

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Monday 13th May 2019.

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Andrew Bull (Secretary), Mike Wignall (Treasurer), Richard Harris, Ian Sidgwick and Roger Williams. Apologies were received from Richard Butland (REC chair).

1. Patrick welcomed Ian and Mike to the committee.

Follow-ups from the AGM

2. The issue of slow play had been brought up. Patrick noted that we had tried using a round timer in the past, but it had not been universally popular and is an extra task for the Director to manage. We will try it again in the near future.
3. Mike suggested we should have a set finishing time - maybe 10:45 - which play will not go beyond, and a stated time per round. Patrick noted that the expected finishing time varied between 10:30 and 10:45, depending on the number of boards being played.
4. It was also suggested that we could lose the coffee break, and CBC are discussing this. Whether GCBA players desire a break, or whether they'd prefer to have coffee provided by machines or brought to the table, is an open question. Another option would be to have refreshments at the start (so players who wanted them could arrive early).
5. Patrick proposed that as CBC are considering changes to the coffee break, we should see how their plans develop before making any new plans for GCBA.
6. One reason for the decline in numbers at GCBA's Monday evening bridge is the increased turnout at CBC's Monday evening bridge upstairs. It was suggested we could try to merge with them with Swiss Pairs events, noting that having perceived stronger/weaker levels of play at such events is preferred by some players, as then they can find opposition to their own standard.
7. We mentioned past practices of "Visitors' Night" or "Play with an Expert" on a Monday. It was agreed we should consider making attractive specific Monday nights to those who seldom play then, e.g. by having reduced/free entry for non-regulars, or prizes for pairs including at least one non-regular.
8. The lower turnout for the Ace of Clubs had also been mentioned at the AGM. Though the event is for players below National Master rating, comments at the AGM showed that some people felt that some of the competitors are too strong (possibly not realising that there are players in the heats who are ineligible for the final). While we could change the maximum rating level, Patrick reported that there is no evidence that the field in the final has actually become stronger recently.

Finances

9. It was agreed that we will continue to charge an entry fee of £10 per head for the Cotswold Cup (as a charity event) and the Everett Cup (a full-day event with two breaks) and for training sessions; £7.50 per head for most other events with a single break; and £5 per head for the Bredon Vale and Ace of Clubs final. For inter-county events, we will charge £7.50 per head for home matches, while the entrants will have travel expenses for away matches.

Committee Responsibilities

10. Patrick is happy to continue as Chief Tournament Director.

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11. The GCBA has a Recorder, to whom players can report confidentially any issues which have arisen, as advertised on the webpages and in the newsletter. Patrick reported that no issues have been raised with the Recorder in the last two years. We agreed to retain the same person as Recorder.
12. It was agreed that Anne Swannell should be asked to continue to provide the catering. [Anne subsequently confirmed that she is willing.]
13. It was assumed in his absence that Richard Butland will be willing to continue to lead the Representative Events Committee, which will also comprise Roger Schofield, Judy Sanis and Paul Denning.
14. The Congress (which we run jointly with CBC) has had Anne Swannell and Jim Simons as the GCBA representatives recently, and the Green Point Event (run jointly with Herefordshire) has had Alan Wearmouth and Jim Simons as the GCBA representatives. Mike agreed to discuss with Jim what his role has entailed, and Patrick agreed to approach Alan Wearmouth to ask if he would continue in his role.

Publicity

15. Publicity for GCBA is run by Judy Sanis with Patrick; as she now has more responsibility at CBC, they felt it right to get new people involved, and the committee were asked to find suitable willing people. This covers publicising the GCBA among regular players at GCBA events, and among other players, and to non-players. One aim was to tell Gentle Bridge learners about the work done by GCBA and EBU - Judy and Patrick will come up with a proposal for doing this. Roger offered to research the club reactions to some competitions, particularly the Bredon Vale and Rank Xerox.
16. Ian suggested that we should try more direct publicity by visiting clubs. Patrick noted that he has visited some clubs, and encouraged the other committee members to follow suit. Having had limited success in inviting club representatives to CBC, he intends to arrange sessions at other clubs with representatives from multiple clubs attending.
17. It was suggested that something similar to the small trifold leaflet provided to all members could be used to inform those who don't play regularly at GCBA competitions about the events intended for non-experts, and about what the GCBA does for them. Such information is in the monthly bulletin to bridge clubs, but this has had little impact on players; it is unclear to what extent the club's points of contacts pass this information around the club.
18. The Ace of Clubs had been discussed at the AGM; as the main non-expert pairs event in the county, it should be advertised better. It was noted that we have nearly a year to ensure that the 2020 event gets better publicity.
19. There are clubs which hold inter-club matches, and this is something that we would like to encourage, especially aiming it at players who generally only play at one club.

Other Business

20. We will aim to hold an extra, longer meeting in June - possibly on Thursday 20th.