**MINUTES OF THE 2023 AGM OF THE BRIDGE SECTION OF RMSGC AT 1 PM ON TUESDAY, 25 APRIL.**

**Committee**: Christopher Roshier (Chair), Christine Tomkin, David Walker (Treasurer), Pip Smitham, Julia Wright (Secretary)

**Apologies**: Caroline Butt, Mimi Waterbury

**Members**: David Mather (Captain), Mark Gailey (General Manager), Liza Lapsley, Penny Marks, Chris Powell-Smith, Erik and Jennifer Porter, Sue Adams, Sue Glynn, David and Liz Kendall, Christine Haynes, Elizabeth Bond, Patricia and Cannell Benmore, Hazell Jacobs, Nicola Meakin, Christine Wright, Robert Bryce, Gillian Bromige, Barbara Benemar, Adrienne Roshier, Carole and Don Anderson, Sheelagh Scott

**Apologies:** Dick and Veronica Venables, Jill Hollingworth, Janet Leffler, Marian Stuart, Mike Hyland, Karen Milliner

**Minutes of the 2022 AGM** were approved.

**Chairman’s report**. Christopher reported the following: a very warm welcome to you all; it is nice to see so many of you here. The purpose of this meeting is to give you a report on our bridge activities at RMSGC and to give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have and/or to raise matters that you wish to discuss.

The last 12 months have flown by. This will be my last AGM as Chairman of the bridge committee but we will come to that later. This year things have returned to normal as far as bridge at RMS is concerned, although there have been some important changes, more of which later.

You may be interested to know that last night I did a quick calculation of how many bridge events we held at RMS since 31 March, 2022, including duplicates, bridge drives, Andrew Robson and supervised practices. The total was 62. This doesn’t include matches in the Freeman Madgett trophy, which must be around another 30-40.

In January this year we had another seminar with Andrew Robson. 84 of us attended and very much enjoyed his lesson. We have a further seminar with Andrew booked for 5 February, 2024. Again, many thanks to David Walker for organising this.

The duplicate and golf and bridge matches will be covered later. As will the rubber bridge competition for the Freeman Madgett trophy.

Christine Tomkin ran a couple of series of Supervised Play events in October 2022 and February/March 2023. These were very successful in helping less experienced players with their bidding and play and we are very grateful to Christine.

The website is being used for people to find out about upcoming events, book for duplicate and other bridge sessions, check results and analyse how well (or in my case badly) they did. I hope that the regular emails have been a help in keeping people in touch. You might like to know that my newsletters go to over 130 members of RMS.

We held a Charity Bridge Drive on October, 2022. This was very successful and we had 21 tables. Thanks to everyone’s generosity, both in joining us and supporting our raffle, we were able to send a cheque for £1000 to the Captains’ charity, Sense. Our next Charity Bridge day is Monday, 16 October to raise money for this year’s Captains’ charity.

Now a few thank you’s. Mark, Emma, Claire, Erin, Manuela and Marcin and their teams have been a great help to us in what has not always been the easiest of years with cancellation and retiming of events at short notice. They are all very supportive of the Bridge section. I would also like to express our thanks to all the other office staff, catering staff and behind the scenes staff, who look after us so well.

My personal thanks go to your committee, Julia, David, Pip, Christine, Mimi and Caroline, who have been tireless in their support over the last year, as indeed they have been over many years. I believe that the last year has been very successful for bridge at RMS and this is due in no small measure to the members of the bridge committee, who work to make it so. I should also like to thank those not on the committee, who organise matches for us, Celia Johnson, Frances Balmer, Carole Anderson and Lesley Young. We could not manage without them. I must also pay a special tribute to our 3 directors, Christine, Karen and Pip. They have ensured that our sessions ran smoothly. We are very grateful to them all for their support. Again, we could not manage without them.

Improvements have been made to the Card Room and as a result, there are 4 tables available for casual bridge. For our formal duplicates, bridge drives and matches, we have used the Henry Cotton Room and Pam Barton Bar with the Viscount Lounge used for larger events. I have to say there is nowhere a more pleasant place in which to play bridge than the Pam Barton Bar on a cold winter’s afternoon with a log fire blazing. The Honours Boards have been moved to the HCR and there is now a new Honours Board for the Benmore Bowl. Storage of our bridge equipment is still a problem and for the time being it remains in the Card Room.

Finally, as I think you all know, I have decided that it’s time for me to retire as Chairman of the RMS bridge committee. I have been doing this job for 11 years and I think it’s time to pass on the baton to a new Chairman. We have seen a lot of changes over this period, Bridgemates, our own dedicated website, our own directors and of course Covid and online bridge to name but five. I am delighted that Pip Smitham will succeed me, and I wish him all the luck in the future. I shall still be involved in RMS bridge as a member of the committee.

