



Report
of
the
Joint Working Party
on
The Merger of
Billericay Mayflower BC
And
Mountnessing BC

May 2022



Joint Working Party Report



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Purpose of this Document

- ✚ The aim of this document is to investigate the issues involved in a full merger of the two Clubs.
- ✚ This final version was issued to the full Combined Committee for approval and approval duly given.
- ✚ To be issued to the full membership of both Clubs at least two weeks prior to their respective AGMs in May (Mountnessing Thursday 19th May; Mayflower Tuesday 24th May).

Motivation for the Merger

- ✚ The principal reason for considering the merger is to provide a sound base for both clubs in the future both in playing terms and financially. The number of players is limited and reducing; the need is for one strong club to withstand these existential issues.
 - ✚ The two Clubs share the same officers (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Webmaster).
 - ✚ The Clubs meet in the same venue and use the same shared scoring equipment with the same scorers.
 - ✚ The Clubs currently share substantially the same membership.
 - ✚ The running and taking forward of the two Clubs would be more efficient, with less duplication, were the two clubs to merge. The running of the Clubs is by unpaid volunteers, without whom the Clubs could not continue to exist. There would be a saving of c. £80/pa for one EBU/Bridgewebs membership.
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- While both Clubs are currently financially viable with current attendance levels. Mayflower has a balance of c. £3k, Mountnessing c. £7k combining resources would make both clubs more secure against future financial pressures.

Considerations

Merged Club

Items for EGM

Should the merger proposal be sanctioned at the respective AGM's it is proposed that the following items are put in formal proposals to the joint membership at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). The proposals to be formulated by a joint Committee.

- Joint name – offer options for a vote.
- Joint Committee and form of said committee.
- Annual subs.
- Table money.
- Club Competitions.
- Club Ethos.
- Club website.
- Bank account.

Configuration of Merged Club

- One Constitution: this would be drawn up using the two existing constitutions. The opportunity would be taken to formalise certain well-established practices of the existing Clubs, such as supporting Charitable events.
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- ✚ One set of auditable accounts: a considerable easing of the workload on the Hon. Treasurer.
 - ✚ One set of bank accounts: Current and Investment.
 - ✚ One committee with one set of office-holders: the number of committee members would be decided at an EGM for the Combined Club, but it is proposed that as a minimum member from each former Club – other than the primary office-holders – should be elected to ensure the traditions and ethos of the former Clubs are not forgotten.
 - ✚ One AGM and one set of minutes.
 - ✚ One membership fee: This is to be proposed by the future Joint Committee for approval by the membership. It is appreciated that a few members would be prevented by personal circumstances or decisions from attending on both nights. Consideration would be given for equity in such circumstances should it become a problem. See Appendix 4 for some initial thoughts.
 - ✚ One membership list and one set of emails: easier for the Secretary and less bothersome for those currently members of both Clubs.
 - ✚ One Club Name: This could be “Mountnessing Bridge Club”, as that’s where the Merged Club will be meeting. But as this might look like a takeover it could be some combination of the two old names, or a new name, as decided at the EGM following the Merger.
 - ✚ One EBU Club Membership: This could be one or other of the existing memberships, possibly with a change of name, or a new membership. Consultation with the EBU might be required as to which, and as to timing. There would be the saving of the annual fee when re-introduced (not much: £27).
 - ✚ One Website: This is somewhat problematical and is covered in more detail in Appendix 3. The Merged site should be the Mountnessing Bridgewebs site, rebalanced to show the two sessions and former Clubs on an equal footing. Text would be incorporated from the Mayflower site (including Peter
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Williamson's article on the origins of the Club). The Mayflower site could be continued (but not maintained) beyond 8th February 2023 at a cost currently around £60 per year.

- ✚ Club Paper Archives: These ought to be held by the Secretary. Well, they aren't, currently and, if any are in existence, they need to be collected from whoever has them. Selected information should be held on-line if the Clubs' histories are deemed important.
 - ✚ Club Competitions: Initially things would carry on as they are, until such time as the new Combined Committee and membership decide for a change. There could be cross-fertilisation between the Clubs; there could be some rationalisation; there could be competitions across both days: for instance, there was / is going to be a Trophy / competition in memory of Chris Megahey at Mountnessing, but Chris was just as much a regular at Mayflower, so the competition could be held on a Tuesday, or across both days, maybe as a way of getting players to play on both days who don't currently do so.
 - ✚ Club Ethos and Aims: The Merged Club will need to be forward-looking, with a concerted effort to expand its membership, but it needs to be more than just a place where people can turn up on an evening for a game of cards. The Club traditions and the Club Competitions are important in this regard. We probably need to step back and think through what kind of Club we want to be. Currently it's great (bar the small number of tables and long sit-outs when the numbers are low) for the stronger players, as they get a really good game, but a sudden influx of weaker players – were that to be possible – could adversely affect the experience for some, though we'd expect this still to be a satisfying experience for most strong players. It would be a nice problem to have and is something for the Combined Committee and new membership to consider.
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Transitional Issues

- 🚩 Membership: Members of either Club would be deemed to be members of the Merged Club until April 2023 when all must join the new Merged Club.
- 🚩 Membership Fees: These will have already been paid for 2022/23. The new combined rate will not apply until 2023/24.
- 🚩 EBU Memberships, Club names & Websites: these would stay the same until the transition is effected, possibly until the end of March 2023, or as decided at an Extraordinary AGM of the Merged Club. There would be an issue with the ladders if the Mayflower website was decommissioned before the end of March 2023, though the Webmaster, after a bit of work, could run them outside of the residual site.

Alternative

Keep things as they are: the risk is that one or other Club will fail for want of a Committee, insufficient membership or lack of innovation for the future.



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Appendix 1

Working party Members

Linda Fleet

Nick Hagan

Albert Kitchin

John McCoy



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Appendix 2

Membership Cross-over between Mayflower and Mountnessing

Year	Both Clubs	Mountnessing only	Mayflower only	Total
2021/22	28	8	13	49
2019/20	29	35	33	95

- As summarised above, an attempt has been made to check just how overlapping the attendance between the two clubs has been over the last two seasons.
 - To exclude marginal attendees distorting the analysis, the parameters have been set to exclude players who have played less than 10 times in the season in question at the two clubs combined.
 - Also, a player is only counted as belonging to a club if he/she has played at least 5 times during the season at that Club.
 - From this, it looks like the Clubs have moved closer together since Covid, but this may be an artifact of the halving of the number of regular attendees, and the likelihood that they are the keener and stronger players who are more likely to turn out at all, and to turn out (at least) twice a week.
 - It is possible that different parameters would lead to different messages. A spreadsheet will be placed on the Club websites giving the raw attendance data from which the above summary has been derived. Interested members can play about with it and draw their own conclusions.
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