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# SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Management Committee of the SCCBA took place at Adur Indoor Bowling Club, Southwick Recreation Ground, Old Barn Way, Southwick, BN42 4NT on Tuesday 7 May 2013 starting at 7 pm

### Present:

Mr M Pool (MP)	President
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 members: Mr D Armstrong (DA), Mr P Bates (PB), Mrs A Galpin (AG), Mr N Hardy (NH), Mr B Campbell-Kearsey (BC-K), Ms K Kennedy (KK), Mr J Mitchell (JMi), Mr A Southwell (AS), Mrs C Watson (CW), Mr M Wotton (MW) and Mr M Wright (MW<sub>r</sub>).

Mrs J Armstrong (JA) also attended as delegate for Old Barn Way BC.

## AGENDA

### 0. Opening Remarks

JM welcomed new MC Members to their first meeting and welcomed back those that had been re-elected. She noted that, apart from herself and DG who were unopposed, all Members elected had received very substantial backing from the membership attending the AGM. DW observed that attendance at the 2013 AGM was just under 60% greater than in 2012 and more than 100% greater than in 2011. This emphasised the high level of wider membership support enjoyed by the current MC.

### 1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Miss J Simpson, Mr E Williams and Mr M Keeping (Club Delegate for Lewes BC).

### 2. Minutes of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013

#### 2.1 Accuracy

Subject to the following changes, MC Members were content to agree the minutes as drafted:

- DW reported a clarification change requested by PB – paragraph 4.2 should read “....donate £100 on behalf of the SCCBA to the Motor Neurone ....”; and,
- KK pointed out a misspelling of Chris Derrick’s name in paragraph 3.1.

**Action - DW**

#### 2.2 Matters Arising –

##### 1. Item 2.2.1 Newsletter/Calendar Distribution

DW had circulated a paper summarising the results of the consultation, suggesting some conclusions which might be drawn and making a recommendation as to the way forward. The following comments were made:

- KK observed that many copies of the last newsletter had remained uncollected at her club despite repeated advertising and announcements by directors. Others reported similar substantial residues (30% or more) at their clubs.
- DW commented that around half of the current membership had arisen from the introduction of universal membership by the EBU and that it might be safe to assume that very many of them were not interested in activities outside their local clubs.
- HB reported that e-mail addresses were held for less than half of our total membership and issue of newsletters and calendars by post or via clubs was the only way of communicating with the rest.
- KK wondered whether we could use club membership databases to expand the county database further towards a point where a substantial majority of the membership were contactable by e-mail.
- JM suggested that the idea of a Year Book replacing the calendar and including all competition flyers appealed to her, combined with greater use of e-mail and lower volumes of paper newsletters distributed via clubs.
- DW reiterated his suggestion that a new Communications Group be created and charged with reviewing all of the issues and developing a future strategy to modernise the Association’s approach.
- JM asked who should be in the new group and DW suggested that it should comprise those with the related responsibilities (HB, BC-K, CW and MW).

**[Post meeting note – BC-K has since agreed to chair the new group and MW has indicated that he does not wish to be in it whilst AS has indicated his wish to join it.]**

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Given the need to issue the 2013 calendar in July, MC Members agreed that the new group should retain the existing calendar/newsletter approach for that and present its ideas for communications beyond that at the July MC meeting.

### **2. Item 2.2.2 Review Of Constitution**

JM rehearsed events since the last MC meeting which led to the establishment of the new review group chaired by James Bugden. That group's initial proposals were presented to the Officers on 25 April. A draft new constitution was given out at that meeting but Officers felt the need to study it carefully after that meeting and to reflect on the points made by James Bugden in his presentation.

### **3. Item 2.2.4 Trophy Insurance**

GS reported that the missing trophy had now been found and replacement was no longer an issue.

### **4. Item 2.2.5 Extension of Director Training to Club Directors**

Helen Kent had enquired at a previous meeting about refresher training for Club Directors. KK agreed that the Education Group would take this forward.

**Action - KK**

### **5. Item 2.2.7 Communications with Members by e-mail**

HB reported that she had repeated her mail shot to known e-mail addresses in April with encouraging results. Only a few had unsubscribed and there were very few 'bounce-backs'. This suggested that resultant database provided a reasonably sound basis for e-mail communications with around 45% of the membership. This opportunity would be fed into the Communications Group's thinking.

**Action – HB**

### **6. Item 12 County Honours Boards**

MW reported that a meeting he had arranged on this matter with Ann Lorimer had had to be postponed. He would report further at the next meeting.

