



Essex Contract Bridge Association

A constituent member of the English Bridge Union

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 16th October 2013 starting at 19.30 at John William's house – Beightons, Bassetts Lane, Little Baddow, CM3 4DA

MINUTES

Present: Nigel Bardsley, Nicole Cook, Alaric Cundy, Margaret Curtis, Linda Fleet, Audrey Hartley, Bernie Hunt, Sandy Riach, Dennis Valtisiaris and John Williams.

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence:** John Williams welcomed all those present and accepted apologies for absence from Ted Cockle, Graham Foster, Tony Philpott and Keith Thompson. He wished to have recorded his and the Committee's hearty congratulations to Tony Philpott for being the well deserved recipient of a Dimmie Fleming Award.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday, June 26th 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:** Item 5: As a result of further discussions Bernie reported that he had held a trial run of his suggested mentoring seminar with members of the A and B squads helping a group of C team and other aspiring players. There had been a short talk followed by 20 boards of bridge and a discussion of the hands afterwards. He had experienced a problem with selecting the group with several players later complaining that they would have liked to take part. Clearly the seminar was well received. Bernie proposed to hold more seminars inviting different groups of middle ranking players to take part. The trial had been free but he proposed to make a charge at future seminars to cover the costs of the hall and refreshments. He was not asking for financial help for the seminars but he would like his helpers to be rewarded with reduced subscriptions for some of our events. Bernie was asked to present his request in writing.
4. **Chairman's report of the EBU's Chairmen's Meeting:** John had attended the Chairmen's meeting held in July and found this one more interesting than the previous two. Sally Budgen, the EBU Chairman, had reported that the RCC Committees and structure had been disbanded. The new initiative would confirm the current structure of Clubs – Counties – EBU, with Regional County meetings following the grouping that currently exists. It was hoped to hold regular Regional meetings so that Counties could share their experiences, initiatives and ideas. Sally introduced Darren Evetts, the Board member who would be taking on the responsibility of setting up the Regional County Meetings. As a result of John's input to the working groups formed at the meeting, Darren invited John to join him at the first Regional Meeting (this was the Midland Region) and talk about the various things we were doing in Essex.
5. **Reports from Hon. Officers:**
 - a. **Hon General Secretary:**
 - i. **Complaint of bad behaviour:** John and Audrey had received a written complaint of bad behaviour which was resolved by a Conduct Committee appointed by the Committee.
 - ii. **Paying for Food at County League matches:** An Essex player had asked, if a player selected to play for Essex should pay the full table money if, for medical reasons, they could not eat the food provided. It was agreed that they should. A player with a dietary problem, should, via the Team Captain, inform our caterer in advance and the appropriate food would be provided at no extra charge. The refreshments are heavily subsidised by the County and players' contributions help to defray some of the costs of providing food for both teams.
 - b. **Hon Treasurer:** Linda said that she wished to propose Michael Vandome as Auditor for the coming year. This was seconded by John and carried unanimously. She reported that our competitions were doing well financially and she proposed that we reduce our P2P charge by a further 1p this year. This was seconded by John and carried unanimously. (The Essex portion of the charge had reduced from 9p to 4p over 4 years; a 55% reduction. The EBU were again increasing their portion of P2P by 1p so the charge would be unchanged.)

