



## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORTS & ACCOUNTS**

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**For the year 1st May 2015 to 30th April 2016**

**Minutes of the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the ECBA,  
held on Saturday 14th May 2016 at Barleylands.**

*Present:* P. Mollison (*Hon Chairman*), Mrs V Mollison (*Hon General Secretary*), B Hunt (*Hon League Secretary*), T. Todman (*Hon Webmaster*), K. Thompson (*Hon Education Officer*), D Valtisiaris (*committee member*), C Taylor (*Selection Committee Chairman*), Mrs P Johnson (*Committee member*) and 32 other members (*See Appendix G for full list of attendees*)

*Apologies for absence:* Margaret Curtis (*Hon President*), Nigel Bardsley (*Membership Secretary*), Linda Fleet (*Treasurer*), Nicole Cook (*Tournament Secretary*), Audrey Hartley (*committee Member*) and 23 other members (*see Appendix G for full list of Apologies*)

### **1. Hon Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Paul Mollison welcomed those present and said he found it heartening that so many had attended the AGM this year especially after last year's particularly low attendance.

He mentioned that he had a number of apologies for absence. As the list was quite long he said he would not read the list out but would give the list to the Secretary to be included in the minutes.

The text of Paul's Opening Remarks is included in Appendix A in full.

Clarification was requested on whether the proposed Saturday event would be in the afternoon or evening. Val said this would be covered in her report, but the proposal was for it to be in the afternoon.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting**

These had been previously circulated to all members.

They were agreed to be a correct record and acceptance was proposed by Tony Philpott, seconded by Dennis Valtisiaris. *[A copy was signed by the Chairman after the meeting].*

### **3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **4. Hon Secretary's Report**

This is attached in full (Appendix B).

Its adoption was proposed by Marcia Levan-Harris, seconded by Simon Moorman and agreed by the meeting. The Chairman thanked Val Mollison for her report.

#### **5. Hon Treasurer's Report**

Val Mollison read Linda Fleet's report in her absence and it is attached in full (Appendix C).

Copies of the Income and Expenditure Accounts (Appendix D) and the Balance Sheet (Appendix E) were circulated at the meeting.

Val stated that although the accounts had been given to the examiner he had unfortunately been unable to complete the examination in time for the AGM due to a heavy workload.

The idea of introducing a "B" Flight event alongside the main event at the Essex/Herts GP events was suggested. Val said she did not know who would be able to decide on that but agreed to put the suggestion to Linda to raise at the next opportunity.

Acceptance was proposed by Tony Philpott, seconded by Simon Moorman and agreed by the meeting.

#### **6. Appointment of the Hon Examiner for 2016/2017**

The appointment of Michael Vandome as Hon Examiner for 2016/2017 was proposed by Tony Philpott, seconded by Marcia Levan-Harris and agreed by those present.

#### **7. Hon Tournament Secretary's Report**

The chairman said that although there has traditionally been a Tournament secretary's report on the Agenda, it probably should have been omitted this year as the restructuring of the committee jobs that he referred to in his opening remarks has meant that Nicole Cook fills a role closer to Chief Tournament Director than Tournament Secretary and that the matters normally covered by this section of the report are now covered by other members of the committee. So there was no report presented and the restructuring is to be covered under later items on the agenda.

#### **8. Hon League Secretary's Report**

Bernie Hunt reported that all league matches had been played in time for the AGM - just - except for one match in the West Division which had been conceded for reasons of illness. This had not affected positions at the top of the table.

He reported that unless more teams entered the leagues next year then the SE Essex may be reduced to two Divisions. However, he hoped to get more teams interested in the league and to try once again to get a new division/league for less experienced teams from which promotion to the main league divisions would not be compulsory.

Val confirmed that at the last committee meeting (which Bernie had unfortunately been unable to attend) it had been agreed to send out emails to different sectors of the membership to encourage more teams to enter both the existing league divisions and a potential new league/division for newcomers to the league. This will be easier to do through the new database of emails that Paul is maintaining with Marc Chawner's help.

