

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Mountnessing Bridge Club

Held on Thursday 1st June 2023, at 7.10pm

1. Welcome and Apologies

- The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed the members present.
- Apologies for absence had been received from David Tennet, Simon Moorman, Peter Oake, Alaric Cundy, Angela Fenton & Colin Scott (who arrived later for the bridge).
- There were 21 members present.

2. Minutes of the EGM held on 7th July 2022

- The minutes of the last EGM were accepted and signed.
- Proposed by Les Curtis, seconded by George Vede.

3. Matters arising.

- There were no matters arising.

4. Report by the Chairman

- The Webmaster (acting Secretary) had provided a handout of statistics from the previous year. See Appendix A.
- The Chairman's message centred on the difficulties faced by the Club over the last year that are continuing into the current year. We averaged 5 tables last Club year. Since April 2023 the average has been under 4. This is insufficient to achieve financial stability (7 tables). During both periods, sessions have had to be cancelled because fewer than the absolute minimum of 3 tables could be assembled.
- While this is a very unsatisfactory situation, the Chairman proposed that we continue with the current rather tedious arrangements until the end of September when – if matters have not significantly improved – an EGM will be convened to consider extraordinary measures, including winding the Club up.
- With the above in mind, the Chairman proposed that membership be closed at the current number of 29 until the future of the Club is clearer. Guests will still – of course – be very welcome and will pay the same table money (£3.00) as members.
- The above measures were accepted by the meeting without dissent.
- The bottom line of the above is that the Members must commit to using the Club, and encouraging others to do so, or it will fold.
- Members were strenuously requested not to organise League Matches for Thursday evenings when the Club meets.
- The character of the Club was discussed. The Chairman argued that it should remain at the high end of the market: a Club where intermediate to strong players can expect a good standard of play. This is not to say that we are not welcoming to players of all standards, but that we will not attempt to train beginners or to compete with Clubs such as Brevion which have better premises and a different approach. We believe we have a niche to fill and will seek to exploit this over the coming months. If it turns out that there is no niche to be filled, the Club will close. This position-statement was accepted by all those present, with one dissenting voice (Sandra Fenton).
- Mike Harbour was thanked for his work on the Committee and, in particular, for running the scoring system following the rejected merger with Mayflower.

5. Financial Report

- The Treasurer delivered a fascinating oration approximately as detailed in Appendix B.
- The bottom line is that the Club lost over £1,000 in the previous financial year (as against over £1,200 in the previous 15-month period).
- Our projected loss for the current financial year – based on the current number of tables – is £1,500 to £ 1,600. While the Club still has 'money in the bank' this is clearly a serious situation financially.
- Roger Tattersfield was thanked for his work as scrutineer and Robert Elliott volunteered to replace him.
- Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Robert Elliott and seconded by George Vede.

6. Approval of Membership Fee and Table Money

- These had been set by fiat in April to £15.00 membership and £3.00 table-money, to help balance the books. However, see above for the proposal for the period from now until the end of September.
- This policy was accepted by the meeting without dissent.

7. Election of Club Officers

- The following had been nominated and seconded prior to the meeting:-
 - Chairman – David Piper
 - Vice-Chairman – Nick Hagan
 - Treasurer – Graham Beeton
 - Secretary & Webmaster – Theo Todman
- Linda Barker accepted the position of Committee Member.
- No volunteer for the 6th position on the Committee could be elicited.
- The Chairman will be Club Captain.
- All the above were elected unanimously.

8. AOB

- The Chairman mooted the idea of moving to Barleylands (meeting on a Thursday evening as currently). This is not a formal proposal at the moment but would be an option to contain costs in the future. On a show of hands, 8 'hands' indicated that they would prefer to meet at Barleylands and 4 would prefer to remain at MVH. 3 'hands' indicated that they would not play at Barleylands. A more formal investigation will be undertaken in October 2023 if needs be.
- Albert Kitchin and Roger & Jill Tattersfield raised the issue of the Quorum. It was agreed that it should remain at 3 tables. The Secretary suggested that members should, without prejudice, have the right to say that they would only play if there were to be more than 'n' tables, though this right should be exercised in the knowledge that it might lead to the termination of the Club. The Chairman was less enthusiastic about this idea.
- Mike Harbour raised the question whether we should review the decision not to merge with Mayflower. The Chairman rejected the idea, saying that 'nothing has changed'. As this failure to merge is sometimes cited as one of many reasons for the decline in membership, the Secretary was tasked with instituting a formal investigation and reporting back to the membership.
- Linda Barker was thanked for providing the excellent spread.
- There being no further matters the Chairman thanked the attendees and closed the meeting at 7.40pm.

Appendix A

Secretary's Report Jottings for Mountnessing Bridge Club AGM

Thursday 1st June 2023

1. **Membership:** 29 (down 20 from last year).
2. **Attendance:**
 - a. **Tables:**
 - i. Average 5.0 tables April 2022 – March 2023.
 - ii. Average 3.9 Tables April-May 2023.
 - iii. Below financial break-even (7 tables).
 - iv. 8 times no-play (4 times no quorum, 4 times other reasons)
 - b. **Distinct Attendees:**
 - i. 66 (April 2022 – March 2023);
 - ii. 34 (April-May 2023)
 - c. **Comparison** (pre-pandemic: April 2019 – March 2020):
 - i. Average 9.3 tables
 - ii. 102 distinct attendees
3. **Club Competitions:**
 - a. Chris Megahey Trophy: David Piper
 - b. Faye Wernick Trophy: Audrey Hartley
 - c. Lionel Wernick Trophy: Peter Oake
 - d. Windmill Trophy: Liz Williams & Nick Hagan
 - e. Margaret Curtis Trophy: Maureen Vede
 - f. Peter Seaton Trophy: Graham Beeton
 - g. Mary Rogers Trophy: Not Held
4. **ECBA:**
 - a. **Fletcher Trophy:** Second (Team: Robert Elliott & Dimitre Stoev, Alaric Cundy & John Sutcliffe, Graham Beeton & Ray Clarke, Peter Oake & Simon Moorman)

APPENDIX B

Report of the Treasurer to the Members of Mountnessing Bridge Club

for the Year Ended 31st March 2023

The accounts show a loss for the year of £1,093 compared to £1,215 in the previous 15 month period. Of the current year's loss, £140 relates to the previous period due to a change of accounting basis from receipts and payments to income and expenditure.

Revenue

During the previous period, following lockdown, members who had paid their subscriptions during the prior year were given free sessions, resulting in the comparative subscription income becoming negative. The membership level at 48 appears healthy but includes many players whose attendance was minimal or have now ceased to play at the club.

We averaged 5 tables during the year but this excludes three sessions that were cancelled due to an insufficient number of players.

Expenses

Most expenses are consistent with previous years once adjustment is made for the effect of the Covid lockdown during the preceding period.

Refreshments have increased as the club now uses only pre-wrapped confectionery and main brands of coffee.

The practice of engraving trophies has been reinstated and this expense includes £74.00 to replace a trophy lost during lockdown.

Forecast

The club currently has 29 members of which barely half are regular attendees. Our average attendance rate for the current year is 3 ½ tables per session. At this rate, our projected loss for the current year is £1,500 - £1,600.