

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 6th December 2012 at 7.30 p.m. at Oxford Bridge Club

PRESENT:

Robert Procter [RP]	Chairman
Sandra Nicholson [SN]	Secretary/EBU Shareholder
Claire MacDonagh [CM]	Treasurer/Tournament Secretary
Vicky Fleming [VF]	Education Officer
Brenda Harris [BH]	Publicity Officer/EBU Shareholder
Barbara Jordan [BJ]	Team Leader, Social Team

Chris Kerr	Oxford	Robert Gasser	Summertown
John Fleming	Oxford	Norman Gascoyne	Wallingford
Kathy Talbot	Oxford	Gillian Weatherley	Wallingford

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Stephen Brown [SB]	Chief Tournament Director
Rob Dixon [RD]	Assistant Chief Tournament Director
Alan Wilson [AW]	EBU Shareholder/Team Leader, County Team
Geoff Nicholas [GN]	League Secretary
Mike Fletcher [MF]	Team Leader, Duplicate Bridge Promotion & Youth Team
Peter Finbow [PF]	Congress Organiser
Aleksandar Lishkov [AL]	

New rep TBA	Aylesbury Aces	Richard Sills	Oxford
David Stead	Banbury	Erica Sheppard	Summertown
Michael Allen	Blewbury	Francis Glassborow	Wallingford
*Esme Alden	Oxford	Colin Jones	Wallingford
Chris Dawe	Oxford		

*Those present wished to minute their congratulations to Esme Alden on the occasion for her absence (her 90th birthday celebrations).

2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 19 July 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved and signed.

3. Action points and matters arising from previous Management Committee meetings, not otherwise on the agenda

Publishing reminders of competition dates: There is now more information on the website, and CM is emailing reminders directly to previous entrants.

Changes to competition by-laws: Where relevant, these had been included in the new competitions brochure. However, the full version now urgently needs to be published on the website, including eligibility to play in the various competitions (NB: to avoid a possible ambiguity arising from the wording of the Constitution, it must be stated that dual members have to be “paid up” in order to play). Kathy Talbot said that she had a new draft ready but needed to get final comments from SB and GN before publication.

ACTION: Kathy Talbot/CN&C team.

Oxford Open Doors: Unfortunately no volunteer was found to organise a bridge event at the Oxford Open Doors weekend in 2012; however, Holly Kilpatrick has kindly agreed to organise this in 2013.

Vacant officer posts: To confirm changes of responsibility which had already taken place pending the meeting, Vicky Fleming was formally proposed as Education Officer by SN, seconded by CM, and Emily Middleton was formally proposed as Membership Secretary by VF, seconded by BH. Both appointments were unanimously agreed.

Dimmie Fleming award: As agreed, the County had put Phillip Simmonds forward for the EBU Dimmie Fleming award, on the understanding that he would be eligible according to the criteria as laid out on the EBU website. However, the Dimmie Fleming awards committee had decided that this was not the case and had subsequently amended the criteria to make it clearer that services to an individual club would not qualify, even if they were felt to be to the benefit of the county as a whole. The committee therefore agreed to recognise Mr Simmonds’ valuable contribution to the development of bridge in Oxfordshire by awarding him this year’s “County Voucher” (a voucher redeemable against payment for entry to an EBU event, up to the value of £95), on the understanding that other clubs may wish to put forward nominations of their own for similar awards in future years. The Wallingford BC representatives present agreed that Wallingford would prepare proposed criteria for consideration at the next meeting. **ACTION: Wallingford representatives.**

4. Reports from Chairman, Secretary, EBU Shareholders

Chairman: RP said he was pleased to have been able to organise the recent “Working Together” regional meeting with representatives from Banbury and Bicester. It was unfortunate that Chipping Norton had decided not to participate in this, although there had also been a representative present from Kings Sutton (unaffiliated). As outlined in the note of the meeting circulated with the pre-meeting reports, there had been a useful discussion from which he had drawn the conclusion that whilst there was interest in organising more local events, there were not enough active members in the area to get anything off the ground without a significant amount of help from the centre.

RP repeated his thanks to all those who had recently resigned from various officer posts, including those who had done so in order to take on another post that needed filling. He

anticipated that, with support from Joan Bennett (of Berks & Bucks) and Alison Nicolson, it would be possible to find a replacement Youth Officer in the near future. The same person might also be able to take over the leadership of the Duplicate Bridge Promotion & Youth team from MF. A new leader was also still needed for the County Night & Competitions team.

His report had mentioned an issue about players at our clubs whose county of primary allegiance (CPA) is not Oxfordshire. Those present felt that a good way of dealing with this would be to send club secretaries a list of all the people in this category who had played at their club, and ask them to contact individuals who were regular players but as far as they knew, had no particular reason for having a different CPA. **ACTION: Membership Secretary.**

With reference to the new “friendly teams” competition, BJ pointed out that there seemed to be some confusion between social bridge and friendly bridge, and it would be helpful to clarify the difference. After a short discussion this was referred to the County Night & Competitions team for review with the aim of producing a description of what was meant by “friendly” bridge, including a definition of who is eligible to play; and a proposal for what events should be tried out on this restricted basis. **ACTION: CN&C team.**

Treasurer: CM said there was nothing unusual to report.