Peter Scotting asked if would be possible to get one or two teams to move over to the West Essex League from the SE Essex League to balance the two sides of the county as the West Essex has only one division.

Bernie responded that the difficulty is the geographical gap as there are few teams in the area between Romford and Billericay. However, one idea that had been floated would be to have a "Premier Division" combining the top 4 teams from West Essex with the top from SE Essex. Bernie agreed to put these suggestions to the captains of teams currently in the Leagues.

The adoption of his report was proposed by Marcia Levan-Harris, seconded by Angela Fenton and agreed by the meeting. The Chairman thanked Bernie Hunt.

## **9. Proposed Changes to the Constitution**

Paul Mollison presented the following proposal.

"The Committee proposes that the Constitution should be changed to alter the composition of the committee as follows

- a) The position of Tournament Secretary renamed Tournament Director
- b) Remove the position of Membership Secretary
- c) Add a new position of Publicity Officer"

Section 3.1 of the constitution then becomes

*"The management of the Association shall be vested in the following:*

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <i>a. Hon Chairman (who acts as the chairman of the Committee)</i> |                                 |
| <i>b. Hon Secretary</i>  | <i>f. Hon Education Officer</i> |
| <i>c. Hon Treasurer</i>  | <i>g. Hon Web-master</i>        |
| <i>d. Hon. Chief Tournament Director</i>                           | <i>h. Hon Publicity Officer</i> |
| <i>e. Hon League Secretary</i>                                     | <i>i. Two elected members</i>   |

*All Committee members must be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting by a simple majority of the paid up members of the Association attending the AGM."*

A discussion followed about the difference between the role of Hon Tournament Secretary and that of Hon Chief Tournament Director, the reason for wanting to make the change (as set out in Paul Mollison's opening remarks) and how best to fill the role. During the discussion three key issues emerged:

- some members were not always happy with Director decisions. The meeting was reminded that, in such cases, there was an appeal process that could be followed;
- part of the current role was to ensure that Directors were selected for Essex events and there was, perhaps, an issue about whether this function should be separated from the role of main Director. In any event it was recognised that there was a need to have several Director options available as one individual could not do everything;
- some members were not always happy with a Director's demeanour. It was recognised that Directing could sometimes be pressurised, especially with complex competitions such as the Fletcher and Cup for Clubs, but there were clearly some concerns to be addressed.

Against this background it was clear that the proposal, and the issues raised, needed further consideration. To provide an interim way forward Simon Moorman suggested an amendment to the proposed changes which left the Tournament Secretary title unchanged. This was seconded by Tony Phillpott and agreed by the meeting. A vote was taken on the amended proposal and it was carried unanimously (abstentions not counted)."

A vote was taken on the amended proposal and this was carried unanimously (abstentions not counted).

#### **10. Proposal by Paul Mollison, seconded by Pat Johnson, to reduce the Quorum for an AGM from 25 to 20**

Paul Mollison introduced this proposal by commenting on the fact that the attendance this year would not necessitate the need for a reduced quorum. However, he pointed out that there is no guarantee of a similar sized attendance in future. If the quorum is not met then another meeting has to be set up with the additional work and costs that that entails.

Marcia expressed her concern that if the quorum was reduced then that might mean more members might take the view that they do not need to attend. Dennis also pointed out the proposed change to the calendar to hold the Mixed Teams on the same day would hopefully help attendance.

A vote was held and the proposal was accepted by a majority with 33 votes for, 4 votes against and 3 abstentions.

