

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA Annual General Meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Monday 26th May 2025

1. **Apologies for absence:** These were received from about a dozen members (including Val Constable, Caroline & Simon Hartley, Allan & Judy Sanis, Ian Sidgwick, Alan Stanfield). There were 33 members in attendance.
2. **Approval of the minutes of the 2024 AGM:** These were approved unanimously.
3. **President's report:** This report is copied as Appendix A. There were no matters arising.
4. **Treasurer's report:** This (see Appendix B) had been placed on the GCBA website, along with the annual accounts. The Treasurer noted the healthy level of reserves held by the county, continuing despite offers to clubs in the county to help them with any purchases which would improve their members' playing experience. It was noted that the Association has provided financial support in a number of ways to the development of Junior Bridge.
5. The accounts were approved unanimously.
6. **Appointment of the Independent Examiner for the accounts for 2025-6:** Jim Simons who had taken on the role of the Independent Examiner for the accounts just approved, has agreed to continue and was unanimously appointed.
7. **Ratification of membership subscription:** after receiving permission to do so from the last AGM, the committee lowered the County UMS charge from 5p per game to 1p per game in September 2024. The committee proposed retaining this position, and also leaving the fee for Direct membership to the GCBA at £5. The attendees agreed.
8. **Election of officers and officials:** The following were elected unopposed:

President: Patrick Shields
Treasurer: Michael Wright
Secretary: <vacancy>
Vice-President: Paul Denning
9. **Election of committee members:** Jan Bailey, Steve Bunker, Richard Butland, Jim Edwards and Alan Stanfield were elected unopposed. There remains space for one more committee member.
10. **Election of shareholder:** Paul Denning has agreed to continue as the GCBA shareholder, and was elected unopposed.
11. **Ratification of Changes to the GCBA Constitution:** the proposed changes to the constitution had been on the website to be inspected for some week. Patrick highlighted the major changes as
 - Simplifying the right of someone to vote at a GCBA AGM/EGM (anyone with primary or secondary allegiance to the county, registered with the EBU), and simplification of the right for a club to become GCBA affiliated (now a consequence of EBU affiliation and the form filling associated with that).
 - When an AGM is not quorate and it has to be re-convened, the number present at the reconvened meeting shall constitute a quorum.

- Neither the President nor the Treasurer may hold their positions for more than three consecutive years.

The proposed change to the Objects of the Association (“To promote bridge in all its forms” was queried, with concerns about whether rubber bridge for money stakes would constitute gambling and lead to issues. The committee agreed to investigate alternative wording and to consult with the EBU and other County Associations. Subject to that happening, the meeting approved the revised constitution.

12. **AOB.** No matters were raised.

12. Presentation of trophies for the 2024-25 season

The season’s events and winners were as follows:

Competition	Winners
Steve Darke Salver	Andrew Bull & James Hastie
Everett Cup	Liz Giles & Richard Seymour Stan Powell & Roger Williams
Bredon Vale Cup	Cheltenham
Cotswold Cup	Gundi & Steve Bunker Helen Nightingale & Tim Russell
Winter Pairs	Diane Kurbalija & Patrick Shields
Winter Teams	Steve Sasanow & Nick Haynes Kanwar Rahim & John Stirrup
Rank Xerox Trophy	Stroud
County League	Patrick Shields & Garry Watson Jack Armorgie & Alastair Catchpole
County 9-High Pairs	Vince Milner & Pat Barbour
County Pairs	Alastair Catchpole & Steve Evans
County Knock-out	Patrick Shields & Garry Watson Jack Armorgie & Alastair Catchpole
Cleverly Cup (clubs league)	Stroud Badgers

Appendix A: President's Report

I must welcome many old faces here today but also some new faces to this AGM, and declare that you are all most welcome, both to the meeting and to the bridge game which follows. I know there are a number fishing for partners, so don't run off too quickly at the end if you are able to play.

I must start off – lest I forget – with a thank you to those who make the GCBA the organisation which it is. I want to say thank you to Caroline Hartley who was our County Secretary for much of the year and was a great force for improvement, and you'll see some of that later in this meeting. I must also make mention of Garry Watson who generates the monthly newsletter that we publish on the website, and say a thank you also to Ian Sidgwick who has been on the committee for a number of years now, and is standing down at this point. There's also the rest of the committee and others too (like Ro Kaye, our safeguarding lead), but I can't extend the list without missing someone, so our collective thanks must go to those I have named and to all the others who have contributed.

