

## GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

### Minutes for the GCBA Annual General Meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024

1. **Apologies for absence:** These were received from about a dozen members.
2. **Approval of the minutes of the 2023 AGM:** These were approved unanimously.
3. **President's report:** This (see Appendix A) was placed on the GCBA website before the AGM. Ian summarised some of the key points at the meeting:
  - Gloucestershire continues to be successful in representative events
  - The Congresses are back and were successful, especially the 9-high section at the Cheltenham Congress – many thanks to Ro Kaye and her team
  - The GCBA continues to help clubs with teaching new players, helping local groups of clubs to work together.
  - Our Youth Bridge reps continue to do great work at local schools, and supporting junior players at bridge camps and at weekend sessions at Cheltenham.
  - The amount of bridge played in Gloucestershire clubs in 2024 is heading towards the figure we saw in 2019 before the pandemic, itself our highest recorded figure.

He noted that his aim as President had been to support the grass roots of the game, and he felt that there had been progress in this area.

4. **Treasurer's report:** This (see Appendix B) had also been placed on the GCBA website, along with the annual accounts.
5. The accounts were approved unanimously.
6. **Election of the Auditor for 2024-5:** Simon Hartley was unanimously approved as the Auditor.
7. **Election of officers and officials:** The following were elected unopposed:  
  
President: Patrick Shields  
Treasurer: Michael Wright  
Secretary: Caroline Hartley  
Vice-President: Paul Denning
8. **Election of committee members:** Jan Bailey, Richard Butland, Alan Stanfield and Ian Sidgwick were elected unopposed.
9. **Election of shareholder:** Paul Denning has agreed to continue as the GCBA shareholder, and was elected unopposed

## **AOB**

10. Suggestions were welcomed regarding the forthcoming Festival of Bridge in September, and Patrick noted that he will be meeting to discuss this with Richard Barlow shortly. It was noted that the main aim is to increase visibility of the game to the public.
11. It was suggested that 1pm on Sunday is not a good time for the AGM, hence the low turnout. May may also be a bad month, as it was a hot day, but this is less easy to change as it marks a short time after the end of the financial year, which is helpful for the Treasurer and Auditor.
12. It was proposed, and agreed, that the committee should be allowed to lower (but not raise) the UMS paid to the GCBA (currently 5p per person per game).
13. It was noted that many members are not aware of what the GCBA does, and suggested that committee members should pay more visits to the clubs in the county.
14. It was agreed that we should investigate further whether people would prefer more GCBA bridge to be face-to-face or online. (It is currently about 50/50).
15. It was noted that when playing at Cheltenham BC, payment is far easier for CBC events than for GCBA events. The committee will continue to consider ways to improve this.
16. It was noted that the season's programme is available to be printed out from the website, should people wish to do so.

## **Presentation of trophies for the 2023-24 season**

The season's events and winners were as follows:

<b>Competition</b>	<b>Winners</b>
Everett Cup	Ian & Wendy Melvin Tony Hill & Alan Wearmouth
Bredon Vale Cup	North Cotswolds
Cotswold Cup	Pam Pearce & Susan Sharp
Winter Pairs	Richard Butland & Graham Cornell
Winter Teams	Patrick Shields & Garry Watson Alastair Catchpole & Jack Armorgie
County League	Richard Butland, Graham Cornell, Paul Denning, Andrew Kambites, Joe Angseesing & Richard Chamberlain
County Pairs	Alastair Catchpole & Jack Armorgie
County Knock-out	Richard Butland & Rob Stevens Paul Denning & Richard Chamberlain
Cleverly Cup (clubs league)	Stroud Badgers

At the end of the meeting, Ian thanked the outgoing committee members Andrew, Ben and Roger.

## Appendix A: President's Report

A year of progress on several fronts.

Our higher level games continue to be well attended and our representative teams success continues, coming top of the Midland County's League in division 1 and 3 and also winning the Pachabo national competition.

Events that had been sadly missing for a while made a welcome come back, including our two joint Green Pointed congresses, the Blue Pointed Newent Bowl and the Cotswold Cup. The Cheltenham Congress was notable not just for the fine efforts of Ro Kaye and her team but the outstanding attendance at the 9-high section with 18 tables. I know of other county congresses where this type of section was cancelled due to insufficient entries.

GCBA held meetings with a cluster of clubs around Stroud and also around Tewkesbury. The idea is to encourage and facilitate mostly smaller clubs to work together, pool ideas/resources and focus what support GCBA could give. For example the clubs of Tewkesbury, Twynning, Bredon and Eckington got together to do joint teaching which has added to club players and a separate "relaxed" game. GCBA gave some support to this but the achievement is the clubs. Alan Stanfield of GCBA organised a get together of our counties bridge teachers and it was great to have over 20 attendees. Teaching restarted at some clubs such as Newent and Churchdown. New club The Forest of Dean BC commenced their first teaching, supported by GCBA. Patrick Shields ran GCBA higher level teaching sessions. The North Cotswolds beginners from last year came back for more and raised further funds for a local charity. Our main charity event was again for Sue Ryder. Enjoying bridge and raising money for great causes is a wonderful combination: major opportunities for this will come in September of course with our "Festival of Bridge - it's a big deal".

GCBA committee member Jan Bailey has kept us regularly updated and has been a driver of the progress on Youth Bridge. The team (Alisons N & P, Ro, Mark et al) are to be congratulated that we now have schools bridge at schools in Cheltenham, Stroud and Woodmancote with other schools about to join in. Gloucestershire children attended bridge Youth Camps and GCBA offered financial support where needed. Children's bridge has been held at CBC on Saturday afternoons and Wednesdays during the holidays. Our initiatives here made it on to both BBC Gloucestershire local radio and the BBC website. Talking of publicity, have you seen our Facebook page?

We have data for the overall amount of bridge played in our EBU affiliated games each year from 2010. This clearly shows the recovery since Covid with us on track to roughly equal the highest previous record of 42,000 individual player games.

My thanks to all the GCBA committee members and our Chief TD Patrick. Indeed my thanks to all the many volunteers that contribute so much to the pleasure of others. This is my final President's report as I stand down after 3 years as per our constitution. What I wanted to see at the beginning was to find ways to further support the grassroots while maintaining the strong high level game. The pandemic got in the way a bit but in spite of that there has been pleasing progress in areas such as Youth, Teaching and the strong recovery in overall playing.

Ian Sidgwick

## **Appendix B: Treasurer's Report**

In the fiscal year, GCBA effectively organized the County Pair League on Real Bridge, boosting our income for the year. We also received our portion of the profits from the highly successful Gloucestershire and Herefordshire Green Pointed Congress. Additionally, the compensation received from Dean Close School for the cancellation of the original congress in May 2023 was properly accounted for in the 2023 GCBA records. However, the Cheltenham Congress held in August 2023 incurred a slight loss, resulting in no profits being recorded from that event.

GCBA provided financial support to various initiatives, including:

- EBED residential junior bridge camps.
- Supporting youth bridge with DBS checks and Mini-Bridge material.
- Support for Tewkesbury and Churchdown Bridge Clubs.
- Support for Stroud Bridge Café (to be reflected in next year's financials).

Moreover, GCBA extended its support to charitable causes, namely Sue Ryder and the EBU junior squad.

Overall, these financial activities showcase GCBA's commitment to fostering bridge enthusiasm among the youth, supporting local bridge clubs, and contributing to charitable endeavours within the community.