

**DRAFT Minutes of the 83rd AGM of the Carlton Bridge Club
held on Wednesday 14th October 2020 via virtual conferencing portal - Zoom**

Apologies were received from: Robert Gatliff, Finlay Marshall. Jennifer Bute, Denise King, Derek Sanders, Alex & Norma Kerr, Iain Sime and Dilys Gellatly.

Present: There were 8 directors and 21 members present. The Secretary was also present. An agenda, the Chairman's Report and the Accounts had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Approval of the Minutes of the 82nd Annual General Meeting

The Minutes of the 82nd AGM had been circulated prior to the meeting. On a proposal by Mr Peter Wright, seconded by Irene Sime, the Minutes were adopted *nem con*.

Actions Arising from Previous Meeting

There was no actions from the previous AGM.

The Chair, Duncan Cursiter had issued his report prior to the meeting and asked the members if there were any questions. Peter Wright complimented the Board for setting up the on-line bridge. Duncan Cursiter responded that the vast majority had been done by the subcommittee and gave special thanks to Hazel Brown and Mike Baron.

Chairman's Report

When the new Board convened for the first time in September 2019, it had no insight into the traumatic events that were to happen from March 2020 onwards. So this report is really a tale of two halves, the second being how we have attempted to cope with the Covid-19 outbreak.

The current membership is 308, very similar to last year. A few players have decided not to renew their membership. In addition it is with great regret that I have to note that Peter Clark and Alastair Rattray have passed on. It is refreshing to see that new members are joining the Club, and I wish them all the best.

Andrew Bailey has settled in well, is learning quickly and attends to many of the hidden aspects of running the Carlton Bridge Club. It is a pity that the work he did along with Bill Brown in terms of advertising the Club for the new season came to an abrupt end when we had to close in March. But the materials that were developed can be used in the coming years.

Westmains Catering, very ably led by Jane Mawdsley, has continued to provide an excellent standard of delicious food. The Carlton has always been renowned in this respect, and it is very reassuring to see it continue in this manner. Jane has always seemed to be in total control, whether it is a weekend event, Christmas Party or just a busy Club afternoon or evening's bridge. Is there better mushroom soup in the whole of Scotland?

Two members of the Board are set to retire at the AGM. Neil Macpherson has been Card Convenor for two years and Robert Gatliff has other interests which take up much of his free time. My grateful thanks to both for the work they have put in. In the same breath, so to speak, I want to thank all other Board members for their diligence and insight in running the Club. Whenever something needs done, or an additional meeting is required, there is always an excellent response. I am very grateful for this support.

I suppose it is invidious to mention one person in particular, but I intend to. Maurice Brady has ignored various bouts of ill health and grafted away in the background, be it liaising with our accountants, dealing with subscriptions or any of the other tasks which come his way. His latest success is in turning round a refusal by the City of Edinburgh to pay us the Small Business grant for which we applied. Along with Tim Bunker he appealed this refusal and we heard last week that we had been awarded the £25 000 grant. This is typical of Maurice's persistence and he is to be congratulated for this achievement.

House Report

All carpets were deep cleaned prior to the Congress at the end of October. Painting of the common areas caused some disruption during November, but the improvement was obvious for all to see. We bought an industrial dishwasher for the kitchen in December. Prior to this, any large event caused an inordinate amount of work in terms of time for dishes and glasses to be cleaned. This purchase has speeded up this process immeasurably, and saved Jane having to take things home to be washed. The lighting in the driveway has been overhauled and improved. It is a pity that we have no bridge on offer for you to verify this fact. A new computer has been bought for the office to help speed up scoring and other general duties.

Tournaments

Both Monday sessions were well attended, as were the Tuesday and Wednesday bronze events and Thursday afternoons. The other evening tournaments continued to be a challenge in terms of numbers. To ensure no half table on a Wednesday evening, Board members stood by and played if necessary. With no half table, this made the evening more enjoyable for those present. Regrettably, there was not a significant increase in numbers attending, even when we ceased charging table money at the start of 2020. The one big success was the last Wednesday of the month Teams evening, when we had 11 teams participating.

