



Essex Contract Bridge Association

A constituent member of the English Bridge Union

**Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 26th June 2013 starting at 19.30 at
Audrey Hartley's house – 168 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, CM1 4HF**

MINUTES

These minutes are confidential

Present: Ted Cockle, Alaric Cundy, Linda Fleet, Graham Foster, Audrey Hartley, Bernie Hunt, Simon Moorman, Tony Philpott, Keith Thompson, Dennis Valtisaris and John Williams.

- 1. Welcome and apologies for absence:** John Williams welcomed all those present with a special welcome to the new Treasurer, Linda Fleet, and guest Simon Moorman. Apologies for absence were received from Nigel Bardsley, Nicole Cook and Margaret Curtis.
- 2. Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday, April 24th 2013:** These had been circulated prior to the meeting and were agreed to be a correct record.
- 3. Matters arising from the minutes not already included in the agenda:** There were no matters arising.
- 4. AGM debriefing:** John said he thought the proceedings went well. The recommended changes to the Constitution had been agreed. The attendance was still low even though the AGM had been well advertised. The date was not very popular and maybe the attendance would improve with a change of date and venue. It was again raised that some people thought the proceedings were too boring to be bothered to attend. The only part of the proceedings which could be shortened was the presentation of trophies and prizes. About half of the prize winners didn't attend anyway and it was mostly the same names every year. This will change as we are introducing more competitions which exclude County players. There were several suggestions to improve this including: a presentation book with all the winners; just reading out the names of the winners with the Trophies on display to be collected later; presenting trophies at each event (This might be difficult because of the correction time period) and sending the prize money to be presented at their chosen club. Ted and John would discuss this later. Under AOB at the AGM Simon Moorman had raised the issue of helping aspiring bridge players to improve their game. As a result Simon had been invited to attend this Committee Meeting to present his ideas.
- 5. Simon Moorman's suggestions about helping aspiring bridge players:** Simon said that the Committee Members were all squad players with the exception of Keith Thompson. He congratulated the rest of the Committee for bringing him in and hoped that this trend would continue. He thought that this made it difficult for the Committee to appreciate the problems faced by ordinary club members who wished to raise the level of their game. There were two competitions for non-expert players (Play with an Expert and PRO/AM) but nothing for the average club players. It was pointed out that there were two competitions already in existence for these players, one was the Cup for Clubs which was held at the same time as the Fletcher Trophy where the majority of the strongest players in Essex would be playing; and the other was the new competition for Club Pairs which was restricted to players who were not in any of the A, B and C squads. Simon said that he had spoken to a number of players who had thoroughly enjoyed playing in the Club Pairs and would like more events like this. It was agreed to extend the Club Pairs concept by holding a parallel event with the Tony Kelvin Memorial Trophy for Teams of Four, again restricted to non-squad members but this time for teams of four. Simon continued with his theme of helping aspiring players by suggesting a pairs competition held four times a year where squad members would be paired with non-squad members who wished to improve. Simon was asked to put this idea in writing so that it could be discussed at the next Committee meeting. Some help was already being given to a number of average club players. Dennis was mentoring a small group of players once a week. Bernie Hunt and Graham Foster were holding improvers classes in their premises (both have dedicated premises which makes it easier for them as apposed to teachers in other clubs). All three had recently tried out a new idea; they had held a teams-of-eight game with a discussion of the hands at the end of play. This was applauded and a number of other Committee members wished to take part. It was suggested that the match should play only 20 boards to leave time for the hand discussion afterwards. Bernie wanted to hold seminars for middle ranking players to help raise their game and asked the committee if it would be possible to defray some of the costs with ECBA money. The Committee thought this a good idea and Bernie was asked to put his proposals in writing to be discussed at the next Committee meeting. The possibility of using outside speakers was raised.

The Committee was told that Andrew Robson would charge £500. David Price gave seminars to Suffolk players (his home County) and it was agreed that Dennis would ask him his charges.

