

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Thursday 1st October 2020.

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Ian Sidgwick, Nigel Mortimer, Roger Williams and Judith Sanis (CBC rep).

Apologies received from Richard Butland and Jan Kinane.

Finance

1. Mike reported that we had received the advertised £50 bonus from the EBU for virtual club payments, and had been advised of the amount they owe us in respect of our share of the fees paid by members participating in GCBA games on BBO. Everything except the Teams League and the 9-high Swiss Pairs is now charged. We will be charging fees for the Learners' Duplicate, so as not to undercut clubs. Overall, the income and outgoings should roughly balance.
2. Teams in the Cleverly League teams have been told the procedure we wish them to use to pay their subs; Ian will check on this in a couple of weeks.
3. Forthcoming anticipated expenses include the Tollemache entry fee (£352) and our contribution to UMS payments for the Midlands County League.

GCBA programme

4. The Monday night Swiss Teams, Pairs League and Teams League, and the other Swiss Teams and 9-high Swiss Pairs are all running smoothly. We are looking to arrange to have more people capable of running the sessions (besides Patrick).
5. We are intending to start the County Knock-Out in October. There's no obvious way to charge for this.
6. There is a U3A session planned on October 16th under the CBC banner. It was noted that Leicestershire have had a similar session, and Lincolnshire have been active in trying to work with the U3A. It was felt this was something to encourage, as it may encourage U3A players to join an affiliated club. Nigel noted that various of the learners at Chipping Sodbury would also play at U3A for friendly practice sessions. It was agreed that we would wait to see how the session on the 16th goes before pursuing this further.

Playing online

7. Patrick has tried out playing on Real Bridge, and noticed several other CBC players there. It differs notably from BBO in that it has audio/video of the players. He found it has pluses and minuses when compared to BBO, though we can expect the platforms to converge as time goes on.
8. Oxford are organising games in which BBO is used alongside Zoom, though it was noticed that this could be bandwidth heavy (less so if just audio is used). Judy said that she'd tried playing with this set-up, and had found it clunky, though she felt some would prefer its more social nature, and it could be a good idea for Gentle Bridge.
9. The proposal from last month that we pair up with Oxfordshire to have a committee of two people to investigate any allegations of online cheating is now in place.
10. It was noted that some people are using the "Undo" button to cover changing their mind, not just for accidentally clicking on the wrong card/bid as it is intended for. On the other hand, some players are not aware of the button's existence. It was felt that we should avoid being sticklers with the rules here, in the interest of encouraging friendly play. Nigel noted that he is

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putting together an e-mail to inform the Tudor bridge club's members about best BBO usage, and agreed to send it to the GCBA committee so it can go into the newsletter, and be shared with other clubs.

11. It was noted again that we would like to find and encourage new online teachers to cover areas of the county where teaching is limited. It was felt that this would be best done via the existing teachers and clubs. Patrick has a meeting planned with CBC about online teaching, and Nigel agreed to attend as well.

Survey

12. Patrick has put together a summary of the responses to the survey to put on the website and in the newsletter. He asked the committee to let him know of any comments in the responses that they would like to see in the summary.
13. There was discussion as to whether we should be concerned about the significant number of people who are unaware of the work done by EBU and GCBA - while to some extent we want to publicise what we do, we don't want people to feel we are forcing information down their throats.
14. It was agreed that direct communications work better if we have something new to announce. The suggestion was made that we try running a county-wide handicap Pairs event in December, maybe with pairs representing their club, and that we should try to make the invitation look festive.

Other business

15. Following our nomination of Andrew Kambites, it has been confirmed that he has been awarded the EBU Silver Award for his outstanding contribution to English Bridge. We are considering when would be a suitable occasion for presenting the award to him.
16. We discussed the role of clubs in the GCBA/EBU structure - EBU is felt to be member-oriented rather than club-oriented. There is no official position for clubs in GCBA (unlike some counties, which have club reps on the committee), and it was felt that it would be good if we could get the clubs more involved. There was some discussion about whether having some of the strongest players in the county playing in the GCBA sessions rather than local club sessions might be making it harder for other players to progress from club bridge to county bridge.
17. Patrick asked that we pass on anything we'd like to have in the newsletter to himself or to Garry Watson.
18. It was agreed that there would be little value in having a delayed AGM, and no push from members to consider it. We need to consider possible candidates for the committee for 2021, especially as new officers will be required.
19. There is no imminent prospect of face-to-face bridge restarting. It was felt that GCBA would probably wait until bridge resumes at CBC before resuming our Monday night sessions.
20. Ian (as EBU shareholder) had had a message regarding provision of nominations for, and in due course voting for the EBU selection committee and board of directors, and can pass on the details if anyone is interested.
21. The next meeting will be on Thursday 5th November.