

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Monday 4th March 2019.

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Jim Simons (Treasurer), Richard Harris, Paul Denning, Anne Swannell, Roger Williams (CBC rep), Judy Sanis (Observer), Mike Wignall (special invite as provisional Treasurer). Apologies were received from Richard Butland (REC chair).

Finances

1. Jim reported that the attempts to change the Bank Mandates were continuing to run round in circles, with bank employees constantly changing their opinion on what paperwork is required. He will continue the battle.
2. Jim distributed an interim set of accounts, but pointed out that the large surplus was illusory as various large payments were due. He pointed out that reporting objectively on the in-year progress of the finances of the Association would always be difficult, due to shifting dates for lumpy payments, but he agreed to make recommendations for how we handle this at year-end to make cross-year comparisons more meaningful. It was agreed that the GCBA balance is sufficient for this not to be an issue currently.
3. Mike confirmed that he is willing to take over as Treasurer next year.
4. Universal Membership System fees: Jim suggested that the GCBA's current balance means there is no need to increase these; however, they provide a sizeable proportion of our income - cutting the Pay to Play charge by a penny would cost us £300 to £400 per year. While we could afford this, it was suggested that this reduction might be too small to encourage clubs to affiliate. It was noted that about £1000 of GCBA funds have been spent on supporting clubs, and that social teams events have expanded recently. Patrick noted that we need to decide whether to reduce the charge at our April meeting.

Catering

5. The new system had gone to plan at the Cotswold Cup, with all food taken away after the event as required.
6. Patrick raised the issue of GCBA's liability in the event of (say) food poisoning or an accident occurring at a weekend event, and asked if anyone had any contacts or knowledge of this area. He will consult with other counties and clubs. It was suggested that we should seek advice from the EBU, and enquire whether they organise insurance for counties.
7. The next weekend event is the County Pairs. Patrick confirmed with Anne that normal light lunch style catering would be required.

Engraving of Trophies/Honours Boards

8. It was noted at previous meetings that some of the trophies and boards will soon have no space for more names to be engraved. Paul reported that most of the trophies still need to be returned and he will request that this happens during March. The full discussion of this issue is deferred until April.
9. Roger asked if we had views on displaying trophies at the club, as has been done in the past with trophies won in external events. It was noted that there is nowhere obvious for trophies to be displayed at present.

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Local Clubs

10. Patrick has informed the committee of the Tudor Bridge Club in Chipping Sodbury that we would be happy for them to switch affiliation from Avon to Gloucestershire; they now need to confirm with their membership at their AGM that they will make the switch.
11. South Cotswolds Bridge Club in Tetbury are intending to become affiliated to the EBU, and it was agreed that if requested we will help them to pay for automatic scoring. It was suggested that we should be more actively publicising how GCBA helps bridge clubs in Gloucestershire. Judy and Patrick will take action through the web site and newsletter.
12. The issue of unaffiliated clubs had arisen at the Midland Counties Working Group, and we discussed the extent to which we should be trying to persuade clubs to affiliate. It was felt to be enough that we should keep clubs informed of the potential benefits (as for the Tetbury club mentioned above).
13. Patrick has spoken to some clubs about the idea of having a visitors' night for members of other clubs, but finding a suitable night was proving difficult in South Gloucestershire, though the new Tetbury club could give another option. Gloucester is the obvious venue for north-west Gloucestershire. It was agreed that we should aim to have these taking place in each region of the county every few months.

Supporting Bridge

14. We had recently had an e-mail from the Keep Bridge Alive campaign, inviting us to help with the crowd-funding of research into the sociology of bridge at Stirling University. The general feeling was that we were happy generally to support the promotion of bridge, but were unsure that this research is the best way to do so.
15. It was noted that Cheltenham BC was doing a lot to support bridge locally, and we discussed whether GCBA should do more. Jim said he thought that the local clubs are the best place to promote bridge, while counties are more suited to supporting youth bridge (as we do), and that we should be encouraging clubs to realise that the ones which do most to promote the game are the ones which are thriving. Patrick will check again whether the U3A clubs would like any support.

Other Business

16. Richard gave an update of the results of the Cleverly Cup. It was noted that advertising these more widely would also be a useful way to publicise the GCBA.
17. Having hosted the friendly match against Avon last year, it was agreed that we should travel to Bristol for a return match this year. It was noted that we should check that both counties had the same selection policy to give a better chance of a closer result this year.
18. Patrick reported that no progress has been made regarding the Stanley Shield.
19. Only four teams (of eight) had entered the Rank Xerox trophy, though clubs had been informed it was taking place. Judy noted that when we have made a special effort to encourage people to take part in an event, we've been successful, and it was agreed that our publicity strategy should include a commitment to do this for a couple of events every year.
20. Patrick noted that we need to discuss our use of Pianola at the next meeting.