

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held via Zoom on Sunday June 12th 2022 at 6:00 pm. The President (Ian Sidgwick) was in the chair and (after some chasing) 26 members attended.

1. Approval of the minutes of the 2021 AGM

The minutes were approved unanimously, with no matters arising.

2. President's Report

The President's Report (see Appendix A) had been placed on the GCBA webpages before the AGM for members to consider in their own time, and Ian skimmed through it at the AGM. There were no questions or matters arising.

3. Treasurers Report and Adoption of the Accounts for 2021-22

This report (see Appendix B) had also been placed online before the AGM and was not read out. Mike noted that the GCBA had an exceptional surplus of over £3700 in the past year. As a non-profit organisation already with a decent reserve, any ideas for development and promotion of the game which need financing will be welcomed. The meeting agreed to continue with the Membership Subscription (which had been suspended while face-to-face play was not possible) at 5p per person per game. The accounts were proposed by Roger Williams, seconded by Val Constable, and approved unanimously.

4. Election of the Independent Examiner (for the account) for the season 2022-23

Mike reported that Chris Coleman (to whom we offer our sincere thanks for many years of service) has asked to stand down, and we do not yet have any replacement.

5. Election of Officers and Officials

There were no contested elections.

Ian Sidgwick was elected unopposed again as the new President.
Paul Denning was elected unopposed again as the new Vice-President.
Andrew Bull was elected unopposed as the new Secretary.
Ben Ritacca was elected unopposed as Treasurer

6. Election of Committee Members and Shareholders

The following members were elected/re-elected to the committee without any vote required : Richard Butland, Jan Kinane, Hylary Kingham, Patrick Shields, Roger Williams.

With no other candidates suggested, Ian Sidgwick agreed to continue in the role as EBU Shareholder for the County.

7. Any Other Business : there was none

8. Winners of the events of the 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons

Again, these had been published online prior to the AGM and are copied as Appendix C here. A round of applause was delivered.

END OF MEETING

Appendix A:

GCBA PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2021/22

I start by thanking the many enthusiastic volunteers across the county, the TDs, the club officials, the teachers and the helpers that make bridge happen in Gloucestershire. Also, to all the players for giving the pleasure of their company to each other. I thank too my GCBA committee for their contributions and must give recognition to Mike Wignall who after three years steps down from being our prudent and sage Treasurer.

Like the previous year it has been an "odd one" due to Covid and this has held back some of the progress that we had hoped to make but we are now move things forward on several fronts. In spite of the pandemic, I'm pleased to report a number of successes in the county:

- Following on from success in the Midland Counties Online League in 20/21 we again did rather well to come first in the Porter, second in the Markham and fourth in the Dawes.
- An outstanding success was Gloucestershire winning the national inter county Tollemache for the first time since 2007.

Our congratulations to the teams and our thanks to the Representative Events Committee. We have a county to be proud of:

- In the Cleverly League we had 21 teams in three divisions. Division One was tied for first place by Stroud and Tudor; Division Two saw Cheltenham Z at the top and Division Three had the new team of Sharps.
- Individually we saw Patrick Shields, Dan McIntosh and their partners win the Scottish Cup; Patrick and Diana Nettleton be runners up in the EBU Year End Congress and once again our Patrick, this time with Richard Chamberlain, win the Teltscher Trials and go on to represent England in the Senior Camrose home international, coming second.
- F2F - the resumption of face-to-face play at nearly all of our clubs, including some GCBA sessions which we hope to increase, dependent on take up.
- The restart of school's bridge
- The GCBA Newsletter, Facebook page and website helping to keep us informed during a period when we could not be as "out and about".
- The variety of GCBA organised formats to complement the bridge offered in Gloucestershire.
- The holding of the GCBA instigated TD training within the county (first for many years) which was well attended by 20 prospective Directors.

Players and Player Sessions continue to recover. We are not yet at pre Covid levels but the trend is positive:

	May Club Sessions:	May Individual Players (club+EBU online):
2019	4108	670
2020	1520	264
2021	3202	482
2022	3418	622

What impresses me most is the enthusiasm that I see in so many of our members, even in the face of Covid. Without doubt it is enthusiasm and a willingness to get stuck in to help our fellow players and prospective players that leads to success. By way of examples look at clubs such as Churchdown, Tudor and Cheltenham and no doubt others too, including the bridge stakeholders that we got together recently in the north east of the county, that are finding ways to support each other and give the game a boost.

Do let us know at GCBA of your successes so that we can publicise them to inform and inspire others as well as giving deserved recognition.

I conclude with my thoughts about our overall performance as a county.

