

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Thursday 14th January 2021

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Richard Butland, Jan Kinane, Nigel Mortimer, Ian Sidgwick, Roger Williams and Judith Sanis (CBC rep).

Finance and Programme

1. Mike reported that we are now receiving money via the EBU from BBO events, but for Real Bridge we still have to collect the money from the players, which is less convenient. So far, he has collected £195 out of £270 for the Swiss Pairs, and £100 out of £190 for the Swiss Teams.
2. We had earlier agreed to rebate the county levy for online clubs, and so far have paid the rebate to Cheltenham. Other clubs will be paid on request (or, failing that, at the end of the financial year).
3. For the Midlands County League, it was agreed that since online games were here to stay we should stick to the principle of charging people for playing in our games. We decided to charge a fixed sum per match (probably £2), and claim the total amount from each player at the end of the year. Richard agreed to let the players know. We will consider whether to charge people for the matches already played in October and December (these were on BBO, so the costs are lower).
4. There was also some debate over whether people might prefer to play online in the future, especially for matches of this type where there would be considerable travel involved. The EBU view is that online play will be more common than it was before the pandemic.
5. Swiss Teams matches can also be played on Real Bridge, which would cost an extra 40p per player per match. It was felt that we should add this to our charges, again to stick to the principle of not undercutting clubs, but that we would allow trials of this for free during the current series. Patrick agreed to poll the Swiss Teams players to see whether they would like to take up this option more generally in the next series (and, if so, the charge will be increased from the current £10 for the series).
6. It was noted that some counties charge an annual subscription for all their events, though it was felt that this might put off new participants.
7. It was agreed that we should stick with our decision not to charge for the County Knock-Out.
8. The Christmas Pairs event had been very successful, with 24½ tables, and had run pretty smoothly. It was suggested that this may be partly due to people being reminded of it in CBC e-mails, as well as by the GCBA direct e-mail shot. It was agreed that we should have another such event at Easter. [Note: This is now booked for Monday 5th April].
9. We had agreed to fund teams taking part in the Midland Counties 8-high No-Fear Swiss Teams on 30 January. The take-up so far has been good, with 6½ teams having entered - it was agreed that we should continue to fund all teams who enter.
10. The Newent Bowl is running online, as a Blue Point event, on 7 March.
11. Chipping Camden have requested a demo session of Real Bridge. It was agreed that GCBA will bear the cost for this (which we expect to be under £10).
12. It was agreed that we would adopt the "Screens" option as the default for Real Bridge Monday League matches. In this mode of play, players can only see one opponent (and not their partner) during the bidding and play of each hand. This allows self-announcement of

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conventional bids (which we agreed was preferable to alerting those by one's partner), and more conversation with an opponent during the play. It was agreed that this should be advertised in the next newsletter, and instructions should be put on the website.

13. The recent CBC run of the EBU Simultaneous Pairs had enabled Voice over BBO, but it had not been used. Nigel said he'd found it to be crackly in the past.

Representative Events

14. Richard supplied a small update to the Representative Events Committee's Terms of Reference, which was accepted, and it was noted that they need expanding, as people had asked about the criteria used for selection in some events not listed. It was agreed that our criteria for selection for the Midlands Counties Online League should be the same as those for the Midlands Counties League currently, and that an entry was needed for friendly matches.
15. We agreed that we would be prepared to contribute to other counties' costs for using Real Bridge.

Teaching

16. Patrick noted that, unlike some counties, we don't have a county education officer, and he is sounding out an obvious candidate.
17. Jan reported that she and a few others are having free online training from Lesley Harrison outside the formal lessons.
18. Tudor Bridge Club is currently running an Intermediate course, in which each lesson comprises a Zoom session and 10 set hands on BBO (with an experienced club member at each table as a helper), and it is proving popular. It was felt that it would be good to let other clubs know about this, and Nigel agreed that it should be reported in the GCBA newsletter and on the Facebook page.
19. It was suggested that we distribute copies of "The Card Turner" - a novel about a teenager playing bridge - to the secondary schools in Gloucestershire, possibly including a note to tell readers who they should contact if they wanted to take up the game. It was agreed that this would be more effective if carried out by Alison Nicholson when she's able to re-commence giving bridge training in the schools, and Patrick will discuss this idea with her. It was also suggested that we should have a review of the book in the newsletter.

Other business

20. The next meeting will be on Thursday 4th February 2021.