

GLoucestershire County Bridge Association

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held on Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 7.30 pm at Cheltenham Bridge Club

In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Alan Stanfield, Jan Bailey, Richard Butland, and via Zoom, Ian Sidgwick and Paul Denning (Vice-President).

Apologies

Apologies were received from Michael Wright.

Caroline Hartley tendered her resignation as Secretary the day before. The committee expressed their sincere thanks for all the useful work she has done in the past year, particularly in moving us forward the Constitution and in preparations for the 2025 AGM.

The Independent Examiner for the GCBA accounts resigned at the start of the month. Patrick requested thoughts as to who might be a suitable replacement.

Patrick will write to both expressing the committee's thanks.

Decisions taken since the last minute

- **DBS checks for Gloucester & Churchdown Schools bridge volunteers.** It was agreed to fund the cost of putting 10 volunteers through DBS checks.

Minutes of Last Meeting (21 Jan 2025)

The committee agreed that the minutes were accurate and are approved.

Finance

Michael had circulated the January and February accounts; there were no questions arising. It was noted that the loan to Churchdown (of £3000) to purchase a dealing machine had been fully paid back now, a year earlier than had been planned.

In the process of drawing up the monthly management accounts, Michael had identified 2024 charges that had been invoiced late by suppliers. These, together with other items, needed to be reflected in the annual accounts. One option was to include such charges in the 2025 accounts, but that could have misrepresented the 2025/2024 comparison. On balance, he therefore proposed to show the effect of such items in their actual year, and to show the 2024 AGM account figure as a separate additional column in the annual report. The committee was comfortable with this approach.

Ian reported that the spend on targeted Facebook adds (around £60) had generated some hundreds of clicks against the advert for the Junior Camp in April of this year, but as yet no new attendees have been identified.

Youth Bridge

Jan circulated a report prior to the meeting (summarised at Appendix 1).

It was noted that the funding of a minibus to take participants to the National Schools' Bridge Championship was much appreciated, but that this is not needed for the Youth Camp in Worcestershire in April, as the driving is split over two days.

AGM Preparation

Caroline had provided a plan for advertising the AGM for which the committee was very grateful; the committee had no further suggestions and agreed to follow the plan. It was agreed to enable a Zoom link to the AGM and to offer this to those who had difficulty getting to Cheltenham on the evening in question, with a caveat that managing votes and questions across the Zoom link might prove awkward.

The committee discussed the suggestions Caroline had gathered for making the follow-on bridge attractive and it was agreed that

- There would be no table money charged for the game
- Patrick would discuss with Cheltenham Bridge Club whether we had the option of providing our own catering, and if that was the case we would offer free refreshments. Otherwise drinks would be paid for as usual.
- The event would be stratified with prizes in three categories.

It was agreed that Patrick would write to all club committees pointing out to them that the committee had vacancies, and that the coming AGM was an opportunity to have their club's interests more fully represented in their County Association.

Constitution

Caroline had prepared some notes on the outstanding discussions on the GCBA Constitution. The committee reviewed the outstanding questions and agreed that

- ✓ Eligibility to vote at the AGM (or an EGM) should be given to all EBU members who have Gloucestershire as either their primary or secondary County of Allegiance. Patrick will email to those we know who might be expecting to be able to vote but whose County of Allegiance is wrong.
- ✓ The selection of the GCBA Shareholder shall be a matter for the committee rather than for the AGM.
- ✓ Any Special Resolution must be submitted at least 14 days before the meeting, which lines up with at least 21 days' notice being given of the date of the AGM.
- ✓ If lack of a quorum at an AGM requires that an EGM be held, then at the reconvened meeting the number present shall constitute a quorum.
- ✓ Any bridge club which successfully affiliates to the EBU and names Gloucestershire as its county will be automatically affiliated to the GCBA. The only route for GCBA affiliation is through the EBU.

Use of the GCBA surplus

The committee confirmed the plans it had drawn up in recent months for use the GCBA reserves. These are

1. (Nov 24) A grant of £50 to all children from Gloucestershire attending a Youth Camp – changed (Jan25) to 50% of the entry fee for all first timers from Gloucestershire (plus bursaries where needed).
2. (Nov 24) Our long-standing financial support (grants, loans) for clubs who need new equipment for their bridge sessions.

3. (Nov 24) Possibility of under-writing a visiting speaker such as Andrew Robson.
4. (Nov 24) Providing students at taster sessions with a pack of cards. [Enough packs have now been purchased]
5. (Nov 24) Travel expenses for county representative events. [Now being applied]
6. (Jan 25) Custom playing cards to be given out. [On hold while we have enough packs from other sources to distribute]
7. (Jan 25) Funding to be provided for adult support attending any Youth Camp. [Now being applied]
8. (Jan 25) Funding of a “teaching taster” session to be run by EBED in May 2025 and to fund any teacher training session which emerges from that.
9. (Jan 25) Funding of the first year of EBTA membership for any teacher active in the county who is not currently a member. [Offer has been broadcast]

And we added to this

10. (Mar 25) Purchase and distribution of Gloucestershire sweatshirts for Gloucestershire youth at bridge camps.
11. (Mar 25) Purchase of an overhead projector for use in lessons [Patrick has one which can be used for this year and he will pass this to Alan for Gloucester/Churchdown lessons]
12. (Mar 25) Organising and financing a First Aiders Course open to candidate First Aiders from bridge clubs in Gloucestershire.
13. (Mar 25) Asking clubs if they had any need for Tournament Director training, and then organising this.

The committee discussed the costs of teaching newcomers and whether it was in the interests of the game (and of clubs and of the EBU) that teaching should be free – being treated as an investment which would be recouped by increased table money in future years.

GCBA roles/tasks

Patrick is to make a list of tasks which could be managed by different individuals.

AOB

Alan reported that there were a few U3A areas in the County with no bridge activities; Patrick offered to investigate.

Alan reported that the Gloucester U3A are taking part in the national U3A Spring Charity Simultaneous Pairs competition, later in March. It would be worth encouraging other u3A bridge groups to take part also.

The committee noted that the 100th anniversary of the game (as we know it) comes in November 2025 and this represents a marketing opportunity. We ought to arrange something, although we cannot expect it to be on the scale of last year’s “Bridge Is A Big Deal” Festival.

Future meeting dates

- Next meeting 7.30pm Tuesday 29th April 2025 at CBC
- AGM Monday 26 May 2025

Patrick thanked the committee for their contributions and the meeting closed at 2100 hrs.

Update on Youth

- ✓ On Saturday 1st March, six members of our YB group travelled to Loughborough Grammar School for the National Schools' Bridge Championship. The location and facilities were excellent, and the organisation by Richard Croot and his team were impeccable. One of the Gloucestershire pairs came first out of thirteen in the C Flight pairs! Another of the Gloucestershire contingent attended all three youth camps last year and has started coming into the club on Thursday mornings during school holidays.
- ✓ Clubs are proceeding at Foxmoor Primary School, Sir Thomas Rich's, Cleeve Secondary and Pittville; and preparations / discussion are underway for taster sessions at St Mary's Primary School in Churchdown and at Dean Close.
- ✓ Cleeve school have invited us in to do taster sessions to the whole of year 9 in July. Ten tutor groups, 30 students per group, 10 sessions over 2 days! We are hoping this will give a boost to our numbers.
- ✓ Our approach (concentrating on Secondary rather than Primary schools) is in accord with the thinking of the EBED CEO - although as we know, getting into any school is a bonus, so we do not give up on Primary Schools.
- ✓ The Wessex Spring camp will be held on 5th/6th April at the Pioneer Centre in Kidderminster.