



Essex Contract Bridge Association

A constituent member of the English Bridge Union

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 23rd April 2014 starting at 19.30 at John Williams's house – Beightons, Bassets Lane, Little Baddow, CM3 4DA

MINUTES

Present: Ted Cockle, Alaric Cundy, Margaret Curtis, Linda Fleet, Audrey Hartley, Bernie Hunt, Tony Philpott, Keith Thompson and John Williams.

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence:** John Williams welcomed all those present and accepted apologies for absence from, Nigel Bardsley, Nicole Cook, Sandy Riach and Dennis Valtisiaris.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday, January 29th 2014:** 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:**
 - a. **Item 3b: Ted Cockle's resignation:** John said that he had approached Paul and Val Mollison about assisting Ted with the setting up of our competitions and they had agreed to take responsibility for this.
 - b. **Item 3c: Super League:** Seven matches had been played and the Saxon team were currently lying in third position.
 - c. **Item 3e: Hon Teacher Liaison Report:** The "Play with an Expert" competition was a huge success. Alaric had circulated invitations to teachers and ECBA clubs and John had written to all non-affiliated clubs that he knew of, inviting entries to this competition and explaining that non-experts did not have to be members of the EBU. There were 40 non-expert entries and experts were more difficult to find as a number were taking part in an EBU competition on the same day. Alaric requested a full list of non-expert entries from Ted and John said he would type up a full list of non-affiliated clubs.
 - d. **Item 6: Bridgemates:** Alaric showed his smart phone and demonstrated the results of his experimental use of these as scorers of duplicate bridge games. He estimated that he could cater for 15 tables for a cost of £500 which is much cheaper than Bridgemates or Bridgepads.
 - e. **Item 9: County Working Groups:** John said that the Eastern Counties working group had decided that at their next meeting they would concentrate on three topics. They were 1. What good counties should do, 2. Clubs acquiring their own premises, and 3. Driving growth in the 40 – 60 age range.
 - f. **Item 11a: Portland Pairs:** Bernie said he had spoken to Gordon Rainsford, the EBU Chief Tournament Director, about his suggestion that Barleylands be used as a venue for the Portland Pairs. Someone from the EBU had already seen the premises and spoken favourably of them so Gordon was happy to put the suggestion to the Tournament Committee.
4. **Chairman's remarks:** John reported that he had written a letter to Jeremy Dhondy, the new EBU Chairman, in response to Jeremy's request for dialogue with EBU members. His letter had supported some of the EBU's actions and been critical of others. He had received an encouraging reply from Jeremy and highlighted a number of Jeremy's comments. In particular he agreed that while promoting bridge to children was a more difficult project it was perhaps more rewarding to promote bridge to the 40 – 50 year old bracket. John suggested to the Committee that our prizes were too high and compared our entry fees and prizes with those of other counties. Norfolk charge £5 per person for two-session events and £2 per person for one-session events., Cambridge had reduced entry fees to some of their events to £2 per person and London used 20% of their entry fee for prizes. The feeling of the meeting was that the entry fee did not deter members and neither did they enter for the prize money. It was agreed to leave things as they were for the time being with the exception of the prize money for the leagues which would be increased to £24 as that was divisible by 4!

