



Essex Contract Bridge Association

A constituent member of the English Bridge Union

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 29th January 2015 starting at 19.30 at Audrey Hartley's house – 168 Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, CM1 4HF

MINUTES

Present: T Cockle, A Cundy, M Curtis L Fleet, A Hartley, B Hunt, P Mollison, V Mollison, G Randall, S Riach, K Thompson, Chris Taylor and Theo Todman as an observer.

1. **Welcome and apologies for absence:** Paul Mollison welcomed those present, with a special welcome to Chris Taylor as the Chairman of the Selection Committee. He accepted apologies from N Bardsley, T Philpott and D Valtisariis. It had been circulated prior to the Committee meeting that Sandy had announced his intention to resign from the post of Website Manager and that Theo Todman was interested in taking over from Sandy. Paul expressed his thanks to Sandy for all the hard work he had put in to maintain our website to its current high standard and this was endorsed by the whole committee. Theo had already prepared a report on the current website with indications of changes he would like to make. The Committee agreed that Theo should be invited to take over the post of Website Manager and that the change-over date should be left to Sandy and Theo to arrange. Paul then invited Theo into the meeting as an observer.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting held on Wednesday, November 5th 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 8. The LMBA's change of date for their Congress:** The proposed change of the LMBA's Congress to one week before the Herts/Essex weekend in July had been agreed by the EBU's Tournament Committee by a vote of 2 for and 1 against with several abstentions/withdrawals. It was agreed that Paul would write to the Tournament Committee again and that the shareholders would raise this at the next Shareholders' Meeting in May making it clear that Essex (and Herts) objected to the date chosen for the 2016 LMBA's Congress. The ECBA Committee were also informed that Bedfordshire were holding an event one week before the September Herts/Essex Weekend.
 - b. **Item 10. The written Complaint:**

Paul had written to complainant and he reported that he was satisfied with the outcome. It was agreed that the director should be asked to make a longer break for refreshments when these were provided by our caterer.
 - c. **Item 14. Proposed venue for Essex home match v. Norfolk:** Audrey reported she had written to Roger Amey asking if Norfolk could find a venue for their home game against Essex which would reduce the journey time for Essex team members. She had received a reply from him saying that he would see what he could do. Our home game v Norfolk was in the year 2015/2016 and their home game would be the following year. Some members of the committee wished to know if a different venue would be found by Norfolk before we committed Essex to use a venue other than Barleylands. It was agreed that Audrey would speak to Roger about this.
4. **Reports from Hon. Officers:**
 - a. **Hon. General Secretary:** Audrey presented a provisional calendar for the season 2015/2016.
 - i) She proposed that the Pairs League should be discontinued as it was not well supported. This was agreed.
 - ii) She announced that the National Pairs Heat run by Essex was to be discontinued as the EBU had decided on a different format for this event. "Heats" would be held on the same day at different venues throughout the country playing the same boards. The top 50 would go forward to the Final. Nothing had been decided yet about a Secondary Final. Barleylands had been selected as one of the venues for the "heats".
 - iii) She also announced that the EBU had decided to drop the Friday Sims as they were not well supported.
 - iv) She proposed that the George Curtis Trophy be held at Barleylands now that the Pairs League had been discontinued. The small entry would suit the venue. It was agreed that this would be blue pointed for one more year.

v) It was agreed that this year's AGM would be at Barleylands. Audrey was not happy with this as she thought the facilities were not as convenient as some other venues. However, it was agreed that the second hall should be hired for the meeting and the other hall used for food and bridge.

b. **Hon. Treasurer's Report:** Linda Fleet reported that our current bank balances stood at: Barclays - £10,928 and Skipton - £15,060. Skipton Building Society have again written to say that the rates of interest have been reduced to 1.25% gross pa for our 90day notice account but the only other account they offer with more interest is 120 day notice account with 1.30% so suggest we leave it where it is for now.

i) The winter competitions had varied results financially, the numbers were slightly down; with Tony Kelvin making a loss though there was no charge for director (Val said she will not be invoicing) and the P2P had not yet come through; the Mixed Pairs had made a profit of £113 but the venue charge was very reasonable and the Swiss pairs will be in profit but no invoice has been received yet from the Director nor P2P charge been deducted. The P2P for the Fletcher and Cup for Clubs had not yet been deducted.

ii) The P2P total for the first nine months is £2,425 compared with £3,143 in 2013 which is a fall of 21%. The amount of the Essex portion should have been discussed at the last meeting but an impromptu quorum of committee members advised EBU that our portion would remain unchanged at 4p this year and it would be put on the agenda for discussion at the October meeting this year.

iii) It was reported that the EBU were offering 36 packs of cards to any affiliated club that asked for them. It was felt that the ECBA also would like to make a gift to affiliated clubs in Essex and it was suggested that we design Essex score cards to give to clubs and to use at our own competitions. Bernie agreed to price this.

c. **Hon. Tournament Secretary:** Ted Cockle presented a breakdown of the competitions held so far this year. Numbers were very similar to the previous year, some slightly up, others slightly down. He was pleased to say that the number of competitors paying by electronic transfer was increasing.

