

Minutes of NEBA Council Meeting on Wednesday, 12th March 2025 at Chester-le-Street Cricket Club at 11.30a.m.

Present:

Sue Davies (Chair and Morpeth Rep.)
Marion Curran (Vice-Chair)
Catherine Farrell (Secretary and Stannington Rep)
Jill Armstrong (Webmaster) (by Zoom)
Helen Wildsmith (Co-opted Chief Tournament Secretary)
Graham Cox (Inter-club league and Wearside Rep)
John Portwood (Chief Tournament Director)
Peter Avery (Brunton Rep)
Andy Pryor (Hexham Rep)
Nigel Durie (Darlington Rep)
Gordon Cockburn (Chester-le-Street)
Jonathan Lillycrop (Durham Rep)
Audrey Bainbridge (Bishop Auckland Rep)

Apologies:

Bill March (Treasurer)
Liz Muir (Congress Secretary)
Paul Ingoe (Castle Morpeth Rep)
Whitley Bay and Tynemouth
Middlesborough
Whitby

Agenda:

1. Minutes of the last meeting – these were accepted as a true record.
2. Matters Arising – There were no matters arising. Sue informed the clubs that Ryton Club had folded and had deregistered from the EBU.
3. Congress 2025 – The clubs were asked to mention to their members if there was anyone in their club who would be interested in coming forward for the role of Congress Secretary. The groundwork has already been done by Liz Muir but someone is still needed to co-ordinate everything for a successful event..
4. Online league – the clubs were updated about the upcoming online league and we managed to raise an eighth team to take part.
5. Upcoming Competitions – number of boards and publicising them. The clubs were asked for their views on changing the running of the Chronicle Cup and make it a direct entry event rather than running qualifying rounds in the clubs. Peter Avery was against the idea of direct entry and thought that keeping qualifying rounds in clubs was preferable. He pointed out that this provided a direct link from the clubs to NEBA which was important. He also pointed out that a number of pairs who qualified in the clubs went on to play in the semi-final who wouldn't otherwise enter directly. If lesser experienced players qualified in the clubs they then had the confidence to play in the semi-final so numbers directly entering the competition would reduce. The other clubs represented also agreed with him having in the past had lesser experienced players qualifying and then playing in the semi-finals. So it was put to the vote and decided that the format would stay as before and not change with a 16 pair final playing 45 boards.

This year both Semi-finals were in the same week but it was decided that it was better to stagger the semi-finals and play them in different weeks so anyone who couldn't play in one week had the opportunity to play at the other venue in another week. Peter was also asked if the Deane Salver had to be cancelled would Brunton have to pay any cancellation fee but this was not the case and hall were very flexible about late cancellations. It was not on the website that the number of boards would be 36. (This has now been rectified) . It is hoped to improve publicity for future events with posters being made available for clubs.

6. 90th Anniversary Celebrations – The suggestion of running a simultaneous pairs event throughout the region was agreed as a good idea running in the clubs from May onwards from Monday-Thursday on the various club nights. This year is also the 100th anniversary of duplicate bridge.
7. Reinvigoration of bridge players in the North East – This item ended up being merged with the teaching and club updates. The clubs generally agreed that this was a long term thing and bringing in students from classes to supervised play took time.
8. Wearside reported that they had about 9 tables of supervised play they ran 4 separate lesson sessions – beginner sessions – intermediate sessions and gentle club nights.
9. Durham ran a supervised play on a Monday and had about 6 tables. They ran a 6 month beginners course , with regular players giving advice and a weekly sheet. Tuesday afternoon was their largest session with 10/11 tables.
10. Hexham had been unable to run a beginners course this year as they had no teacher but were starting a new course in September . They were making good progress with 25/30% of their students now playing on their club nights. Also some of the former students had joined the committee and had become involved in the running of the club.
11. Darlington ran a 9 high on a Monday evening for improvers and was more social.
12. Chester-le-Street ran a Chicago event on a Monday evening and were trying to move them on to the regular club night.
13. Morpeth and Castle Morpeth ran a teams event once a year with the unaffiliated clubs and some of the members played in both clubs.
14. Bishop Auckland is struggling with only 4 to 4.5 tables.
15. Wearside reported that they have mentors for their improvers and are ruthless with offensive players as it puts off other players.
16. The clubs were asked to mention in their clubs if any of their club TDs would be interested in taking the qualification for County TD being held on 17th/18th May by the EBU . NEBA would pay the expenses.
17. They were given the date for the AGM on Tuesday, 27th May at 6p.m. at Wearside Bridge Club.
18. A.O.B. It was mentioned that there is a new County Development Officer for the EBU who was looking into rejuvenation of bridge she is hoping to visit the region when she has settled into her new role she is called Mary Cousins.
19. The next Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, 15th October 2025 at Chester-le-Street Cricket Club at 11.30a.m. The meeting concluded at 12.30p.m.