**Action - MW**

## **3. Chairman's Report**

**3.1** JM said that she was very pleased with the overall strength of the MC. There were many issues to pursue and resolve in the education and other areas and the strength of the MC team gave her confidence that much further progress would be made this year to the advantage of duplicate bridge across Sussex.

**3.2** However, before moving on to the rest of the agenda, there was one matter she felt obliged to report to the MC. As she understood it, shortly after the last AGM, Peter Langston had written to the EBU to enquire as to the possibility of a new bridge association being created alongside and in competition with the SCCBA. Apparently, he thought that this might be called the "Sussex Democratic Bridge Association".

**[Post Meeting Note – Peter Langston has since contacted JM to state that the acronym 'SDBA' actually stands for "Sussex Duplicate Bridge Association"]**

The EBU had commented that such a request for advice was unprecedented. Changes had been made in the past to merge counties or separate them but these had all involved distinctly separate geographical areas. The possibility of two organisations representing the same or similar areas had not arisen. Therefore, the EBU Board had decided to discuss the matter at its meeting on 11 June 2013. MP emphasised that the EBU had not been asked to implement any change. They had simply been asked for advice. JM observed that it appeared that the enquiry had been made before the publication of the AGM election results which clearly show overwhelming support for the newly elected MC. The EBU had been given a copy of the election results for information and they had promised to keep the SCCBA informed about their deliberations. DA commented that, in his view, this initiative underlined the importance of the MC being as close as possible to the clubs and their memberships. MP observed that the MC had appointed "ambassadors" some years ago and whilst these had visited clubs regularly their activities had not really been welcomed by the wider membership, very many of whom wanted simply and solely to enjoy their regular sessions at their local clubs. JM added that she had established an 'open door' policy with a web site link that encouraged any member to communicate with her at any time. DW added that the new Communications Group would want to look at how best to strengthen communications with clubs and their members in ways which put the wider membership's interests and views first.

## **4. Treasurer's Report**

**4.1** DG confirmed that the AGM had approved his proposals for P2P to be a maximum of 7p for 2014/15 and for the separate Club Subscription Fee to be abolished from 2013/14 onwards. He had contacted the EBU regarding the latter and there would be repayments to be made to some clubs who had already funded direct debits. These would be made as soon as possible. In addition, he would report to the MC at its October 2013 meeting on the prospects for a reduction in the County P2P rate for 2014/15. This would be dependent on progress made in reducing costs, eg in relation to newsletters, and on the additional funds required for further investment, eg in education.

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**Action - DG**

**4.2** DG reported the latest balances as £9415 (current account) and £22853 (deposit account). The total represented an increase of £2K compared with the start of the year after deduction of £1K which was due to be paid out in respect of the Charity Pairs.

**4.3** DG and DW had prepared what they hoped was a comprehensive set of policies on expenses. BC-K asked whether it would be necessary to define tiers of approval authority more specifically. DW explained that where a strategy or programme of work was being implemented this would require overall approval by the MC itself. After that whoever had the implementation responsibility would have the primary approval authority subject to the work remaining within the limits of the budget approved. MC Members approved the policies for immediate application.

**Action - All**

### **5. Selectors' Report**

There had been no developments since the last MC meeting. The Selectors were due to meet next week to discuss teams for the Tollemache and the Metropolitan Cup. DA questioned whether the County should continue to enter the Tollemache given performance in recent years. KK indicated that the Education Group could look at ways of improving future performance at the Tollemache over the long term. A majority of MC Members indicated their continued support for a County entry to the Tollemache.

### **6. Tournament Committee Report**

#### **6.1 Directors' required skills – Progress**

DW referred to the best practice documents which had been circulated. Regarding the recommendations for numbers of directors, etc for County events, KK commented that it was difficult to find director/scorers who were competent in all aspects of the job including both manual and electronic scoring. GS agreed that the TC would look further at the need to strengthen directors' skills.

**Action – GS**

#### **6.2 Directors List 2013/14**

DW had circulated a paper proposing the County Directors' list for the coming year together with three recommendations for managing the list in year. Subject to the delegated authority resting with the Tournament Manager (rather than the TC) to allow immediate action in response to difficulties, MC Members approved the proposals.

#### **6.3 Tournament Manager's Report**

##### **6.3.1 GS reported:**

- Event outturns had been variable over the last period, some up on the previous year (David Pavey, Senior Sims, Spring Congress), some slightly down (Charity Sims, Sussex Pairs, Elisabeth North, Mixed Pairs) and some broadly the same (Individual, Teams of Eight).
- Some difficulties had been experienced with the David Pavey, the Elisabeth North and the Teams of Eight and lessons had been learned.