Derrick Peden very kindly sponsored the first night of the Min Thomas, by providing prosecco and nibbles. Many thanks for this gesture, and it was fitting that he went on to win the event, having ensured that the rest of us were suitably mellowed to provide the odd gift in exchange for his generosity. No, scrub that last sentence as he and Muriel played very well.

Education

Eldrydd Robinson has been in charge of Education. The Board would like to thank her and all the teachers who have contributed to the success of the classes in the session 2019-20. The teachers involved this session have been Elizabeth Peckham, Duncan and Margo Cursiter and June Morrison. Derek Sanders has also continued to offer his classes within the club

The numbers attending classes is giving some cause for concern. Advertising did not bring the hoped for increase in numbers and the Board will be looking at different ways in which more beginners can be encouraged to join the club. This will include clearer pathways to advance from the classes into suitable tournaments. One session which has proved particularly popular, is the Thursday session for improvers. Members could drop into these sessions, hosted by Margo and Duncan Cursiter, for particular topics of interest, which were listed on the Club web site.

The Club offered a further series of afternoon seminars to more advanced players in the autumn of 2019 and these events were warmly received. We would like to thank Liz McGowan, Geoff Bailey and Derrick Peden, for the time and effort that they put into these seminars. It was proposed that further sessions would be offered in Spring 2020.

Bridge Online

As I have already mentioned, face to face bridge ended abruptly on Tuesday 10 March. This heralded lockdown and an end to life as we knew it. We had to accept a new 'normal'. The Carlton Bridge Club (CBC) was in a fortunate position in that we could start holding Carlton Online Bridge sessions using Bridge Base Online (BBO) from Monday 20 April. We were able to do this, as Mike Baron was already a BBO Director and he kindly set up and managed the Carlton sessions through his account. This meant the CBC was playing regular online bridge sessions before most other clubs in Scotland. From May 2020, the Scottish Bridge Union (SBU) then negotiated an agreement with BBO which enabled Bridge clubs to hold regular 'SBU recognised' online tournaments. BBO charges 3\$ of which clubs currently receive 65%. We are now running 4 Carlton Online sessions a week on Sunday evening, Monday and Thursday mornings, and Wednesday afternoon with an average 10 -14 tables per session. We believe it is important to keep a relaxed event where members who are new to BBO, or do not wish to play 20 boards can play. At the moment we are running this on a Tuesday afternoon but we are monitoring attendance and it might change if we find that members wish this to be held on a different day.

At the last count we had 202 members signed up to play in the Carlton Online Tournaments. We are aware that there are members who are playing online but not in the Tournaments, and others choosing not to play online. We are planning to send out a questionnaire to all members to seek their views and preferences for online bridge in the future.

In April, June Morrison set up a Teams event for Carlton players. Nine teams contested the first and second rounds, and six in the third. Pressure of competing events and the increasing difficulty of arranging matches, meant there was insufficient interest to continue with the format, which was nevertheless enjoyed by those who took part.

On July 19th we held an Online Swiss Pairs. We had 30 pairs and although we would have preferred more, it was good for the first event and we hope to be able to encourage more members to play in our next Swiss Pairs event.

On Saturday 19 August the CBC hosted an SBU event "The Bronze Brunch", a 12 board session for Bronze players. 56 pairs took part in this event. The CBC will receive all the revenue for hosting this event and we have offered to continue hosting it on a rota with other clubs.

We sought permission from the SBU to award master points retrospectively, for the pairs events held before the SBU arrangement with BBO was put in place, and for the teams event organised by June. The SBU gave their permission, so master points have now been awarded.

The online bridge events have been organised by a sub group consisting of Marilyn McDonagh, Mike Baron, Hazel Brown, Eldrydd Robinson, Jane Stephenson and John Pottinger. I would like to thank them, as well as all those members who are playing bridge online and supporting the club through these difficult times.

Finance

Maurice Brady gave brief feedback on the accounts.

As at 31st March 2020, we had £ 74,000 in the bank and £ 89,000 in bonds.

