

Minutes of the 55th Annual General Meeting, Monday 13th October 2025

1. Welcome by Chairman: Jerry Broers welcomed 73 members to the 55th AGM.

2. Apologies for absence: 33 received prior to the meeting:

Alick Fraser, Gill Apted, Ron Rutstein, Elizabeth Gibbon, Duncan McSorland, Julie Kamieniecka, Brian Glicksman, Helen and Michael Price, Lorna Alexander, Lawrence Penney, Hamish and Olwin Macarthur, Olive Law, Beverley Sinden, Roger Whittaker, Liz Plumtree, Rob Donkin, Maggie Simkins, Paul Mullarkey, Clive Allum, Sally Bradbury, Ulla Adilz, Peter Camburn, Vernon Morton, Betty Attwood, Trevor Gaskell, Helena Pollock, Heidi Darley, John Vernon, Mieke Kyle, Lindsay Smart, John Stewart,

3. Minutes of AGM 2024:

Previously circulated to members by email - read, accuracy agreed and signed by Jerry for filing as hard copy.

Their acceptance was proposed by Anneke Prior, seconded by Brigid McDonald.

4. Matters arising: none

5. Chairman's Report: Good morning ladies and gentlemen

This year's review of the year just gone was dominated by two main events, both of which stalled the plans the committee had at the beginning of the year to continue making this a welcoming, high quality bridge club, where a good standard of bridge could be enjoyed throughout the year.

The first was the death of my wife Elisabeth only a month into my second year as Chairman, and the second was Kate's decision to step down as Club Secretary after 10 years of loyal service to the club.

As every previous Chairman of the club will tell you, you need an excellent sounding board at home to listen to your thoughts and ideas about the club, and to steer you in the right direction. Elisabeth was that for me and she was brilliant at it. She gave me so much good, sound advice, gleaned from 10 years of expertise as a Head Teacher herself. I often adopted her suggestions of how best to go about things because, as you may appreciate, getting a group of intelligent but opinionated individuals to agree on something new and different can be a bit tricky! Very tricky! Let's just say that, amongst other things, I miss her wonderful calmness and diplomacy in knowing how best to get things done!

It was inevitable that Kate would step down as Club Secretary one day, having put her heart and soul into it and making the role her very own. She was an excellent club secretary and all of us have benefitted from her expertise and thoroughness. She went above and beyond what she needed to do, and many of you will have been very appreciative of the time and attention she gave you whenever you wanted to speak to her directly. She was also very good in giving us plenty of notice of her intention to step down. The committee took the opportunity to modernise and streamline the role because there was simply no way that Marilyn, as our new Club Secretary, was going to be able to devote as much time to it as Kate has done. Enter Pianola. As we have been explaining to you, Pianola is a programme designed specifically for bridge clubs which enables us to stay on top of our onerous GDPR requirements. It also improves the way the club communicates with you whilst at the same

time keeping your data very secure. It also has another major benefit in that Marilyn will not have to spend hours on GDPR compliance herself. She can rely on Pianola to process that for her, whilst she herself acts as the Data Controller. Win, win.

Of course, the club had to transfer the data we had from our current systems to Pianola's systems. Neil Higgins agreed to head up the small team responsible for that transition, comprising Kate, Marilyn, Yvonne and Neil himself. The transition was hard work for the team involved but finally appears to have been implemented successfully. I think the club owes them an enormous vote of thanks and gratitude for their superb efforts behind the scenes. Please can we show our appreciation in the usual way.

The club can now look forward to a new era of GDPR compliance while key individuals on the committee also hone their skills in learning how to get the best out of Pianola. Neil has also very kindly agreed to stay on as our friendly Pianola expert for a few more months to help key committee members through the learning process.

Will Pianola cost us money? Not initially because the first year is free! But it will in future, particularly if our table numbers continue to increase. A very small price to pay in my opinion because Marilyn would not have agreed to become our new Club Secretary without the assistance Pianola gives her. The role is time consuming enough as it is, let me tell you. Kate herself can vouch for that!

