

FINAL

SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION HELD AT THE UCKFIELD CIVIC CENTRE ON SUNDAY 6TH APRIL 2014

Present:

Mr M Pool
Mrs M Langmaid
Mrs J Mayall
Mr G Stanford
Mr R J Wheeler
Mr D Galpin
Mrs H Beveridge

President
Vice President
Chairman
Vice Chairman & Tournament Manager
Honorary Secretary
Honorary Treasurer
Membership Secretary

and 40 members, as shown in the record of attendance. Apologies were received from Peter Bates, Ron Buddery, Sue Cottrell, Mike Finch, Molly Freeman, Julian Mitchell, Andy Ryder and Linda Souter.

0. Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming members present and acknowledging that several of those who had apologised had not been able to attend because of a clash of dates with the National Pairs Final.

1. Approval of minutes of AGM held on 7th April 2013

The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting. The Secretary indicated that the new Chairman would be asked to sign the final version at the first opportunity.

Action – Dick Wheeler

2. Approval of minutes of EGM held on 15th September 2013

The minutes were approved as a correct record of the meeting. The Secretary indicated that the new Chairman would be asked to sign the final version at the first opportunity.

Action – Dick Wheeler

3. Matters arising from the minutes

3.1 Actions under paragraphs 1 and 7 had been completed

3.2 Dave Armstrong referred to paragraph 3.3.3 of the minutes and asked what progress there had been in relation to the pursuit of mentors. Julia Simpson reported that whilst there some initial enthusiasm, her pursuit for volunteers had not been very productive. The county website had been used to broaden the search but again with little success.

4. Chairman's Report

4.1 The Chairman opened her report by recalling that at the 2013 AGM she had promised to spend a lot of time and effort on education. Bill Acraman, Linda Souter and Gerry Stanford, along with 7 or 8 volunteer teachers, had worked tirelessly to get Bridge into Sussex secondary schools. Initially 8 schools had been interested in principle but when it came to the crunch some of the school teachers identified to work alongside our bridge teachers were not enthusiastic about any extra workload, and as a result the county is currently teaching in just three schools with Angmering starting taster sessions this month. We also offered Saturday morning sessions with little response.

4.2 However, the Chairman indicated that the education group remained committed to making further progress. Education colleges and universities were being contacted with a view to starting lessons after the summer break. If any have bridge clubs in existence then an offer of support will be made. The Chairman emphasised that all bridge players could also help. If they had children or grandchildren in those establishments it would be useful if they could talk to them about the opportunity and let Gerry Stanford know if there was any interest.

4.3 The outreach display was also still doing the rounds. Gerry Stanford and his team had taken it to Colliers Open Day and they were now teaching there on a Wednesday afternoon. Several chairmen of other counties have been in touch with me asking for further details of these travelling display boards and have started doing the same. Crawley BC now have their dozen or so people as regular players at their club after putting the display in Crawley library for a week.

4.4 Other developments in 2013/14 included the introduction of an online payment scheme for competition entries. The current website has a notice about it. This had taken much time and effort to set up and resolve problems and thanks were due to David Galpin and Mervyn Wotton for completing the work as planned. The first opportunity to use it would be the green point events this summer.

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4.5 The Management Committee (MC) had also decided to make competition entry forms more readily available in an effort to encourage more entrants to our competitions. In the coming weeks, following today's AGM, when the new committee has been confirmed, a 2014/15 Yearbook will be mailed to every member. It will contain all the information needed about Sussex bridge, Sussex clubs, Sussex competitions and their organisers and will have perforated entry forms for all county competitions - on green paper for the green pointers and blue for the blue pointers. Many thanks are due to Gerry Stanford (and his wife Sue), Brian Campbell-Kearsey and Andrew Southwell for their tireless work on this. Some members may have read the Chairman's appeal for advertisers to help defray the cost. She indicated that there was the opportunity to sell advertising space on the reverse side of the entry forms £100 whole page, £50 half page. The Chairman invited members to contact Gerry Stanford, Brian Campbell-Kearsey or herself if they were interested.

4.6 The Chairman continued that the last area she wished to focus on was the introduction of the new constitution. She appreciated that many saw this as a dry old subject but it was very necessary that we equipped ourselves with a new, modern constitution in line with EBU guidance and consistent with Human Rights legislation. Her thanks went to the sub group set up to help with this, chairman Jim Bugden, Jill Armstrong, Martin Pool and Pyers Pennant.

4.8 Moving to the evolution of the MC, the Chairman reported that several people were leaving the MC:

- Eddie Williams, who has been on the MC for very many years. She reassured members that he would remain as Sussex Chief TD and would therefore be as visible as ever. Eddie had held most positions on the committee and was probably the most well known Sussex bridge personality.
- Carol Watson who had served over 11 years in many capacities, latterly as NYST organiser and Publicity.
- Norman Hardy who again has held many positions on the committee.
- Julian Mitchell who would also still be working for the county by Chairing our Selection Committee, whose other members would be Chris Jepson, Mike Keeping and Roger Poulter. Julian had taken over the chair of this committee from David Galpin who had led it so successfully for so many years. It was not an easy committee to chair as it was difficult to please everyone where selection is concerned. and last but not least,
- Dave Armstrong, Junior Coach and leader of the groups attending the Junior Teach In at Loughborough each year. Again Dave would still be helping the Juniors and the Chairman doubted it would be the last the MC would see of him!