d. **Hon. League Secretary:** Bernie said that everything was ticking over smoothly in the leagues, matches were getting played mostly within the time scale. Thirteen teams had entered the League Knockout Competition and the draw had been made.

e. **Hon. Teachers' Liaison Officer:** Alaric Cundy said that he had circulated the non-expert players and bridge teachers for our "Play with an Expert" Competition in March. Ted and Bernie volunteered to co-ordinate the experts with the non-experts. It was agreed that for the purpose of our competition a non-expert would be defined as someone with less than 5000 MP or had not played in an Essex event (excluding Play with an Expert and PRO/AM).

f. **Hon. Webmaster:** Sandy Riach apologised that he felt that he should resign, but health, family and work made it necessary that he did so. He was happy to hand over to Theo whenever the committee felt that should occur. It was agreed that Theo and Sandy should arrange this between themselves.

5. **Eastern Counties Working Group:** Dennis Valtisiaris was not present but had asked Committee members to give their opinions on three topics which would be discussed at the next meeting of the Eastern Counties Working Group.

Topic A: Improving the relationship between the EBU, Counties and Unaffiliated clubs (notes attached)

Topic B: Developing a value proposition and a progression strategy for players at all levels that revitalises our membership (notes attached)

Topic C: Structuring, staffing and motivating the volunteer workforce that we depend on at National and County level (notes attached)"

As there were no notes attached it was agreed that individual members would send their thoughts to Dennis rather than discuss it at the meeting. It was felt that too little information was available at that time.

6. **Share Holder's report:** Margaret reported that everything at the EBU's AGM had sailed through with no problems. She said that the EBU had agreed to host the next European Championships in England and that they would use a venue at Milton Keynes; the board had not presented any cost figures to the Shareholders. One change they were making to the EBU's prestigious Brighton week was to move the venue from Brighton to Eastbourne.

7. **Venues for our competitions and the AGM:** The venue for the Fletcher and Cup for Clubs had in the past been Navestock Village Hall but the flickering lights had not been cured and it was decided that the Anglo-European School at Ingatestone should be considered. Paul agreed to visit the school to view the hall. It was agreed that Audrey should find an appropriate hall for the Mixed Teams; Stock, Danbury or Broomfield were considered. It was also suggested that Mountnessing might be possible on a Thursday when the Mountnessing Bridge Club meet.
8. **Review of the Prize Structure:** Linda proposed that our competition prizes should be related to the number of entries. She thought that the prizes for some of our competitions were far too high. It was agreed that the prizes should continue to be in the form of vouchers. Suggestions considered were: for teams' competitions 5 – 10 tables first only; 11 – 16 tables first and second only; and over 16 tables prizes would also be awarded to third place. For pairs competitions prizes could be doubled correspondingly to 2 pairs, 4 pairs and 6 pairs. A figure of 20% of the entry fees was suggested as the amount of money to be distributed as prizes. It was agreed that we would no longer give medals at the Warboys and Club Pairs competitions. Linda said she would look into the figures in greater detail and we would discuss this at the next committee meeting. It was also agreed that the prizes should be on the website.
9. **Herts/Essex joint venture.** Linda Fleet reported that the 2014 distribution of £2,100 has been received and the new venue booked for September. Essex & Herts were very disappointed at the EBU's decision to allow LMBA to hold a green pointed event the weekend before the July 2016 weekend but they are confident that they can make the Herts/Essex Congress more inviting.
10. **Succession Working Group:**
 - a. Audrey proposed that the two posts, Teacher Liaison Officer and Schools Liaison Officer, be combined into one called Hon Education Officer. The duties would be to keep in touch with EBED, the EBU Education Charity, and to promote the teaching of bridge across all age ranges. Tony Philpott supports this suggestion. He thinks the committee is becoming too large. This would need to be voted on by the membership at the AGM as it would necessitate a change to the existing Constitution.
 - b. Tony Philpott has suggested some people who might be interested in taking over one or two of the vacant positions. It was agreed that the posts of those resigning should be advertised on the Website.
 - c. At the AGM we would need to change the wording of item 3.1 of the Constitution, possibly to:

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

a. Hon Chairman (who acts as the chairman of the committee)	f. Hon League Secretary
b. Hon Secretary	g. Hon Education Officer
c. Hon Treasurer	h. Hon Web-Master
d. Hon Tournament Secretary	j. Two elected members
e. Hon Membership Secretary	

This would need to be passed by the AGM.

11. AOB

- a. **Timing of our competitions:** It was agreed that we should no longer start any of our competitions at 2.15 pm. A 1 pm start was popular where possible but some venues split the day into morning, afternoon and evening for the purpose of letting and this usually meant that the start time would be 2 pm. It was agreed that in future each competition would give an estimate of the finishing time as well. In essence this is already done as competitions are advertised as single or double session events and a session is stated as playing approximately 24 boards.
- b. **Fliers:** Sometimes fliers had been distributed at our competitions advertising a few coming events. It was felt that such fliers were very useful and that the practice should be followed more regularly.

12. Date of next meeting:

The next meeting would be on Wednesday, 29th April 2015 at the Mollisons' home.

Paul closed the meeting at 10.40 pm and the Committee thanked Audrey for her hospitality.