#### **11. Election of Offices**

Other than Nigel Bardsley, all other members of the committee were willing to continue in their roles on the committee. As agreed in item 9 above, the position of Membership secretary was replaced by the position of Publicity Officer, a role which Pat Johnson

was co-opted to the committee to fill last year. The proposed committee up for re-election is as follows

<b>Position</b>	<b>Nominee</b>
Hon. Chairman	Paul Mollison
Hon. Secretary	Val Mollison
Hon. Treasurer	Linda Fleet
Hon. Tournament Secretary	Nicole Cook
Hon. League Secretary	Bernie Hunt
Hon. Publicity Officer	Pat Johnson
Hon. Education Officer	Keith Thompson
Hon. Web Master	Theo Todman
Hon. Committee Member	Dennis Valtisiaris
Hon. Committee Member	Audrey Hartley

As no other nominations were received, the committee was re-elected as a whole, proposed by Tony Philpott, seconded by Tony French.

## **12. A.O.B.**

Paul Mollison started by stating that this agenda item is to allow members to put forward ideas that they would like the committee to think about, but that there would no voting on issues raised or decisions made.

Paul started by thanking Theo for all the work and changes he had made to the website. The members were all in agreement that the website is now much improved.

No other significant issues were raised as most points had been covered under other items in the agenda.

## **13. Presentation of Trophies**

The trophies were then presented to the winners of the various competitions throughout the year.

Thanks once again to Tony Philpott for agreeing to present the trophies.

Paul Mollison then declared the meeting closed and invited everyone to stay for cheese, wine and a game of bridge

## **Appendix A: Hon Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Welcome to the Essex Contract Bridge Association AGM for 2016.

Firstly thanks to you all for attending today and helping us to achieve our quorum. I can tell you that it's no fun sitting up here waiting for the 25<sup>th</sup> player to arrive.

Over the last year we have lost a number of well-known players who had contributed much to Essex Bridge. Dick Green (our Vice-President) passed away earlier this year. We have also had to say farewell to George Wilcox and Stan Ritter, amongst others, and sadly, Sue Taylor was never able to take over her role as Tournament Secretary.

I would like to offer my thanks to my fellow committee members, some of whom give up a considerable amount of their spare time to make Essex Bridge run smoothly. In particular, I must single out Val. I have witnessed firsthand the considerable amount of work that she has put in getting to grips with the many jobs that fall to the Secretary. Thanks also go to Tony Philpott for keeping an eye on our pay-to-play revenues.

Val and I have recently had a smart meter installed by the Electricity Company. We also have some solar panels on the roof so, on a sunny day like we had last week, a small icon in the shape of a pylon appears to indicate that we are putting something back into the grid. This struck me as a good metaphor for what a lot of us do for Bridge. Not only committee members but also those who teach Bridge, those who run clubs, those who provide host systems, those who run supervised play sessions, those who give bridge seminars, those who support our local events and, of course, those who turn up to the AGM. We are all putting something back into the grid.

We have had to slightly restructure the Committee. The Tournament Secretary job has been split between three of us, so that (unless a suitable candidate were to present themselves) we no longer have a need for that title. Instead, we have gone back to the days of Sid Prince and Bob Allen, and appointed Nicole Cook as our Chief Tournament Director.

We have also created a new post – the “Publicity Officer”. Pat Johnson has offered her services and is already helping us out by preparing and posting the Essex reports for the EBU magazine.

Advances in Technology have also reduced the need for a Membership Secretary. The EBU pay-to-play scheme has done away with a lot of the admin previously involved with collecting subscriptions to the EBU.

Sadly, we have also seen two clubs drop out of the Essex Association. The Harlow Club have elected to be part of Hertfordshire and the Clacton club have joined Suffolk. In both cases, we understand the geographical issues behind their decision.

This year has seen Barleylands become our main centre for small to medium sized events. We are now playing virtually all of our home County matches here. In addition, the EBU have sponsored Really Easy events, the Portland Pairs and the new format National Pairs regional heats at Barleylands.

We are attempting to listen to the ideas put forward by our membership. So please keep making your suggestions to members of the committee about how we can improve Essex Bridge. One previous suggestion was to look at running some events on a Saturday, so we will be experimenting with running the Gwen Herga on a Saturday, to see what response we get.

