

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

## Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Monday 2nd December 2019.

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Ian Sidgwick, Richard Butland (REC chair) and Judy Sanis (CBC rep).

### Finance

1. It was agreed that there should be prizes at the special event we are holding on 30th December, using handicap scoring.
2. There is concern that the CBC insurance doesn't cover GCBA events (or CBC staff at such events). Mike has agreed to check the possible options for this.
3. EBED have requested that we have a county education point of contact. Various possible names were suggested, and it was agreed that Patrick should have a meeting with the county's teachers (as proposed previously) and ask for volunteers.

### EBU AGM

4. Patrick reported back on some issues of interest:
  - a) Membership numbers: Most people are now taking up the game in their 50s or 60s, so can only be expected to be active players in the EBU for about 20 years; hence we need an intake of 5-10% annually to maintain membership levels. While large clubs such as CBC are still flourishing, smaller clubs may struggle in the future. It was noted that clubs tend to fold when they have a lack of directors or scorers (or just lack the critical mass of regular players); the surveys being done in GCBA should help us to see where problems could lie in the future.
  - b) It was noted that about 15% of EBU members haven't played in the last 12 months, and a further 15% had played less than monthly. Also, while membership is currently stable at about 54,000, about 4000 people cease to be members each year; this would correspond to about 100 people in Gloucestershire.
  - c) EBED: They are moving away from publishing books towards online learning, entering into partnerships with other bridge sites. There was a reminder that the "D" in EBED stands for Development, and it was felt that this isn't being fulfilled to the same extent as Education.

### Other Business

5. Patrick noted that EBED provide support for teachers and classes (even funding to rent premises can be bid for).. It was suggested that we could provide funding for teachers to join EBTA for their first year - this entitles their pupils to free EBU membership for 1 year, along with various other free materials.
6. CBC and GCBA have both had trial sessions where robots were used so players didn't have to sit out for a round when there was a half table, and it was agreed that we should try more such sessions in general pairs events. Playing against the robots would be optional for each pair. It would also be possible to have a robot standby.
7. None of the GCBA committee is available for the CBC meeting on Thursday 5th. Judy agreed to report back on any business of relevance to us.

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## Engagement with clubs

8. Roger's survey, which he is co-ordinating in South Gloucestershire and Ian and Rahim are in the North, has had a lot of replies. We intend to consider the feedback more fully at the next meeting.
9. Patrick reported that he had contacted the neighbouring counties to inform them of this initiative. Those that had replied were happy for us to involve their clubs near the Gloucestershire border.
10. Ian gave a report on ideas for improving our engagement. These included a GCBA representative attending a session at each club at least twice a year, and if possible attending each club's AGM.
11. He also noted that the clubs could be divided into clusters: there are about 8 clubs in Central Gloucestershire (around Cheltenham and Gloucester), about 9 in the South (around Stroud and Wotton) and about half a dozen in the north. He suggested that it would be beneficial to have a GCBA contact for each cluster, to keep the clubs informed of the help we could give regarding e.g. technology and teaching, and encouraging local activity such as inter-club events (which could also be supported by GCBA).
12. Further suggestions included an annual newsletter (on the lines of the one produced recently by Avon) for each cluster, advertising the learning opportunities - this could be circulated beyond the bridge clubs at libraries, U3A, tennis/golf clubs etc - and offering to present talks at such places. It was noted that unaffiliated clubs, in particular U3A clubs, are being offered free affiliation to EBU for 4 months.
13. The suggestions were generally approved; we will need to decide whether we should try out some of the ideas in certain regions, and in what sort of timeframe we intend to implement them.