

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Thursday 4th February 2021

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Richard Butland, Jan Kinane, Nigel Mortimer, Ian Sidgwick and Roger Williams.

Finance and Programme

1. Mike reported that we continue to receive money via the EBU from BBO events, and that most of the money due from Real Bridge play has now been collected. He noted that there is no need to raise the price for Real Bridge.
2. It was suggested that we should pay for a Zoom Pro licence for online teaching or for an online AGM. Nigel has a licence for his online teaching, and Cheltenham Bridge Club also have a licence, so it was agreed that GCBA would aim to use one of these if necessary. It was noted that Real Bridge have said that they intend to provide the facility to broadcast for seminars, but currently do not have this, and hence Nigel had not found Real Bridge useful for online teaching.

Online Bridge

3. The Midlands Counties 8-high No-Fear Swiss Teams had been success, with 45 teams including 9 from Gloucestershire, and the Midland Counties Working Group plans to run a similar event every 2 months. As the January event made a profit, the next event (in March) will have a professional director. It was agreed that Gloucestershire teams should pay their own entry fee of £8 in the future. Patrick will ask Richard Seymour if he would be willing to co-ordinate the Gloucestershire entrants.
4. The demonstration session of Real Bridge for Chipping Camden had been run successfully, and they are now closer to being able to run their own online sessions.
5. Patrick reported that Alison Nicholson had found that quite a number of GCBA clubs had no online activity, so some players may not be aware of the online bridge available - we should try to help out anyone we hear of in this situation. Nigel noted that some Malvern players were now playing online at Tudor BC. It was suggested that clubs be informed of the Chipping Camden session, as they might want to try something similar.
6. There are 3 inter-county events for which we will need to select teams: The Pachabo Cup (for teams of 4), the Corwen Trophy (for pairs) and the Garden Cities Trophy (for teams of 8).
 - For the Pachabo Cup, we agreed to select the team through the County Knock-out as usual.
 - For the Corwen Trophy, we will use the County Pairs championship as usual, and we agreed to stick to the usual format of having qualifiers run by clubs (with a GCBA qualifier for players at inactive clubs). It was also agreed that we should charge the participants in the final of the County Pairs, and run it on BBO.
 - For the Garden Cities Trophy, we have recently had a CBC team; it was agreed that we should solicit entries from other clubs.
7. Patrick noted that it would be useful to have a GCBA Master Point Secretary, as it is a non-trivial task for him to get the master points processed for some of our competitions.
8. It was agreed that we should run a GCBA Easter Pairs event on Real Bridge on Easter Monday along the same lines as the Christmas Pairs event: free entry, 24 boards from 6 pm.
9. CBC are starting to plan their annual congress (which is jointly owned with GCBA, but CBC do nearly all the preparation) online this year - we are happy with this set-up, but would like an official GCBA rep on the committee. Patrick will ask Peter Waggett if he would be willing.

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10. It was agreed that we should try to run the annual Ross-on-Wye congress (which we run jointly with Herefordshire CBA) online in July, and that we would be happy for Sarah Amos's group to run the event, as well as to direct it, though this would need to be agreed with Herefordshire (as it will increase their fee).

Representative Events Committee

11. Richard had send out his proposed new version of the Terms of Reference of the REC. It was agreed that they reflect what was suggested at the previous meeting, and they were approved.

Bridge Teaching

12. Patrick had had a discussion with Alison Nicholson. She feels that coordinating GCBA bridge teaching overall (teaching new adult players, helping the development of existing players and youth bridge) is a large task, but is happy to co-ordinate the youth bridge as the County Youth Officer.
13. There are potentially more people currently with time to learn bridge, but many teachers in the county (outside Cheltenham) are fairly isolated and may need support. It was felt that it is more the responsibility of clubs to support the teaching of the game, and that we should be trying to help the clubs as needed. The EBED teacher training has re-started, and it was suggested that we should ask Gloucestershire clubs if they have people who would be interested in taking the course.
14. It was noted that the list of EBTA teachers on the GCBA website is not especially useful, as it is incomplete. Patrick noted that some counties had a better online presence (e.g. Yorkshire have the website 'learnbridgeyorkshire.co.uk').
15. Nigel noted that it is difficult for people to start learning online (especially if they have no experience of trick-taking games). It was felt that in the future there will be both online and face-to-face teaching, as online learning has certain advantages (easier to find a casual game for practice, and can have recorded lessons to watch).

AOB

16. Patrick suggested that we might try grading our various competitions in the manner of ski-runs (green - blue - red - black - orange), by NGS average ratings. He noted that a first stab at doing this showed up a gap in the available competitions, with most club events being "blue" (or "green" for Gentle Bridge), while the GCBA Monday night matches would be "black" - there is a gap at the "red" (54-56) level, making club to county a big step. It was noted that while the Monday night games are popular, they do lead to many of the best players in Gloucestershire not playing at club events.
17. The issue of the Stanley Trophy was raised, as the intention was to make continued use of the trophy. Patrick will talk to Alan Wearmouth about the idea of holding an online event.
18. The next meeting will be on Thursday 4th March.