The higher-level game continues to do well: the county representative teams, the GCBA program and the Cheltenham Congress and long may this continue.

The more Grassroots game, even before Covid, I think has the most potential for growth. The non-duplicate players outnumber us and huge numbers of non players would benefit from learning the game and boost our club numbers. We need to give this serious thought and take appropriate action. GCBA / EBU are there and keen to support in this.

Ian Sidgwick

GCBA President (2021-2022)

Treasurer's Report

We started the year in the situation of bridge played only online, as it had been since mid-2020, and GCBA continued its policy of encouraging bridge in Gloucestershire by rebating the County UMS charge to member clubs organising online games. When Face to Face play became possible again, we took the view that we should be encouraging a return to play in clubs. Accordingly, we discontinued the UMS rebate and made a grant of £1,000 to Cheltenham Bridge Club in respect of expenses incurred in preparing the club for reopening and play on the premises.

Clubs are returning to F2F bridge and GCBA has organised some competitive and some training days on a F2F basis at CBC. Online bridge does however continue to be a popular alternative, and we anticipate that it may continue to detract from F2F numbers for some while to come. GCBA itself, with a wider catchment area than other local clubs, expects to continue to run a number of its regular events online for the foreseeable future, whilst aiming to organise events as F2F, whenever that proves practicable.

Online Bridge can be organised at considerably less expense than F2F bridge and as there are no location barriers to play, some price competition can be regarded as international in effect. EBU, local clubs and GCBA have taken the view that there are benefits in playing online within a local "club" environment with local organisation, players, EBU master points and NGS, and this is reflected in the table money charged by local clubs. GCBA has taken the position that it does not intend to undercut local clubs on charges to play, and regards the table charge levied for local online club events as a minimum for its directly organised events, in the same way as for F2F bridge.

The effect of this (and reduced F2F numbers) is that online bridge is making a substantial contribution to GCBA funds and F2F bridge, whether club or GCBA organised, faces a rather harder challenge in covering premises costs. We would urge you to support your local club F2F events as soon as and as often as that is possible for you. If you do play online, a "local" event will make a financial contribution to the organising club and help to secure the future of a thriving Bridge Community in Gloucestershire.

Despite my continued efforts otherwise, the financial results of this year show a surplus of over £3,500 and a consequent increase in the retained surplus, which is now at a higher level than we believe is necessary to support GCBA activity. We remain of the view that one of our prime purposes is to support our member clubs in the development and promotion of bridge within the County and Ian Sidgwick will be very pleased to hear from you if you have any projects which we can help with.

Finally, I would like to explain GCBA's table money charges for online games. In general, these take place on one of two platforms:

- BBO – the table money is set by us and is payable to BBO on registration. A proportion of this charge is remitted to GCBA (or any organising member club) via EBU. This works painlessly for the Treasurer.
- RealBridge – RB has no facilities to charge players and the platform charge is invoiced to GCBA on a monthly basis. This means that GCBA has to collect money from players and asks for bank transfers of these fees. We try to minimise the number of these transactions by seeking payment per pair/team and series. Unfortunately, a minority of players have been unable to comply, or to quote the requested reference, with the result that each payment has to be reviewed manually. The impact is that the Treasurer discourages the Tournament Director from using the RB platform and therefore your benefit from the richer platform features is reduced.

Enjoy your Bridge!

M J Wignall
Hon Treasurer

Appendix C:**Winners for 2021-22 (mostly online)**

Event	Winners
County Pairs	Joe Angseesing & Kamwar Rahim
County Knock-Out	Patrick Shields & Garry Watson, Dan McIntosh & Rob Myers
League Division 1 (C)	Patrick Shields & Garry Watson, Tom Paske & Diana Nettleton
League Division 2 (C)	Tony Letts & Roger Schofield, Allan & Judy Sanis
Cleverly Teams League	(D1) STROUD on a split tie with TUDOR (Swiss equal first) Gloucester B and Southam S
County Individual	Peter Waggett
Autumn Pairs League	Diana Nettleton & Nevena Senior
Spring Pairs League	Jack Armorgie & Patrick Shields
Summer Pairs League	Paul Denning & Patrick Shields
AGM Pairs (Steve Darke Salver)	Val Constable & Lesley Harrison
Summer Teams	Rob Lawy & Stefan Lindfors, Harry Anoyrkatis & Jim Grant
Autumn Swiss Teams	(equal) Malcom Green's team and Lesley Harrison's team
Spring Swiss Teams	John Arblaster & Mel Barlow, Nigel Edmondson & Rob Wilkinson, Patrick Phair & Jim Simons