

♣ ♦ BOOKHAM AFTERNOON BRIDGE CLUB ♥ ♠

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 18 November 2021

1. Welcome by Chairman: Neil Higgins welcomed 53 members to the 51<sup>st</sup> AGM. No AGM was held in 2020 due to pandemic restrictions.

Neil's words of welcome:

"Welcome everyone. It is over two years since we last met. It is great that we are now able to meet once again in person and thank you to all of you for taking this big step in coming once more to play face to face bridge. I hope that you were not too thrown by this new layout which enables social distancing away from draughts. Please do let us know if you cannot hear. We have trialled putting most papers on internet so that you would have an opportunity to digest the information ahead of this meeting and maybe will have prompted some questions from you to raise later."

The meeting was addressed from the floor of the Hall; seating was not arranged 'theatre style'; instead, with chairs and tables set out for the bridge session to follow and giving members the opportunity to observe social distancing as far as possible. The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary were seated at separate tables and other committee members seated according to their preference.

2. Apologies for absence: 36 received
3. Draft minutes of the 50<sup>th</sup> AGM: agreed and signed.
4. Matters arising: None
5. Acceptance of the minutes was proposed by Sheila Hayter and seconded by John Cumming
6. Chairman's Report: full text attached and available to view on the BABC website. However, Neil wished to highlight certain matters as follows:

"We are a face-to-face bridge club, and your committee has done everything possible to keep bridge alive whilst we could not meet and then to make a facility possible for those who sought to play F2F again. We will ultimately return to playing F2F twice a week but at this time we cannot say when that will be. Hopefully you will have appreciated the regular communication which we published since our closure, and we did seek to engage with the membership prior to making any significant changes. We will of course keep you informed about any future changes which we might be considering.

The support we received for our online sessions far exceeded anything that we can have dreamt of and thank you to all those you participated. Playing online is very

different to F2F and for many just mastering the technology was a major hurdle. I must also thank the incredible generosity of those who supported our fund-raising events with numerous contributions also being donated by members who were not playing online.

I should also on your behalf like to thank all those who have made restarting F2F bridge possible – not just the full Committee who provided me with such great support over the last two years but also the Directors and scorers without whom we could not have started playing again.

Thank you also to those members who have more recently begun contributing to the smooth running of our club – to Richard Arnett and Rodney Turner our new Directors and to Jerry Broers and Richard Skeet who are swiftly picking up the scoring mantle. To Robert Newhouse who will be helping maintain our equipment and now a plea – we require someone to work alongside Robert and we also desperately require someone to help Ron Rutstein who does such a fantastic job in keeping our website so relevant. If you think that you can help at all with these roles then do please get in touch with me.

Finally, a plea from me that we should all show each other respect during our bridge sessions. The Directors and Scorers always do their best and the least that we should all do in return is to be polite to them and not question their decision making other than through the correct channels at the end of a session.

We are very fortunate and are much better placed than most other bridge clubs. I am confident that we will survive for many years to come and let's hope that when we meet again for our AGM next year that the Country will be held in a much healthier position and that the challenges which we have all faced over the last two years will be behind us."

7. Hon. Secretary's report: Attached and available to view online.
8. Hon. Treasurer's report: Balance sheet for 2020 and 2021 attached and available to view online.

Commentary to follow.

Acceptance of the reports was proposed by Angela Reid and seconded by Jerry Broers.

9. Election of Officers and Committee Members:

**51<sup>st</sup> AGM COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS**

POSITION	NOMINEES	PROPOSER	SECONDER
<b>CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>NEIL HIGGINS</b>	Rodney Turner	Tony Belton
<b>VICE CHAIRMAN</b>	<b>STEVE LEACH</b>	Sandra Cape	Laurence Penny
<b>HON. SECRETARY</b>	<b>KATE CASTREE</b>	Lesley Milton	Christine Eccersley
<b>HON.TREASURER</b>	<b>SUE MCDONALD</b>	Jerry Broers	Richard Skeet
<b>COORDINATOR OF DIRECTORS AND SCORERS</b>	<b>MARILYN CLARKE</b>	Veronica Lawton	Anne Vicars-Miles

**ELECTION OF FIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

NOMINEE	PROPOSER	SECONDER
<b>CAROL NEWTON</b>	Lesley Milton	Liz Dunjay
<b>ALICE HARPER</b>	Karina Tyrrell	Judy Horton
<b>JULIE KAMIENIECKA</b>	May Williamson	Margaret Main
<b>CINDY TROOP</b>	Yvonne Wallis	Richard Arnatt
<b>ANGELA REID</b>	Christine Eccersley	John Cumming

Acceptance of the new committee was proposed by Renate Lane and seconded by Trevor Gaskell

Sandra Cape and Kath Green stepped down from the Committee.