The Chairman expressed her thanks to all who were leaving the MC. In addition, there were new MC members to welcome.

- A new appointment but not new to the committee would be Brian Campbell Kearsey who would be taking over the role of Vice Chairman to replace Gerry Stanford. Gerry would not be leaving the committee, but would be focussing more on education as he finds teaching more rewarding than politics!!
- Also new to the committee would be Peter Gannon. As chairman of Lewes BC he would bring a wealth of experience to the MC.

4.9 The Chairman felt that it was also important to recognise the very large number of members' on and off the MC whose efforts contribute significantly to the delivery of the county's objectives. In addition to the 'army' of Tournament Organisers, special mention must be made of:

- Andrea Galpin who so efficiently runs the Invitation Pairs;
- David Galpin who manages the delivery of the Sussex League with patience and fairness;
- Jim Bugden whose oversight as Independent Examiner is so important to the good management of the Association;
- Geoffrey Wolfarth, the county's pro bono legal adviser who is always willing to provide a legal perspective when required;
- Jill Armstrong, Chair of the county's Conduct Committee and her committee of Harold Linfield, Mick Carrington and Richard Burnett who continue to oversee the implementation of our disciplinary procedures;
- Julia Simpson, our Charity Coordinator, whose efforts result in significant benefit to local charities;
- Malcolm Wright, our equipment and trophy co-ordinator who ensures the safe storage and distribution of our assets;
- Peter Bates, one of our EBU shareholders, who represents the county in EBU fora; and
- Mervyn Wotton, our webmaster and master points secretary, to whom the county owes a huge debt of gratitude. It would appear that Mervyn just does not sleep! There were not many competitions held for which Mervyn had not posted the score for by midnight on the same night. Chris Jepson had recounted that when she returned from doing so well in the Lady Milne she had been amazed to see that same night a 'well done' message on the county website. The Chairman felt that 'well done' to Mervyn was also due.

4.10 The Chairman also wished to record a number of other compliments to:

- Chris Jepson, for achieving a place in the England Team in the Lady Milne next weekend. The county would be watching on BBO and wishing her luck.
- Stephen Kennedy who was in the winning England Peggy Bayer team in Ireland.

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- Oliver Powell, George Siddens and Jonathan Derrick who represented England in the Channel Trophy; and,
- Chris Derrick who plays for the England Junior Squad. Other juniors who had done well at the JTI in Loughborough were Miri and Lulu Tenquist and Zac, aged 11, and Sorcha!

4.11 The Chairman also wished to place on record her thanks to her Officers:

- Hazel Beveridge, our Membership Secretary, for producing a working e-mail database so that we could now contact more than 1600 of our members directly;
- David Galpin, our Treasurer, who worked so hard to keep our finances in good order in addition to his other roles mentioned earlier;
- Gerry Stanford, my Vice Chairman and the county's Tournament Manager who had arranged all our competitions and made them happen; and,
- Dick Wheeler, our Secretary, who seeks to ensure that the MC is in the right place at the right time doing the right things and who spends many hours working to achieve this.

4.12 In conclusion, the Chairman confirmed that she was retiring today as chairman and committee member, although Gerry Stanford had persuaded her to become the organiser of three tournaments in 2014/15! Previously she had been Chairman of the Conduct Committee for some years and as members would remember had taken over the MC Chair role when Jackie Clinton had become so ill. Jackie was thought of very fondly still. In addition to her court work the Chairman had a new job as grandmother to two little girls. It was a new role in her life, working with little people who are unrealistically demanding and noisy. She reflected that perhaps it wasn't such a different role after all! Her final remarks went to her Officers and the MC. She felt that she and they had had to make some difficult decisions during their time together, some of them not very popular. But the MC had worked as a united Team in a fair minded way and the MC's support to her had been unfailing and for that she was very grateful. She felt that that support was vital to whatever she had been able to achieve.

5. Honorary Treasurer's Report

5.1 Adoption of the Audited Annual Accounts. The Treasurer reported that the audited income and expenditure account (distributed at the meeting) showed a surplus of £1215 before depreciation and a loss of £73 after depreciation. The year's outturn had therefore been broadly to budget. The Treasurer invited questions. None were made. The Honorary Treasurer thanked James Bugden for auditing the accounts and foregoing his fee for the benefit of the SCCBA. It was proposed by Norman Hardy and seconded by Andrew Southwell that the accounts be adopted. By show of hands this was approved by an overwhelming majority.