I would like to thank you all for your support of our events and of me personally. We could not do all that we do without your support and encouragement, and as far as I am concerned, this makes all our efforts worthwhile. I am sure you will extend this support to Pip as he takes on his new role.

**Treasurer’s report**. This is attached. David Walker reported that there is a healthy balance. Regarding home and away matches, the catering balance varies depending on the requirements, which can vary from soup and sandwiches to a full meal.

**Duplicate bridge report**. Christopher reported the following: It’s been a mixed yearas far as duplicate bridge is concerned. We have had to cancel several Thursday evening supper bridge sessions, and as a result, we have only been able to hold 7 sessions over the winter, instead of the 10 planned. Even when the sessions have gone ahead, numbers have been much lower than in 2019 and previous years. In the new year we tried an experiment for supper bridge, alternating 5 pm and 6.30 pm starts, but this doesn’t seem to have made a huge difference. We need to consider the format of supper duplicates for 2023/24. We have a new chef, who is very good and this is another attraction for the supper bridge, so I would encourage you all to come and join us for supper bridge. The Peter Taylor cup for 2022/23 was awarded to Karen Milliner with an average score of 60.40% for her best 5 scores over the winter. Pip Smitham was second with 58.94%. These scores were achieved despite the distraction of directing. Karen couldn’t join us today so we cannot present the cup to her.

On the other hand, Tuesday afternoon duplicates have been successful. We have held 17 sessions over the winter with duplicate being played every Tuesday except in December. Over 70 different players have played in these sessions. Given this success, we have decided to continue our weekly Tuesday duplicates until at least the end of June, provided the numbers signing up continue to justify it. The Benmore Bowl will be awarded on results through to the end of May and so we do not know who will win it yet.

A Christmas duplicate was held in 2022 with 14 tables, a good attendance. There was an Easter duplicate in 2022 with 61/2 tables and last Thursday at the Easter duplicate, we had 8 tables. If you weren’t there, you missed out on free tea and hot cross buns, courtesy of the Bridge section.

The annual Men v Ladies match was held in November with 11 tables. There should have been 12 but Adrienne and I and our partners had to withdraw at the last moment because of illness. The Ladies won with an average score of 51.32%, the Men had won the previous 2 matches. Many thanks to the Team Captains, Dick Venables and Carole Anderson, for organising the teams so effectively.

As regards duplicate matches against other clubs, we played in the Surrey Ladies League and 8 other matches. Of the 8 other matches, we won 5 and lost 3. We also played 2 golf and bridge matches against MCC and Roehampton and won against MCC. On the Surrey Ladies League, Frances Balmer has asked me to report the following: we had good wins against St. George’s Hill, Burhill, Royal Wimbledon and Sunningdale and narrowly lost to a strong Roehampton team. We are still waiting for the final result, but she is optimistic that we will have done quite well. About 30 players participated in these matches and Frances would like to thank everyone who played, especially those who volunteered to be a reserve.

**Bridge Drive Report**. Julia reported the following: The sessions have been popular, and we have had new players coming, with the number of tables ranging from 5 to 9. They have been held mainly in the Pam Barton Bar, where we have had a roaring log fire when cold. The format is the best 3 rounds of Chicago out of a possible 5 rounds. The sessions will continue throughout the year on the first Wednesday of each month, if there are enough tables. As Christopher mentioned there will be another Charity Day on Monday, 16 October. Please make a note in your diaries. Thank you all very much for our help and support.

**Freeman Madgett competition**. Mimi sent the following report. 22 pairs participated in the FM this year, which was played throughout the winter. There were some keenly contested matches and very good scores in the first round. The 3- hour limit in the first round seems to be popular and the new format of 20 hands or 3 rubbers in the second round is more balanced. Congratulations to all who entered and the results are as follows:

Winners: Caroline Butt and Christine Tomkin Runners up: Cannell and Patricia Benmore

Semi-finalists: Sallie Greene and Judy Talbot Erik and Jennifer Porter.

Dave Mather, the Men’s Captain presented the FM trophy to Christine Tomkin and prizes to the runners up and semi-finalists.

**Officers of the Bridge Section**. In January Pip Smitham was appointed to the Bridge committee with the intention that he should succeed as Chairman following the AGM. If re- elected, Christopher will stay on the committee. All the other members of the committee are willing to stand again, and with your agreement, they will be re-elected. The AGM members agreed to this.

Pip expressed everyone’s appreciation of Christopher’s splendid 11 year reign as Chairman of the Bridge Section and thanked him for his sterling work. Christopher was presented with a Thank You card, signed by many members and gift vouchers.

**AOB.** Chris Powell-Smith enquired whether the Bridgemates belong to RMS bridge section. Christopher replied that they did. Christine Wright asked of news of the Card Room and Monday afternoon bridge. Christopher replied that players can always ask reception to arrange for tables to be set up in the Club.