

NEBA Council Meeting at Chester-le-Street Cricket Club on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 10.30a.m.

Minutes:

Present:

Marion Curran (Chair)

John Portwood (Chief Tournament Director and Bishop Auckland BC Rep.)

Helen Wildsmith (Chief Tournament Secretary)

Catherine Farrell (Secretary and Stannington BC Rep.)

Jill Armstrong (Webmaster)

Sue Davies (Exec. Support)

Mary Page (Exec. Support)

Peter Avery (Brunton BC Rep.)

Paul Ingoe (Castle Morpeth and Morpeth BCs Rep.)

Andy Pryor (Hexham BC Rep.)

Johnathan Lilycrop (Durham BC Rep.)

Nigel Durie (Darlington BC Rep.)

Chris Patrick (Wearside BC Rep.)

Andy Clarke (Whitley Bay BC Rep.)

Gordon Cockburn (Chester-le-Street BC Rep.)

1. Apologies for absence: Graham Cox (Vice Chair), Bill March (Treasurer), Liz Muir (Exec. Support), Val Gibson (Exec. Support), Bev. Godfrey (Exec. Support), Brian Pacey (Exec. Support), Colin Mitchell (Stannington BC Rep.)
2. The Minutes of the last meeting on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 were accepted as a true record.
3. Matters arising: The Congress went ahead and ran at a small loss. It will be going ahead this year with a different venue and run by Oliver Cowan.
4. There have now been 2 sessions of the online league . The first session was won by the Gibson team and the second one by the Armstrong team. The preparations for the third session are already underway.
  5. As yet there have been insufficient volunteers for a sub committee to discuss ways forward to encourage more participation and so there is nothing to report from them.
6. The Anniversary Simultaneous pairs has been completed and a cheque for £312 has been sent to Dementia UK.

7. There was a long discussion re. the imbalance in the 2 semi finals for the Chronicle Cup and after looking at various alternatives it was voted that in future we would keep the club qualifying events but allow the clubs in the south of the region to hold 2 qualifying events to try to rectify the imbalance in numbers between the 2 semi finals and in future the semi finals would be held in Durham and Brunton and the final at Wearside.
8. The extra green pointed event that we have been allowed by the EBU . It was voted that we should upgrade the Category pairs which is to be held in Durham later in the year.
  9. John reported that the problems with the Bridgemates at the Chronicle cup could be rectified using 2 USB ports and as we don't use our Bridgemates very often that at this time it is not necessary to go to the expense of upgrading to Bridgemate 3. Thanks to Graham Cox for looking into the costs.
10. The Council Reps were asked to encourage their members to make more use of the NEBA website. Posters have been printed as well for club noticeboards advertising forthcoming events. There will be new posters produced every 3 months for club noticeboards. Dave Armstrong was thanked for doing the posters.
11. Niman Israel pre Covid had 12 teams but has now dropped so far that it has been unable to run. As it is a mixed pivot team it is very limiting, so it was suggested that NEBA joined forces with Brunton and supported their Charity Event on 17<sup>th</sup> May for St. Oswalds Hospice. This is currently being advertised around the clubs.
  12. Following on from Norman Gray's suggestions already circulated there was a long discussion about the inter-club league. It was eventually voted that the format would stay the same and the dates altered slightly, One in October, November, January, March and early April. As the Congress is now at the end of November it was decided not to hold one in December due to the closeness of Christmas etc.
13. The individual clubs then gave their updates. Hexham, Darlington, Wearside, Durham, Brunton and Morpeth are all running classes. Bishop Auckland are hoping to start a teaching programme, Brunton and Stannington both run Gentle Bridge sessions and Stannington has had some success in getting some of their Gentle Bridge players moving into the club. There was a suggestion that we run a play with the experts as a friendly and any money raised would be donated to Charity.
  14. A.O.B. Clubs were asked to try to encourage members to join the online teams which is about 2 hours once every 3 weeks. There can be a team of 6 but only 4 play at a time.
15. The meeting closed at approx.. 11.45a.m. and the date of the next meeting is 14<sup>th</sup> October 2026.