10 pairs, ahead of two of the U15 internationals! They are aged 9 and 11 years, and Jacob and Aidan (aged 8 and 10) came 8<sup>th</sup>. Henry Rose, aged 11, continues to attend training days for the U15 squad and Aleksander Lishkov has very kindly agreed to take Henry under his wing and do special sessions with him on Sunday afternoons, at the club, and to play online with him.

We are holding a junior competition at the **Oxford Bridge Club on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2-5 pm**. All are welcome and we will have three sections: mini-bridge, novice bidders and experienced bidders. The Trustees of the Oxford BC are very kindly giving us the premises free of charge.

This term we have started a bridge club at Headington Prep School run by Peter Sherry and Joan Bailles, with 10 signed up, and at Magdalen College School we have 3 tables run by Paul Walter. Bridge at Oxford Girls High continues to thrive, ably run by Peter Finbow and Pauline Wyman, who usually have 4 tables, and at the Dragon School I run two sessions of six children beginners/intermediate and advanced. Rob Dixon has 2 tables at D'Overbroecks and Summerfields School runs a small club on Tuesday afternoons. We are hoping that these children might attend our Sunday club as the school (boarding) is five minutes walk away! Ludmilla Checkley runs beginner bridge sessions at St Clares, a Baccalaureate College for 16 years+. Therefore, there are well over 60 juniors learning bridge on a regular basis in North Oxford alone.

We could do with two more volunteers who could help me with the Oxford Junior Club. Those we have are wonderful and supportive, but in order to give the service we would like, we really need four adults on a Sunday afternoon, and this can be a struggle!

**Holly Kilpatrick – November 2015**

**OBA Management Committee Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015**  
**Agreed action points**

*Please note, this document is intended primarily as an aide-memoire for committee members and team leaders. Full minutes will be circulated, and published on the County website, at a later date.)*

<b>Action to be taken – carried forward from previous meeting(s), with amendment where necessary</b>	<b>By whom, by when</b>
<u>OBA Website</u> : RP to speak to PB about sending out a general email advising of the change of ownership of the site.	<b>RP/PB</b>
<u>Oxford Congress</u> : The scale of prize awards under the terms of the licence to be checked with the EBU.	<b>SC</b>
<u>Publicity Officer</u> : Peter Owen-Smith to be asked if he would be willing to take on the role of Publicity Officer.	<b>SN</b>
<u>Best Practice Review</u> : John Briggs to be confirmed as replacement for Diana Nettleton.	<b>KT</b>
<u>Club Chairman's Conference</u> : Abbey Smith to be asked to offer a date for a presentation to the county's teachers, at which club representatives would be invited to attend.	<b>RP</b>
<u>North Oxfordshire Development Group</u> : Progress to be made on setting up what will be known as the "Co-ordination Group".	<b>SN</b>
<u>Oxford Junior Bridge Club</u> : RP to discuss with Mike Fletcher the request for a grant of £400 for a proposed junior event at Wallingford BC on 9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup> January. <b>See Minute 11 for updated information.</b>	<b>RP/MF</b>
<u>Honours Boards</u> : SN to provide revised figures to the next meeting on expenditure for set-up outlay and ongoing updates.	<b>SN</b>
<u>County Duplimare Machine</u> : The cost of overhaul of the machine to be established, and RP to seek a volunteer to transport boards, and to raise the question of a lack of hand copies on occasion. <b>See Minute 13 for updated information.</b>	<b>RP</b>
<u>Grants</u> : Clubs to be asked to provide a business plan arguing why their proposed expenditure could be expected to get new people playing duplicate bridge.	<b>RP/MF</b>
<u>Meeting Room</u> : KT to be asked to book a meeting room at Horspath Village Hall on Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> March.	<b>SC/KT</b>