

## **GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION**

### **Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

In attendance were Paul Denning (Vice-President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Ben Ritacca (Treasurer), Patrick Shields, Richard Butland, Alan Stanfield, Jan Bailey, and Alison Nicolson (who had been invited in her role as County Youth Officer).

For most of the meeting, Alison was giving a report on the progress of Youth Bridge in the county for the last 4 years.

#### **Youth Bridge report**

1. Alison took over as the County Youth Officer in 2019, following her successful work in Berks/Bucks/Oxfordshire. Unfortunately, early progress in Gloucestershire in March 2020 had to be delayed for a long time due to the Covid-19 outbreak.
2. Subsequently, she has been trying to encourage bridge in various schools and other groups:
  - Following further taster events at Woodmancote School, bridge has been run there as an after-school club for nearly two years.
  - At Cheltenham Ladies College, bridge has been an 'enrichment subject' for a couple of years, but unfortunately has been held on Friday afternoon, so many of the girls only play for about a term. The current teacher there is keen, so there is hope that they will start having an after-school club there.
  - At Denmark Road High School, bridge was again taught as an enrichment subject, and there was a good take-up initially, but Alison has lost contact with the teacher there, so momentum has been lost.
  - Alison Pritchard has been successful in organising schools bridge in Stroud, and in keeping up the number of volunteers. She is currently running a club at Foxmoor School.
  - Another school + youth group in Oxfordshire (near to Gloucestershire) has also started playing bridge with GCBA assistance.
  - Jan, Ro Kaye and Mark Giard have been running the youth bridge group at Cheltenham Bridge Club since last summer on Saturdays (and on Wednesdays in the school holidays).
  - There have also been a few requests from grandparents for help in organising bridge at their grandchildren's schools.
3. Alison noted that overall this has been a slow start, and she intends to push on. There is a taster session arranged in Charlton Kings in July, and Cleeve's School has shown interest. It was noted that summer taster sessions (after exams) would fit in well with this year's September festival of bridge.

4. It was noted that the current method for running bridge in schools requires a lot of volunteers – and that it is helpful to find younger volunteers as elderly volunteers will usually be forced to retire after a few years. Alison will try asking for volunteers from the list of local teachers. It was generally agreed that teachers should be left to teach in the manner that best suits them and the pupils, and that it was usually most successful for a group of friends to run a school's bridge. It was also suggested that we ask for more volunteers at club bridge evenings.
5. It is difficult to start people playing bridge at university, as they only have a short time to learn the game there, though Cardiff University have had some success lately. Similarly, it is difficult to teach the game at secondary schools which have short lunch breaks and where many of the pupils don't live close enough to be able to stay behind at the end of the day.
6. Some suggestions were made for encouraging new schools to take up the game, such as:
  - Getting the game mentioned at head teachers' meetings
  - Advertising the game in PTA magazines

#### **Other business**

7. Ian had e-mailed to report that we now have Richard Barlow as GCBA manager for the 'Bridge – It's a Big Deal' festival. Ian has also spoken with club officials from Chipping Camden and Winchcombe about the festival.
8. It was noted that the GCBA website should be updated to list the Forest of Dean club as affiliated.
9. Paul reported that the electronic honours boards are in progress.