They were replaced by Angela Reid and Cindy Troop.

Kath sent her apologies and was thanked in her absence by Neil for her valuable contribution to the smooth running of the club. He wished her well for the future.

10. Election of Honorary Examiner

<b>HON. EXAMINER</b>	<b>CHRIS PULLAN</b>	<b>Proposed Rodney Turner</b>	<b>Seconded Tony Belton</b>
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Neil thanked Chris on behalf of the club for the assistance in this role which he has given to the club over many years and presented him with a gift of M&S vouchers.

11. Presentation:

Sandra Cape, on stepping down from the committee, was warmly thanked by the Chairman for her several years of dedicated service as Coordinator of Directors and Scorers in addition to organising the duplimating teams. She will continue to be involved in the training of Directors and Scorers and in assisting where her technical expertise is required.

Neil presented Sandra with a bouquet of flowers and theatre vouchers; Sandra's husband David was given a bottle of wine as thanks for his involvement where additional IT expertise was required.

Neil then paid tribute to Ron Rutstein, the club Webmaster, for the exceptional contribution he has made to the setting up of online bridge and for the dedication he has shown in managing the website for the past several years.

To show our appreciation Ron was awarded the Chairman's Cup; this will be presented to Ron when he next attends. The inscription reads:

20-21  
*Presented to Ron Rutstein  
In recognition of his exceptional contribution to the setting-up of BABC Online  
while f2f sessions were suspended during the pandemic*

The awarding of the normal competition trophies was suspended due to the suspension of f2f play during the pandemic.

## 12. AOB

In response to a question about f2f bridge returning on Mondays it was announced that the Committee would be meeting in mid-January and members would then be informed about any changes.

Neil informed members that no membership cards would be issued this year or in the future. Due to ongoing uncertainties any information regarding fixtures or venues might prove to be inaccurate and environmental considerations are a factor, both now and in the future. All BABC information is available on the website and receipts will be issued for subscriptions.

An Andrew Robson event is planned for 3 March 2022, currently limited to 22 tables. In the first instance full members only may sign up – cost £15 per ticket. All surplus proceeds will be donated to the Barn Hall.

Echoing Neil's plea, Chris Pullan requested that all Directors should approach any table requiring assistance with the EBU Rule book; however, it should be accepted that Directors may make mistakes. He further requested that all rulings by Directors and Scorers should be treated with courtesy. Any problems should be notified in a timely manner.

Sheila Hayter spoke to thank Neil for all his efforts to keep the club running both online and face to face.

Carol Newton made a presentation to Neil on behalf of all members. The gift was organised by Rosie Branch. Unfortunately, Rosie was unable to attend the AGM to make the presentation herself and had requested Carol to read the tribute which she had written:

# Neil

**It has been a dreadful two years for us all but luckily we at Bookham Afternoon Bridge Club have had you to safely guide us through it, back into more normal times. We are most grateful for this, as we know how much time and effort you have dedicated to keeping our club viable. Many a Club has not survived the pandemic.**

**You have demonstrated your dedication to this cause in many ways; you encouraged those lacking the confidence to play online by organizing practice sessions for them, you helped to**

connect players who were without partners but most importantly you have shown great determination to return to the Barn Hall and resume the social aspect of playing bridge.

Oliver Cowan, our online director, told a member that he had not come across a Chairman who works as conscientiously and tirelessly for his Club as do you, Neil.

It now gives me great pleasure on behalf of all the members to present you with this gift.

**Rosie Branch**

The meeting closed at 12.16

It was followed by a break for lunch and drinks were provided.

Duplicate bridge followed at 13.15.