5. **Reports from Hon. Officers:**

- a. **Hon General Secretary:** Audrey reported that she had published the Summer Programme and sent printed versions to the club secretaries and those members without internet access. With these she had sent notification of the AGM and its agenda and a letter inviting club secretaries to help with entries to the Club Pairs and the PRO/AM competitions with prizes to the winning clubs of 24 packs of playing cards. She explained that she had found it necessary to change the dates of two of our competitions because the EBU and a county had changed the dates of their competitions after she had fixed her dates.
She also reported that she had received a written complaint of bad behaviour at a league match and that she would be forming a Conduct Committee to investigate the matter.
 - b. **Hon Treasurer:** Linda reported that she had sent the accounts to the Examiner and she said that there had been a surplus of £2376. We had received £700 less from P2P as we had dropped our portion by 1p. She said that the Tollemache hotel bookings had now to be made through Holidays Abroad and they were demanding a £25 deposit per room and full payment one month before the date. Bernie said that our P2P would be increased by a small amount as one of his teaching sessions was progressing towards an affiliated duplicate game.
 - c. **Hon Tournament Secretary:** Ted produced a list of our competitions and the number of entries to each. He said that entries to our competitions were coming in very late and it was sometimes difficult to plan the number of boards and tables that we would need. He reported that all the cups had been returned to him and he could now get them engraved.
 - d. **Hon League Secretary:** Bernie reported that everything in the league was progressing smoothly. All but one match had been played. Next year team captains would be required to enter the results of their matches on the EBU website as well as send the results to Bill West who entered the results on the ECBA website.
 - e. **Hon Teachers' Liaison Secretary:** Bridge Teachers had been invited to be listed on our website but only a few had said "yes". Alaric said he had had difficulty in finding the information on the website and thought this should be made simpler. He said that Julie Lake was running several, very successful, weekends away and seminars which had resulted in an increase in our membership.
6. **AGM:** It was agreed that John would look after the wine, soft drinks and glasses and Audrey confirmed that Impulse Catering would provide the buffet. Ted and Bernie would prepare the prize winners lists and read them out after the meeting and John would bring his camera to take the photographs of the winners. Audrey would organise the bridge after the buffet. Audrey said that she had received a suggestion that Nick Hagan should be given the "Good Friend of Essex Bridge" award for his hard work in the back ground for a number of different clubs. This was agreed and Margaret said she would write up the recommendation.
 7. **Report from the Succession Working Group:** Tony reported that he had approached Committee Members and asked them if they had aspirations for more or different responsibilities. No-one had. Tony and John had prepared a list of people from outside the Committee that they thought might be interested in becoming members of the Committee and taking on officer responsibility. The names were discussed and a shortlist prepared; and John said he would approach these in the order agreed.
 8. **Ian Moss's Request for the Committee to Look at "Logical Alternatives":** Ian Moss and Mike Graham reported that on a number of occasions they had experienced hesitations from one opponent and a bid from the other that could have been strongly influenced by the hesitation. They had found that several directors and players were unaware of the "Logical Alternatives" rules and they asked the Committee to look into this. This had been passed to Nicole Cook and her response was that it was not a Committee matter but that Ian and Mike could appeal against the rulings that they had received if they wished. She then offered to hold a Director's Seminar for Essex Directors and interested players and thought that this topic would be a good one to include. The Committee welcomed this suggestion of a refresher course and gave it their full support
 9. **The Future of the Selection Committee:** Ian Moss had handed in his resignation as Chairman of the Selection Committee to take effect from April 2015. He had made recommendations as to how it should continue. After some discussion it was agreed that John should have further talks with Ian.
 10. **Home venues for E. C. home matches:** The Selection Committee had written to the Committee asking that all E. C. home matches should be played at Barleylands. They said that many opponents had liked the venue and it was much more convenient for the organisers as everything was already set up in the room with coffee, tea and biscuits available. Margaret said that she knew that Norfolk were not happy with the distance they had to

travel to Barleylands and would be writing to us about this. One of their members had needed to leave home at 9.00 am in the morning to arrive at the venue in time for a 1.00 pm start. Audrey pointed out how difficult it was for the caterers as they couldn't drive their van to the lift and had to transport the food on trolleys to the lifts as well as along corridors to the room provided. Also, for people with mobility problems the car park, though extensive, was some distance from the lifts and the lifts some distance from the bridge room. It was agreed that when the premises were used for E. C. home matches it was essential that the second room was available for the caterer as the main bridge room was rather cramped for her to be preparing the food while the match was being played. John proposed and Linda seconded a motion that Barleylands be used for future E. C. home matches. This motion failed. A second motion that Barleylands be used as our home venue when except when a visiting county team objected, was agreed. In the event of any particular objection the case would be further looked at by the committee.

11. **Essex/Herts Joint Venture:** Linda and Margaret had little to report. Entries were coming in and they were distributing fliers advertising the event.
12. **Shareholders report:** There had been a Shareholders meeting the previous Wednesday. Margaret reported:
 - a. The EBU were intending to appeal the decision that the EBU could not receive rebate on their entry fees as this was given in a number of European Countries.
 - b. A new manager, Simon Barb, had been appointed to the EBU charity EBED.
 - c. A small change had been made to the Articles concerning the Vice-Presidents of the EBU.
 - d. The EBU were considering new awards to players and clubs; the latter was proving more difficult as size of clubs made it difficult to compare like with like.
 - e. The P2P increase would not be decided until the Board meeting in September and the AGM would be in November.
 - f. English Bridge would be physically smaller in the future but there would still be 6 issues each year.
 - g. Next year's diary had gone to press and would be printed in Scotland but the EBU were not sure if it would be ready for the August issue or the October one.
13. **AOB:** There was no other business.
14. **Date of next meeting:** Wednesday 25th June 2014 at Audrey Hartley's home.

The meeting closed at 10.30 pm and John was thanked for his hospitality.