We have also taken the opportunity to syphon off some of the peripheral roles Kate also managed to do, like the Harrison Room list and the Spare Partner List. Jill Pattison has volunteered to do both. Thank you Jill! It means more of the workload of managing the club is shared among members. I'm all for that.

But despite these two major distractions, your experienced committee continued to ensure the smooth operational running of the club with the minimum of fuss. New members were welcomed; rotas were prepared; table vouchers were collected and the tea and biscuits magically appeared at half time. What I have always liked so much about your committee is that, whenever something went wrong over the last year, the number of individuals who stepped up and wanted to help never ceased to amaze and humble me. Truly phenomenal, and thank you all on the committee for that. There are others who also continue to give extra hours of their time to the club: - Miranda, as our superb Webmaster, Neil as the head of scoring and now our Pianola expert too (you already know from his previous senior roles in the club how talented he is) and finally to the duplimating teams who ensure the boards are prepared well in advance every week. The teams are now ably led by Steve Leach. Once again, thank you all, and thank you for the extra hours you give.

Going forward, the Committee is going to be bolstered by two new members, David Allbuery, and Alan Long. Their own expertise of being on other committees and their calm influences are likely to be very welcome. I have a feeling that we will be able to get back to fulfilling the ambitious plans and priorities the committee had for the Club quite quickly. But first, I would just like to go through those priorities, to indicate how many of them we can already tick off. Here goes:

The first was to continue the previous Committee's plan to improve efficiency and increase the membership back to pre-Covid levels. With the help and support of you, the members, continuing to introduce your bridge friends to the club, we are nearing our maximum membership of 210 members. We currently stand at 203 members with an excellent pipeline of potential new members doing their visits, waiting patiently to join the club. The

maximum is drawing close and I don't think it will be too long before we have a waiting list once again!

The second was to increase the Club's 'technical human resources' i.e. Directors, Scorers, Dealing Coordinators, etc. We have certainly achieved that on the directors' front with 6 new directors joining the existing team and several are now very happy to direct as often as they can, headed by Adrian and Richard. Roger Sugden has joined the scoring team and Sue Mc Donald has expressed an interest in joining the scoring team in due course. Steve Leach now heads up the Duplimating teams, but we also have Richard Arnatt and Marilyn who have, thorough duplimating knowledge themselves, sufficient to show new duplimators exactly what to do. So we can tick that one off too.

The third was to spread the knowledge more widely among key people. As you know, the aim is to make sure we have cover at all times when key members are off sick or are on holiday. This is always a work-in-progress priority, because you can't really have too many knowledgeable people in a club of this size. Still, as you have just heard, we are doing very well on that front too.

So far I have only talked about the plans which had previous priority, but there are others now. The biggest new priority is to implement Pianola into our daily bridge lives and to get key committee members fully integrated and conversant with what it can do to help us. That is going to take time but it will be worth it because Pianola has much to offer. So far, we are only scratching the surface of its capabilities.

If we have time, we would also like to take a closer look at the needs of our members, explore the "power of the welcome" and to continue to improve your own awareness of the EBU's standards and regulations. In my opinion, you as members will always benefit from knowing those standards and regulations well, and I make no apologies in believing that we should always be improving our own knowledge of this magnificent game of cards.

I also have some new ideas but I need to discuss these with the committee first!

Finally, a club is only as good as its members, which is where every one of you plays a key role each week, by coming and playing. I am particularly pleased with the regularity with which our newer members come to play. That enthusiasm for the game is great to see and is a key reason why the club has posted such positive numbers in our financial results for the year. Our visitor numbers continue to increase too, so things are looking rosy. Thank you all for promoting the club to your bridge playing friends and acquaintances as you have done this year. Please continue to do so. Visitors I have spoken to this year tell me that that they really appreciate the friendliness which you the members show them. That in turn makes them feel very welcome indeed. This is also a large part of "the power of the welcome" idea I referred to earlier, which the committee would like to explore further in due course.

