

Hertfordshire Bridge Association (HBA) Annual General Meeting Sunday 6th October 2024 @ 2:00pm. Zoom Video Meeting

In Attendance: 37 Members - Srimath Agalawatte, David Arrighi, Amanda Barnes, Karima Basse, David Clarke, Geoff Cordingley, Bernard Eddleston, David Eddleston, Margaret Eddleston, Sheila Evans, Sheila Gabriel, Andy Fenn, Marion Fenn, Anthony Golding, John Hiron, Helen Holehouse, Kate Howland, Stephanie Hughes, Ian Kemp, Geoff Lacey, Paul Littlewood, Mike Minting, Jill Mumford, Tim Nash, Celia Oram, Derek Oram, Glen Parry, Anne Short, Cliff Short, David Stimson, George Summers, Tanja Summers, Robert Teesdale, Rachel Thomas, Dave Tookey, Alan Woof, Tracey Woof.

Apologies for absence Arni Anidjar-Romain, Roy Button, Gary Conrad, Roger Edmonds, John Eyre, Jeff Green, Pat Henry, Oliver Tiemann, Fiona Littlewood

Welcome

Mike Minting, HBA President, welcomed members to the meeting. He was pleased that there was a good turnout and hoped that everyone would enjoy the meeting. Mike handed over to Paul Littlewood, HBA Chairman.

Minutes

1. Approval of Minutes of AGM on 1st October 2023 was proposed by Karima Basse, seconded by John Hiron and passed unanimously. It was noted that John Eyre had become Tournament Secretary and Ian Lennox agreed to audit the accounts.

2. Approval of Accounts 2023/24
Unfortunately Oliver is not able to attend the meeting. The accounts, showing a small surplus, are available on the website. They had been audited by Ian Lennox. Glen Parry proposed the approval of the accounts, seconded by David Clarke and agreed unanimously.

3. Reports
The reports are on the website.
Paul pointed out that the EBU's Festival of Bridge has raised £80,000 with money still coming in, an amazing amount. Unfortunately HBA's blue pointed event had to be cancelled, but Paul thanked all the clubs who held their own events and contributed to this total.
Paul continued that the committee is trying to find the right type of events going forward. Two Blue Pointed events and one Nine-High had to be cancelled. The template for Seven-High events seems to be to get a club involved, as Alan has done successfully with Leverstock Green holding the event at Bedmond.
The original Corwen is an event for those who do well in the Championship Pairs. This year there will also be an EBU Nine-High Corwen. The HBA Nine-High event on 23rd March will provide qualification for the EBU Corwen.
Paul pointed out that Steve Lambert had sent round a mail encouraging St. Albans members to play in HBA events. He managed to persuade a few pairs who have never played before to play in the Mixed Pairs which will be held in a couple of weeks time. There are only 11 pairs entered at the moment, so a few more entries would be good. Similarly the Senior Pairs this coming Sunday has 12 entries and more would be welcome.
Paul would like feedback from clubs as to what events their members would like. The committee has taken notice of previous comments and made changes to the Eccles Cup event and qualification for Championship pairs.
Ian Kemp raised the topic of balance between on-line and F2F events. We seem to be seeing more players returning to F2F in the clubs and perhaps the on-line format may daunt less experienced

players. He was surprised that in the Tournament Director's report, the Seniors Pairs event was put back to on-line 'by popular demand'. In fact when it was held on-line in '22, there were 6½ tables, last year there were 9 tables when F2F and this year on-line the number is currently back down to 6 ½ tables. [When the event took place, there were 10 tables.]

Andy Fenn raised a point on timing. Super serious players play at weekends but he wondered whether shorter, blue pointed events could be run mid-week. Paul thought it was an interesting idea but we have to bear in mind that there is no evening when there is not an HBA club playing. Friday evening is the least used.

Paul pointed out that Alan's statistics indicate that 62% of club sessions are F2F which supports the idea that there is a move back to F2F.

David Eddleston at Watford: F2F is becoming more popular. He was concerned that if F2F events have to be cancelled, what is the financial cost to HBA if events have to be cancelled?

Paul stated that we are running some Swiss pairs events F2F next year. On 2nd March Swiss pairs at Jersey Farm, 17th November NGS Seven-High pairs at Bedmond and GP Swiss pairs in July at Jersey Farm. Seniors pairs is a possibility to return to F2F.

Paul took a straw poll of those present. A number of people indicated that they would only play on-line. He did know Hazel Miles from Harlow will only play on-line which is understandable as she will have to travel some distance for a F2F event.

Margaret Eddleston: before Covid, the Seniors Pairs was a social event with a provided buffet lunch, if going back to F2F would the lunch be reintroduced? Paul replied that providing a buffet would be trickier but F2F with a packed lunch with tea & coffee provided is a possibility.

Margaret pointed out that Hitchin runs four F2F and two on-line sessions and over the last three months the two on-line sessions have declined in numbers. The on-line ones include people who have moved away or because they fancy playing on a Friday afternoon and don't live near Hitchin.

David Clarke: Barnet U3A started during Covid and plays only on-line with a diverse membership including players from Lincoln and Cornwall. Playing F2F is something they will try another year as currently the club is encouraging members to play in Hertfordshire events.

Alan Woof answered the point Margaret raised about Seniors Pairs by saying that the buffet lunch was provided some years ago but, with interest waning, a straw poll was held and approximately 2/3rds were in favour of dropping the buffet with a lower entry fee. There is definitely a move to F2F. David has the advantage that with U3A membership, he has a pool of players coming through. There is now so much bridge on-line, multiple EBU events every day of the week, so a Herts Tournament is only one of many.

Bernard Eddleston: the Seniors Pairs is still 30-36 boards – historic when it was a two session event with a lunch between, you might want to reduce it to 24.

Paul thanked everyone for their comments which would be considered in committee.

4. Election of Chairman, Officers and Committee

All officers and committee members were elected unanimously.

5. Appointment of Auditor

Paul will confirm that Ian Lennox has agreed to act as an independent examiner again. On the basis that this is so, Ian was elected as auditor (proposed by Dave Stimson; Andy Fenn)

6. Marjorie Lukyn Charity

Three charities had been suggested: Mudlarks (Hertford); DENS (previously supported in 2020/21) and REACT (a national children's support charity). The committee has chosen Mudlarks, a Hertford based charity supporting adults with learning disabilities and mental health concerns. They have their own allotments and use their produce in the cafe in Fore Street.

7. Any Other Business

Glen Parry proposed a vote of thanks to Paul and the committee for their efforts during the

year..

Paul has one set of cards for Royston which he will post if no one is available to deliver them.

Paul Littlewood thanked everyone for attending and declared the AGM closed at 2:25 pm.