Another recent initiative by the committee has been to assist the development of Bridge in Essex by organising a series of free Bridge Seminars (run by Marc Chawner and Paul Spencer) for improving players nominated by the Club Secretaries. We have run two

seminars so far, attracting over 50 players each time and these have been very well received by everyone who has attended. We are hoping to continue with these seminars in the Autumn, although we will need to levy a small charge in future in order to avoid exhausting our development fund.

We are also working to develop events for the less experienced players with "B" Flight events, Cup for Clubs, Club Pairs and Really Easy competitions. We have been able to make use of the extensive EBU database to mailshot players at all levels in order to promote our events. I would like to thank Marc Chawner for his help in developing spreadsheet software that has allowed us to do this more efficiently.

This year we have generally maintained or improved attendances at our Essex events. I would ask you to continue to make an effort to support these. As I've said before, once we start cancelling events, there is probably no way back.

Thank you.

## **Appendix B: Hon. General Secretary's report 2015-16**

I have now completed my first year as General Secretary of the ECBA and the good news from my point of view is - I've survived. I've got through the year without any major catastrophes that I am aware of. I'll probably soon find out if you disagree.

### **Competition Calendar**

As far as competitions are concerned this is the first year that we have held all but our biggest weekend events here at Barleylands. This has greatly reduced the amount of work that goes into setting up an event especially for the director on the day.

The large interclub events are still held at other venues because they are too large to be held here, and the midweek Seniors daytime events will continue to be held at 3 different venues around the county.

There are two events which are held on midweek evenings at other venues. One of these is the Gwen Herga Men's and Women's Pairs events which has been dwindling in numbers over the past few years and so next year we are planning a trial of holding the event on a Saturday afternoon.

We have also been looking at the problem of dwindling numbers at the AGM and so we have been considering the possibility of holding it on the day of one of our competitions. So next year we are planning to try holding the Mixed Teams in the afternoon, followed by the AGM. The mixed teams is a single session teams event currently played on a Wednesday evening, not an easy time to find halls that are available, and so seems like the ideal event for this trial.

Another change to next year's calendar involves events for the relative newcomer to competition bridge. Essex used to hold Novice events for players who been playing for only a few years, but these were eventually cancelled due to lack of numbers. Instead we have run two events for non-experts to play with a more experienced partner, but no events for inexperienced player to play with their own partner. However the EBU have been holding a number of events called Really Easy Afternoons with heats held at a number of venues around the country, including here at Barleylands, with the scores from the heats combined to give a national result. These have proved popular and so we have decided to replace the summer pro-am competition with a Really Easy Pairs of our own. One of the plus sides of the EBU's Universal membership (or pay-to play) scheme is that qualification for these kind of events can be based on the amount of experience a player has in terms of masterpoints earned, rather than number of years playing which I think opens the competition up to more players who haven't got much competition experience.

We hope that these competitions will eventually give these newer players the experience and confidence they need to venture out to play in our other trophy events.

One final change for you to be aware of is that the EBU now has an online facility to record teams and results for knock out events, similar to the one we have been using for the leagues. We are proposing to set up this coming season's Teams of 4 and Switch Cup events using this facility.



## **Inter-county Competitions**

Each year Essex competes in the Eastern Counties Leagues. Last year the A team finished 6th and the B and C teams finished 4th in their respective divisions. Peter Oake has been the A team Captain for the last few years, but has announced his intention to step down at the end of this calendar year.

Essex has also continued to field a team in the TGR League in London. They had been promoted to Division 1 last Autumn but unfortunately were relegated to Division 2 again for the Spring. However, they are currently lying 3rd with one match to go and it looks quite close at the top.

## **EBU and County Congress Successes**

There were a number of creditable achievements by Essex Members in National Competitions and County GP Events. They are too numerous to mention individually now but congratulations to all those who did well. Congratulations to all. Although there are too many names to mention now. A full list of notable results will be published in the annual newsletter which will be distributed to clubs and posted on-line on the ECBA website.

