

## **Briter Bridge Club 2**

**Annual General Meeting Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022  
For the year ending 31 July 2022**

**Held at 6.30pm at Parklanglely Club**

### **Agenda**

- 1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Minutes and Matters Arising from AGM 2021**
- 3. Chairman's Report**
- 4. Financial Report and Accounts [Separate Documents]**
  - Membership subscription and table money for 2022 - 2023
  - Change of Auditor
- 5. Technical Report**
- 6. Membership Report**
- 7. Election of Committee for 2022– 2023**

Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Technical Director, Membership Secretary
- 8. Consideration of issues regarding resumption of club sessions at Parklanglely**

Including

  - Points raised by members
  - Refreshments
- 9. Beginners' Tuition Sessions**
- 10. Annual Meal**
- 11. Bridge Weekends**
- 12. Margaret Burrell Memorial Cup Competition**
- 13. Any Other Business**

## Annual General Meeting Tuesday September 21<sup>st</sup> 2021

Held at 6.30pm at Parklanglely Club

### Unadopted Minutes

#### **1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence**

22 members attended and 9 sent apologies for absence.

##### **Attendance**

Tim Burrell, Ann Close, Jan Titcombe, Colin Blount, Janet Bell, Luke Titcombe, Stuart Bell, Sheila Tutt, Kate Mitchell, Susan Lee, Brian Close, Margaret Styles, Andrea Hixson, Janis Fancett, Julia Booth-Brockbanks, Pat Hunt, Diana Letchford, Susan Hughes, John Hayward, Caroline Ashcroft, Angela Hughes, Walter Million

##### **Apologies**

Caroline Ashcroft, Derek Chadwick, Duncan Bell, Pat Hunt, Jenny Davis, Mannie Ng, Claire Marshall, Valerie Holder, Reidun Stockwell

#### **2. Minutes and Matters Arising from AGM 2020**

The unadopted minutes of the AGM held on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020 were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

#### **3. Chairman's Report**

Tim highlighted some features of his report. The club has completed its ninth year and continued to operate successfully until Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March when we were forced to stop playing at Parklanglely because of the Covid 19 pandemic. During the long closure, the website was maintained and a WhatsApp group has been active. Several of our members have been playing online using BBO.

Our first Bridge Weekend in Worthing had to be postponed from June 2020; thanks are due to Susan Hughes for all her hard work arranging this and, more recently, rearranging it for October this year, which many of us are looking forward to.

Since we have returned to face to face play in July, we have been averaging about 4 or 5 tables in the afternoon, but only 2 or 3 in the evening. This level of attendance does not cover our costs at the current table money rate. We need to find out whether existing members do intend to return and, if not, mount a recruitment drive to ensure our sustainability.

We were unable to hold a dinner in April 2020 and 2021; it is to be hoped that it will be possible next year. A show of hands at the meeting was in favour of this.

It was agreed that the Margaret Burrell Cup competition should restart from the beginning of August 2021.

Tim thanked his fellow committee members for their support in running Briter Bridge Club 2.

#### **4. Financial Report and Accounts**

Ann presented the audited accounts for 2020 – 2021, which covered very little bridge activity, but included regular payments and transactions related to the forthcoming Bridge Weekend. While there were fixed costs, including insurance, Bridgewebs fees and Parklanglely Club social membership totalling £195, we had a healthy balance of almost £2500 at the year end (31<sup>st</sup> July 2021).

As far as subscription fees and table money are concerned, Ann informed those present that, at our present attendance rates, we would not cover our costs on a weekly basis. She recommended that the annual membership fee should remain at £4 per annum (subscription payments are due now) and that table money should be raised to £3 per session (with 9 tables across the afternoon and evening sessions this will cover our weekly costs). Those present at the meeting endorsed this proposal unanimously and also delegated to the committee any decision to alter the table money over the course of the next year if they deemed it necessary.

