

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

In attendance were Ian Sidgwick (President), Paul Denning (Vice-President), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Andrew Bull, Richard Butland, Jan Bailey, Hylary Kingham, Nigel Mortimer, Roger Williams and Judy Sanis (CBC Representative), plus Ro Kaye the County Safeguarding Office. Apologies were received from Alan Wearmouth, invited as Chair of the Representative Events Committee, and Patrick Shields (Secretary).

GCBA Safeguarding

1. Ro had been invited to brief the committee on Safeguarding issues; the points she made included:
 - a. The rules apply to situations involving children and those involving vulnerable adults. All forms of physical contact should be avoided and situations where a single adult is alone in a room with a vulnerable person are to be avoided.
 - b. The rules are about keeping all parties safe, as much for the staff or committee members as it is for the vulnerable person.
 - c. Photographs and email contacts for a vulnerable person all require permission of the responsible adult (parent for children) and are never allowed in the case of foster children.
 - d. There are situations (suspicion of FGM or force marriage) where there is a legal requirement that you contact the police.

[Ro left the meeting at this point; The CBC SafeGuarding Policy adopted by the GCBA [can be found here](#)]

Finance

2. Mike ran through a number of issues related to finance -
 - a. All trophies have been retrieved by Paul & Mike from Cheltenham BC and a list is being prepared of all trophies and current status. The Secretary will be given the list to hold. An appropriate list will also be prepared for the balance sheet. Hylary asked about trophy engraving and the costs involved; Roger reported that Cheltenham BC use a High Street firm, and Paul reported he gets all county engraving done in Tewkesbury.
 - b. For the record, the Gloucestershire-Herefordshire Green Point weekend was run by Sarah Amos, and resulted in a remittance of £1096 which was divided equally between the two counties. Although Covid introduced some serious financial risks to events planned face-to-face, this event was planned from the outset to be online and ran at virtually no financial risk.
 - c. We had previously agreed that Midlands Counties League match fees would be set at £20 per pair per match, in the expectation that a number of matches would be live. With the perception now much more strongly that all matches will be online, this charge seems high. Mike proposed that the fee is reduced. The committee agreed that the fee for all future matches should be £5 per pair per match (which is a lot less than the £15 per pair which was charged traditionally for live matches).
 - d. Paul raised the question of whether a mix of higher charges and free days would result in less work for the Treasurer, but Mike suggested that there too many awkward issues arose from such an approach. Judy asked about advance payments and managing a surplus account for players, as is run by Cheltenham BC; this would be less of a memory burden on players, but it does put a lot of extra responsibility and work on the Treasurer, and is not appropriate at the GCBA scale.
 - e. The payment of fees in respect of the several events in the autumn series had largely been completed with some issues arising from incorrect/missing references and confusion over amounts due. The committee re-affirmed that it would be inappropriate for members with arrears to be regarded as eligible for selection to GCBA teams or allowed entry to GCBA events. Collecting fees for ongoing online games is proceeding, although the lack of references by some payers generates extra work.
 - f. Mike agreed to write to all relevant players explaining the county's position on fees.

Report from Chief Tournament Director

3. Patrick has reported in advance
 - a. No changes are proposed at this time; the Oct 02 event was satisfactory, albeit within minimal numbers. A similar event will take place on 27 November. The 9-High Swiss Pairs players are being sounded out about a possible live event for that community in November or early December. A questionnaire will be distributed to Monday night players in November to help planning for 2022. All County Championships are on hold until the New Year, so that the most inclusive format can be determined and adopted.
4. We agreed that a potential financial loss on 27th November would be acceptable, but doubts were expressed as to whether it should proceed. The decision was left with Patrick. [LATER: he agreed that he would poll attendees and the event would run if and only if there were 12+ attendees]

Update from the Representative Events Committee

5. Alan had delivered the following report in advance
 - a. The REC met on October 7th by Zoom and discussed selection for the following two MCL matches. It was agreed to publish a squad for the two matches in order to give people notice but to postpone selection until the results of the October match v Derby were known. Selection would then be achieved via email. It was hoped to meet in person in late November/early December to discuss selection for the January and February matches and to discuss the desirable composition of the REC, attitudes towards selection, our remit from the GCBA Committee, and to enjoy an element of sociability.
 - b. Since then, the teams for November and December have been selected and published. Unfortunately, it seems inevitable that due to an increase in Covid cases particularly in the Cheltenham area, that the December meeting will be via Zoom.

EBU Communications

6. In a recent message to all County Associations, the EBU proposed that an offer be extended to any non-affiliated club (almost any, not to returning clubs) that their members be given free EBU membership for a year. (Mike suggested we would waive the GCBA membership fee for the members of clubs taking up this offer, and all agreed). The EBU have asked that County Associations take on the role of promulgating this offer to the non-affiliated clubs in their county. Ian asked how we should progress this? There is a list of 22 Non-Affiliated clubs on the website, but we don't know which are still active. The first step is probably to touch base with these clubs and find out their current status. Ian agreed to use a forthcoming message from the President to raise the offer and discover the status of these clubs. Mike offered to correspond with two contacts he knows, as did others. Judy suggested reaching out to other U3A groups, beyond those on our current list.
7. The EBU AGM comes on 30th November and papers for voting will emerge in coming weeks. Ian's plan is to circulate these around the committee. The one name mentioned as standing received favourable comment from a number of players who knew this person.
8. EBED has announced the creation of a new "Smart Bridge" course to teach complete beginners at fast speed, and it will be available in 1Q2022. The course is in support of clubs who lack teaching capacity, rather than to compete with traditional approaches. The role of the GCBA would be to help coordinate clubs which wanted to take advantage of this. Associated with this are some professionally produced leaflets and posters for marketing the game – these could be useful to any clubs wanting to recruit newcomers.
9. The EBU is also offering a course labelled "Transition" which aims to help existing bridge players transition from social bridge to organised Duplicate Bridge. The course as it stands is complete and therefore potentially overwhelming, even if spread over 4-6 weeks. There are plenty of social bridge players who could move to Duplicate Bridge, but a friendly club running Gentle Bridge might be a better approach. This course might be better received after a player has played Duplicate Bridge once or twice. We agreed that this was an offer/suggestion for clubs to take up, rather than requiring GCBA action.

OTHER BUSINESS

10. Jan reported that Schools Bridge (after missing a week because of parents' evenings) is currently on hold due to increased Covid levels and instructions schools received from the LEA. There are 24 children signed up and awaiting the restart.
11. The suggestion was made that the County Association pay EBED membership for the coming year for any of the leaders of the Schools Bridge work (currently £45) and it was agreed that was appropriate.
12. The committee noted that Alan had reported offline on the Green Point even in July 2021. "This event ran successfully with 37 tables for the Pairs on the Saturday and 32 teams on the Sunday. It was organised by Chris Chowney from Herefordshire and myself and we are both investigating options for next year as reported previously. If the event is held online one learning point is to organise post event congratulations etc. to prize-winners in order to try to retain the reputation for friendliness and good organisation."
13. We considered what could go into the News column in the next County Newsletter, and Judy agreed to write an article about the recent Town Twinning experiences of Cheltenham BC (playing against Annecy and Gottingen bridge clubs).
14. The plans for meeting with county clubs have been pushed back to the spring of 2022. The suggestion of holding two meetings – one in the North of the County and one in the South – was made. Hylary reported difficulty in finding a venue at a reasonable price.
15. The next meeting will be on Thursday 2nd December at 1900 hrs.

THE END