It might be appropriate at this point to mention three major friends of the GCBA whom we have lost in the past year. It is sometime since we saw Peter Walker playing bridge, but when I started in this county he was a major force, Chief TD for many years, and the County benefited enormously from his efforts. Two of our more recent regular players died in the winter just passed – Richard Harris and Pete Jackson. We are sorry to lose them.

The existing county players have performed well over the past year. Richard Chamberlain & I representing England Seniors, and Paul Denning and Diana Kurbalija for the Welsh Mixed, played in the European Championships in Denmark last summer. The same pairs played in the Home Internationals for Seniors earlier this month, and in that the Welsh team were the winners. The County team reached the final of the EBU's Tollemache Cup again this year, but lost its sparkle when it got there! It has however dominated the Midlands Counties League coming first in the Dawes division and with a second and a third place in the others. This year saw the first introduction of an NGS 9-High match within the MCL framework, and we were one of the few counties to have a match at that level.

That was mostly about the high end of county performance, but the role of the County is to support all Bridge players in the county and this we do try to do. We have several events where the standard is restricted, and the numbers at these are increasing slowly, but it is proving difficult to grow this community as fast as we would like. The County – led here by Jan Bailey with too many helpers to list – has done an enormous job in starting bridge activities in schools across the county, as well as a monthly Sunday club here in Cheltenham. We now have schools in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Stroud all active – and we have at least two new schools in the pipeline for the autumn. This County is pushed as an example to other counties showing what can be achieved. If you know of any candidate players in the schools age range, please do let us know.

There's lots of other "business as usual" to report on. The County programme has weekly sessions every Monday – half face-to-face and half online. We held the Cotswold Cup in April in support of Sue Ryder and raised over £400 as a result. Stroud BC is going forward to represent the County in the Garden Cities trophy next month. The amount of bridge being played in Gloucestershire continues to grow. The mission of the GCBA is, of course, to make that grow faster!

Patrick Shields, GCBA President. 26 May 25

Appendix B: Treasurer's Report

1. **Income** overall was broadly similar at £11,148, against £11,755 in FY2024

- League Pairs entry fees were apparently up by £1,350. There were three Pairs leagues in FY2025. In FY2024, the Summer 23 Pairs league was on BBO, and the income was processed as Table Money. This resulted in an apparent increase in League Pairs entry income.
- The Cheltenham Congress is the closing entry, as future events are to be run by CBC.
- The bank deposit interest of £106 follows our decision to lodge monies, not immediately needed, in a Barclays deposit account.

2. **Expenses:** there was an increase of £973 in the CBC room hire fees to £4,408, caused by the change in the CBC charge basis from a room fee to taking all the table money. This was the main increase in expenses this year

- Representation costs at £1,761 were at a similar level to the FY2024 charges of £1,678. The FY 2025 costs were

Inter Counties Finals	£200
Garden Cities Trophy	£239
Corwen entry	£56
Pachabo	£107
Edgar Foster Cups	£52
Tollemache	£1,107

3. **Payments to Charities:** these included £330 to Friends of Stow in April, and a £166 donation to the Cancer Research Fund as part of the Bridge - It's a Big Deal Festival, in addition to which

- In April, we supported the Stroud café event.
- In November we assisted Tewkesbury Bridge Club by a grant of £500 to help them finance their £1,831 purchase of the Bridgemate system
- In FY2024, we had lent Churchdown Bridge Club £3,000. They repaid £400 by March 2024, and paid off the balance in February 2025. A good deal for both Churchdown and GCBA.
- Our main charitable spend this year has been to support Junior Bridge. Costs in the year were £1,442.

4. **Balance Sheet**

- Bank accounts: The bank balance has grown from £21,000 to £25,000, despite our charitable donations. Of that £25,000, we have £20,000 earning interest in a deposit account.
- Members' deposit accounts: As a result of the confusion in FY2024, we closed the Members' accounts, with the exception of one retained because of geographical constraints.

5. **Reserves**

Even after

- writing down the value of the trophies,
- the adjustment in respect of the previous year, and
- the deficit this year after the charitable donations,

the funds are in a healthy state.

Michael Wright, 9th May 2025