

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Tuesday 9th June 2020.

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

Finance

1. Mike had produced a financial report for last year, and it had been put on the GCBA website a few weeks ago. The accounts had been through a less thorough audit than normal as all discussion with the auditor (Chris Coleman) had to be done via e-mail.
2. It was agreed that GCBA (rather than CBC) should reimburse Patrick the £50 he was about to be charged for becoming a BBO director.

Online Bridge

3. Mike noted that Universal Membership payments (42p for EBU, 5p for GCBA) are automatically generated when online events are registered with the EBU. It was agreed that we should return the GCBA part of this to the originating clubs while face-to-face bridge was impossible.
4. GCBA are running Swiss Pairs and Swiss Teams events on BBO (run as 6-week series, so people aren't committed to playing for one team long term). These are being run for free - BBO sessions only involve payment for standard Pairs sessions run by virtual clubs. It was agreed that GCBA should register as an EBU virtual club, which removes limits on session times, and that when we then run standard Pairs sessions, we should charge the same as CBC do currently.
5. There is concern that the free GCBA sessions are detracting from other clubs' charged sessions. It was agreed that we should charge £10 per head for the year for our series of Swiss Teams events. It was confirmed that it is straightforward to track that only players who've paid have taken part.
6. The standard Pairs sessions run by GCBA currently take place on Monday mornings. It was agreed that we would switch to Monday afternoons in July as a trial, with the option of switching to Monday evenings if afternoons proved to be unpopular.
7. It was agreed that we would not charge people taking part in the 9-high Swiss Pairs event aimed at new and inexperienced players, as this was designed to encourage new players and thus promote the game in the county.
8. Patrick noted that to run Green Point or Blue Point events online, we would have to make a proposal to an EBU authority. It was felt that such events would have to involve multiple sessions.
9. There has been little feedback from the clubs other than CBC regarding becoming virtual bridge clubs. It was agreed that, with GCBA and CBC both running a number of open events, there are enough options available for people, so this is not a major concern.
10. GCBA has taken part in some inter-county matches online, which have not been registered with the EBU. It was agreed that we should make the Universal Membership payments for these matches from GCBA funds (covered by the £10 entry for regular players, and free for less experienced players, as an encouragement for them to be involved).
11. Patrick noted that we would usually have several events at about this time of year, such as the County Pairs, and it was agreed that we should try to organise these online. It was suggested that we run an "AGM Pairs" event on a Sunday afternoon as a double session with a "tea break" in the middle, and that we should advertise this via the CBC newsletter, and/or a GCBA

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

newsletter. On this topic, it was suggested that we should try to e-mail the members with news every 2 or 3 months, but that we have to restrict it to this frequency or less. Hopefully the newsletter will be more frequent than this. It was noted that we have little information about how well the newsletters are circulated at the county's clubs.

Other Business

12. Patrick had circulated a video of the County Chairs' meeting, which Peter had viewed and to which Ian had given feedback. It was suggested that the EBU came across as biased toward elite-level bridge, though it was acknowledged that it is harder for a national body to engage with casual players, and that they are looking for ways to do this better.
13. While face-to-face bridge teaching has had to be cancelled, the lockdown could be an opportunity to introduce more people to the game. Ian suggested that a basic teaching package to enable anyone to help new players pick up the game would help this, and Patrick agreed to ask Alison Nicholson if she had anything suitable from her experience at teaching bridge in schools. He noted that he had had little response from teachers other than at CBC when he had written to them since lockdown asking for feedback, and that CBC have been focusing on re-starting classes in the Autumn (if possible) rather than extra teaching in the present situation.
14. Richard B reported that Alan Wearmouth and Val Constable have joined the Representative Events Committee, while Lesley Harrison has stepped down. It was suggested that someone with more contacts among less experienced players would be a good addition to the committee, and he agreed to speak to Richard Seymour about this. We agreed that there would be no problem in expanding the committee. [Note: Richard Seymour has now agreed to join the REC on a trial basis for a few months, and will continue to encourage lower-graded players to participate in online matches]