## **5. Technical Report**

Jan presented her report. When lockdown started, we had the option of suspending the website and extending our subscription, but the committee decided to keep it running, so we could maintain communication with members, and provide information e.g. about playing online. We also set up a WhatsApp group (contact Jan if you would like to join).

The long period being locked away in the filing cabinet had not been detrimental to any of our technical equipment and everything still works. There is now a shortage of people who can direct and score and this needs to be addressed. Tim is continuing to operate the dealing machine but it will be necessary for other people to share this responsibility before long.

Should further Covid restrictions or low numbers in winter make our sessions unviable, we may wish to consider running online bridge sessions, possibly using Realbridge which does not require us to join the EBU.

## **6. Membership Report**

Colin reported that we currently have 67 members; we have seen a steady increase in the number of people returning to play and several visitors to afternoon sessions, some of whom have applied for membership. The afternoon sessions have been better attended (average 4.4 tables) than the evening (average 2.1 tables); in due course it is likely to be appropriate to aim to actively recruit new members, with a focus on increasing attendance at the evening session.

## **7. Election of Committee for 2021 – 2022**

The members of the committee had all indicated their willingness to continue to serve and there had been no other nominations. So the following committee was elected by the meeting.

Chairman – Tim Burrell, Secretary – Janet Bell, Treasurer – Ann Close, Technical Director – Jan Titcombe, Membership Secretary – Colin Blount [Secretary's note – Ann and Colin subsequently agreed to swap roles.]

## **8. Consideration of issues regarding resumption of face to face sessions at Parklangley Club**

Including points raised by members during consultation

- The viability of the evening session
- Starting the evening session earlier e.g. at 7pm
- Permanently abandoning refreshment provision

Tim pointed out that if we stopped the evening session, we would find it difficult to get the room back, should we wish to restart in future (there are others interested in it). It would be better to try to recruit more new members, targeting those who would like to play in the evening.

The evening players present at the meeting indicated that they would be happy to try at 7pm start, which would allow slightly longer playing time (up to 24 boards) and it was resolved that this should happen, initially on a trial basis, for the next four weeks.

The view of those present was that we should continue without refreshments (which take up space and encourage crowding around the table) until the spring, when there should be a review in the light of the Covid situation at the time.

#### **9. Any Other Business**

Those present were in favour of holding a club dinner in April 2022 if possible.

There was a vote of thanks from the meeting to the committee.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

**Janet Bell – Secretary**

## Chairman's Report 2021/22

### **Establishment of the club**

The club has now completed its tenth year and what a difficult year it's been. As the Treasurer will report we still have a reasonable balance but since play restarted after COVID most Tuesdays have been running at a loss. Colin will report in more detail. Since the last AGM Colin and Ann have swapped roles on the committee and Ann is now membership secretary and Colin the treasurer.

### **Covid 19**

Since we returned to face to face play the numbers have been below those required to break even. In the afternoon we are averaging about 4 or 5 tables. However, in the evening we have been having 2 or 3 tables and on some occasions not meeting at all. Whereas this can be sustained in the short term we need approximately 10 tables in total to break even at the current table money rate. More on this later. We may need to mount a recruitment drive to ensure our sustainability.

### **Table and Membership fees**

Our last AGM agreed that table money should be £3 for members and £4 for non-members and an annual membership fee of £4. Colin will propose a way forward when he goes through the accounts with you.

### **Social event**

Given that COVID restrictions have eased we were able to hold our annual meal again this year. On the 30<sup>th</sup> June the Langley Club again provided us with an excellent lunch which was appreciated by all who attended. It was great to see some former members who are no longer able to play with us.

### **Competition**

It was good that we were able to play again enough times to be able to award the cup again this year and I'm delighted to announce that Stuart Bell was this year's winner. Congratulations to him. The committee has decided to introduce a handicap system to even out the chances of others winning the trophy. Jan can talk more about this.