**6.3.2** PB asked whether, given the current emphasis on attracting and training new players, consideration might be given to the re-introduction of the Novice Swiss Teams. JMi commented that he had six teams of eight at the Avenue who might enter such an event and GS agreed that the TC would look at this possibility in conjunction with the Education Group.

**Action - GS**

**6.3.3** Several MC Members expressed concerns about the viability/practicality of mixed heats. They had been introduced to try to expand entry levels by encouraging smaller clubs to offer heat opportunities but difficulties over the last year had weighed heavily in the balance. MC Members agreed that:

- Mixed heats should be retained for the coming year;
- Instructions to club heat organisers should be strengthened to avoid the movement difficulties encountered this year; and,
- The TC would review the case for continuation of mixed heats beyond 2013/14.

**Action - GS**

### **7. Secretary's Report**

#### **7.1 AGM Outcomes**

DW reported on his efforts to clear lines with those who had made contributions to the meeting. All were now content apart from Malcolm Pryor whose recall differed sharply with DW's notes and recall and DW was not prepared to amend the draft in the way suggested by Malcolm Pryor. DW had provided MC Members with a copy of the exchanges with Malcolm Pryor and now sought MC endorsement of the line taken. MC Members endorsed the line taken unanimously.

#### **7.2 Appointments and Organisers**

DW referred to the list that had been circulated. All those on the first page had been elected or appointed by the AGM. The second page contained the detailed appointments which now required MC approval. There were a number of changes compared with last year and these had been highlighted in bold italics. DG pointed out the spelling mistake in the Legal Adviser's name and GS reported that BC-K would now be the Mixed Pairs organiser. Subject to those further changes, MC Members approved the list and DW agreed to arrange for it to be published in the calendar and on the web site.

**Action - DW**

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## 8. EBU Matters

### 8.1 EBU RCC - Sussex Representative

JM reported that efforts to find a volunteer for this role had not succeeded thus far. She had two further possibilities that she was following up but she could not guarantee that she would be successful. MP commented that he did not believe that it was vital that this role was filled. The regular communications from the Association to affiliated clubs ensured that they were fully informed and that conduit could be used to channel any further information which the RCC wished to convey. In the final analysis it was for the clubs to appoint a representative and if no volunteer was forthcoming, the issue would have to be 'parked' pro tem. DW agreed to keep the EBU informed as appropriate.

**Action – DW**

### 8.2 Shareholders Meeting

DW reported that the next EBU shareholders' meeting would take place on 8 May. Amongst the papers circulated beforehand, he had noted:

- The creation of an EBU Youth Education and Development Fund Charity was proceeding with a view to implementation in April 2014. This would promote education for all ages and its work would provide a, hopefully complementary, backdrop to our own education strategy.
- A new 5 year strategy for the EBU Ltd was to be tabled at the meeting.
- There was to be a consultation about Sim Pairs. Feedback from some had indicated that there were too many and that they were too mundane and too expensive.
- Clubs who ran fewer than 26 duplicate sessions per annum were to be invited to affiliate at double the normal fee.
- Green point awards at county events were to be brought into line with national events from 1/10/13.

### 8.3 Nominations for Dimmie Fleming Awards

DW indicated that the request for DF nominations for 2013 was expected shortly and he sought MC approval for the following approach:

- In line with the clarification from the EBU following the unsuccessful nominations in 2012, DF nominations should be invited for outstanding service primarily at county level; and,
- Nominations (later in the year) for the Sussex Gladys Hakki award should be invited in respect of those who had given outstanding service primarily at club level.

MC Members agreed.

## 9. Membership Secretary's Report

HB indicated that she had nothing further to report beyond informing MC Members that the current total of members was 3039.

## 10. Newsletter Editor's Report

JM had acted as editor of the last issue following Yves Lebrech's resignation from the MC. Following BC-K's election to the MC, he had agreed to act as editor for future issues. He would be reliant on others for the content but he was happy to prepare the material supplied for publication.

## 11. Communication Officer's Report

CW indicated that the photos supplied by event organisers were sometimes of insufficient quality to be published by the EBU. She asked that in future she be provided with originals of sufficiently high resolution.

## 12. Webmaster and Master Point Secretary's Report

MW had nothing to report.

## 13. Conduct Committee Report

JM indicated that she was delighted to welcome JA as Chairman of the Conduct Committee. JA asked whether MC Members felt that clubs were up-to-date with the procedures which should be employed in the event of a complaint. Standard reporting forms were available on the SCCBA web site but she was unsure whether they were being used. DW and JA would consider how best to ensure clubs were fully informed.