I would, however, like to say that it is encouraging to see some of our relative newcomers doing well in the national Really Easy competitions. In particular Armarjeet Singh & Gurdeep Singh who scored over 70% in the Easter Really Easy Afternoon, and two Pairs who went to the Really Easy weekend in April: Jan & John Radley who won two of the pairs events, and Sue and Tony French who came second in the Swiss Pairs

## **EBU News**

In the light of recent high profile cases of cheating, the WBF is proposing a change to the by-law to slightly ease the degree of proof required for conviction.

There is also a small change to the alerting rules with regards to the need for a player to make reasonable effort to ensure both opponents have seen the Alert card. Again this is a slight easing of the rule.

The EBU are also attempting to change the Tournament, Laws and Ethics and Disciplinary standing committees to sub-committees. So far they have not achieved a sufficient majority of the vote at the shareholders meeting for this to go through, but they are planning to put this forward again with a few amendments and clarifications.

More information about all of these can be seen in the ECBA committee meeting minutes which are on the website.

## **Thanks**

I would like to add my personal thanks to Audrey and Margaret for the assistance and information that they have given me over the past year.

## **Appendix C Hon. Treasurer's Report 2015-16**

### **Bank Balance at year end**

£9,018 - Barclays

£15,519 - Skipton

As you can see from the accounts we have a surplus of £619 (£2,028 in 2015) – I have transferred £246 from the Development fund to cover the seminar expenses. This is considerably down on last year mainly due to the purchase and distribution to the clubs of score cards which were also printed with details of the ECBA competitions (£792) and also there was £1,000 less received from Essex & Herts Green Pointed events which was due to increase in expenditure and decrease in the number of entries.

### **Competitions**

Overall the competitions during the year made a profit £1,400 which was used to fund hotel expenses for the Tollemache team. The GP events in July and September gave us a profit half share with Herts of £1,100 (£2,100 – 2015) which was not as much as last year

### **P2P**

Total for the year £2,787 (£2,867- 2015).

We unfortunately have lost Harlow who have decided to join Hertfordshire and Clacton which has joined Suffolk

The amount of the Essex portion will be put on the agenda for discussion at October meeting this year

### **Essex & Herts GP**

We are starting to get the entries in for this July's event – I think Mike has done a good job making the Entry Form very striking. I hope that we will have a good turnout this year as there will be a London Green Point Event held the weekend before.

**I would like to thank Michael Vandome for his examination of the accounts and Tony Philpott with his help and advice especially in keeping a check on the amount of P2P**

## Appendix D: Income and Expenditure

### Essex Contract Bridge Association Income and Expenditure Account for the 2015/2016 Season

	<u>2015/2016</u>		<u>2014/2015</u>	
	£	£	£	£
<b><u>P2P, Club and other EBU Income</u></b>	3138		3576	
Less Life Members	<u>-112</u>		-130	
		3026		3446
<b><u>COMPETITIONS &amp; COLLECTED AT COUNTY MATCHES</u></b>				
<b><u>Fees</u></b>	8885		11375	
<b><u>Sponsorship</u></b>	<u>200</u>		<u>200</u>	
	<u>9085</u>		<u>11575</u>	
<b><u>Competition Expenses</u></b>				
Accommodation and refreshments	4114		5781	
Cost of Duplimate hands & Bridgemates	470		760	
Tournament Directors	1186		1583	
EBU Competitions Entries	698		652	
P2P	295		315	
Prizes (including Sponsorship prize)	<u>1428</u>		<u>1785</u>	
	<u>8191</u>		<u>10876</u>	
		894		699
<b><u>LEAGUES</u></b>				
Entry Fees	280		480	
Prizes and EBU Fees	-141		-160	
TGR - Saxons won league	250			
		389		320
<b>Interest Received Net</b>		155		308
<b>Sale of Surplus Cards</b>				48
<b>Surplus on joint EBU events</b>		<u>1100</u>		<u>2100</u>
		5564		6921
<b><u>EXPENSES</u></b>				
County matches & Tollemache	3125		2528	
Printing and stationery	85			
AGM Current Season	200		350	
AGM Previous Season	82		0	
Seminars/Mentoring Expenses	246		601	
TGR Expenses	100		170	
Postage and telephone	47		669	
Engraving and repairs	180		339	
Web Site	88		88	
Score Cards Purchased Given to clubs	792			
Sundries - Mileage			148	
		4945		4893
<b>Excess of Income over Expenditure</b>		619		2028
Plus Transfer from Development Fund		246		601
Plus transfer to New Equipment Fund		Nil		Nil
Plus transfer to Youth Development Fund		<u>Nil</u>		<u>Nil</u>
		<u>865</u>		<u>2629</u>

