

GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

Minutes for the GCBA committee meeting held at Cheltenham Bridge Club on Monday 2nd July 2018.

1. In attendance were Patrick Shields (President), Jim Simons (Treasurer), Richard Harris, Anne Swannell, Richard Butland (REC Chair), Roger Williams (CBC Representative), Judy Sanis (Observer). Andrew Bull (on holiday) and Paul Denning (trapped in traffic) could not attend.
2. Patrick started by declaring that he expected the meeting time to be used up in Treasurer business, and he handed over to Jim to lead on this, using the attached report which Jim had prepared in advance. Jim's first message was that there were discrepancies and mis-accounting that he might not be able to remedy, but the organisation was not in any financial crisis. Our ability to formally declare audited accounts was uncertain, and he would discuss the resolution of this with our auditor (Chris Coleman). Jim's report highlighted 5 key questions which we now stepped through.

Q1 : whether the current management accounting scheme was worth the effort ?

3. Jim produced illustrative account from 2014-15 pointing out that the use of them had turned out to be error prone in recent years and in practice these accounts had been used neither for accountability or for decision making. The consensus however was that the layout is attractive and informative and while an individual year's sheet might not help much, a sequence of sheets could be very useful in spotting trends and potential problems over the years. Given it already exists, we agreed that its use should continue.

Q2 : whether the concept of a Cash Box should be discontinued?

4. There was total support for institutionalising the immediate banking of the take from any event, and so no holding of cash and no need for a Cash Box. Slips detailing the take should be deposited in the plastic box in the office and should only be removed by Jim. Responsibility for banking the money will go to Jim if present, else to Val Constable, else to Patrick – and if none of those are present the Duty Committee member must find someone to take on the role. We shall add this task to the Duty Committee member responsibility list.

Q3 : should we continue with a Deposit Account in addition to the Current Account?

5. Jim reported that its use could be simplified by restricting that use to transfers to/from the Current Account (vice payments) but that dropping it would be little effort, and re-generating it should the position change would also be straightforward. We agreed it should go.

Q4 : how should accounting of free plays for Directors be done?

6. It was agreed to leave this as it currently exists, which does keep the visibility of the occurrences of free plays, although it sometimes get missed and will not be 100% accurate.

Q5 : who should have what permissions on the bank accounts?

7. We agreed that it was right to have two primary names plus one backup for each account, that these people had full rights on the accounts, but that a two-person rule would be enacted for all pay-outs. We agreed that the names should be
 - a. Current account : Jim Simons, Val Constable, Judy Sanis.
 - b. Herefordshire GP event : Jim Simons, Alan Wearmouth, Val Constable.
 - c. Congress : Jim Simons, Paul Clark, Val Constable.

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This last assignment needs to be confirmed by the Congress Committee tomorrow night. Jim will make the necessary arrangements with the bank.

Future Treasurership Issues

8. We discussed the fact that Jim had volunteered to cover the job for the current year but that the next Treasurer had to be identified well before the end of the year in order to manage an effective handover. The key attributes needed by a Treasurer were identified as comfort with spreadsheets plus familiarity with and ability to track all GCBA activity. We agreed that we should aim to get the new person involved by the end of December.

9. Having declared no expectation of things going astray again, we discussed how to ensure that cannot happen. We identified one option to give us confidence as some form of quarterly review. We agreed that Patrick would talk to Chris Coleman about the annual audit process and the way forward on this.

Current Financial Arrangements

10. Just to ensure it was clear, Patrick (with help) reported two less-than-usual aspects of the current accounts

- a. For both the GP event and the Congress, the proceeds for 2017 had been distributed in advance of the final bill for the EBU License, which means too much had been passed out as profit to both Herefordshire CBA and to Cheltenham BC. Our plan – being worked by Patrick with the representatives of those organisations – is for GCBA to carry that loss but to be reimbursed over the coming years as profits from these ventures emerge, which means that HCBA and CBC are likely to show zero profit for 2018 on these ventures.
- b. The GCBA had always contributed one of its allocated Green Point licenses to one day of the GP Event in Ross, and one to the Congress, and when the idea arose of a second GP day at the Congress the GCBA could not oblige without using both of its GP allocations, and it was agreed that Herefordshire CBA would use its two GP Licenses for the Ross event, and that the Congress would pay HCBA a fee of £150 per usage of that. This looks to be Good Value for GCBA/CBC.

Patrick will confirm the process for licensing of these two events.

END OF MEETING

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GCBA Treasurer's Report for 2 July 2018

I have taken over as treasurer at short notice, the previous treasurer having resigned through ill health. This report will say what I have done so far, and my short term plan, some ideas for simplifying the process for my successor, and some ideas of more long term significance.

It is clear to me that after such turbulence in the treasurership as we have had in recent years, the handover process has degraded, and the treasurer was left with a situation that would have been very difficult under any circumstances. The processes involved are necessarily quite complicated, but have perhaps become more complicated than they need be. There is one aspect of this that I do not yet understand, which is the financial arrangement with the club, which have changed in recent years. I have asked for a meeting with the club treasurer so that she can explain it to me.

