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SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Management Committee of the SCCBA took place at Patcham Community Centre on Thursday 18 July 2013 starting at 7 pm

Present:

Mr M Pool (MP)	President & Elected Member
Mrs J Mayall (JM)	Chairman
Mr D Galpin (DG)	Hon Treasurer
Mr G Stanford (GS)	Vice Chairman and Tournament Manager
Mrs H Beveridge (HB)	Membership Secretary
Mr D Wheeler (DW)	Hon Secretary

And other elected members: Mr D Armstrong (DA), Mr P Bates (PB), Mrs A Galpin (AG), Mr B Campbell-Kearsey (BC-K), Ms K Kennedy (KK), Mr A Southwell (AS), Mr E Williams, Mr M Wotton (MW) and Mr M Wright (MWr).

Mrs J Armstrong (JA) also attended as Chairman of the Conduct Committee, member of the Constitution Review Group and delegate for Old Barn Way BC. Mr J Bugden (JB) and Mr P Pennant (PP) also attended for item 2.2.1 as Chairman and Member respectively of the Constitution Review Group.

AGENDA

0. Opening Remarks

JM opened the meeting by welcoming the constitution review group of Jim Bugden (Chair), Jill Armstrong, Pyers Pennant and Martin Pool. She was very grateful for the work they had done leading to the draft constitution which was to be considered today. She was conscious of the length of the agenda in addition to that item and indicated that she would seek to 'push things along' where necessary.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Mr N Hardy, Mr J Mitchell, Miss J Simpson and Mrs C Watson.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 7th May 2013

2.1 Accuracy

MC Members were content to agree the minutes as drafted.

2.2 Matters Arising

1. Item 2.2.1 Review Of Constitution

DW rehearsed events since the last MC meeting which had led to the recent circulation of a draft new constitution which had the support of the Review Group and the Officers. A commentary paper had also been circulated highlighting the main differences from the current constitution. JB indicated that before inviting questions, he wished to emphasise the following:

- The Review Group had proposed a new constitution which would modernise management of the Association and make it easier and lower cost. For example, the use of the web for publication of notices about general meetings.
- The constitution now provided for the eventuality that there was not a quorum for a general meeting.
- For elections to the MC, the constitution was now designed to be used in conjunction with an application form which would ensure clear understanding of responsibilities at the time of the application. This reflected good practice in corporate governance. The application form would also include reference to the potential liabilities of members of the management committee of an unincorporated body.
- Whilst the new constitution provided for members' resolutions, it was important to recognise that the MC still had a duty only to accept valid resolutions. The latter could not be allowed to lead to, for example, the Association breaking English Law or contravening the Bye Laws of the EBU.
- All members' resolutions would now require a two thirds majority to be passed.

DW then invited comments and questions on each section of the draft. The following points were made:

- Para 3.1 – MC Members were content with the reduction from six officers to four but DA was concerned about the reduction of other members from fourteen. He was of the view that the MC should be opened up to the clubs to strengthen links and that each club should be invited to nominate someone to become an 'other' member. DW pointed out that such a change would actually dramatically increase the number of other members from 14 to at least 29 which seemed to be moving in the opposite direction to that recommended by the review group. KK pointed out that elements of the now emerging education and communications strategies would strengthen links with clubs without the increase in MC numbers. MP added that the other members of the MC all had jobs to do serving the county and it was important that the right people

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were elected to those roles. DW added that some clubs were not particularly interested in what the county was doing and would not respond to a request to send a representative to the MC. Currently all clubs were allowed to send a delegate to all MC meetings but very few took this opportunity in practice. Following further discussion of preferences as to the actual number of other members, a show of hands indicated an overwhelming majority in favour of a maximum of ten.

