

GLoucestershire County Bridge Association

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Friday 7th August 2020.

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Ian Sidgwick, Roger Williams and Judy Sanis (CBC rep).

Patrick reported that Richard Harris has decided to step down from the committee. We thank him for all the work he has done for Gloucestershire bridge.

Finance

1. Bridge Base Online has reduced its charge from the EBU to 30% (it had been 40% since the start of July). Its minimum charge for Pairs events is \$3; the expectation is that at some point they will start charging for Teams events as well.
2. Collection of the £10 fees for the online Swiss Pairs/Teams events is now close to 100%.

Online meetings

3. Patrick reported that there had been little enthusiasm expressed for the idea of a virtual AGM, so we dropped the idea.
4. Patrick and Ian had held an online meeting for club reps on August 2nd, at which 8 clubs were represented. They had had a good discussion: the clubs were happy to co-operate with joint online playing sessions. Stroud had reported that their online sessions have been very successful, and Chipping Camden are intending to become another online club.

Online teaching

5. At the same meeting, the club reps reported that less online teaching was expected in the autumn than was given face-to-face last year .
6. EBED are launching an online learning platform called the English Bridge School. It was agreed that we should involve Martin and Nicola Renshaw with providing feedback on this. The school will involve prospective students finding suitable teachers - it was suggested that we could help the students with this.
7. CBC have thirty new learners signed up to start in September. It was noted that they have reached the critical mass of learners, meaning that they get enough new people joining via word-of-mouth, and don't need to advertise. They are very well organised, with plenty of material to use for lessons, and have been active online during lockdown. It was noted that online bridge gives more opportunity for new players to learn through play - e.g. the Learners Duplicate at CBC, with commentary on the hands afterwards.
8. We assume there are similar numbers of people elsewhere in Gloucestershire who would be interested in learning - however, it was noted that it is difficult to cope with more than 8 pupils in an online session, so more teachers would be needed. We think CBC would be happy for new teachers to use their material and methods.
9. It was agreed that we should try to investigate the level of interest in online learning via local newsletters and Facebook groups, and that we should ask members (e.g. the GCBA regular players) to suggest suitable groups - we would provide a blurb which they could use.

GCBA planning

10. Patrick recommended that the 2019-20 County Knock-out be abandoned as most of the remaining teams had captains or players not playing online. The County League had reached a

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sensible point to end, as all the teams had met, and was declared complete, and the Cleverly League had been completed online.

11. We agreed that the Monday afternoon sessions will be moved to Monday evenings, between 7:30 and 10pm. There was some discussion about how best to organise the online Monday evening programme - would there be enough demand to adopt the seasonal Pairs/Swiss Teams model that we've used in the past? It was suggested that the demand could well increase as the time without face-to-face play lengthened.
12. Other options, such as playing shorter sessions and discussing the hands afterwards, were also proposed. We agreed to survey the Monday night players for their ideas and preferences.
13. There is a friendly match with Avon scheduled in a couple of weeks; Patrick will check with Alan Wearmouth that we have a team organised for this.
14. EBU - and GCBA - want to know what bridge players want from them. EBU has suggested its mission, vision and values, which we discussed. It was suggested that these are too bland, and overly focussed on the top 10% of players. This was countered with the suggestion that the EBU (and to some extent the county organisations) are trying to fill in the gaps, and that local clubs are less able to cater for the top 10% than for the rest. However, it was agreed that a balance does need to be struck. It was queried whether the clubs in Gloucestershire had their own mission/vision/values.
15. Patrick is intending to ask a few people if they would be interested in joining the committee, and we discussed what skills we would like in new committee members. It was felt that our main role is to guide the voluntary work done in the county, so members not based in Cheltenham would be an asset.
16. It was noted that CBC have developed their website recently, and suggested that we should ask them for assistance with improving the GCBA website.
17. The next meeting will be on Thursday 10th September.