

**Bracknell Bridge League**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held**  
**Virtually on Zoom Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021**

Present

Committee:	Dave Lee	(DL)	Chairman (Aerospace)
	Joyce Baldock	(JB)	Treasurer (Aerospace)
	Dave Green	(DG)	Fixture Secretary (Ascot)
	Marguerite Ehinger	(ME)	Secretary (Ascot)
	Alan Brown	(AB)	Yateley
	David Pinder	(DP)	Camberley

Club Representatives: Ian Lewis (Camberley/Yateley), Chris Hopkins (Woodley), Dave Calcutt (Ascot), John Sheridan (Crowthorne) and Ian Adnams (Finchampstead)

Voting Rights: (Ascot)	Dave Calcutt	2 votes
(Bracknell Forest)	by proxy (DL)	1 vote
All others		1 vote

1. **Apologies** were received from Bracknell Forest.
2. **The Chairman** welcomed all to the AGM and explained the voting rights. He said much of the meeting would focus on the changes put forward by the Committee for the forthcoming season, with the members having the opportunity to vote on a number of related proposals.
3. **Minutes of the 2020 meeting** were accepted and will be signed when possible. (JB/DG)
4. **Matters Arising** – although no formal update to the rules to cover on-line matches had been issued, documents providing guidelines for setting up matches on BBO and detailing changes between on-line and face-to-face matches had been prepared and issued to all clubs. DL thanked clubs for providing feedback on early drafts - final versions had been posted on the BBL website.
5. **The Secretary** reported that apart from dealing with comments etc on early drafts of documents outlined above, there was little correspondence between clubs and the league.
6. **The Treasurer** had circulated the Accounts prior to the meeting. The year showed a loss of £214.29. JB explained that a number of factors had contributed to this figure:
  - As well as withdrawing their 50% discount on P2P fees at the start of the season, the EBU had also increased the (undiscounted) unit fee from 38p to 40p. In effect this meant that the fee paid by the league to the EBU had increased from 19p to 40p/person/match in one season, only part of which had been passed on to the clubs.
  - A charge of \$10/team/season for 'non-casual' team's matches played on the BBO platform had been introduced at the start of the season. Clubs were asked to contribute about 50% of this amount, the rest coming from league funds.
  - The annual EOSP had not been held at the end of the 19/20 season because of Covid, so depriving the league of an important source of income. (JB reminded the meeting that EOSP finances always appear in the accounts for the year following the event).

Some savings had been possible by the withdrawal of the Pivot from the EBU management system. JB said that, despite the loss, the league had sufficient funds to pay the forthcoming EBU/BBO invoices, although it would be necessary to increase league fees again next season – this would be discussed under Item 10 of the agenda. She then proposed that the Accounts be approved and adopted – carried unanimously.

7. **Appointment of Examiner of Accounts** – Adrian Smith – unanimously accepted (JB/DL)
8. **The Fixtures/Results Secretary** – DG reported that everything had run smoothly in BBL's first full season on-line. Most matches had been played on BBO, with two clubs playing a very small number of their home matches on the BCL platform. The league structure for the season had been three divisions, each of 6 teams. Crowthorne had exercised their right to withdraw temporarily without penalty because of the move to on-line matches. He added that fixtures had been drawn up on a 'w/c' basis for the first time, enabling teams to take a more flexible approach when arranging their schedule.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Division had been won by Ascot L, their first ever win of the top division for the group of players who were formerly Lilly Res. DG congratulated Yateley A and Camberley B on their respective wins of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Divisions. Turning to next season, he was hopeful that there may be a small increase in the number of entries. Designated playing weeks would be made available by the end of July, with a target for completion of the fixture schedule by the end of August. First matches would begin in mid-September.

9. **Pivot Cup Secretary** – 8 teams entered this year with no drop outs and all matches completed much to schedule. The final was between Mike Corfield's Ascot team and Pam Brown's Yateley team, with Ascot the eventual winners. All matches were played on BBO without any apparent difficulties. Having removed management of the event from the EBU system for reasons of cost, submission and display of results was handled via the BBL website using Bridgewebs. DP was thanked for generating the handicaps for those competing in the cup.
10. **Overview of Proposals, Recommendations and Costs for 21/22.** DL said that it had been clear to the Committee as the season progressed that BBL would continue on-line for at least the forthcoming season, not just because of the on-going Covid situation but also because players were now recognising and accepting the convenience and benefits on-line bridge offered.