Secretary: It appeared that Diamond BC had changed affiliation from OBA to Berks & Bucks. SN had had no official notification of this and would investigate further. Also, RP said he had heard from the EBU that from 1 April 2013, affiliation requirements for clubs were to be changed to allow clubs holding fewer than 26 duplicate sessions per year to affiliate on payment of twice the normal club affiliation fee. It was unclear whether this would apply to clubs that did not play duplicate at all. Kathy Talbot added that at the same time, according to her information, non-affiliated clubs would be banned from taking part in county leagues. SN was asked to find out more. **ACTION: SN**

5. Team reports, recommendations and items for discussion

i. Education

It was hoped that we could organise one event of an educational nature in each area over the course of the year. For example, this could be a “play with an expert” pivot teams for intermediate players, with each team including one member of the County team and time allowed to discuss hands etc. **ACTION: Education Team**

ii. Selection and County Team Management

Some members were unclear about how players are selected for the County team and new pairs invited to play. It was explained that from time to time pairs are asked to put themselves forward and then a choice is made by the selection committee, taking into account performance in OBA and other events, but without formal trials. The team was asked to make this process more transparent, perhaps by publishing it on the website.

ACTION: S&CTM Team

iii. Competitions and County Nights

Whilst the introduction of a pivot teams evening on 4th Tuesdays seemed to be going well, there was an apparent need for a “partnership secretary” or similar service to find both teammates and individual partners for this and other County Night events. It was hoped that this could be a feature of the new website.

RP commented that whilst changes had been made to existing competitions to try to encourage more players to participate, he felt there was still a need for more restricted and/or regionalised events. There was a view that it might be possible to regionalise the lower divisions of the Wessex League, and/or to introduce more local inter-club competitions similar to that organised by Banbury and Bicester.

Concern was expressed over the comments about the President’s Cup in GN’s report and SN was asked to obtain more details. We should consider what can be done to improve the welcome for teams new to this competition – perhaps by stressing the principles of “Best Behaviour at Bridge” when the information about entries is circulated.

ACTION: C&CN Team (and SN to get more details from GN)

iv. Duplicate Bridge Promotion and Youth

VF reported that the number of schools participating in the minibridge initiative was still increasing and a local schools Sim Pairs had just been held. More volunteers were urgently needed in the north of the county where there was a waiting list of 6 schools looking for teachers, and also a need for someone to act as a local co-ordinator.

v. Social

BJ said that she hoped to organise at least two more events before the next Congress, and was planning to set up a web page which would include details of unaffiliated clubs in the county, as well as social/charity events. **ACTION: BJ/helpers.**

vi. Infrastructure

Rental agreement with Oxford Bridge Club: The final version of the agreement for Tuesday nights was accepted by the committee and signed. The weekend agreement was still under discussion, in particular as to whether the period of hire should represent one and a half or two sessions, given the effect that the higher charges would have on the finances of competitions and Dawes League matches. It was hoped that this could be resolved amicably.

Website: RP explained that Stephen Brown had taken over the regular updating but that he and AL felt that the best way to make progress with the new site would be to enlist some professional help. A quotation had been received from a freelance web designer (see michaeledwards.me.uk) who was prepared to do the initial work of setting up and configuring the site using Joomla, for approximately £750. The Wallingford representatives were unhappy with this approach, arguing that a bespoke site would involve not only the payment of large sums upfront, but ongoing maintenance costs. RP explained that Joomla itself was free to use and online tutorials were readily available, so that any future charges should only be for further development rather than maintenance. It was agreed by majority vote that we should proceed as quickly as possible with the new site, with a limit of £1000 for initial expenditure. RP also noted that it would be

necessary to arrange for ownership of the hosting space to be transferred from Alan Grunwald to OBA. **ACTION: RP and website group.**

Budgets: RP explained that he had reviewed the accounts attempting to reallocate all costs and income to the correct year, in order to create a “profit and loss” account. On this basis the net surplus for the previous year was £2770. He anticipated that for the current year the income would be similar or maybe a little higher, but expenditure would be greater, creating a small net deficit of around £300. This could be broken down as follows:

Membership/P2P	3000	County team	(950)
Promotion/youth	(2000)	Education	(250)
Competitions/ County nights	(200)	Infrastructure/ communications	(800)
Congress	1900	Website	(1000)
Social	0		

It was noted that the figure for Competitions and County nights included an exceptional “one-off” cost of £1500 for new honours boards, which in future would reduce the cost of updating the information each year.

As stated above, the Wallingford representatives voted against the expenditure on the website and one Oxford Bridge Club representative abstained. All others present at the meeting were in favour of this item and the remaining budget plans were unanimously agreed.

Team targets

RP summarised achievements planned by the 2103 AGM in June, as follows:

Duplicate bridge promotion & youth: involve more schools in the Minibrige project; foster contact with rubber bridge players

Competitions and County Night: new look at regional events, events for lower levels.

Introduce partner/team finding service

Social: two events

Selection & County Team Management: Define criteria for eligibility to represent county. Advertise need to contact Selection Committee if interested. Organise OBA “play with an expert” event (pivot teams with one county player/3 others).

Education: updated details on website

Infrastructure: new website.

6. Any other business

- (i) **Use of EBU “County Voucher”:** this had already been covered under Matters Arising, see above.
- (ii) **Honours boards:** SN relayed an update from Richard Sills explaining the reasons for the delay. It was agreed that OBA boards should go back to 1964, and that Lynne Hayes should be delegated to take sensible decisions over style and type size after seeing the OBC boards.
- (iii) **Used cards for youth bridge:** VF asked whether it might be possible for the County to donate any used cards to the youth bridge effort. Norman Gascoyne

said that new cards had already been obtained for use by the County duplimators and he would make sure the old ones were passed on. SN also suggested asking the EBU whether they had any used cards available. **ACTION:Norman Gascoyne.**

(iv) Competitions brochure: BH said that it would have been better to print the brochure with a different coloured cover rather than using the same colour as last year, since this was confusing. She also said she preferred the previous format. It was agreed that competition entry forms should be available on the website.

ACTION: CM/SB.

(v) Date and venue of next meeting: The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 20 March 2013. It was agreed that SN would try to find a suitable venue in the Aylesbury/Thame area. **ACTION: SN.**