

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MIDLANDS COUNTIES WORKING GROUP
AT West Midlands Bridge Club
ON Thursday 12 January 2017 @ 10.30am

PRESENT:

Derbyshire	Roger Mallinson (RM)	Nottinghamshire	Graham Brindley(GB)
Derbyshire	Jim Parker (JP)	Oxfordshire	Robert Procter (RP)
EBU Board (Warks)	Darren Evetts (DE)	Warwickshire	Mike Thorley (MT)
Gloucestershire	Jim Simons (JS)	Warwickshire	Jude Currie (JC)
Gloucestershire	Patrick Shields (PS)	Worcestershire	David Thomas (DT)
Leicestershire	Dean Benton (DB)	Minutes (Warks)	Myra Twyman
Nottinghamshire	Clare Batten (CB)		

Chair: Clare Batten

1. Apologies

Linda Curtis (Staffs & Shrops), Jim Bainbridge (Northants) and Mike Willoughby (Worcestershire)

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting 15 September 2016

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

3. Future of National and Regional Working Groups

- DE outlined the value of the County Working Group and the positive impact it can have on the development of bridge.
- It was agreed that extending the Midland Counties Working Group to other Counties not currently part of a Regional Group may be a positive move towards engaging with those Counties. PS and JS will discuss with their neighbouring Counties. It may also be possible to host a meeting in Gloucestershire to engage with Southern Counties. **Action: PS & JS**
- DE to prepare a mission statement/value proposition for the County Working Group. **Action: DE**
- It was noted that the future of the County Working Group structure will be discussed at the County Chairmen's Meeting in July. Clare and Lesley Millet (Northern Chair) have been invited to attend. It is important that information is circulated well in advance of the Country Chairmen's Meeting to ensure positive and meaningful discussion.

4. Bridge in Schools and Universities

- Nottinghamshire has engaged with Nottingham University and a Bridge Society has been formed.
- Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire are running a Wessex Youth Bridge weekends and the next one is 1 April 2017.
- PS suggested a toolkit could be created for Counties who might like to run Youth Groups.
Action: NCWG

5. Midlands Improvers Pairs

- This will be on 15 October 2017, with heats at Spondon and West Midlands. Wolverhampton has also been offered as a third venue, but Wolverhampton may be too close to the other two venues.
- It was suggested that running a number of small heats would be fine, providing they were of at least 4 tables.
- One of the aims of this event is to engage with unaffiliated Clubs, but this aim has not yet been achieved.

6. Blue Points Events

Discussion took place regarding the rules for these events. It was noted that whatever regulations were in force, there would be a desire to stretch the boundaries. It was felt that with Green Point events being expensive compared with Club sessions, Blue Point events could offer a more cost effective way of engaging with some players. The question was raised whether the limit on the number of Blue Points that can count towards Green Points may be extended in the future. DE felt that with the current regulations it would probably take some years for a player to amass sufficient Blue Points to exceed the Green Point equivalent.

7. Social Bridge Competitions

- RP presented an Oxfordshire initiative for the Oxford Bridge Festival 4-7 September 2017, which includes a Cafe Bridge Day; Seminars; Duplicate and Rubber Bridge sessions and refreshments. The Group wished Oxfordshire every success with the event, and offered to include links on their websites if it would help support the event. The Group will be keen to receive RP's report on the event later in the year.
- It was agreed that the developing needs of the EBU, both at National and County level, must encompass all types of bridge players. **Action: NCWG**
- The question of promotional events and licence fees was discussed. This matter is currently being looked at.

8. Feedback from National advert on learning Bridge

- The national advert resulted in approximately 600 nationwide enquiries to EBU/EBED.

It was noted that a number of enquires may have gone directly to Counties and Clubs, rather than through EBU/EBED.

- It was agreed to ask EBED for feedback on where enquiries had come from. **Action: DE**
- It was agreed that it would be useful if Counties could have a copy of the advert in plenty of time to produce weblinks, etc, so as to maintain a continuity of approach for when the advert is next published. **Action: DE**

9. Membership Database

- Suggested developments for EBU Membership Database for Counties:
 - Management of Dual membership
 - Access to current membership list through County area
 - Multi level County area access
 - Easy downloadable membership lists
 - Fields to include TD and Teacher flags
 - Current NGS and Master Points ranks for individuals and partnerships
- Could members area include information about how to change County allegiance.
- **Action: DE**

10. Inter County League

- Paul Hammond (League Co-ordinator) had circulated details of the Teams program needed to score County Matches. It was agreed that all Counties will endeavour to score using this system. Once all Counties are on board data can upload for NGS and MP purposes. **Action: All**
- Nottinghamshire require some assistance and DE agreed to provide some training if it would assist.
- Starting Time – The majority of the group felt 2.00pm was acceptable however it was agreed to leave Paul Hammond to collate each County's views on a start time and everyone will confirm to the majority view. **Action: DT>PH**
- It was also agreed that the same hands should be played when County matches are played on the same day. David Thomas will liaise with Paul re moving to this and other points herein. **Action: DT>PH**

11. AOB

- NGS – A general discussion took place with some points being highlighted as possible

developments:

- A player's NGS is only affected after 3 sessions have been played in any two year period
- Knock-Out Matches should have an effect on a player's NGS if it is to be an accurate indication of a player's current level
- **Action: NCWG**
- Northamptonshire will be discussing their membership of the Midland Counties Working Group at their next County Executive meeting. It was felt that they should be asked to consider carefully their position given the discussions during this meeting and the benefits of remaining. **Action: CB**
- When a player changes his or her address with EBU HQ at Aylesbury, could that person, where appropriate, be prompted to confirm whether or not they wish to change their County of Primary Allegiance. **Action: DE**

12 Date of next meeting

Thursday 27 April 2017, 10.30am @ WMBC.

The meeting closed at 12.40pm