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SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Management Committee of the SCCBA took place at the Patcham Community Centre on Thursday 17 January 2013 starting at 7 pm

Present:

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| Mr M Pool | President |
| Mrs J Mayall | Chairman |
| Mr D Galpin | Hon Treasurer |
| Mr G Stanford | Vice Chairman and Tournament Manager |
| Mr D Wheeler | Hon Secretary |

And members: Mr D Armstrong, Mr P Bates, Dr H Beveridge, Mr D Ellis, Mrs A Galpin, Mr N Hardy, Mrs H Kent, Mr R Lowe, Miss J Simpson, Mrs C Watson, Mr J Williams and Mr M Wotton.

Mrs J Armstrong also attended as delegate for Old Barn Way BC and to support the further discussion of the proposed revision of the Constitution.

AGENDA

0. Opening Remarks

JM welcomed MC Members and thanked them for all their hard work over the period since the last meeting. She noted that this was the first MC meeting since the untimely passing of Jackie Clinton and she wished to place on record the Association's heartfelt appreciation for all that Jackie had done for Sussex bridge. MC Members concurred unanimously. JM also reported that Eddie Lucioni, who had been seriously injured whilst attempting to use a pedestrian crossing last year, was now much better. He had been transferred to Tunbridge Wells hospital and would very much appreciate any visitors.

Turning to the business of the day, JM observed that the substantial length of the agenda which included several major items for discussion demanded that contributions be clear and succinct and that this would be paramount in the MC being able to complete its business in the time available.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Mr E Williams.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 11th October 2012

2.1 Accuracy

MC Members had no points of accuracy to raise but, referring to the minutes of the last meeting, RL enquired as to the mechanism whereby post meeting notes were applied. DW replied that this was sometimes a useful mechanism for reflecting the position reached after a meeting and thereby enabling MC Members to be as up-to-date as possible. In the case in question, DW had indicated at the last meeting that this mechanism would be used to deal with the point raised.

2.2 Matters Arising –

1. Item 2.2(a)2 Newsletter/Calendar Distribution

DW reported that he had prepared the article for the next newsletter as requested. This was a conversational style consultation about the future of newsletters and calendars and gave the wider membership an opportunity to influence future choices. The draft article had been circulated to MC Members before Christmas and DW had received no comments on it. MC Members confirmed they were content for it to be published as drafted.

2. Item 2.2(a)5 Review Of Constitution

2.1 JM introduced this item saying that the current draft of the new Constitution represented the results of much further hard work by the Sub Group led by Liz Hoskins. JM paid particular tribute to the work of JA and MP. Since the last MC meeting JA had co-ordinated, collated and applied the various further changes suggested and MP had ensured that the evolving draft remained consistent with EBU advice.

2.2 JM invited MP to guide MC Members through the principal changes compared with the current Constitution. MP explained that the review work had been driven primarily by the need for consistency with the EBU model given the commitment which the association gave to the EBU in 2012 when the latter approved the interim changes to the provisions for conduct and discipline. The following points were raised in the ensuing discussion:

- Para 3.1 – it had been suggested that the role of the WebMaster might usefully be added to the list of Officers. JM observed that whilst MW's current attendance at Officers' meetings was valuable (because he often took on tasks beyond the basic remit of the WebMaster), that might not be the case in respect of future WebMasters. MC Members agreed that the number of Officers listed was sufficient and that the suggestion should not be adopted.
- Para 3.1 – DA questioned whether The MC might operate more efficiently with fewer Members and, therefore, whether the specification of "not less than 8....." should be changed. MP agreed the potential advantage of such a change but was concerned that it would reduce breadth of representation from the Clubs if such a change was

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made. MC Members agreed that, on balance, it would be sensible to keep the qualification as drafted. This provided the flexibility to have up to 14 MC Members but did not demand such if sufficient volunteers were not forthcoming.