- Para 3.7 – DA expressed concern with the continuation of EBU shareholders being appointed rather than elected. He felt that if they were elected on the basis of nominations from clubs this would strengthen the extent to which the wider membership felt their views were being represented. PB pointed out that the existing shareholders did consult the wider membership, particularly over the introduction of P2P. On other matters reports have been regularly produced and shared with clubs. It was also important that the county's shareholders were fully aware of MC business so that if necessary they could speak at EBU meetings in full knowledge. DW asked MC Members whether they supported the idea of elected other members. None other than DA was in favour.
- Picking up on the preceding discussion, JM asked JB to expand on the issue of liability and an unincorporated body. JB said that such bodies could not enter into contracts, only individuals (ie MC Members) could do this on behalf of the Association. It was possible therefore that those individuals could be pursued for the Association's liabilities. MW asked whether insurance against this risk was possible but JB said that one could not insure against bankruptcy. JB added that the key to avoiding this risk lay in the MC understanding fully the risks in its business and managing its projects and other activities with that risk assessment in mind.
- Section 5 – MW was concerned that this section seemed to allow someone who was not paying anything (P2P or subscription) still to enjoy the benefits of county membership simply by declaring their county of allegiance as Sussex. Conversely, it seemed to suggest that full membership was not given even when payment was made and elsewhere it appeared to give some type of membership to every EBU member in the county. In his view this section was meaningless without the associated terms and conditions (T&C). DW said that T&C consistent with the new constitution would be produced for approval after the constitution was approved but a draft would be available at the time of the related extraordinary general meeting (EGM). The T&C might be changed relatively frequently and it was important that this could be done without the additional expense of a change to the constitution.
- Para 7.7 – PP expressed a wish for this paragraph to indicate explicitly whether, and to what extent, a two thirds majority in favour of a resolution would be binding on the MC. In JB's view, a resolution carried under 7.7 as drafted, would be binding on the MC. MC Members agreed. It was also pointed out that there needed to be consistent wording between this paragraph and paragraph 10. DW agreed to apply "20 or two thirds of those present and voting, whichever is the greater" to both paragraphs.

JM then checked that, subject to the changes indicated above, MC Members were content to proceed with publication of the recommended draft. On a show of hands, MW was against, other MC Members were in favour. The newsletter imminently to be published would contain a notice about the EGM which would be held on the Sunday of the Autumn Congress at 11.30am. EW agreed to organise sandwiches and other refreshments for attendees. The agreed draft constitution and a suitably amended commentary paper would be published on the web site and to clubs via e-mail both with an invitation for questions to be put to JB. He would group these as appropriate and respond again via the web site and e-mail to clubs.

Action – EW, DW & JB

2. Item 2.2.4 Extension of Director Training to Club Directors

EW indicated that he had offered (at a Tournament Committee meeting recently) to organise further directors training days (for club directors) after that for county directors on 22 September 2013.

Action – EW

3. Item 12 County Honours Boards

MW reported that his e-mail exchange with Ann Lorimer had not exposed any further honours material of use to the county archive.

4. Item 4.1 County P2P rate 2014/15 – carried forward to October meeting as previously agreed.

5. Item 20.3 – JA reported that unfortunately there had been no reply from Staples to the approach for sponsorship.

3. Chairman's Report

Conscious of the pressure on the agenda, JM confined her report to feedback from the recent EBU Chairmen's Conference. The overriding theme had been a review of County Chairmen's priorities to ensure the EBU's strategies were fully aligned as far as possible. Discussions revealed that Sussex

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was very much in the van of positive developments in particular with regard to our strategies on education and communications.

4. Treasurer's Report

DG reported the latest balances as £10813 (current account) and £22853 (deposit account). The total represented an increase of £2K compared with the start of the year. He would take a view in October as to the prospects for a reduction in the P2P rate for 2014/15, taking account of not only the increased revenue currently enjoyed but also anticipated savings, eg, in newsletter distribution as offset by increased costs arising from, eg, greater investment in the education strategy. Charitable donations of £450 each had been made to Crawley Open House and St. Catherine's Hospice. In addition, club subscriptions of £15 had been refunded to 29 clubs as previously agreed.

5. Selectors' Report

5.1 There had been two meetings of the selectors since the last MC meeting, principally concerned with the teams for Metropolitan Cup and the Tollemache. All concerned had been informed and details would be published on the web in due course. The Met Cup 'A' team remained the same as last year and they had recently won the 'A' section of the National Inter-County League Final. MC Members indicated their wish that congratulations be conveyed to the winning team.

Action - DG

5.2 DG indicated that he had informed his fellow selectors of his intention to step down from his role as Chairman of the Selectors to allow him to concentrate on his other responsibilities. He would work with JM and others as required to ensure a smooth transition in due course.

Action - DG & JM

6. Tournament Committee Report

6.1 GS reported:

- As indicated earlier, the next county TD training day would be held on 22 September/
- A further meeting with AIBC had established that the likely cost (£2500 pa) of a shared building would not be affordable. DA had made an initial enquiry to a private storage company and outline costs of £500 pa had been quoted. He would investigate further in conjunction with MWr.

