



Essex Contract Bridge Association

A constituent member of the English Bridge Union

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 10th October 2012 at John Williams's house – Beightons, Bassetts Lane, Little Baddow, CM3 4DA.

Present: Ted Cockle, Nicole Cook, Margaret Curtis, Audrey Hartley, Bernie Hunt, Tony Philpott, Keith Thompson and John Williams.

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence:** John Williams welcomed those present and accepted apologies for absence from Nigel Bardsley, Alaric Cundy, Sandy Riach and Dennis Valtisaris.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting held on June 20th 2012:** These had been circulated prior to the meeting. Keith said that in item 3.b. he thought that Great Baddow should be changed to Little Baddow. This was changed and the rest of the minutes were agreed to be a true record.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes not already included in the agenda:**
 - a. **Venue and timing of future AGMs (Item 3.b.):** John reported that he had replied to Sue Taylor's complaint about the venue and timing of our AGMs and competitions. He told her that he thought that the venues used gave a reasonable cover of the county and that the next AGM was already booked at the same venue but at a later date of May 18th 2013. If any member wished to propose changes to what were our current practices then they were welcome to make a proposal to be debated at our next AGM.
 - b. **The AGM. (Item 4.):** John thought that we should advertise the AGM more strongly – short meeting, presentation of trophies, tasty free food, good quality free wine followed by friendly bridge between teams of four made up on the day.
 - c. **EBU Chairmen's Conference (Item 10):** The Charity status would be dealt with later but he had attended the Chairmen's conference in July and wished to record that at that meeting Jeremy Dhondy had praised Essex for the way in which they had dealt with a difficult disciplinary problem. Margaret and Audrey said that Jeremy had said the same at the EBU's AGM.
 - d. **Barbara Cornell's proposal (Item 13):** John said that Barbara was delighted with the proposal that her annual donation in memory of her husband Ray should go to the club that won, at our Helliarr Trophy Competition, the right to represent Essex at the Garden Cities Trophy and defray the cost of attending the event. (Needs to be advertised on website.)
 - e. **Meeting with Club Representatives (Item 14.):** This meeting took place on September 19th 2012. John reported that it had been a poor turn-out. 7 representatives attended only 3 of which were not on the Committee. He discussed the current changes and innovations like the National Grading Scheme, the new Blue Points which were being introduced on 1st January 2013, the EBU Charity Status, P2P, etc.
4. **Reports from Hon. Officers:**
 - a. **Hon General Secretary:**
 - i. **Advertising in our website:** Audrey reported that she was receiving many requests from other counties, bridge holidays and the EBU asking us to advertise their events on our website. It was thought that we should in general do this but care needed to be exercised so that we didn't advertise events that clashed with our competitions and that our events took precedence over those of other organisations. It was agreed It might prove useful in considering what should go where on the website if a small sub-committee comprising Ted, Nicole and Sandy, were formed to assist Sandy. Keith had said that we ought to improve our marketing methods. More things should be sent out by email to club secretaries who could then email their club members.

- ii. **Preserving the past:** Audrey also reported that Dennis had expressed an interest in “Preserving the Past” for Essex after reading an article with this title by Jeremy Dhondy. Margaret said that she was willing to discuss this with him as she still retained most of the information he would probably need.
 - b. **Hon Treasurer:** Tony reported that all was ticking over nicely. Our profits looked like being well down from last year’s figure of £5 000 that was struck before transfers to reserves to cover Youth Development and Equipment purchases. They would probably be nearer £2 000. Never-the-less, it was agreed that our portion of P2P should be reduced by 1p for the year 2013/2014.
 - c. **Hon Tournament Secretary:** Ted reported that about a third of the entries to our competitions were now being paid using BACS. Of the remainder, most were paid by cheque but still some were being paid by cash. The EBU were trying to organise results for team competitions to be entered directly to them so that they could integrate the point allocations and the National Grading Scheme to include team events. This at present was not working properly and was very disorganised. The problems of the organisation of our “Play with an Expert” were aired. We had received only 10 entries from non-expert players, Alaric was away during the run up to the competition and it was very early in the year for beginners to have enough playing experience. It was felt that the competition scheduled for October 14th should be cancelled and an alternative date found in the New Year. Keith again stressed the point of good marketing and suggested that it might be a good idea to find an alternative name from “Novices”; perhaps “up and coming pairs” might be better. Ted also said he would be away from January 29th to March 4th. Nicole said she would monitor the entries for him.
 - d. **Hon League Secretary:** Bernie reported that the problem with the Premier League for 2011 had now been resolved and that the long drawn out competition should soon be finalised. He reported that a number of Essex members had completed the Club Directors’ Course held at Barleylands and were now qualified Club Directors. It was agreed that the Chairman should write a letter of congratulations to each of them.
 - e. **Hon Teachers’ Liaison Secretary:** Alaric (absent) had written a report of the RCC meeting he attended on behalf of Dennis (absent). It was agreed that Audrey should circulate the minutes of the RCC and Alaric’s report to be discussed at our next meeting.
 - f. **Hon Webmaster:** Sandy Riach (absent) had nothing to report.
5. **Selection Committee:** John reported that Tony Philpott, the current Chairman of the Selection Committee was resigning from this post. John thanked Tony for his contribution to the Committee’s work and proposed Ian Moss should be elected in his stead. This was agreed. It was proposed that the Selection Committee should be responsible for nominating Tony’s successor on the committee.
 6. **Review of the Prize Structure:** Tony presented a list of our current competition prizes and compared them with his suggestions for the new structure. These recommendations were accepted. Spoons would continue to be given as prizes for certain events until our stocks ran out. The cost of the prizes was about £1,100 per year. It was agreed that we should continue use vouchers.
 7. **Regional Club Committee:** This had already been covered.
 8. **Purchase of Bridgemates:** Ted produced a quotation from Bridgemates UK for the purchase of 30 bridgemates and two servers at a cost of £3,395. This should be sufficient for most of our competitions, but should we need more, then Bernie Hunt was purchasing similar bridgemates for his club and we would be able to borrow these. It was suggested that the County bridgemates could be loaned to clubs for a fee of £5 per session but the equipment should be stored by the County and not by a club. The Committee agreed to go ahead with the purchase.
 9. **EBU Shareholders’ report:**
 - a. **EBU Charity Status:** Audrey circulated the statement from Andrew Petrie. The original proposals had been found to be unworkable and it was now proposed to create a new charitable Company limited by guarantee with the objectives of promoting amateur sport and the advancement of education.