I am afraid that last year's accounts are in a bit of a mess, with little supporting paperwork, and so little chance of getting them completely right. I am going through everything, correcting obvious errors and making the best guess I can where the right answer is not obvious. I have paid outstanding debts. I have sorted through such paperwork as I have, and organised it appropriately. Having promised at the AGM that we would have an audited set of accounts, I shall shortly speak to our auditor about what we can achieve in that direction. I have set up this year's accounts, and in this case, the events are recent enough that I am reasonably confident they will be accurate, except that some transactions that I am now making should have been made last financial year. I shall take advice from the auditor about how best to account for them.

There has been some significant under-collection of Monday night table money on occasion. I have created a new form to help reduce this, and will put copies in the GCBA box in the office. Please will anyone collecting the money use it.

Once things have settled down, I shall set up some thorough documentation of the whole system. The handover notes I gave to my successor last time are now quite out of date, but have not been updated.

There are some issues on which I would like a decision from the committee. Some are about simplifying our procedures and the accounting spreadsheet, ahead of handing over to someone new. As a reminder, we currently have five bank accounts:

- Current and deposit accounts for all our normal business.
- A current account for the Green Point event. As far as Barclay's is concerned this is a GCBA account, but the money in it belongs jointly to Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. All the business of the event is conducted using this account, and the surplus distributed equally to the GCBA and HCBA current accounts.
- A current account for the Congress. Similarly, as far as Barclay's is concerned this is a GCBA account, but the money in it belongs jointly to Gloucestershire and Cheltenham Bridge Club. All the business of the congress is conducted using this account, and the surplus distributed equally to the GCBA and CBC current accounts.
- A current account for youth bridge, similarly jointly owned by Gloucestershire and Cheltenham Bridge Club. The agreement is that when it runs out, we will top it up equally, up to £500 each per year. Since it was set up, hardly any money has been spent.

Here are the issues I'd like to discuss:

1. When I was last Treasurer, I introduced some management accounts. At our meeting I shall distribute the accounts for 2014-15 that I produced, as an example. I did not detect much enthusiasm at the time from the committee, and have not been used since, some of the information required would now be hard to collect accurately, and their presence does complicate the master spreadsheet in a way that has caused errors. We would perhaps be better off without them, and so I

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would like to remove them. If the new committee wants more detailed financial information than the basic accounts provide, I could set something up ahead of next year, but probably not for this year as the basic information probably won't exist.

2. Treasurers up to and including myself last time round used to maintain a cash box, and a sheet in the master spreadsheet that accounted for it. Cash is a nightmare, and subsequent treasurers have abandoned the cash box, instead paying any cash received into the bank account immediately, either by depositing it, or by pocketing it and transferring an equal amount from a personal bank account. This is a much less error-prone approach, and I would like to institutionalise it, abandoning the cash box and its accounting. (The is a detail here – we have a £20 float in the GCBA box in the office, which should be on the balance sheet, but isn't. I don't yet understand this.)

3. For years we have had a deposit account, but the interest is tiny: £2.79 last year. I used to move money around between the current and deposit accounts to maximise with interest, but subsequent Treasurers have understandably not bothered. With five bank accounts, this one represents one more potential source of error, with negligible benefit. I would like to close it until such time as we can find a way to earn a worthwhile amount of interest.

4. Some years ago, the committee decided to give Monday night directors a free game. I was Treasurer at the time, and decided to account for this by recording it as though the director had paid table money, and then been paid an equal directing fee. This was so that the amount this policy was costing us would appear in the accounts under directors' fees. This has been a small burden on Treasurers, and a minor source of error, as the convention has not always been applied. It would slightly simplify the life of future treasurers if we abandoned this, and simply recorded the actual amount taken as the table money with no fee being recorded (the amount the policy costs us is easy to see anyway – £3.50 per Monday night).

5. At the AGM we discussed having a two-person rule for authorising expenditure. I have found out how to achieve that, and the bank needs to see the minutes of a committee meeting authorising all the signatories. We do not need to have the same signatories for all the accounts, but I suggest that for each account we should have three signatories, in case one becomes incapacitated or is away when an urgent payment needs to be made. Almost all payments are made online nowadays, so it is not a matter of two people signing a cheque. A related issue is that it would make the life of the organisers of the Congress and the Green Point event much easier if they had online access to the bank accounts, not to make payments, but just to see the entry fees coming in. I have found out how to do that too: it is called a Limited Servicing Authority. We have two ways forward. Take the Green Point Event, for which the Gloucester lead organiser is Alan Wearmouth. He could either be one of the three signatories for the Green Point Event account, in which case he could be one of the two people who routinely sign off expenditure, or else he could have a Limited Servicing Authority for it, so that he could see the money coming in, but with others being the signatories. I don't think there are any very strong arguments either way, and Alan himself doesn't much mind, but perhaps the cleanest arrangement is the latter. I suggest we have the same three signatories for all the accounts: the Treasurer, one other person who is routinely involved, and a reserve. The situation with the Congress is similar; the organiser who would benefit from access is Paul Clark. On all five accounts, the signatories are currently James Hastie, Val Constable and myself. I'd like the committee to decide whether we go for a two-person rule at this stage, and, whether we do or not, who the signatories should be and who should have a Limited Servicing Authority, so that this can all be minuted, and I can set about implementing the change. Experience suggests that it would be unwise of me to give an estimate of when the change will be completed.

Jim Simons (GCBA Treasurer)