

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Monday 3rd June 2019.

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Richard Harris, Ian Sidgwick, Roger Williams and Richard Butland (REC chair).

Finances

1. Mike had nothing to report regarding finances, as Jim Simons (the previous Treasurer) has been away so there had been no progress with the handover.

Pianola

2. Mike had e-mailed Pianola and received no reply. Pianola currently costs us £360 per year, a higher rate than clubs pay, and it was suggested that we settle for just using Bridgewebs, as they now provide all the facilities we need for £72 per year. This would require us to re-create e-mail groups; Patrick has done so for training groups and said that there are about 10 more groups which would have to be re-created. He will send a test e-mail to the training list to confirm that the process is working [Note: this has now been done], and suggested that the Cleverly League should be used as the next test case. It was noted that we need to be careful regarding what information is held on Bridgewebs, and on the access to it.

Committee Responsibilities

3. Jim had been the GCBA financial rep for the Cheltenham Congress, but Mike noted that (according to the minutes) he had reported in the March meeting that this will be run solely by CBC from now on. It was felt that it would be inappropriate for GCBA to provide our Green Point allocation to this event while compensating Herefordshire financially for our failure to provide a GP allocation for our shared event. There is a meeting soon of the Congress Committee at which the position will be confirmed.
4. Patrick reported that the Recorder is happy to continue in this role, and that Anne Swannell is happy to continue to provide the catering. Richard Butland confirmed that he will continue to lead the Representative Events Committee.
5. Alan Wearmouth has agreed to continue as the GCBA representative at the Green Point event at Ross-on-Wye. Mike's belief is that Jim intends to continue as the GCBA financial representative - he agreed to confirm this.
6. Patrick is happy to continue as the EBU shareholder and as the GCBA Youth Bridge rep.
7. There is currently no GCBA rep attending the meetings the CBC committee. Richard Butland volunteered to attend the next CBC meeting (on 10th July) if he's free [Note: Richard has confirmed that he is free then]. Similarly, since Roger left the CBC committee there has been no CBC rep attending the GCBA meetings.
8. The return friendly match against Avon will take place in Bristol on 18th August. Patrick organised the Gloucestershire team (which contained a mixture of strong players, club regulars and new players) last year, and would like to hand over the responsibility for this year. It was suggested that he approach a member from Stroud as a possible organiser; meanwhile, the committee were asked to think of other possible candidates [Note: John Councer has now agreed to take over this role].
9. It was agreed that we would hold an extra, longer meeting on 19th June to decide on the programme of evening events and Strategy, and Patrick will produce draft versions a week in advance.

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Working with Clubs

10. Judy Sanis and Patrick have a visit planned to Tudor Bridge Club in Chipping Sodbury (which transferred from Avon to Gloucestershire recently) - the plan is that they will talk to the organisers about the club, then play a session there.
11. Ian had put together a map showing the large number of unaffiliated clubs in the county that he was aware of. Patrick noted that in some counties, unaffiliated clubs are not listed on the county website. We felt that we should continue to list them, but separately from the affiliated clubs. It was agreed that the GCBA Strategy should continue to include the intention to work with unaffiliated clubs as well as affiliated ones, though the latter will get priority regarding financial support.
12. We would like to offer these clubs the chance to affiliate (and provide assistance if needed), and if they don't want to, find out why not, as well as letting their members know of our existence and what we can offer including:
 - advice on organising and directing events
 - competitions
 - the Recorder service for dealing with problems
 - the chance for publicity for clubs on the county website.It was agreed we should develop a package to advertise this, though it was noted that there is a tendency for all our communications not to get beyond the club's POCs.
13. It was also noted that in some areas of the county, it would not be obvious for a beginner to find out how to get lessons; typing "learn bridge in <town>" works for (say) Cheltenham, but not in various other places.
14. The EBU has provided us with a list of the county's affiliated clubs and the average number of tables played there per week; these were generally fairly stable. They are also organising materials to help failing clubs, and we discussed what we should be doing to help. It was suggested that a description of "best practices" carried out by successful clubs could be helpful to less successful ones. It was also suggested that we should help clubs try to avoid meeting on the same evening as other local clubs.