Smiles on faces is also something I like to see. The sense that we take our bridge seriously but we don't get too grumpy about it when things don't quite go our way. And they don't! It is only a game after all! Incidents of bad behaviour are also down this year which is good, but can always be improved upon. So remember, if there is bad behaviour at your table, do call the director. He/she will clamp down on bad behaviour because it has no place in our club.

This year, I have also valued how critical the supportive side of the Club is, particularly as we get older and need some help from our bridge friends ourselves at one point or another.

There are some very good examples of that support out there - Adrian for instance giving Clive a lift whenever he can. And he is by no means the only one doing good things for fellow members. I have benefitted from that generous support myself so I know how important it is to one's wellbeing. It's certainly lovely to see it being offered to others who need it which is entirely down to the kindness of spirit within all of you. Long may that continue.

The buzz at tea time, the sounds of laughter and the general noise of people chatting in good cheer is another example of a happy place. I love to hear it. The over-subscribed Christmas event; the generous raffle prizes at charity fundraising events also tell me that this is not just a Bridge Club - it is a place of genuine friendship, warmth and kindness.

This bridge club will not stand still, there's too much we still have to do! So thank you for all your continued support. Much appreciated! Keep coming to play and we, the committee, will just crack on, and continue to make your day's bridge an enjoyable one! Thank you for listening.

6. Hon. Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer's Commentary on Accounts for the year 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2025

The accounts have been posted on the website and I hope you have had a chance to look at them. For those who have been unable to access them on the website there are a few copies in the room.

The accounts show a surplus of £2976 in the year. We have healthy reserves of £9000.

Last year we increased the subscription fee and the cost of playing as we wished to recoup the cost of the directors training over a number of years. We had not expected to be able to do this immediately and had expected a much lower surplus than we have achieved.

The surplus has arisen because of various factors:

- Our average table numbers have been the same as last year - we had prudently budgeted for a slight reduction. This together with the phasing of the increased price of the table money added to the income.
- We have not spent on consumables such as new cards in the year. We received some new cards following the EBU Charity drive that we took part in in September 2024: we intend to buy new cards imminently.
- We had expected expenditure on repairs to and replacement of equipment but any costs have been minimal.

The balance sheet shows the value of vouchers purchased but not yet redeemed this is £3406. This is approximately 9 weeks worth of vouchers.

We still have an outstanding number of blue vouchers which we have decided to leave on the balance sheet for a further year as these vouchers are still being redeemed albeit very slowly.

Our healthy reserves mean we will be able to replace equipment such as the duplimating machines and bridgemates as this becomes necessary. We currently have equipment with a replacement value of around £16000.

Our direct playing costs - rent, tea service, pay to play - continue to rise each year. Our current subscription fee and cost of table money will cover

these increases for the next year. We will therefore not be changing the costs to members and visitors of playing at the club.

Charity fundraising

In 2024-25 we raised £2298 for charity. The charities supported in the year were:

Children in Need, Queen Elizabeth Foundation, Bookham Village Week, EBU charity drive for Cancer Research, Citizens Advice Mole Valley.

7. Hon. Secretary's Report:

Since our last AGM I am delighted to report that we have enrolled 14 new members; two previous members have rejoined.

However, I have to record with sadness the death of Stuart Wabe, a very longstanding member of the club who contributed greatly to its success both as a director and as the club's first webmaster. We were also sad to learn of the death of Yvonne Wallis who, likewise, had been a member for many years. Sad news has also been received of the deaths of a number of former members including Elizabeth Taylor, Reg Carlier and Joan Barwick. I received notice of 5 resignations due to health problems or travel difficulty and we had to assume a further 6 resignations when membership was not renewed.

I have been notified that two members will be resigning – Judy Horton who has relocated to be near her family and Ron Rutstein, our former webmaster, who has not enjoyed the best of health in recent times. We wish them both well for the future and will miss them both.

15 visitors are applying for membership which now stands at 203. At present there is no waiting list but that could soon change if we reach our maximum of 210.

And now to more personal matters:

After ten years in the role I am now stepping down as Secretary.

I regret that this has happened at a sensitive time for the club but my husband has been seriously ill over the past year and remains rather unwell, so I feel I need to make him my first priority.