- Para 3.7 – this was a new provision and MC Members' attention was drawn to it accordingly. In the past it had been suggested that there might be open elections for this role but it was felt that it was important that the holders of these roles were fully aware of the business of the County and thereby able to balance the interests of County members with the overall health of the EBU. Such awareness could only be acquired through involvement in the MC and appointment by the MC was therefore felt to be the most advantageous approach. MC Members agreed.
- Para 5.4 – MP explained the membership categories now listed, including the two types of dual membership possible. DA questioned whether the Constitution should explicitly recognise and be consistent with the EBU provision of member anonymity. MP did not believe that this was necessary but DW agreed to check with the EBU after the meeting.
- Para 7.4 – Referring to the list of items of AGM business, MP pointed out that the phrase "terms and conditions of membership" should be inserted after "Association" in 7.4(e). MC Members agreed. Also, it was felt that there should be a 'catch-all' item of "any other business" inserted as 7.4(g).
- Para 7.6 – DE felt that proxy votes might be allowed in order to enable wider membership involvement in key decisions. DW observed that managing proxy votes in ways which dealt effectively with the potential for fraud was demanding and very costly. MC Members agreed that the bar on proxy votes should remain. JS expressed concern at the lack of reference to the availability of provision for formal votes on matters raised under 'any other business'. She reminded MC Members of the difficulties which had arisen a few years ago at an AGM. DW suggested that a sentence might be added to para 7.6 in the form "A formal vote will not be allowed in respect of items raised under paragraph 7.4(g)". MC Members agreed.
- Para 7.7 – MP highlighted this paragraph as novel and introducing an obligation on the MC to consult the wider membership in the event of a resolution being passed by a substantial majority. MC Members agreed that this was a useful addition which responded to the difficulties which had arisen in the recent past. JM alerted the MC to an e-mail she had received only 24 hours before this meeting from Malcolm Pryor. He had referred to the Surrey Constitution which placed a binding obligation on all its Association members in respect of any decision at a General Meeting. JA informed the MC that the Surrey Constitution (and several others) had been studied by the review group and they had concluded that such an obligation was actually anti-democratic in that it allowed what would normally be a small minority of the membership (who were prepared to attend a General Meeting) to impose its view on the majority without further recourse. This had led the review group to the view that the obligation to consult the wider membership where there had been a substantial majority in favour of a particular resolution was by far the more sensible and democratic option. Given its significance in relation to past difficulties, DW requested a formal vote on this point. JM agreed and MC Members voted by 13 to 1 with 3 abstentions to reject Malcolm Pryor's suggestion. MP added that Malcolm Pryor had also suggested that there was a need to clarify that the MC took its delegated authority from "the General Meeting" but he asserted that in fact the MC took its authority from the Constitution and that there was no need for the 'clarification' suggested. MC Members agreed.
- Para 7.9 – DA suggested that, given the potential seriousness of the background to an EGM, the 'bar' in terms of the quorum for such should be higher than that for an AGM. He believed that the quorum for an EGM should be 50 members present and voting. After discussion, a vote was also taken on this and the suggestion was agreed by 14 to 1 with 2 abstentions.
- Para 9.1.4 – JM referred to a further e-mail, also received only 24 hours earlier, this time from Sheridan Stevens. The contents of this e-mail were read out to the meeting and MC Members discussed the pros and cons of allowing Presidents and Vice Presidents to vote at MC meetings. Opinions were divided. Some felt that the experience and expertise which Presidents and Vice Presidents might bring to bear could only be fully acknowledged if the right to vote was accorded, as it is in the current Constitution. Others felt that such appointments were very much honorary and that the right to vote should only come from being elected as an Officer or ordinary member of the MC. PB proposed a vote on the matter, seconded by DA and the MC voted 8 to 7 with 2 abstentions to withdraw the right to vote from Presidents and Vice Presidents. DW undertook to make the necessary change by replacing "vote in" with "speak" in 9.4.1.
- Para 9.1 - JA asked whether there should be provision for the appointment of Presidents and Vice Presidents to be time limited in some way, as was possible in

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relation to honorary members under 9.2.2. JM said this was a suggestion MC Members may wish to take time to consider, having been given a little notice, and suggested it be considered at a later date when consistency with the EBU model had been achieved. MC Members agreed.

- Schedule A – JA alerted MC Members to the reference to “clause 10” in line 1 of section 1, which should read “clause 6” to be consistent with the draft now being finalised. MC Members agreed. MP also pointed out that paragraph 6.5.2 of Schedule A introduced the provision for the County to assist Clubs in relation to conduct and disciplinary cases. This was consistent with past practice and formalised the approach previously taken wherever possible.

2.3 After checking that there were no more suggestions for change, JM reiterated that the overall objective is to implement a new Constitution which is fully in line with EBU requirements and which deals with the various concerns which have arisen over the last year or so. The aim is to be able to recommend the new Constitution to the AGM in April 2013 having first obtained EBU approval. The latter would be sought through the EBU's new self-certification process as soon as a final draft version of the Constitution was available. DW added that he would apply the changes agreed today and re-circulate the revised draft to MC Members. Subject to any further issues, the draft would be fully proof-read by DE before transmission to the EBU and, in due course, publication with the other papers for the AGM.

3. Item 2.2(b) 1.1 Proposals for SCCBA storage

GS reported that there had been no further developments regarding costed proposals for permanent storage facilities. Action was being taken to install wooden pallets at the present storage location to reduce the risk of damage from damp. Additionally GS had received details of a tournament support service that could supply everything needed for an event should our own equipment be the subject of a major disaster.

