

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held online on Friday 17th July 2020.

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

Finance

1. As agreed at the previous meeting, we have agreed to return to CBC the £50 Universal Membership payment collected by GCBA from the CBC online events. Mike noted that there are further (much smaller) amounts due to some other clubs.
2. We have collected £600 out of the £840 due for the online Swiss Pairs/Teams events.
3. Mike and Patrick attended a meeting with CBC, who are suffering financially from the lockdown as they still have significant expenses, and are discussing increasing table money when face-to-face bridge resumes. (GCBA have limited expenses and are not significantly affected financially by the lockdown).
4. It was agreed that we are happy to support CBC (hence our charging for online events to avoid undercutting them), and wish to continue the amicable relationship that we've had with them for many years. It was suggested we need to make sure that the CBC committee members are aware of how CBC (as well as GCBA) benefit from the relationship. It was noted that the relationship between the two bodies is no longer documented in the CBC constitution.

Online Bridge

5. CBC has been running a virtual club on Bridge Base Online for two months, with 8 sessions per week. Newent, Tudor (in Chipping Sodbury) and Somerford Keynes/Corinium (in Cirencester) are the other clubs in the county which are running online events. Stroud and Fairford are organising online matches but do not have organised pairs sessions.
6. It was felt that GCBA could best help out by suggesting that the existing online clubs accept entries from other local clubs. Judy agreed to see if CBC would be willing to do this, and Patrick will contact other clubs in the county. It was noted that Stratford (in Warwickshire) may be the nearest online club to NE Gloucestershire.
7. GCBA's current sessions - Swiss Pairs, Swiss Teams and regular Pairs - have had more players in April-June 2020 than we had at the Monday night club sessions the previous year, so it was agreed that we should continue with these (with 6-8 week sessions for the Swiss events), and do not need to introduce any other sessions. Patrick intends to get other people involved in running the Swiss events.
8. CBC are running sessions for learners, and Gentle Bridge for players rated 7 or less. It was felt that they would not have the capacity to expand the learners' sessions to the rest of the county, but might be willing to expand at least some of the Gentle Bridge sessions. Judy and Patrick will discuss this idea with Martin Renshaw of CBC.
9. Regarding the regular county competitions for 2019-20: Patrick will consult with the teams that were still involved in the County Knock-out to see if they would all be willing to continue the event online. It was suggested that we could also run new online versions of these events for 2020-21 (as is being done in some other counties). Judy thought that only inclusive events (not Mixed Pairs, for example) would be suitable.
10. The idea of having regular events on Monday evening was supported, and there was some discussion as to whether advertising them via e-mail and the website is enough. Patrick noted that 90+ % of the regular GCBA club players have taken part in the online sessions.

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11. Richard B reported that organising cross-county matches was becoming more difficult with the easing of lockdown restrictions, and that responses from other counties tended to be very slow, so they were trying to arrange matches a few months ahead.
12. Some mentoring of less experienced pairs is happening; Richard noted that this involves a lot of work. There was some discussion about how to make sure this was worthwhile - discussing recent hands which the pairs had played was felt to be the best way. It was agreed that GCBA would support mentoring in the county.
13. The 2019-20 Midland Counties leagues are on hold, to be resumed when face-to-face bridge resumes. The Midland Counties working group has proposed having online versions for 2020-21, and we discussed what format we would prefer these to adopt - it was agreed that a single session of 32 boards would not be popular, and having two 16-board sessions with a reasonable break would be better.

Other Business

14. EBU has asked for nominations for the Dimmie Fleming and Silver Awards. Andrew agreed to check on the procedure for the Tony Priday Award, as we had decided last year that we felt that Andrew Kambites would be a worthy recipient. [Note: Samantha Kelly has replied that the Tony Priday awards are decided by the EBU Board, but that she would be happy to pass on our nomination]
15. EBU are trying to make their services to the game more relevant to bridge players generally. It was acknowledged that this would be difficult, especially as committee members tend to be high-level players. On these lines, Patrick, Judy and Ian agreed to hold a separate session to discuss getting more people who work with learners involved with the GCBA.
16. The AGM would have been held in April or May; it was agreed that we would ask on the website if anyone wanted there to be an online AGM, or had any issues that they would like to raise. We could also ask if anyone would be interested in joining the committee - noting that people not based at Cheltenham might find attending meetings more convenient while they were being held online.
17. Patrick and Ian took an action to arrange an open forum for representatives of each club in the county to raise issues for discussion. It was noted that this would also be a good opportunity to encouraging inter-club online games.
18. We agreed to aim to meet on the Thursday after the first Monday of each month, with the next online meeting scheduled for August 6th.