- c. **Hon Tournament Secretary:** Ted was not present but he emailed his report. He said that the Pro/Am Competition had been cancelled again through lack of entries. The Fletcher (11 teams) and the Cup for Clubs (10 teams) were well supported and there may be more entries for the Cup for Clubs. Ted reported that there had been a number of comments about the rules for our knockout competitions but he was certain that in order for us to finish our competitions on time these rules should not be relaxed. He had been requested to send off the master points for the Eastern Counties League games again. He was doing this but he considered that it should not be his responsibility. It was agreed that this should be the responsibility of the Selection Committee. (Neil Tracy of Norfolk was taking charge of this and the Selection Committee should liaise with him.) Ted finished by announcing that he wished to resign from the post of Hon Tournament Secretary and would not be seeking re-election at the next AGM.
- d. **Hon Teachers' Liaison Secretary:** At the last committee meeting Alaric had reported that there would be two Adult Education Courses this Autumn but only one had gained sufficient entries to be viable. It was thought that the cost was too high and learners had to commit themselves to a full term before they knew if they liked the game. There was no rebate if they had to miss a lesson. Freelance teachers were more flexible. A survey on bridge lesson costs had been carried out giving a charge of £5 to £10 per student per 2 hour session but these were more expensive the nearer one was to London. There was also a problem as to how we could encourage learners to join clubs. It was suggested that the most successful teaching was where a teacher was in some way connected to a club and could channel learners to that club. A number of clubs were doing this with some success.
- e. **Hon Youth & Schools Liaison:** Graham said that when he first came on the committee he had expected his work load to be reducing but the reverse had happened. He said that he would not be seeking re-election at the AGM. He would, however, continue with his initiatives in primary schools and also with the informal inter club Teams of Eight project.
- f. **Hon Webmaster:** Sandy reported that he was in the process of re-organising the website and invited help and/or comments. A complaint had been received that it was difficult to find teachers on our website. It was agreed that we needed a list of places and people that provide teaching in our area. Alaric and Sandy will liaise on this matter.
6. **Bridgemates:** John had written to Martin Lee and received a reply. Both letters had been circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting. It was agreed that John would draft a reply.
7. **Herts/Essex joint venture:** Margaret and Linda reported that the two Herts/Essex events in July and September had contributed £575 and £840 respectively to our funds of which £600 had been invested for next year. Both weekends had gone well and had not detracted from Surrey's events. Margaret said that two day events were more successful than one day events.
8. **Ian Moss's selectors' reports:** Ian's proposals had been circulated prior to the meeting. His "Code of Conduct" for players representing Essex was well received and approved. He had reported that responses to his survey about entering a team in the Super League had been very positive and half of those questioned had said they would wish to take part. The Committee has agreed that anyone who needs financial assistance to take part would be reimbursed their table money expenses.
9. **Prize giving at the AGM:** This topic had been aired at the last Committee meeting but no decision had been reached. Ted proposed that the new format should be:
All prizes would be on display, the winners of all our competitions would be formally announced but the prizes would not be presented individually but collected at the end of the AGM from the Tournament and League Secretaries.
At the meeting it was also proposed that there should be a group photograph of all the winners and all these proposals were agreed.
10. **Tony Philpott's proposal:** Tony wished to propose that the £2000 which had been added to the Youth Development Fund in the financial year ending 31st March 2012 (originally set up by funds donated from the Thurrock Bridge Club to be used to develop youth bridge) should be transferred to a Development Fund which would be used to support the initiatives mentioned at the previous meeting (mentoring etc) for the development of bridge at whatever age. The Youth Development Fund was lightly used and had only reduced to £802 before we topped it up from ECBA Funds. This was seconded by Audrey and carried unanimously.

- 11.Shareholders' Report:** The Shareholders reported that the Chairman, Sally Budgen, had resigned and that Jeremy Dhondy and Ian Payn had been appointed Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the EBU respectively. Ian Payn and Heather Dhondy would continue as Chairmen of the Tournament and Selection Committees and a new Chairman of the Laws and Ethics Committee would be elected at their next meeting. There had been a lack of consistency with the charges made to under 25 year olds playing in our tournaments. This would be rectified by new charges which would be coming into force on April 1st 2014. Keith had questioned the reasoning for linking the P2P charges to the Retail Price Index (RPI) rather than the Consumer price Index (CPI). The Chairman had said that most of their costs are staffing and these increased in line with RPI. Keith thinks they are wrong and that many things are now related to CPI rather than RPI. It would need a cross-county organisation to challenge this if we wanted to mount a serious challenge.
- 12.New structure for RCC:** This was dealt with in the Chairman's report. Hertfordshire had agreed to convene the Eastern Counties meeting and John and probably Dennis would attend.
- 13.League and KO Competition rules:** Alaric had received a lengthy complaint about the interpretation of the rules concerning play-by dates and that these rules were too draconian. Bernie said that he thought he needed strict rules to overcome the problems of the last few years where competitions were not being completed by the end of April and in some cases drifting well into the next season. He agreed to revisit the wording of the "play-by dates", it was not intended that all matches should be played on that date but be played BEFORE or on that date. Team Captains who were experiencing difficulties in arranging matches should contact him as soon as possible. Ted had given his views on this in his report.
- 14.AOB:** John said that in view of the resignations of Ted from the position of Tournament Secretary and Graham as Schools Liaison Officer, Committee Members should start looking for people who would be appropriate as their replacements. He and Audrey also pointed out that they had both taken over their positions as Chairman and General Secretary on the understanding that it would be for a short term only and Committee Members should be looking for younger members to replace them.
- 15.Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 29th January 2014 at Audrey Hartley's home, 168 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 4HF.