



Essex Contract Bridge Association

A constituent member of the English Bridge Union

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at 19.30 on Zoom on Friday 4 December 2020

Present Petra Bromfield, Linda Fleet, Bernie Hunt, Pat Johnson, Paul Mollison, Val Mollison, Valdie Poter, Sue Thorburn

1. **Welcome** Paul Mollison welcomed those present. Dennis Valtisiaris has resigned from the committee and as a shareholder
2. **Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday 15 January 2020** These had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting. A copy was signed by the secretary on behalf of the chairman.
3. **Matters arising from the minutes not already included in the agenda** None
4. **Reports from Officers**
 - a. **General Secretary** (Sue Thorburn) Nothing to report
 - b. **Treasurer** (Linda Fleet)

Bank Balance at 30.11.2020

£9,871.85 - Barclays and Lloyds

(including £339.50 held for refunding from cancelled competitions in 2020)

Linda will transfer funds to top up the Lloyds account.

£16,1632.01 – Skipton

Competitions There have been no 2020/21 ECBA competitions so Linda has not prepared the entry/expenses chart. She hopes the Mixed Pairs on 13/12/2020 will herald the start of more online competitions and we will have a Swiss Pairs competition in January 2021, a Gwen Herga in February 2021 and, maybe, a Championship Pairs in March 2021. (See later minute stating that, apart from the mixed pairs, they are very unlikely to take place.) A record of the 2019/20 competition entries prepared for the AGM is attached.

UM The UM analysis for year 2019/2020 is attached. The EBU portion is to stay the same at 40p from 1st April 2021. The Essex portion has remained the same as last year.

Linda proposed to refund UMS to the clubs who have chosen to play online. The total is £810.44. Petra suggested the sum should be retained as an emergency fund to help

clubs that may struggle to restart when the pandemic is over. It was felt other funds were available to help clubs so the proposal to refund was accepted.

Prizes The prizes for the Warboys and leagues will be held over until the competitions are complete. It was agreed Bernie should retain the £200 awarded to the winner of the Cornell to fund entry in the Garden Cities until the competition resumes.

Independent examiner Petra has agreed to return as independent examiner. Linda will let her have the papers for 2019/20

c. Tournament Secretary (Val Mollison)

Events There have been no competitions in the 2020/21 season and none is anticipated until at least Easter 2021. The big room at Barleylands has been cancelled until June but, in the unlikely event face to face competition resumes, Bernie's room should be big enough. There had been fairly serious problems running the Metropolitan Cup on line. Compensation had been offered but Val felt it was more important to learn the lessons than to impose financial penalties.

County matches Val felt there were too many problems running teams of 8 on BBO and suggested the matches do not resume until face-to-face play is possible. Valdie said RealBridge is looking at the issues with running teams. He will find out more about it.

d. League Secretary (Bernie Hunt)

Bernie felt it was not practical to run the leagues online. A number of team members do not play online.

e. Shareholders

Linda and Keith both felt there were no issues arising from the EBU AGM. Dennis has resigned so a replacement can be appointed.

f. Webmaster (Petra Bromfield)

Petra is keeping the website updated. It was agreed she should show all county events for the remainder of the season as cancelled. Sue will contact Essex club secretaries reminding them that their online events can be advertised on the website.

5. **Herts/Essex joint venture.** Linda circulated a proposal from Herts that the events should be online in July and live in September. The proposal was agreed.
6. **Calendar** The remaining 2020/21 calendar is cancelled and Pat felt there were still too many unknowns to start planning 2021/22. The mixed pairs in December is not classed as a county event.

7. **AGM** Very few counties had run an AGM and it was felt the practicalities of running one online meant it was unviable. Although this does not comply with the constitution it was felt the unusual circumstances justified the decision. Sue will circulate clubs to tell them the AGM is postponed until a live meeting can be held.
8. **Online events** Paul had circulated a paper on ECBA events online. Experience is limited as, across all counties, there have been very few online county events. The recent Metropolitan Cup highlighted the issues with online team events. Although it is not an official county event, the mixed pairs on 13 December will increase our knowledge.

Paul proposed we should provide county support for events at Barleylands. There would be no trophies or prizes. Bernie suggested we run an invitational event for county level players. There were some questions about finding someone who had both directing and BBO experience. Bernie said he could run it if Nicole Cook is available to direct.

He will look for a suitable date, probably a Tuesday or a Thursday in mid-January. There would be a minimum 22 boards. The county squads and other Warboys players will be invited. **LATER** Bernie and Keith Thompson have set this up.

9. **Any other business** Valdie asked if there was any way of recognizing a contribution to Essex bridge. Paul said there was a Friends of Essex Bridge certificate but this had not been awarded for several years. It was agreed certificates should be presented this year and four nominations were made.

The question of support for clubs struggling to restart when the pandemic is over was discussed. Bernie said he was happy to provide the venue if clubs could not fund current premises. Although this was welcomed there are issues with the location for some clubs. It was felt concentrating on getting new members and the success Chelmsford had made by teaching and association with the Great Baddow club demonstrates what could be done.

Paul said he would be taking a break from the chairmanship with immediate effect. He had asked Valdie to take on the role until he returns next Spring.

10. **Date of next meeting** The next meeting will be held on Zoom at 8.00pm on Wednesday 17 February 2021. Paul then closed the meeting.