5.2 Appointment of Independent Examiner. Following a proposal from the Treasurer it was agreed by an overwhelming majority that Mr James Bugden be re-appointed as an independent examiner to audit the County's accounts for a further year.

5.3 Subscriptions for the Years 2014/15 and 2015/16. The Honorary Treasurer confirmed that the County P2P rate would remain at 7p for the year 2014-2015 as approved at the 2013 AGM. He added that he was also pleased to be able to report that as current financial performance was broadly on budget, he did not believe that it would be necessary to increase the P2P rate next year. On a show of hands, the Treasurer's proposal, seconded by Julia Simpson, that the P2P rate for 2015/16 should be a maximum of 7p was carried by an overwhelming majority.

5.4 Approval of membership T&C

The draft membership terms and conditions for 2014/15 had been circulated to members. It was proposed by Ros Wolfarth and seconded by Eddie Williams that the T&C be approved. By show of hands this was carried by an overwhelming majority.

6. Election of Officers

6.1 Chairman

6.1.1 Before the election for the Chairman's post, Dave Armstrong asked whether the questions he had sent to the Secretary had been put to the two candidates. The secretary replied that, as he recalled, he had replied to Dave's e-mail and thought that had settled the matter. Dave Referred to a listing of specific questions which the Secretary did not recognise and the latter said that as one of the candidates was not present at the meeting (Andy Ryder was playing in the National Pairs final that day) the questions could not be put at the meeting.

[Post meeting note – Subsequent investigations by the Secretary revealed that he had overlooked an attachment to Dave Armstrong's e-mail. He has apologised to Dave and undertaken to put his questions to the first meeting of the MC.]

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6.1.2 The Chairman advised members present that she had received an e-mail from Jeremy Dhondy, EBU Chairman, expressing a concern about one sentence in Geoffrey Wolfarth's election statement. She read out the relevant part of the e-mail as follows:

*"In his statement he makes the following assertion **"I have for a long time on a "pro bono" basis advised both officers of the EBU and latterly the SCCBA on legal issues"***

It is not the opinion of the current officers nor the officers in recent years that this is true. There have been occasions when Geoffrey has offered unsolicited advice such as the occasion last year when he told us that to hold online matches in our competitions would be against the laws of bridge but nothing that goes beyond the entitlement of any member to offer his or her view to the EBU."

The Chairman invited Geoffrey to clarify matters. Geoffrey replied that he was a solicitor and during the 1980s, when Peter Briggs was general Secretary of the EBU and when Geoffrey had been an Oxfordshire member who lived close to the EBU headquarters, he had been approached for advice on a number of occasions. More recently he had provided advice to the EBU L&E committee and in 2006, when Denis Robson had been EBU Secretary he had advised regarding the filling of the General Manager position. The Chairman enquired as to whether there were any questions about this from the floor and none were posed.

6.1.3 The Secretary then referred to the ballot slips which had been given to each attendee on arrival and invited Members to cast their votes in favour of the candidate they wished to be elected as Chairman. The independent Tellers (James Bugden and Pyers Pennant) collected and counted the votes cast and reported the result to the Chairman. She announced that Andy Ryder had been elected Chairman by 27 votes to 20 with no abstentions.

6.2 Vice Chairman

There being only one candidate nominated, the Secretary invited members present to agree to the election of Brian Campbell-Kearsey. Members present agreed.

6.3 Honorary Secretary

There being only one candidate nominated, the Secretary invited members present to agree to the election of Dick Wheeler. Members present agreed.

6.4 Honorary Treasurer

There being only one candidate nominated, the Secretary invited members present to agree to the election of David Galpin. Members present agreed.

7. Election of a Maximum of Ten Committee Members

There being only ten candidates nominated for these posts, the Secretary invited members present to agree to their election. Members present agreed and the following were elected:

Mr P Bates, Mrs H Beveridge, Mrs A Galpin, Mr P Gannon, Mr M Pool, Miss J Simpson, Mr A Southwell, Mr G Stanford, Mr M Wotton and Mr M Wright.

8. Members' Resolutions

The Secretary reported that no Members' resolutions had been submitted.

9. Award of Gladys Hakki Trophy.

The Chairman announced that she was delighted to present the Gladys Hakki Trophy to Mervyn Wotton. He had served for many years on the Crawley BC committee and had served on the MC as Master Points Secretary and Webmaster over the last 7 and 8 years respectively. His accuracy and efficiency in both roles was without equal.

10. Any Other Business.

The Chairman invited any other business and there being none she moved on to present the following trophies to:

- Richard Newton, winner of the 'Reflections' quiz
- Roger Poulter on behalf of Eastbourne BC, winners of the Team of Eight
- Gerry Stanford, Dave Franklin, Martin Pool and Nigel Urban, winners of the Spring Congress Multiple Teams
- Jill and Dave Armstrong, winners of the fitch prize in the Mixed Pairs
- Chris Jepson and Neil Watts, overall winners of the Mixed Pairs

The meeting closed at 12.20.

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