



Essex Contract Bridge Association

A constituent member of the English Bridge Union

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 18th January 2012 at 168 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, CM1 4HF

1. **Present:** Ted Cockle, Alaric Cundy, Dick Green, Jill Hair, Audrey Hartley, Bernie Hunt, Ian Moss, Tony Philpott, Sandy Riach and John Williams.
2. **Welcome and Apologies for absence:** John Williams welcomed those present and recorded the congratulations of the Committee to Nicole Cook for winning a place on England's Lady Milne team. He accepted the apologies of Margaret Curtis, Nicole Cook, Nigel Bardsley and Dennis Valtisaris who were absent.
3. **Minutes of the last meeting held on October 19th 2011:** These had been circulated prior to the meeting. Ian Moss referred to item 11. e. and said he had not been given responsibility for the liaison with a group of Essex clubs and it was agreed that it was Ted Cockle who had that responsibility. With this alteration the minutes were accepted as a correct record.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes not already included in the agenda.**
 - a. **Meetings with affiliated clubs (Item 4.f. & 7.):** John Williams had written to the affiliated Clubs in Essex and so far had received 3 replies. Before visiting the clubs and talking with the members there were several things he wished to have clarified with the EBU.
 - b. **Website (Item 6.g.):** Sandy Riach was congratulated by the Committee on the improvements he had made to the website.
 - c. **Resignations (Item 10.):** Jill Hair and Ian Moss have both tendered their resignations from the Committee to take effect after the next meeting.
 - d. **Non-affiliated clubs (Item 11.e.):** John Williams said he had sent letters to all non-affiliated clubs that he knew of asking if he could visit them with a view of discussing re-affiliation. He had received six replies and they were all, "Thanks, but no thanks". John is not going to give up trying. Alaric Cundy has a list of 42 non-affiliated clubs in Essex.
All affiliated clubs are listed on the website and it was agreed that we would ask non-affiliated clubs if they would like to be included in a list of non-affiliated clubs. Access to the non-affiliated clubs list would be from the affiliated club page.
5. **Reports from Hon. Officers:**
 - a. **Hon General Secretary:** Audrey Hartley said she had nothing that was not already included separately in the agenda.
 - b. **Hon Treasurer:** Tony Philpott reported that our finances were in a healthy state. It was agreed that any surplus at the end of the year should be placed in special reserve funds for the purchase of equipment, the education fund and possibly the setting up of a central venue.
 - c. **Hon Tournament Secretary:** Ted Cockle reported on the progress of our competitions (report attached). Several players had successfully used the bank transfer facility but it was early days. Ted referred to item 4.d. of the minutes of the last meeting where it was agreed that £1 per person should be added to the entry fee for those paying on the day. He felt that, much like the way the membership had taken to the use of the internet for entering our competitions, electronic banking would probably take off in the same way. He wished to defer the application of the extra charge for a while.
 - d. **Hon League Secretary:** Bernie Hunt said that the league was progressing smoothly. Bill West was now keeping the website up to date with the results. The League cup draw would take place shortly. It had been overlooked in November (the promised date). Because there was insufficient time left to get it played before the AGM it was agreed that the final play-by date

should be the end of July and the trophy presented at the Fletcher. The Premier League should be finished by the end of September and its trophy could be presented at the Fletcher as well. Bernie suggested that a draw in January might work well as autumn tends to be very busy with matches and perhaps members are less busy in the New Year. It was also suggested that we consider doing the same with the Switch Cup.

- e. **Hon Teachers' Liaison Secretary:** Alaric Cundy's report is attached. He dealt with **Play with an Expert** which is progressing well, he had received 18 applications from inexperienced players, and Nicole Cook reported that she had plenty of experts. Alaric said he would write to teachers again to see if he could drum up more support. Nicole would be directing the event. The suggested **Essex Newcomers Simultaneous Pairs' Event** had received little support and we would not proceed with it. The EBU (EBUTA) are running a Simultaneous Pairs event and he will investigate the possibility of this being run by teachers and combining the results from all entrants to have an overall winner and second place for our Novice and Non-Expert trophies. Every autumn Alaric carries out a survey of bridge teaching in Essex. Apart from three teachers the response this year was poor and two teachers have retired. He has not been able to analyse the data as the sample is too small.
- f. **Hon Webmaster:** Sandy Riach said he thought the development of the Website was progressing well. He asked members to give him information and news items; unless people told him he wouldn't necessarily know what was happening to County Association members nor about their successes outside the County. He also asked for feedback from anyone using the website about how easy it was to navigate and if there was information that they wished for but couldn't find.

6. Progress on new initiatives/events:

- a. **Pro/Am competition:** Nicole will get this moving shortly. Probably after the "Play with an Expert" in February.
- b. **Pairs League:** This will not start this winter but we could try for the summer.
- c. **Play with an expert:** Alaric Cundy reported on this earlier.
- d. **An Essex Simultaneous Pairs:** As has already been reported this does not appear to be a viable event. The Committee were keen to do something in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee and the Olympics. The bank holiday Tuesday, June 5, 2012 was selected for the competition. Two possible types of competition were suggested.
 - i. A "Mini Marathon" of three sessions in one day. Players would enter as a team for the first session, split into pairs for the second session, and play an individual for the third session. Each session would be separated into groups of about 5 tables according to expertise which would hopefully attract more of the less experienced players to the game.
 - ii. A pairs' competition with one section of experienced players and a second section of less experienced players. There would be prizes for the winners of each section. Pairs from each section would be teamed up with a pair from the other section and prizes awarded to the winners of this event.