What follows is my response to a kind invitation to produce a potted account of my time at the club. I applied to join the club in 2006 and was accepted after being 'played in' on three occasions with committee members which was a very daunting experience. Judging by some of my recent results I am surprised they accepted me!

The club was entirely different in those days. Boards had to be dealt by hand at the table and scoring was done with travellers. Calling the director took some courage and the same applied to any errors made with the travellers. I know, I was guilty of both!

I was invited to join the committee in 2013 which I considered a great honour and in 2015 I was elected Secretary.

Before Covid we held two big annual events - a Village Week charity lunch plus a Christmas party when duplicate bridge was abandoned and we played fun bridge. We self-catered for each occasion, hard work for the committee but I believe we managed to organise successful and enjoyable events. The most memorable club occasion for me was in 2019 when we celebrated our 50th Anniversary with a bridge tea. I was tasked with ordering a huge celebration cake and did so through a baker who was highly recommended. However, the weekend before the event I received an email very late at night from the baker's wife to say her husband had injured his hand in the mixer and she was at the hospital A&E with him. I had to act quickly as time was short. After frantic googling well past midnight I managed to

contact a firm who promised to supply the celebration cake which we required. Doing the artwork online for the cake decoration in the early hours of the morning was quite a challenge but all went well and a beautiful cake duly arrived 48 hours later.

I later learned that someone else had a very similar experience with the same company on a separate occasion. The baker must now have a very mangled hand!

I have served with four Chairmen - Coral Wabe who transformed the club into the friendly, welcoming association which we know today, Lawrence Penney and Neil Higgins who worked tirelessly to set up our online club during Covid, and now Jerry Broers who has worked to bring the club up to date with the latest technology.

I have been privileged to work with many splendid committee members who have been great team players and a wonderful support for me.

Now, I will be handing over quite a large part of my role to technology in the form of Pianola. It will assume the responsibility of safeguarding your personal data. However, I wish to say that I never considered that particular aspect of my duties to be a burden and trust that I have kept all details carefully and respectfully. And while the efficient and labour-saving features of technology can be beguiling, I would hope that the part it plays in managing our club will not detract from our hallmark ethos of maintaining friendly, helpful interaction through personal contact.

Now I know that pre-empting in bridge can be very risky, but I have full confidence that, when you elect the new committee, you will give unanimous approval to my nominated successor, Marilyn Clarke. I know she will be an excellent Secretary.

Last, but certainly not least, I must pay tribute to our members, especially those who showed great courage and support for the club in returning to play face to face after Covid in September 2021. That was a crucial point in our club's history, and we have subsequently gone from strength to strength.

Bookham Afternoon is a wonderful club and it has been a true privilege and honour to serve you.

Thank you.

8. Acceptance of Reports: Proposed by Sue Goodey, seconded by Richard Skeet.

9. Election of Officers and Committee Members.

OFFICERS

POSITION	NOMINEES	PROPOSED BY	SECONDED BY
CHAIRMAN	JERRY BROERS	Elizabeth Gibbon	Sue Marshallsay

VICE CHAIRMAN	ADRIAN FILKINS	Julie Kamieniecka	Alan Long
HON. SECRETARY	MARILYN CLARKE	Miranda Moore	Diana Trayler
HON.TREASURER	YVONNE McCONNELL	Robin Coleridge	Margaret Lawson
COORDINATOR of Directors and Scorers	ADRIAN FILKINS	Brigid McDonald	Margaret Main

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

NOMINEE	PROPOSED BY	SECONDED BY
DAVID ALLBEURY	Ruth Tribick	Liz Garwood
RICHARD ARNATT	Sonja Hamlyn	Wendy Hoare
SUE McDONALD	Carol Newton	Liz Dunjay
JILL PATTISON	Helen Oldman	Marilyn Hammick
JOHN STEWART	Tina Higgins	Anitra Trout
CINDY TROOP	Vivien Shires	Maria Martin
ALAN LONG	Roger Sugden	Bob Mankin