The sponsorship of £200 was kindly provided by Barbara Cornell in memory of her late husband

Ray Cornell and presented to the club entering the Garden Cities Trophy.

## Appendix E: Balance Sheet

### ESSEX CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

#### BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31/03/2016

	31/03/2016	31/03/2015
	£	£
<u>ASSETS</u>		
Stock of vouchers and stamps	0	70
<u>DEBTORS</u>		
Entry fees due & Prepaid Halls	341	330
<u>CASH</u>		
On current account and in hand	5504	4872
On Business Bonus Account	3514	3513
Skipton Building Society 90 Day Account	15519	15365
	<u>24878</u>	<u>24150</u>
<u>LESS CREDITORS</u>		
Hire of halls, fees in advance and prizes	1161	1052
	<u>23717</u>	<u>23098</u>
<u>REPRESENTED</u>		
<u>BY</u>		
New Equipment Fund	2500	2500
Youth Development Fund (see Note 1)	802	802
Development fund (See Note 1)	351	597
Tollemache Reserve Fund ( see Note 2)	1000	1000
Capital account	18199	15570
Excess of Income over Expenditure (2014/2015 Surplus)	865	2629
	<u>23717</u>	<u>23098</u>

HONORARY TREASURER: Linda J Fleet

I have examined the books and records of the Essex Contract Bridge Association and, in my opinion, these give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31/03/2016

HONORARY EXAMINER: Michael Vandome

**Note 1:** The Youth Development Fund represents funds originally donated by the Thurrock Club on their closure with the express wish that they be used to develop youth Bridge. The Fund was subsequently topped up by the ECBA but has now been taken back to original amount and the difference held in Development Fund to assist in developing players of any age. During the year £246 was spent on mentoring.

**Note 2:** The Tollemache Reserve Fund is to cover the extra costs involved on the occasions when Essex qualify for the final.

**Note 3:** It is the policy of the committee to write off expenditure on trophies, cards, boards and stationery in the year of purchase.

## **Appendix F: Attendees and Apologies for Absence**

### **Attendees**

Paul Mollison	Val Mollison	Bernie Hunt
Dennis Valtisiaris	Pat Johnson	Alaric Cundy
Theo Todman	Keith Thompson	George Vede
Maureen Vede	Susan Everitt	Chris Taylor
Tony Philpott	Simon Moorman	Marc Chawner
Jon Ward	Mike Harbour	Catriona Lovett
John Cosgrove	Eric Godfrey	Linda Barker
June Brown	Angela Fenton	Frank Morrison
Marcia Levan-Harris	Peter Scotting	Sue French
Tony French	Albert Kitchin	Trish Kitchin
Peter Oake	Nobby Clark	Ann Clark
David Clark	Chris Megahey	Paul Spencer
Anne Morgan	Keith Seabold	Alan Aylott
Len Williams		

### **Apologies for Absence**

Linda Fleet	Audrey Hartley	Rob Elliott
Ian Moss	Chris Rastin	Margaret Rastin
Graham Allen	Margaret Curtis	John Sutcliffe
Tony Verran	Ted Cockle	Roger Bacon
Chris Comer	Bill West	Angela West
Wendy Coldham	Ray Lenger	Barbara Osborne
Sandra Fenton	John Birch	Marion Cook
Chris Chorley	Steve Cade-Bowyer	Alan Roger
Kate Roger	John McCoy	