**Action – DW/JA**

## 14. Education Report

### 14.1 Overall Strategy

KK reported that whilst she was happy that the statement of outline strategy provided a useful starting point, education was a very wide subject. It involved not only her efforts but also youth arrangements handled by DA and the improvement seminars and publicity handled by BC-K. In future the detailed strategy would need to cover a whole raft of other activities including:

- Getting people to play bridge in the first place.
- Getting them to continue to play in clubs.

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- Improving the play of those already in clubs.
- Having enough teachers, enough affiliated clubs in all areas and lessons for all who wished to learn at all levels.
- Having enough directors and scorers and maintaining the levels of skill and understanding.
- Greater use of mentors for beginners and improvers.
- Competitions tailored to those who were learning and improving.
- Identification and re-education of those who do not adhere to BB@B and thereby deter learners and improvers.
- Publicity of opportunities and events through multiple channels.

At this very early stage, KK was not able to define all aspects of a detailed 3 year plan but she was happy to recommend the outline strategy and initial budget of £500 pro tem and to bring more detailed plans to the October MC meeting. MC Members agreed.

**Action - KK**

### 14.2 Minibridge in Schools

KK reported that this initiative was progressing. There were 16 volunteer teachers thus far and it was hoped that more would join. She hoped to be able to report how many schools were participating at the July MC meeting.

**Action - KK**

### 14.3 Loughborough Juniors Event

DA reported that he was searching for a self-drive minibus which could accommodate 17 including the driver. This total included 3 from East Sussex. He would clear lines with DG on the final cost of this in due course.

**Action – DA/DG**

### 15. Mentoring

DW reported that the county's mentoring activities were now integrated with the education work and JS was a member of the Education Group.

### 16. 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. Her own choices would probably be the Dame Vera Lynn Trust for Children with Cerebral Palsy and the Chestnut Tree House Hospice for Children but other suggestions were still welcome. A final decision would be sought from the MC later in the year.

**Action – MC Members**

### 17. Equipment Co-ordinator's Report

17.1 MWr reported the following:

- He had updated the county equipment inventory last month and agreed to send details to DG for the asset register.
- The water coolers used at tournaments were getting tatty and needed replacement. He had the opportunity of acquiring an ex hire cooler in very good condition for £45+VAT compared with a new price of £200. MC Members agreed this purchase. MWr would keep looking for a second cooler.
- Ron Robins (Patcham BC) had reported that amongst the county's equipment at Patcham there was a desktop PC which did not appear to work. MWr agreed to pick it up and ensure that any data on the hard drive was properly deleted.

**Action – MWr**

17.2 DA reported that, after many months of deliberation, AIBC had now submitted an estimate for an SCCBA storage facility housed on the AIBC site. This amounted to £2500 per annum which MC Members agreed was excessive. GS suggested that any figure beyond £500 would be unlikely to make it worth dismantling the present arrangements. DA agreed to negotiate further and report back.

**Action - DA**

### 19. Dates of Next Meetings

DW indicated that the next meeting would take place at Patcham CC on Thursday 18 July at 7pm. Provisional dates for meetings beyond that were 10 October and 16 January but these may be subject to change.

**Action - DW**

### 20. Any Other Business

#### 20.1 Teaching Web Site Designs

BC-K had circulated links to two possible designs for the county's teaching web site. MC Members voted equally for each design and the Chairman used her casting vote for site 2. Both domain names would channel enquiries to a single web site with that design.

**Action – BC-K**

#### 20.2 Seminars for Improvers

BC-K outlined details of a proposed first seminar following the lines of successful seminars in Surrey:

- The topic would be advanced declarer play and inferences from the bidding.
- The session would start at 11.30am and include a 24 board duplicate session and subsequent analysis and commentary on each hand.
- The session would be delivered by Ian Pagan who had delivered the sessions in Surrey.
- Cost estimates indicated that with an entry fee of around £20, the breakeven was 11 tables.

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- A provisional booking for the Avenue had been made for Saturday 27 July.

The MC discussed the likely demand for such a session and agreed that initially at least there was no need to advertise it outside the county. MC Members agreed that BC-K should finalise the arrangements as outlined and proceed on the basis that the financial outturn would be break even or better.

**Action BC-K**

### **20.3 Sponsorship**

JA reported the possibility of sponsorship by Staples. MC Members agreed that she should pursue to see what might be in prospect.

**Action - JA**

**The meeting closed at 10.05pm**