10. Election of Honorary Examiner

NOMINEE	PROPOSED BY	SECONDED BY
RIICHARD SKEET	Neil Higgins	Bill Archer

11. AOB:

- Steve Leach as head of duplimating thanked the current teams for their work and asked for new volunteers to assist. A fourth team would mean each team would be required to do one session per month coming along to the club at 11am on a Thursday. Full training will be given.
- Nigel Taylor asked the cost of Pianola after the initial free year. An average of fewer than 25 tables per session will result in a cost of £150 p.a. If this average is exceeded the cost will increase to £400 p.a. Sue McDonald advised our current average is 17 tables. Jerry emphasised Pianola's role in GDPR matters and in assisting with the smooth running of the club and mentioned the committee will look at other capabilities of the site which we do not use at present.

12.Trophy Presentations: Adrian Filkins stated he wished to make presentations on behalf of the club to Kate Castree and Sue McDonald in recognition of their service to the club as Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer respectively. He read out an Ode to each of them composed by John 'Wordsworth' Stewart before presenting each of them with an envelope which he claimed contained tickets to a Stranglers concert.

An ode to Kate

Kate we've heard you're leaving, you will be secretary no more
 No emails, no letters, no telephone calls galore
 But there is at least one benefit and I know you will not grouse
 Get rid of all the papers and files and you'll get back half your house.

You started recording on papyrus I think
 Then parchment with a quill and that new stuff they called ink
 Even with a biro you recorded accurately
 Now it's Alt, Control, Delete, Reboot, god help us we've got IT

For all prospective members, the first person they meet is you
 You take down all their details, a bit like GCHQ
 But they know their info's safe, as safe as it can be
 And all prospective hackers know, you don't mess with Kate Castree.

But through all these years I think it's fair to say
 That your husband's been a stalwart, whenever you're away
 He listens to the phone calls and makes notes accurately

Then goes back to watch Newcastle play football on TV

Now Kate this ode is ending no more jokes and no more fuss
Just a warm and heartfelt thanks, from the club and all of us.

An ode to Sue McDonald

Sue McDonald's leaving her post, she thought it's time to go
I've been doing it for quite a while but little did she know
She thought to herself when she started how hard can it be
I've got ten fingers and then there's my toes I can easily count to twenty

But the numbers kept on growing and it was becoming quite a fuss
I need some help in counting she thought, so she bought an abacus
She then got even more serious at least I've heard it said
She cancelled the Woman's Weekly and took the Financial Times instead

First there was cash, then cheques, then cards and then came vouchers too
She'd sit on the floor surrounded by papers and think I haven't a clue
But Sue was very resourceful and had a back-up plan I'm told
The boy next door was good at maths, you know the eleven year old

But our finances are in good order, we're in the black not in the red
And our money is safe in a great big bank, no more in the shoe box that was under her bed.

Now Sue this ode has ended, no more jokes and no more fuss
Just a warm and heartfelt thanks, from the club and all of us.

Jerry then presented trophies to the winners of competitions held throughout the year.
Steve Lock accepted the *Anniversary Plate* and the *Queen's Jubilee Cup* on behalf of himself
and Alick Fraser for Best Individual Score (unusually we had joint winners) and Best Pairs
Score.

Julie Kamieniecka was announced as the Most Improved Player and will be presented with
the *Gordon Jenner Trophy* when she next attends the club.

Ruth Tribick and Ken Reeves were presented with *The Chairman's Cup* as the winners of the
handicap competition.

Jerry moved to close the meeting at which point Dilwen Collier stood to give thanks on
behalf of the membership for the hard work done by the committee, especially to Kate for
her very long service, and to Sue for her long service. Kate thanked Dilwen noting she has
enjoyed the work and will miss it. Sue McDonald thanked Jerry for leading the committee.
Members were reminded they could pay subscriptions and sign up for the Christmas Party.

The meeting closed at 11:55 and was followed by a break for lunch. Tea was served along
with cakes provided once again by JubyLee Bakes. The afternoon session of duplicate bridge

followed, free to all who attended the AGM. Normal table money was required from those attending the bridge session only.