

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Monday 4th February 2019.

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Jim Simons (Treasurer), Richard Harris, Paul Denning, Anne Swannell, Richard Butland (REC chair), Roger Williams (CBC rep), Judy Sanis (Observer).

Finances

1. Jim reported that he and Chris Colman had re-drafted the report they had written on some anomalies in last year's accounts (as discussed last month), and Patrick is to create a member's only area on the website and publish them there.
2. The annual settlement with CBC is being re-negotiated, and as currently set would be about £1400 per year more than before, partly due to extra VAT charges. Jim felt this increase was reasonable, though he felt the increased charge for boards still seems high; but it was agreed that this was probably not worth disputing further.
3. He noted that the annual profit (averaged over the last four years) was about £1400, so we should still be breaking even, though as CBC are taking back the responsibility of running the Congress we will also lose our profit from this. It was noted that this will make it hard to reduce our Pay to Play charge (currently 5p). Patrick noted that this charge is about the average across the counties. It was agreed that GCBA should aim to be self-sustaining, and that funds gathered from clubs support GCBA's representation of them at EBU meetings, etc. It was noted that, in the past, surpluses have been fed back to the clubs.
4. Mike Wignall has agreed provisionally to take over as Treasurer next year. Jim agreed to invite him to the next meeting.
5. Jim reported that all the forms for bringing in dual signatory roles for the accounts have been sent off (for the second time).

Other business

6. Roger reported that CBC is planning to obtain three second-hand iPads to be used as "robot" players at club nights so that players wouldn't have to sit out for a round (an idea that had been trialled successfully at the club's recent bridgeathon). They so far have obtained one from a member, with hopes of getting a second, and had raised the possibility of GCBA purchasing any other required kit. We agreed that GCBA ownership of kit was inappropriate and that CBC should be encouraged to finance this themselves, and if GCBA did contribute, we would expect the iPads to be made available to other clubs.
7. CBC have recently introduced a new catering scheme in an attempt to avoid the possibility of club liability should players become ill or suffer from allergies due to the food. It was stressed that at GCBA week-end events at the club, we are responsible for the catering, and that we must abide by the CBC rules that no food be left behind. We agreed that a designated person needed to be responsible for ensuring the clean-up takes place after each of our events, and Anne agreed to create a set of instructions in time for that person before the next event on the 17th February.
8. The Tudor Bridge Club in Chipping Sodbury has asked if they can switch their affiliation from Avon to GCBA. Patrick has spoken to Peter Shelley at Avon, and he confirmed that they have no objections. Noting that Chipping Sodbury is actually in South Gloucestershire, it was agreed that there are no issues with allowing them to switch.

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9. The next Midland County Working Group meeting is on February 13th, and Patrick invited anyone who wished to attend. He noted that Peter Shelley is hoping to attend on behalf of Avon. The meeting will be discussing our views on the EBU's Strategic Aims (e.g. how to counter falling attendances at events).
10. Patrick suggested that, since inviting members of other clubs to Cheltenham had had limited response, we might get better results by visiting clubs in other parts of the county. Various clubs were suggested, including Stroud, Newent, Wotton and Gloucester. It was noted that it would be preferable to visit a club which met on a night which didn't clash with other neighbouring clubs' nights, to encourage more external visitors. Patrick will contact some clubs to find their views.
11. It now seems likely that the Stanley Shield will take place in June, and it was noted that, while the venue needn't be a hotel, it must be somewhere which allows for suitable catering. It was suggested that we could check with the two registrars who are members of CBC, as they would know where the wedding venues are. Patrick will report back next month.
12. The idea of replacing the honour boards at the club appears to have been shelved by CBC. Views on both sides of the discussion were expressed.
13. Patrick noted that the EBU is allowing more people to attend the EBU Chairs meeting - which will be discussing the future of bridge in the country - if they wish to. Jim expressed interest in attending this year's meeting on 15th May.
14. Worcestershire and Somerset have recently hosted successful seminars run by Andrew Robson. He has run seminars at CBC before, but it was noted that the number of people who could be in the same room at CBC is limited, so there is a case for GCBA holding such a seminar elsewhere. However, it was also noted that it is easier to sell the idea of attending seminars when they are held at a club. There was insufficient appetite to take the idea forward.
15. Patrick noted that none of the home international events (e.g. the Camrose and Lady Milne trophies) have been hosted at Cheltenham since the 1990s, and suggested that GCBA might consider hosting one. Paul suggested that the CBC room structure might not be suitable, and there was insufficient appetite to take the idea forward.
16. It was decided that we (through Roger) should ask CBC to contribute to the costs of the Cotswold Cup (this being a charity event), as they did last year. [He later confirmed that they would].