4. Item 2.2(b) 1.2 Trophy Insurance

AG reported that enquiries of the Association's insurance company had established that a claim could not be made for the missing Championship Teams trophy because its loss could not be proven. The value of this particular trophy was also unknown as the policy covered all trophies with individual values of up to £1000. The MC agreed that HK and GS would consider how to proceed regarding the trophy to be awarded for future events and report back.

Action – HK/GS

5. Item 2.2(b) 2 Tournament Reports from TDs

DW reported that at the Directors Training day last November (note circulated to MC Members previously) it had been agreed, amongst other things, that, in future, TDs would provide a report on each tournament that they direct consistent with EBU White Book requirements. HK took the opportunity to enquire about the previously proposed refresher training for Club Directors. DW undertook to e-mail EW on the subject and report back.

Action - DW

6. Item 2.2(b) 4 Invitation Pairs – Improving Understanding

DW reported that he had produced a short Q&A article and cleared it with the TC as requested. It had now been published on the web site as agreed at the last MC meeting.

7. Item 9 Communications with Members by e-mail

On behalf of EW, HB reported that a mail shot to 1637 members whose e-mail addresses were known had produced puzzling results. 78% appeared not to have replied but a check of MC Members revealed that many had not received the e-mail in question. Of those that had replied, only 92 (6.7%) had indicated willingness to receive all County communications by e-mail. A number of ‘bounce-backs’ had occurred and HB had tried to resolve these as far as possible. However, the large percentage of ‘no replies’ made it difficult to draw any firm conclusions. MC Members agreed that, in the first instance, HB should resend the e-mail to all MC Members to check that the system was working correctly. JM reiterated the importance of making progress towards greater use of electronic communication and thanked HB for her sterling efforts in this respect.

Action - HB

3. Chairman's Report

3.1 JM conveyed congratulations to Chris Derrick who had recently represented England at junior level in the Channel Islands Trophy event. The England team had won the event.

3.2 JM thanked those MC Members and others who had organised events since the last meeting. Their commitment to maintaining the breadth and depth of competitive opportunities provided by the County continued to be of major importance.

3.3 JM alerted MC Members to an article she had provided for publication in the EBU magazine. This concerned the County's use of display stands to advertise County facilities for teaching, etc to attract new members. The stands had been used in several locations already and more were planned. One location had generated enquiries from up to 12 potential new members. HK emphasised the importance of the stands being manned if at all possible because there was a much greater chance of interest being generated if it was possible for the curious to have a dialogue with someone who could field/answer additional questions.

4. Treasurer's Report

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4.1 DG reported provisional balances at the end of December of £6328 (current account) and £22816 (deposit account). The total represented a small increase on the total at the end of 2011 but this would turn into a small loss after depreciation is taken into account. Receipts from P2P were £7593 compared with £6488 for 2011 reflecting the higher rate introduced in April 2012 and the net effect of the introduction (also in April 2012) of County payments to the EBU.

4.2 DG also reported that he had donated £100 on behalf of the SCCBA to the Motor Neurone Disease charity following the passing of Jackie Clinton.

5. Selectors' Report

5.1 Copies of the minutes of the November meeting had been sent to MC Members and published on the web site.

5.2 The 2012 Tollemache team had played in a tough group and had finished 6th of 9 teams.

6. Tournament Committee Report

6.1 Directors' required skills – Progress

DW referred to the note of the County Directors day already circulated which provided a full report on the matters discussed and the actions agreed. EW would report further on the latter in due course.

6.2 Green Pointed Events for 2014

DW reported that there had been only four responses to his e-mail enquiry about the idea of concentrating these events into one weekend. As those responses were divided between change and the status quo and in light of the low level of response he suggested there was no sound basis for change. MC Members agreed.

6.3 Tournament Manager's Report

6.3.1 GS reported:

- The NYST had been very successful with a late flurry of entries resulting from much 'chasing' by CW.
- The Charity Sim Pairs was under way and numbers thus far were slightly down on 2011. DG raised the question of the costs of production of commentary sheets and MC Members agreed that these should be absorbed by the County and not deducted from the amount available for donation.
- Feedback sheets were now being sought at all tournaments and GS proposed that a summary of the feedback received should be published on the web site. MC Members agreed.

6.3.2 HK referred to the difficulties experienced with a stratified approach used for the East Grinstead Basic Bridge event. GS was aware of these and the TC would consider matters and advise as appropriate.