### **Beginners' sessions**

We have been conscious for some time that there is a demand for beginners to learn more and get used to duplicate play before being ready to join one of our regular sessions. Colin and I have been hosting some informal sessions at home but it has become clear there could be a wider demand for this. On the 13<sup>th</sup> September we started a trial class that met at 11.00 am before our regular play. On the first day we had 7 attendees which more than paid for the small extra charge Langley are making. These are proving successful, and we are asking the meeting to agree that these should continue on a regular basis whilst the demand exists.

### **Refreshments**

When we restarted play, we were not allowed to provide refreshments and this has continued. Members of course can still buy coffee/tea at the bar especially if there is a sit out. Many have said they prefer not to return to having refreshments in the room especially as it would require members to volunteer to organise this. The committee are proposing that we continue without refreshments.

### **Thanks**

Finally I would like to offer thanks to all the Committee for the hard work they have done during the year; to Colin for all his work in keeping the accounts straight; to Jan for keeping us all informed by the web site and helping us with our technical problems; to Janet for her secretarial support and all the hard work she has put in to try to keep the evening sessions viable; and to Ann for maintaining our membership and attendance records for the year.

**Tim Burrell – Chairman**

## Technical Report 2021/2022

There are no new issues, but I have summarised those that exist below for the benefit of new members and to refresh others' memories.

We need 4 types of software which all need to talk to each other and be as easy as possible to use:

- Website software which enables: -
  - The Committee to display and share results, keep records of members and players, communicate with members and market the club to others.
  - Members to communicate with each other.

The current Bridgewebs website is used by the majority of bridge clubs in the UK, is reasonably priced, relatively robust and easy to use. There have been no outages or security scares during the last year, it still meets our requirements and our main concern - that it is a "one man band" - seems to have been partly addressed by the owner taking on some staff during the past year.

- Scoring software which calculates the scores and enables them to be displayed on the website. This is currently PairsScorer which was developed by and freely available from Jeff Smith who subsequently sold it to the EBU, who have developed it further. The EBU make their version available free to affiliated clubs or sell a licence to non-affiliated clubs. The version we use currently still serves our needs, works with the website and the Bridgemates and some (but fewer) members have backup copies on their laptops. There is always the possibility that this will cease to be the case. There are alternatives <https://www.bridgemate.co.uk/product/scoring-programs/list-of-scoring-programs-supporting-bridgemate/> but because they would involve retraining and additional expense with no perceivable benefits we have decided in the past to accept the risk.
- Bridgemate software and associated hardware which allows players to record their scores and view results as they play. The software is the most difficult to use and learn, the tablets are not easy to read, there are now better solutions available. However the kit still works and the more modern systems would involve capital outlay which would deplete the club of all its reserves. BriAn would involve very little outlay but would slightly increase our running costs. I therefore propose that we delay taking any further action until the Club is on a better financial footing or unless circumstances force a change.
- Software and hardware that deals the hands and uploads the details to the website. Both still work well. Volunteers to keep the dealing machine and organise the hands are always welcome. It is the easiest software to use and the dealing machine works very quickly. We have purchased an additional laptop so that those with Apple kit can now assist. You do need space to house the machine and cards and be able to transport the cases.

So the issues that members need to agree or note are:

- We continue to take the known risks of using the current technical solutions
- We welcome any volunteers to house and use the dealing machine and to learn how to set up scoring for a session

**Jan Titcombe – Technical Director**

## **Membership Report 2021/22**

Before the AGM in 2021 we had a total of 103 members: 62 Afternoon and 41 Evening. However, it had been a difficult 2 years for all of us and only 59 members renewed at that time. 4 more came back to us in the spring of this year, making us a group of 63 paid up members currently.

The afternoon players have managed to achieve an average of 5.3 tables over the past year, but sadly, the evening sessions have not been so well attended and have only achieved 4 tables on eight out of 50 occasions and we have had to cancel the session on three occasions.

We have always maintained that we are all members of one club and have, in the past, managed to cover our expenditure. However, this is no longer the case and as Tim has mentioned, we are planning to take some positive action in order to increase our membership, especially by encouraging new players to attend in the evening.

**Ann Close – Membership Secretary**