

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

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

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Ian Sidgwick, Roger Williams, Richard Butland (REC chair), Ro Kaye (CBC rep) and Alison Nicholson (GCBA Youth Officer)

GCBA Youth Bridge and Bridge Education

1. The main focus of the meeting was the proposals made by Alison Nicholson for the future of Youth Bridge in Gloucestershire, and she was invited to the meeting to present her case.
2. Alison outlined her credentials for the role: she had been the Development Officer with EBU, so had seen the efforts made throughout the country, which would often be successful in the short term, but unsustainable, often relying on too few people. She had had considerable success in Oxfordshire at getting a large number of volunteers to help out at schools with the teaching of mini-bridge and bridge, and at developing their young players. She noted the importance of achieving a critical mass of players, as there will inevitably be players who drop out at each level.
3. She proposed that she should follow the same model in Gloucestershire, aiming eventually to have bridge played at 40 schools in the county with 120 volunteers supporting that. This was greeted with enthusiasm by the committee. Ro reported that Alison also had the support of Cheltenham Bridge Club: they are considering hosting end-of-term events for Youth Bridge and not charging for rent or use of boards, rather than giving a grant as in previous years.
4. The main requirement Alison has from GCBA is for funding to purchase the kit needed for each school - this means an initial investment to buy the boards, cards etc, and then ongoing running costs. It was agreed that we should commit to providing £500 initially, with the expectation of providing further support following a progress report, and after establishing the arrangements with CBC. It was noted that the DBS costs are funded by EBED.
5. There was some further discussion on the teaching of bridge to adults. It was felt that clubs are generally in the best position to do this, and are willing to do so to try to boost membership, but that GCBA should be concerned about the areas where there was no club teaching.
6. It was also noted that there is no functional teachers' association in England, and there was discussion as to whether this was something GCBA was keen on promoting. It was generally agreed that the Teacher Association made little different to our mission to promote bridge, and we would be better placed to help at the "classroom to clubroom" level.

Other Business

7. The South Cotswolds Bridge Club in Tetbury have asked for help funding the purchase of a Duplimate dealing machine. It was agreed that they need to clarify the request: do they want a loan or a grant; can they specify which other clubs would be interested in sharing the use of the machine. However, we are in principle happy to help out. Patrick to respond to SCBC.
8. It was agreed that we do not need to have official signed copies of the monthly minutes.
9. It was suggested that we might need a fire warden identified at each session at the club; this is currently the responsibility of the director and is often overlooked. It was suggested that we should have a drill in the near future.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

10. The Cleverly Teams League for 2019-20 is up and running, with 18 teams in three divisions.
11. The proposal described last month regarding training sessions - that they be moved to Wednesday, and that the boards played and commentary be supplied to Stroud Bridge Club - has been informally agreed.
12. Patrick reported that Alan Wearmouth has taken over the role of arranging the Stanley Shield and has made good progress, with the aim being that this should take place in January. It has been agreed that any surplus money should go to Youth Bridge.
13. Roger has been developing a spreadsheet of information regarding the membership levels and amount of bridge played at clubs in the county. It was suggested that this will be a large task and he should try to find volunteers to help him.
14. Paul Denning has agreed to take on the responsibility for mapping out the relationship between this year's competitions and the trophies and honours boards.
15. EBU has declared an objective to run a membership campaign, but had not worked out how to set itself any targets. There was discussion regarding what we thought the targets should be (e.g. for number of active players, or number of sessions played), could we identify appropriate targets for Gloucestershire. Another relevant question is the amount of bridge which needs to be played to keep EBU viable.