6. Reports from Hon Officers:

- a. Hon General Secretary's report:** Audrey said that she had made the alterations in the Constitution that had been agreed at the AGM, she had prepared the AGM Minutes, Reports and Newsletter and she had also completed the programme of competitions for the period September 2013 to May 2014. She had made 60 hard copies of each and posted them to club Secretaries and those without internet access. She had also sent copies of the Constitution to the members of the Conduct and Disciplinary Committee Panel. It was agreed that a meeting with this Panel should be arranged in September or October and John expressed an interest in attending. Audrey had also emailed club Secretaries and the Webmaster with copies of these documents in pdf format. She thought that when accessing competitions on the website the information should be as in the programme. She informed the Committee that Clacton Contract Bridge Club had affiliated to Essex and the EBU. We now had 29 affiliated clubs. We had been told the Burnham on Crouch was also going to affiliate but we had no further news about that.
- b. Hon Treasurer's Report:** Tony and Linda reported that the change over had been reasonably smooth, there had been a minor hiccup with a signature being not wholly within a box but that was all. Linda asked Tony to present the accounts for the Championship Pairs and he said that this competition had made a loss of £100. This was due to a fall in the number of entries.
- c. Hon Tournament Secretary's Report:** Ted presented a table of our competitions, the numbers attending and the costs. Apart from the low entry to the Championship Pairs other competitions were about the same. He said that he had been told that the Alpha Club had selected a team for the Fletcher Trophy and also one for the Cup for Clubs. The Chairman of that Club had not been aware that entry to the competition was by invitation only. John and Ted had reviewed the list of team members and agreed that the team was sufficiently strong for an invitation to be given. Audrey said that she had been given this information earlier that day and included Alpha in the invitation to take part in the Fletcher Trophy. She had included in the wording of the letter to club Secretaries that any club wishing to be included in the Fletcher Trophy invitation should contact the Tournament Secretary to discuss this. Ted also asked for help to decide about an entry application to the PRO/AM. The Committee agreed that the player in question was much too good a player even though not having been playing for very long.
- d. Hon League Secretary's Report:** Bernie reported that the Premier League final from last summer would now not be played, a member of one of the teams had withdrawn from bridge and the other team had spilt up. The draw for the current season's Premier League had been made. One of the teams that had qualified for this event but when invited had said they were unable to play and the next team down had accepted the place. After the draw another team had withdrawn and Bernie had decided that he should not bring in a replacement as it was after the draw had been made. The opponent would get a bye.
- e. Hon Teachers' Liaison Secretary's Report:** Alaric was very pleased to report that one of Essex's teachers had been offered three classes in Further Education Colleges starting next term. He didn't yet know what the take up was but he hoped they would do well. He said that there were several teachers who were offering day-time classes but that it was very difficult to find classes in the evening. He thought that potential teachers like to PLAY in the evening rather than teach.
- f. Hon Schools & Youth Liaison Report:** Graham reported that finance in Further Education in Colchester and Southend had been cut drastically and further cuts were planned for the next three years. This might affect the potential bridge classes reported by Alaric. On a happier note Graham said that bridge was to become a part of the Primary Maths Curriculum. He was at present involved in teaching bridge in primary schools with a small army of helpers and had the areas of Chelmsford, Southend and Thurrock covered. He was looking for help in other areas of Essex. He reported that Southend High School for Girls had won the Inter-schools Cup which he had presented to them recently.
- g. Hon Webmaster's Report:** The web was not always up-to-date. Sandy was very good at serving our requests but was not always aware when things changed. The issue was also raised of congratulations to players in competitions outside Essex on our home page. Tony was asked to organise a meeting between Sandy and interested parties (Audrey, Ted and anyone else) so that these matters could be sorted out.

7. Progress on new initiatives/events:

- a. Club Pairs:** There had been 12 tables at this event and there were several reports of how much it was enjoyed. 32 boards were played with a break at half-time. There were requests for more events of this

type. The first pair had said they were not keen to play in the Metropolitan Cup C Team but the offer was accepted by the second and third pairs.

- b. **Pairs League:** Nicole was willing to continue running this event. It was much enjoyed by those who took part. As yet insufficient players were taking part to run more than one division.
- 8. **Programme of events for 2013/2104:** Audrey said that she had found it necessary to consult with Committee Members in advance of the meeting as she wished to complete and send out the Programme by that date. She had discussed with Tony the fees for our competitions and then circulated the Committee Members with the recommendations by email. She said that she was happy to accept that no reply showed agreement but in fact she received two emails agreeing with the changes and one from Dennis expressing a wish that the George Curtis Memorial Trophy should not be raised. As his was the only dissent Audrey prepared the programme with the recommended changes.
- 9. **New rules for KO competitions:** In response to the very late playing of a number of our KO competitions Ted had formulated some rules so that in future competitions would be played within appropriate time periods. Bernie said the rules were good and he would adopt them for the Competitions he runs.
- 10. **Herts/Essex joint venture:** Tony read Margaret's report. She had written that so far they had received only 40 entries for the Pairs and 20 entries for the Teams for the July joint venture. This was well down and Hertfordshire had suggested taking advantage of the half-price advert offer in English Bridge. Margaret had been opposed to this at the last meeting as being too expensive but the half-price offer made it more attractive and she was in favour of accepting this suggestion. The Committee agreed to support Hertfordshire's suggestion of taking a ¼ page advert in English Bridge for £200 to advertise the September joint venture. It was too late for the July event.
- 11. **Shareholder's Report:** Margaret said that P2P will be announced at the October Shareholder's Meeting. Some Members of the Committee wanted to mandate the Shareholders to reject any P2P increase but this was deemed unreasonable as if an increase were recommended by the Board we needed to know the reasons for the increase before we could make that decision. In any case we did not want the EBU to go bankrupt. It was agreed that the shareholders would let the Committee Members know by email if there was to be an increase recommended and the reasons for that recommendation. Audrey said that she had reported most other items at the AGM.
- 12. **RCC Report:** Dennis reported that Graham had agreed to give advice to the RCC on how best to approach schools for the purpose of teaching the students to play bridge and Nicole had agree to report on the Pairs League. Dennis said he would need to give them a reminder. He told the Committee that the EBU had made available the sims template for hand commentaries on the internet. Ted thought that would be very useful. Dennis reported that several areas in the North of England had not sent representatives to their RCC committees and there was some doubt as to whether the RCC would continue. Dennis had been told fairly recently that they would but John said that there had been strong feeling against the RCC at the Chairman's meeting he had attended that afternoon.
- 13. **AOB:** There was no other business.
- 14. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 16th October 2013 at 7.30 pm at John's home.

John closed the meeting at 10.30 pm and the Committee Members thanked Audrey for her hospitality.