- b. **EBU P2P:** The EBU proposed that the P2P for the year 2013/2014 be increased by 1p and that the club affiliation and direct members should be increased by £1. All other subscriptions would be unaltered.
- c. **Essex Members:** Margaret reported that in the EBU's "Number of Members by County", Essex membership was 487 P2P(1), 1373 P2P(2), 34 Direct, 1 Junior and 62 Bridge for all. P2P(1) were members who played in a club less than 12 times in a year. P2P(2) were members who played in a club 12 or more times in a year. For EBU and Essex purposes P2P(1) and P2P(2) were combined but the payment for affiliation to the European Bridge Federation and the WBF by the EBU were based on the P2P(2) figures.
- d. **Schedule of Standard Penalties:** The Laws and Ethics Committee had agreed a list of standard penalties which came into force for their competitions on August 1st 2012. They were included in an appendix of their minutes which Audrey circulated at the meeting. We would consider these at the next meeting and decide if we wished to use the same penalties at our competitions or some modification of them.
- e. **New Appointments:** Andy Bowles and David Burn had been elected to the EBU Selection Committee, Jeremy Dhondy was to be the new Vice Chairman of the EBU and the retiring Vice Chairman, Andrew Petrie, was the new Treasurer taking over from Michael Hill who was retiring.
- f. **Corporate Governance:** The EBU had published a leaflet on Corporate Governance as guidance for Clubs and Counties. The EBU had issued a form for County Constitution Self Certification and were asking that they be signed by the County Chairman and Secretary.
- g. **Replacement Shareholder:** Dick Green had resigned as Shareholder at the beginning of the year and we needed to select another Shareholder.

10. New Rules for League Competitions (including late running of Premier League): Team captains were finding it increasingly difficult to fix matches with so many team members away for longer periods of time. The 2011 Premier League had not yet been completed even though this competition was designed to take place during the summer months. Audrey produced some additional rules for league competitions to give a time table for the playing of matches. They were thought to be a little draconian but provided that the League Secretary used his discretion they should help to keep teams on track.

11. Herts/Essex Joint Venture: The July Herts/Essex joint venture went well. There was extra expenditure because of the change in directors and source of equipment and numbers were slightly down for the Teams event on the Sunday. However, there was a healthy profit and Essex received £1,050. Margaret said that next year we should gain more as we had been granted permission to share with Hertfordshire in a second joint venture in September. She said that she wished to slowly withdraw from helping to run these events and hoped the Committee would be able to find someone who could work with her next year in order to learn what was required.

12. AOB:

- a. **Letters of Complaints from Members:** John had received two letters of complaint from members about an incident of bad behaviour at a club event. John had replied explaining that this was a matter for the club itself and it was not appropriate for the ECBA Committee to intervene at this time.
- b. **Congratulations to Essex B team:** John said he wished to congratulate the Essex B Team for winning the Metropolitan Cup for two years in succession and for winning the National County Leagues Final in July. Nicole suggested that this be done formally at the Fletcher Competition.
- c. **Tollemache:** Ian Moss asked the Committee if they would consider badges for those who played in the Tollemache. The Committee were not in favour of the idea.

13. Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 16 January 2013 at the home of Audrey Hartley

Meeting Closed: John closed the meeting at 22.30. The Committee members thanked John and his wife for their hospitality.