6.3.3 RL raised the question of the amount of travel required of participants in Sussex semi-finals and finals. DW commented that it was open to individual clubs to volunteer to host semi-finals and finals. If a club that had not previously hosted was prepared to volunteer and such a location would help reduce the travel involved for participants he was sure that it would be given serious consideration. There was always a balance to be struck with the location of semi-finals and finals in terms of the likely numbers of participants from different parts of the County.

7. Secretary's Report

7.1 Gladys Hakki Award

DW reported that the trawl of clubs for the 2013 award was in train with a return date of 31 January. DW would consult MC Members by e-mail over the nominations and the final selection during February so that the award can be made at the AGM as usual.

7.2 AGM Preparations

DW reported that preparations for the AGM on 7 April were under way with a view to issuing the agenda and papers in line with the requirements of the Constitution. He invited Members to ensure that they arranged for completion of their nomination forms if they wished to continue to serve on the MC. In that context, DW reported that EW had informed him that he did not wish to stand again as Membership Secretary or to serve on the MC. He was however happy to continue to serve on the TC and as CTD. This would mean that there was at least one Officer role to fill in due course.

Action - DW

Action – MC Members

8. EBU Matters

DW reported that, owing to ill health, Barbara Herold had been forced to give up her role as Sussex representative on the EBU RCC. A trawl of Clubs is under way to invite nominations to take on this role. He added that if MC Members knew of particularly suitable candidates they should engineer for appropriate action to be taken. The closing date for nominations is 28 February.

Action – MC Members

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9. Membership Secretary's Report

HB indicated that she had nothing further to report beyond informing MC Members that the total of members had now risen to 3062.

10. Newsletter Editor's Report

JM reported that the final date for copy had now passed although she hoped to be able to include recent results from Henfield. This edition would be issued in bulk to clubs for distribution in order to save postage costs. MC Members agreed that this edition of the newsletter need not be individually enveloped and addressed, saving further on the cost of production. DE observed that he was no longer being sent proofs by the Editor for checking.

11. Communication Officer's Report

CW had nothing to report.

12. Webmaster and Master Point Secretary's Report

MW reported on two matters:

- The Members only facility for finding partners on the web site had been removed primarily because it had not been used.
- The Roll of Honour was now live on the web site and this had prompted contact from a Horsham member who believed there were County honours boards stored in a friend's garage. MW would pursue this further and report back

Action - MW

13. Conduct Committee Report

JM reported that Liz Hoskins was taking a sabbatical from her role as Chairman of this committee. JM was standing in pending an appointment following the next AGM. There had been one recent case resulting in an appeal on a ruling being referred to the EBU.

14. Education Report

14.1 Business Plan

DA reported that the Education Sub Group believed there were four areas to be targeted – young people, adults at work, adults in classes and numbers of teachers available. A two day course had been held to address the latter and ten teachers had been trained. For young people already playing, the JTI event remained the primary focus and MC Members agreed that a budget of £1500 should be allocated for that event in 2013 subject to any additional cost necessary to secure the transport required. Other elements of the strategy would be addressed in the business plan which will now be presented at the next MC meeting.

Action - DA

14.2 Minibridge in Schools

JM reported that she had convened a meeting with a bridge playing West Sussex County Councillor, Bill Acraman. Mr Acraman had chaired the meeting and he had reported that he had received the agreement of the Children's Learning Advisor at WSCC, Victoria Ludlow, to write jointly with the SCCBA to all schools to recommend minibridge as an after school activity. This looked like an exciting opportunity to generate interest in our favourite mind sport amongst young people across the County. JM would keep the MC informed of progress.

Action - JM

15. Mentoring

JS reported that West Sussex BC was considering taking up mentoring and that Ernie Rivett (Chairman Worthing BC) had also indicated that their mentoring sessions might be opened to members of other clubs.

16. Charities

JS had nothing to report.

17. Regionalisation of County Activities

DW reported that he had circulated a summary paper on the results of the survey of clubs on this matter. Only 6 (of 30) clubs had responded and one of those had done so simply to say that their members were not interested in County competitions. In light of the low level of response, DW did not believe there was any sound basis for change. MC Members agreed.

19. Dates of Next Meetings

DW reported that meetings would continue to be held on Thursdays at 7pm at either Patcham CC or the AIBC. Dates for the next four meetings had been provisionally set for 9 May, 18 July, 10 October 2013 and 16 January 2014. The next meeting (9 May 2013) would be held at the AIBC subject to a check on availability which JA/DA agreed to make.

Action JA/DA

20. Any Other Business

JW reported that he would now be standing down from the MC. Expansion of his business meant that he now found it difficult to find the time to contribute fully. He wished to thank all who had helped during his time on the MC and to wish everyone well for the future. JM called for a vote of thanks to JW from other MC Members for all his hard work over the years and this was delivered by acclamation.

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The meeting closed at 9.45pm