

# North Eastern Bridge Association

Council Meeting July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 11.00 am, Chester-le-Street Cricket Club

## Minutes

Present: representatives from Bishop Auckland, Brunton, Durham, Cramlington, Hexham, Morpeth, Ryton, St Georges, Wearside, Whitley Bay Bridge Clubs, and all Committee members.

1. **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all those present.

2. **Clubs' recent experiences**

There was a wide-ranging discussion of Clubs' experiences since Lockdown was first introduced and since f2f re-opening had become possible. Experiences were varied; most clubs had established online bridge during Lockdown (either individually or in partnership with others), and a minority are maintaining online bridge in parallel with f2f following the relaxation of Lockdown. Typical engagement with f2f bridge is between 50% and 75% of pre-lockdown levels. This is creating financial challenges for some Clubs, causing some to increase table money and some to seek a renegotiation of the room rental. Two Clubs have, sadly, closed (Alnwick and South Shields) while others are looking at merging.

3. **NEBA competitions**

The new arrangements for NEBA competitions was discussed, and the Committees' view that, with the exception of the Chronicle Cup, all competitions would be direct entry was **unanimously endorsed** by Council. It was **agreed** that the entry date for Direct Entry competitions would be two weeks prior to the date of that Competition.

4. **2022 Inter club Competition**

Arrangements for the 2022 Inter club team of eight Competition were discussed. It was **agreed** that this would be, as usual, f2f and start at 2.00 pm on a Sunday. It was also **agreed** that refreshments would comprise tea/coffee/biscuits and NOT a "big tea". Whitley Bay Bridge Club helpfully **offered** their premises as a mid-point if team wished to play there.

5. **2022 Congress**

Arrangements for the 2022 Congress were discussed. The Committees' view that the Congress should be f2f was **endorsed** by Council, notwithstanding a full recognition of the financial risk involved.

6. **The website**

Council would like the website to:

- a) have obvious Club links with details of when they play
- b) promote teaching opportunities so that players know when and where there are opportunities for lessons and/or improver play
- c) create an archive of historical information (so that it can be taken off the homepage efficiently)
- d) encourage members to provide information for uploading so that the site might become more membership driven

The Committee were also **encouraged** to produce an "obituary policy" to determine which obituaries should be on the NEBA site and which should be just on club sites.

7. **Teaching Strategy**

Discussion focussed on the possibility of a more formal teaching strategy led by NEBA. In the absence of a proactive programme of teaching and recruitment it is most likely that there will be a drop in membership over the next 5 years. This important matter was **referred back to Executive Committee**.