It was left in the hands of the "Events Working Group" and interested Committee Members to make their recommendations.

- e. **The Selection Trials & Tollemache Report:** Ian Moss reported that the Selection Committee had experienced great difficulty with availability of the selected pairs for the dates of the competitions. For next year they proposed to send out a letter with the A, B and C selection procedure asking for availability of A and B squad members for the Metropolitan Cup and the Tollemache and also the trials which would be held earlier this year. It had been agreed that Margaret Curtis and David Sherman would be preselected for the Tollemache and the metropolitan Cup for this coming year.
- f. **Online Journal:** John Williams reported that he had written 3 articles for the proposed Online Journal and was waiting for the editor, Mike Graham, to return from his holidays so that he could approve them and put them forward for publication on the website.

- g. Regional Club Committee:** Dennis Valtisariis emailed a request for feedback on Essex activities since the last RCC meeting in October and also for a list detailing who was taking responsibility for which clubs. John Williams said he would provide Dennis with the details.
- h. Christmas Party:** The party had been thoroughly enjoyed by those taking part. Bernie Hunt said he hoped more would attend next year. £184 had been raised and sent to the charity "Little Havens Children's Hospice" selected by the winners of the competition.

7. Our Tournaments: The following decisions came from general discussions about our tournaments.

- a. Player Convention Cards:** It had come to the attention of the committee that quite a number of pairs playing in our competitions did not have convention cards. It was agreed that a mention should be made about convention cards in the programme of events and on the website.
- b. Large events should have more than one director:** It was agreed that when the number of tables was very large there should be more than one director. The EBU have a rough guide of 16 - 20 tables per director and also that for two events taking place in the same room there should be two directors. The second director did not need to be fully qualified but an assistant to the principal director. This was agreed.
- c. Publication of the ECBA Committee meeting minutes on the website:** It was agreed that we should publish the minutes in the website, excluding confidential matters and only after members had had a chance to read the minutes and suggest any corrections they thought should be made.

8. Programme of events for next summer and provisional programme for the following winter:

These had been circulated in advance but they could not be finalised until the matches for the Eastern Counties League had been arranged. Bernie said he had now received the schedule of dates and had started to try to fix matches. Audrey Hartley said that fixing the dates needed to be done in conjunction with the calendar of Essex and EBU dates. Bernie said he would send her the dates for fitting into the calendar.

For the coming season it was agreed that the entry fees would be as follows:

- Essex Mixed Teams of Four increased from £16 to £20 per team,
- Essex Teams of Four Championship increased from £26 to £30 per team,
- Essex Switch teams of Four remain at £18
- George Curtis Memorial Trophy remain £ 30
- Senior Day-time Pairs should be £26 per pair,
- Pro/Am should be £10 per pair,
- Essex leagues should be £20 per team
- Trials should be £15 per pair.

9. Venues for home matches in the Eastern Counties League: Peter Oake's reasons for his request for Eastern Counties League home matches to be held at Barleylands and Margaret Curtis's response had been circulated in advance. It was agreed that in the first instance we should hold such matches at Barleylands for home matches against Suffolk and Norfolk only as it was thought that players for these counties could easily use the A12 to access the venue. Other counties found Thornwood Common easier to access. This year we were away to both those counties so the venue would not be used this year.

10. Eve Goblets' point scale: The proposed new scale was circulated in advance and agreed provided Margaret Curtis was happy with it. Audrey Hartley reported that she was.

11. New rules for league competitions: Bernie Hunt had left the meeting by the time this item was reached and it was agreed to leave it to next time and place it higher on the agenda.

12. Herts/Essex joint venture: Margaret Curtis reported by telephone that Neil Morley had been appointed to be the senior Tournament Director at the Herts/Essex Joint Venture. She also said that permission had been granted for an additional joint venture with Herts in the September 2013.

13. AOB:

- a. Helliars:** A question of how long a player representing a club in the Helliars needed to have been a member of that club. This arose because the leading combined A and B teams from each club in the Helliars went forward to the Garden Cities Regional Final. At present the regulations state that

players in the Garden Cities Regional finals must have been bone fide members of the club they are representing for at least 3 months prior to the date of the Garden Cities Regional finals. It was thought that the committee might wish to impose restrictions on club representation in the Helliard. It was agreed that a player must be a bone fide member of the club and that if the club membership fee has been paid that player is entitled to represent the club in the Helliard. Audrey Hartley agreed to look up the rules of the competition.

- b. Providing food at some of our events:** Only a few of our events required the provision of food. It was agreed that Impulse Catering should be used for most of our events requiring food. These were the "Day-time Seniors", "Helliard", "Fletcher", AGM and the home matches in the Eastern Counties League. The exceptions were "Play with an Expert", "Pro/Am" and the Christmas Party. Dick Green asked if Impulse Catering could also provide the wine for the AGM and it was agreed that they should.

14. Date of Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on Wednesday 25 April 2012 at the home of John Williams.

15. Meeting Closed: John Williams closed the meeting and thanked Audrey Hartley for her hospitality.