Another important development over the season had been the emergence of the RealBridge (RB) platform, which offered a video/audio link between players at the table. A number of clubs who competed in the BBL had started using RB for their duplicate sessions and had expressed a wish to play matches on that platform in preference to BBO. The Committee estimated that about 60% of the current teams would prefer RB, with the rest wishing to stay on BBO. There was no longer any support for BCL. The league had already opened a RB account and would be happy to manage/administer matches on behalf of those teams who wished to play on RB. The BBL account would also be available over the summer for those teams wishing to play friendlies to evaluate and become familiar with the platform.

Draft proposals had been drawn up by the Committee and circulated to clubs. The proposals allowed the BBL to operate in future as a 'hybrid' league in which both on-line and face-to-face matches could be accommodated. Key points in the proposals were:

- At the start of each season, the Committee would recommend a 'default' for the arrangement of matches (i.e. on-line or face-to-face). The default in place for the season would apply to those matches where there was no mutual agreement between the two teams.
- On-line matches could be played on either RB or BBO, according to the preference of the home team, who would also carry the cost of playing on the platform.

DL said that both the League Constitution and the League Rules would need to be updated to take into account these changes. The former had been completed and issued in draft whilst the latter would be addressed once the changes outlined above had been agreed by the members. He thanked clubs for their comments/feedback on all drafts.

JB then addressed charges and associated fees for the new season. She said that the cost to teams entering the league would be split into a basic fee and a platform charge, with the former covering EBU 'P2P' fees plus general BBL overheads. She estimated that the basic

fee would need to be about £26/team. BBO and RB had different approaches to charging for using their platforms for team's matches. The former charged \$10/team/season to cover all matches, collected by the EBU on behalf of BBO. RB charge about £4 per 24 board match, covering all 8 players, reducing to just less than £3 for a 20 board match. RB would invoice monthly on a 'pay-as-played' basis, whilst the BBO charge would be a one-off payment of about £8 via the EBU. Teams playing all their home matches on BBO would therefore pay £34 for the season. The total outlay over the season for a team playing 6 home matches on RB would be nearly £50.

Finally, JB confirmed that there would again be no entry fee for the Pivot, although a platform charge would apply for any matches played on RB.

11. **Votes on Proposals 1-3-** DL asked the meeting to consider the three proposals put forward by the Committee, as already discussed/outlined. As there were no amendments tabled, the meeting voted as follows:

P1 - *'That from season 21-22, the BBL becomes a 'hybrid' league in which matches may be played face-to-face or on-line'* – carried unanimously.

P2 – *'Adoption of the Committee's recommendation that the default for season 21-22 is online'* – carried, 8 votes in favour to 1 against.

P3 – *'Adoption of the Committee's draft update of the League's Constitution'* – carried unanimously.

12. **Adoption of Treasurer's Recommendations for fees for next season.** Whilst accepting that it represented a substantial increase over last season's basic entry fee of £17/team, she asked the meeting to agree that the fee be increased to £26/team. Without such an increase the league would incur another large loss on the season. Those teams opting to play on BBO would be asked to pay another £8/team to cover platform fees. - carried unanimously.
13. **Entries for Next Season (League and Pivot)** – Now that changes in how the league will operate in future had been accepted, formal invitations for entries into the league would be sent out. DL said that an entry of 19 or 20 teams was expected, depending on whether or not Crowthorne decided to re-join after deferring for one season.

JS said that the club wanted to re-join, but were still unsure about playing on-line. He would discuss Crowthorne's position with the team captain, Margaret Eddy, and was hopeful that the team would return. DL confirmed that they would be able to take up their place in Division 2 and reminded JS that the rules now allowed flexibility on the number of boards and start times, which might make on-line matches more attractive to the team.

In addition to providing the usual information on contact details etc, teams would be asked to state their preferred platform when making their entry. The target date for returns was mid-July, which would give the fixture secretary adequate time to issue the fixture schedule by end of August.

The League planned to run the Handicap Pivot again next season provided there was sufficient interest in the competition. In order to be viable, a minimum entry of 8 teams was required. Invitations to enter would be sent out with those for the league and the draw made in August.

14. **League Rules** – DG said he was in the process of reviewing the current rules, which would be updated in line with the proposals accepted by the members at the meeting. A draft would be circulated to clubs for feedback/comment and it was hoped to have new rules in place by September. Existing guidelines on setting up and running matches on-line would also be revised to include matches played on both RB and BBO.

15. **Election of Officers** - With no nominations received from the floor, DL proposed that the current Committee of:  
Dave Lee (Chairman & Pivot League Secretary)  
Marguerite Ehinger (Secretary)  
Joyce Baldock (Treasurer)  
Dave Green (Fixtures & Results Secretary)  
David Pinder  
Alan Brown  
be elected 'en-bloc' – carried unanimously.

16. **A.O.B.** – None

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 4pm.