As pointed out last year, the Club deregistered for VAT on 31st March 2019. Therefore, when looking at the accounts, it is worth remembering that where applicable, the income figures for 2019 include VAT, whereas those for 2020 do not. The reverse is the case for expenditure.

I'd like to thank 2 people in particular:

Firstly, Elizabeth Peckham, for all the miles that she puts in walking to the Club and back, counting the money and doing the banking.

Secondly, I'd mention Tim Bunker. Tim is an assessor with Graham and Sibbald, having previously worked for City of Edinburgh council (CoE) and Rydens.

In 2017, there was a revision of Business rates. The Club was facing a 400% increase in its annual rates bill. Tim was engaged by the Club to assist in our application to CoE for rates relief. This application consisted of a form from us with an accompanying letter written by Tim. The application was successful and resulted in our getting 80% tax relief. This discretionary relief is still in place and has to date saved us £ 8,000 per annum.

In July 2020 we applied to CoE for a Small business grant. The application was refused and Tim wrote the appeal on our behalf. After a considerable length of time, the council decided to accept the appeal and the Club received the grant of £ 25,000.

Tim's first-hand knowledge of the local authority has been of great value to us. I'm sure you'll join with me in thanking him for all his efforts on our behalf.

The Accounts were adopted on a proposal by Peter Wright and seconded by Jane Stephenson.

Peter Wright, Judith Sischy and Jim McDowell had questions regarding the accounts. PW asked why wages were up 30% and would BBO income cover ongoing costs. The Treasurer responded that the cleaner had been made redundant which had cost the Club £2000, Andrew Bailey was no longer on the Club's payroll as he had taken a contract with West Lothian Foodbank as the Club did not have work for him. The only wages being paid out was the Secretary's Honorarium. Judith Sischy asked if someone was looking after the building and whether the Club was financially secure. The Treasurer confirmed that Andrew was still looking after the Club, Goldenacre BC was carrying out the cleaning of common areas and fire alarms. The Treasurer was not worried for the foreseeable future of the Club finances and was going to propose that the Club takes out another bond. Jim McDowell asked if a forecast of the savings that would be made since the Club was not in use currently.

Appointment of Auditor / Independent Examiner

The reappointed of the Accountants – George & Co was proposed by Maurice Brady and seconded by Duncan Cursiter.

Linton Horsfall pointed out that the accountants are not auditors and should be called Independent Examiners. Peter Wright highlighted that George & Co state in the accounts that they have not carried out an audit of the Club's accounts. It was therefore agreed that the term Independent Examiner's would be used instead of Auditors.

Election of Directors

Neil Macpherson and Robert Gatliff had resigned from the Board. The Chairman thanked them for their support and hard work over the last year.

There were no nominations for new Board members. All remaining members of the Board are still within their 3 year term, with one exception. The Articles indicate that Board members may serve for four years if necessary.

June Morrison asked if the election of directors is still to be done annually or elected after their 3 year tenure. Duncan Cursiter confirmed that the Directors are elected for a 3 year period and therefore are not re-elected each year.

AOCB

Peter Wright and John Pottinger gave a vote of thanks to the Board.

Carlton Trophy Winners 2019-2020

Teams

Porteous Cup	Derrick Peden	Keith Youngs	Veronica Guy	Peter Moss	Patrick Home	
Porteous Handicap	David Kaye	Mike Baron	Irene Sime	Jane Stephenson	Robert Gatliff	
Sutherland Quaich	Maurice Brady	Sandra Watson	Judith Smeaton	Dorothy Middleton		
Bobby Allan	Peter Braid	Heather Braid				
Harrower Cup	No Fearties	Andrew MacLeod	Alec Brown	John Pottinger	John Sneddon	Polly Purvis

Pairs

Club Cup	Ron McCarron	Les Sinclair
Club Cup Handicap (Harry Stein Trophy)	Ian Barnes	Norman Stewart
Min Thomas	Derek Peden	Muriel Blake
Bill Brown	Dilys Gellatly	Bron McWhinney