

Draft Minutes of AGM
Chepstow Archway Bridge Club
March 16th 2022 St Arvans Meeting Rooms

Members Present: Peter Taylor, Ray Mardon, Sue Blake, Grace Martyn, Pat Davey, Caroline Gawler, Brian Harden, Dave Smith, Jennifer Heaththorn, Christine Brierly, Marina Hunter, John Mayo, Stewart Anderton, Brian Heaththorn, Sheila Montgomery, Brandon Waters, Pat Waters, Steve Dobney, Richard Stevenson.

Apologies: Graham Eele, Pam Robinson, Bridget Evans, Tony Waters.

Outgoing Chair's Report.

The last two years have been a very difficult period for the Club, in common with all UK clubs. There were two lockdowns preventing f2f bridge, a very prolonged one of 18 months and a short but disruptive one of 6 weeks. We had to leave our usual premises during the long lockdown and start again at the Meeting Rooms in St Arvans. We lost many members, some became too frail, some shielding. We don't know for sure how many members we have, the fees were waived for over 2 years. We must accept that we are a smaller club now. We have funds, lots of kit, a smaller, cheaper and much more welcoming venue and our task now is to get the Club back up and running. We are smaller and we need to be flexible and responsive to members wants and need.

Membership fees will be £15 this year. The WBU have reduced their fees to £10, no EWBA charge this year, and the Club will charge £5 to cover ongoing running costs.

We need to change the financial year for the club. It was October to September, but no fees have been collected and there has been very little financial activity. It is convenient to run from March to February now, aligning better with the WBU financial year of April to March.

SM is stepping down as Chair, but will remain on the committee as secretary.

Sue Blake is stepping down from the committee after many years of service. A vote of thanks was given and a presentation of flowers made.

SM thanked Richard Stevenson (dealing machine), Pete Taylor (webmaster), Graham Eele (treasurer), Ray Mardon (competitions), and Stewart Anderton (scorer). Thanks especially to all the members for sticking with us.

SM introduced Dave Smith as incoming chair. She welcomed his energy, enthusiasm, fresh ideas, and his genuine love of the game.

Incoming Chair's Remarks. DS discussed the immediate future and the hopes for getting the Club going again. We are still seeing if Monday evening will work, and Wednesday attendance has been more satisfactory. A good aim would be 4 tables a night. We can try afternoon bridge again in the darker months if all goes well. On line teams were popular and we intend to continue with them. Members are beginning to come back, and we should try to encourage pairing up to cover holiday absences, etc.

Change of Financial Year. (This item was brought forward to place the Treasure's report in the right time frame.) No membership fees have been collected since Jan 2020. The WBU financial year runs from April to March, so the Committee felt this would be an appropriate and technically easy time to align our financial year with that of the WBU. It was proposed to move our financial year to March to February. We would collect membership again now and be able to pay the WBU subscriptions without the money lingering in the account. Brian Harden raised a procedural point of needing a special AGM to change this rule, and DS said that point would be looked at. A vote was taken and the change to the financial year was unanimously passed.

Treasurer's Report. GE was unable to attend. The accounts were presented. No issues were raised. Dave Smith proposed they were accepted, seconded by Grace Martyn, which was passed unanimously.

Annual Subscriptions. The WBU have reduced their subscription to £10 and the Committee set £5 for the Club fee, making a year's subscription of £15. This was discussed, and most attendees felt that was reasonable. Pat Walters raised the point that some members get no benefit at all from the WBU membership. DS said this year we need to collect the fees, but is open to looking at this again as the year progresses and we see how the Club fares. Ray Mardon proposed accepting, Pete Taylor seconded and the vote was passed unanimously.

Election of Officers and Committee Members. Dave Smith was proposed as Chair, Sheila Montgomery as secretary, Graham Eele as treasurer, Ray Mardon and Caroline Gawler as committee members. All were voted in unanimously.

Motions received. There was a lively discussion about all the motions. Carolyne Ogden and Jennifer Heaththorn proposed a booking system to avoid half tables and a long sit out. Everyone agreed it would be good to avoid long sit outs, but there were problems about a booking system. DS did not want any pair coming along being turned away. Stewart Anderton suggested a Whats App group to improve communication, help find last minute partners etc. DS thought that a good idea and will bring it to the committee. Pete Taylor pointed out that more tables playing would be the best answer.

Bridget Evans proposed afternoon bridge in the darker months, which will be borne in mind. She also wanted to have a venue in Chepstow. SM said that was not practical at the moment.

Richard Stevenson wanted to start play at 7pm one night to benefit working members. Many members have to travel a long way, and the meeting felt that a later start was not practical.

There was no A.o.B. items and the meeting was closed at 7.10.