Action – DA & MWr

- The Novice Swiss Teams had been reinstated to the calendar. MC Members were content with this.
- The TC would continue to monitor experience of mixed heats before considering (early next year) whether to continue with them in 2014/15.
- Stratification would be used at Basic Bridge events if organisers were content.
- EW's approach to emphasising the importance of BB@B would be adopted by all county TDs.
- The TC had proposed that Welcome Pairs events should be free for all first-timers and that each club should be offered a free entry to a congress event for a pair of players neither of whom had entered a congress event previously. The MC agreed with this initiative to attract the less experienced to congresses.
- Attendance at the recent GP event had been slightly down on the previous year but because of lower overheads the overall outturn would be similar.

6.2 DG expressed concern about the availability of the League entry form. GS undertook to make it available immediately.

Action GS

7. Secretary's Report

DW had nothing to report.

8. EBU Matters

8.1 EBU RCC - Sussex Representative

DW reported that discussions at the EBU Shareholders' meeting in May and the recent EBU Chairmen's Conference had indicated that the EBU now saw the RCC structure as not adding a great deal of value. The EBU's future strategy saw closer links with counties as the way forward so action to fill this post would be suspended.

8.2 Shareholders Meeting

DW referred to PB's report which had been circulated. There were no questions arising from this from MC Members.

8.3 Nominations for Dimmie Fleming Awards

DW asked PB to retire from the meeting for this item. He indicated that two nominations had been received and MC Members had been given copies as well as a copy of the criteria applicable. MC Members were content to endorse both nominations. DW would forward them to the EBU shortly.

Action - DW

9. Membership Secretary's Report

9.1 HB introduced the draft code of practice for e-mail communications with members. All county data emanated from the EBU so their privacy policy applied to Sussex as well. However, the EBU policy allowed the EBU to do things which HB believed were unnecessary in the county context, hence the

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'tighter' code of practice now recommended. MC Members were content to endorse this code of practice as drafted.

9.2 HB indicated that she now had an e-mail database of around 1600 addresses, well over 50% of the current total number of members (3022).

10. Communications Committee's Report

BC-K reported that the first meeting of this committee had been held and he passed round a hard copy of the minutes. He would provide an electronic version for web publication in due course. Two quotes had been received for newsletter/calendar printing/distribution and issue would be completed by the end of the month.

Action BC-K

11. Press Officer's Report

There was nothing to report.

12. Webmaster and Master Point Secretary's Report

MW reported that all calendar entries were now on the web site.

13. Conduct Committee Report

JA reported that there were no current issues under consideration.

14. Education Report

14.1 Overall Strategy

KK reported that a 26 point plan was developing well and she would present the full picture at the next meeting.

Action - KK

14.2 Minibridge in Schools

KK reported that the first stage of this initiative was to be discussed at a meeting shortly. Plans were being drawn up for six teachers to go into six schools and deliver two terms of teaching. A meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday 31st July to discuss the project in more detail with the teachers involved and other interested parties.

Action - KK

14.3 Teaching Web Site

BC-K reported that an e-mail had been sent to clubs to gather the necessary information with replies called for by the end of July.

14.4 Seminars for Improvers

BC-K reported that this had been set for 27 July and 11 or 12 tables were expected. Break-even point was 9 tables so a small surplus was expected. The event was being held at the Avenue and would start at 11am and involve a duplicate session, lunch (with a quiz) and analysis of the duplicate results.

14.5 Loughborough Juniors Event

DA reported that he now had a full minibus and a car going to this event, with a total of 21 entrants and a possibility that two others might travel by train.

15. Charities

JS had reported by e-mail to DW that she had not received any suggestions from clubs for charities to be supported this year. She was therefore now recommending her own choices:

- the Dame Vera Lynn Trust for Children with Cerebral Palsy; and,
- the Chestnut Tree House Hospice for Children.

MC Members agreed.

16. Equipment Co-ordinator's Report

MW reported that the obsolete PC had been disposed of and the hard drive had been 'wiped' in the process. The recently replaced water coolers would also be scrapped shortly.

17. Dates of Next Meetings

DW indicated that subject to confirmation the next meetings would be on 11 October (at AIBC) and 16 January (at Patcham). JA undertook to check current prices at AIBC.

Action – DW & JA

18. Any Other Business

20.1 Metropolitan Cup Organiser

EW indicated that he had informed the TC of his wish to cease being organiser of this event after 2013. MC Members were asked whether the county should continue to be the organiser and if so who should take on the task. EW said that Middlesex had indicated a willingness to take over and he would provide DW with contact details to enable consultations with other counties. MC Members were content with this approach.

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Action – EW & DW

18.2 Calendar Preparations

BC-K expressed thanks to MW and HB for their contributions to the proof-reading of the calendar

The meeting closed at 9.55pm