

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

64th Annual General Meeting

Monday 14 June 2010 at the Oxford Bridge Club

MINUTES

1. Present:

Evan Harris	President
John Briggs	Chairman
Sandra Nicholson	Secretary/EBU Shareholder
Stephen Brown	Chief Tournament Director
Alan Grunwald	Tournament Secretary
Geoff Nicholas	League Secretary
Ian Angus	Match Secretary
Brenda Harris	Publicity Officer/EBU Shareholder
Marryat Stevens	Youth Officer
Lynne Hayes	Honours Boards, Cups and Trophies
Rob Procter	Auditor

Esme Alden, Oxford	Arthur Jones, Wantage
James Anderson, University	Clive Keep, Abingdon
Anamaria Bicarregui	Helen Lawton Smith, Oxford
John Cecil, Summertown	David Marsh, Witney
Diane Coe, Witney	Mary-Ann Sheehy, Oxford
Matthew Covill, Oxford	Richard Sills, Oxford
Rob Dixon, Oxford	Andrew Speyer, Abingdon
Barbara Eyton	Lorna Swadling, Oxford
Francis Glassborow, Wallingford	Denis Talbot, Oxford
Frank Harris, Oxford	Kathy Talbot, Oxford
Krishan Jalie, Oxford	Alan Wilson

Apologies for Absence:

Dinah Lintott	Treasurer
Maxine Henry	Membership Secretary

Ian Brooks, Banbury	Alastair Gidman, Summertown
Kay Chamberlain, Faringdon	Norman Gascoyne, Wallingford
Sandra Claridge	Paula Hopkinson, Thame
Sandy Constable, former President	Deirdre Jalie, Oxford
Chris Dawe, Oxford	Colin Jones, Wallingford
	Krys Kazmierczak, Summertown

Bill McCarthy, Thame
Ina Merriman, Witney
Tracey Reimer
Elizabeth Salisbury

Ian Seward, Frilford Heath
Erica Sheppard, Summertown
Mike Webley, Aylesbury
Neil Whiting, Summertown

2. **Approval of Minutes of 63rd AGM**

The copy of the Minutes of the 63rd AGM circulated prior to the meeting had included an amended list of prizewinners. With this alteration, the minutes were unanimously approved – proposed Alan Wilson, seconded Lynne Hayes.

3. **Matters arising**

The Chairman noted that although the Men's and Ladies' Pairs had not achieved the numbers referred to during the previous year's discussion (12 and 10 tables respectively), they had been broadly cost-neutral in the past year and rather than discontinuing them, it was hoped to continue running them with more effort to encourage less experienced players to participate, e.g. by awarding non-expert prizes and/or stratifying the events.

4. **Officers' Reports**

(Written officers' reports received prior to the meeting had been circulated with the Agenda, with the exception of that from the Publicity Officer which had been inadvertently omitted and is therefore included here in full.)

❖ **Chairman:** See report previously circulated.

❖ **Secretary:** See report previously circulated.

❖ **Treasurer:** See report previously circulated.

Approval of the accounts was formally proposed by Alan Grunwald, seconded by Stephen Brown, and agreed nem.con.

The Auditor, Rob Procter, congratulated the Treasurer on the way in which the accounts had been kept. He said, however, that in his view the County needed to discuss and decide what use should be made of the ongoing surplus funds that were being accumulated. The Chairman commented that with the change of officers in the past year, and various other issues, it had been a busy year and he was aware that this was an issue which had been identified by the previous Chairman but had not yet been addressed. He agreed that it was important to find ways in which the available funds could be used to best effect for the benefit of bridge in Oxfordshire, and hoped to make progress with this over the coming year.

❖ **Chief Tournament Director**

Stephen Brown reported that all events run during the year had gone well and he wished to record thanks to Lynne Hayes, Kathy Talbot, Krishan Jalie, and Max Booker in particular for their help in organising, directing and scoring, as well as to Clive Keep and Malcolm Simpson for writing the commentaries for the Sim Pairs.

❖ **Tournament Secretary:** See report previously circulated.

Alan Grunwald added that the Congress was now almost completely full, with 41 teams and 81 pairs currently entered.

❖ **League Secretary:** See report previously circulated.

Geoff Nicholas added that all competitions under his control had run well during the past season. It would be necessary to review entry fees for the next season to include the new EBU P2P charges for league events.

❖ **Match Secretary:** See report previously circulated.

Thanks were recorded to Nick Smith, who stood down as Match Secretary during the year.

❖ **Membership Secretary:** See report previously circulated.

❖ **Publicity Officer**

Brenda Harris reported that:

- The next Andrew Robson seminar is scheduled for Thursday 7 April 2011.
- The Claridge Cup, for the best-played hand in a County Match, was won by Andrew Murphy
- As regards the Oxfordshire column in English Bridge, we are strictly limited to 280 words which means it is not always possible to include all the many Oxfordshire successes at both local and national levels in current issues: these will appear in subsequent issues. Alan Wilson, Sandra Nicholson, Krys Kazmierczak and Steve Noble have all given invaluable help with proof-reading for the column, for which we are very grateful
- We also particularly wish to thank David Bygott, who has taken over editing the County Newsletter following Malcolm Simpson's retirement due to ill health.

❖ **EBU Shareholders :** See report previously circulated.

❖ **Education Officer:** No report, as post currently vacant.

❖ **Youth Officer**

Marryat Stevens reported that he would be continuing bridge activities in schools at the start of the new school year in September.

5. Election of Officers

The President led the election of officers as follows:

- ❖ Chairman: John Briggs, prop. Stephen Brown, sec. Brenda Harris
- ❖ Secretary: Sandra Nicholson, prop. Erica Sheppard, sec. Christopher Sheppard
- ❖ Treasurer: Dinah Lintott, prop. John Briggs, sec. Sandra Nicholson
- ❖ Chief Tournament Director: Stephen Brown, prop. John Briggs, sec. Geoff Nicholas
- ❖ Tournament Secretary: Alan Grunwald, prop. Krys Kazmierczak, sec. Lesley Cole
- ❖ League Secretary: Geoff Nicholas, prop. Bill McCarthy, sec. Debbie Roberts
- ❖ Match Secretary: Ian Angus, prop. Brenda Harris, sec. Lorna Swadling
- ❖ Membership Secretary: Vacant
- ❖ Publicity Officer: Brenda Harris, prop. John Deech, sec. Robert Gasser
- ❖ EBU Shareholder: Sandra Nicholson, prop. Krys Kazmierczak, sec. John Briggs
(Brenda Harris was also proposed and seconded but it was subsequently confirmed that, as existing Shareholders, she and Sue Maxwell did not need to be re-elected each year. However, concern was expressed at the meeting over the fact that Sue Maxwell had not regularly attended the Shareholders' Meetings. The Chairman agreed to pursue this.)
- ❖ Education Officer: Vacant
- ❖ Youth Officer: Marryat Stevens, prop. Stephen Brown, sec. Nick Smith
- ❖ Selection Committee:
 - Joe Clacey : University
 - Nick Smith: Frilford Heath
 - Andrew Lintott: Aylesbury
 - David Bygott: Summertown
 - Kathy Talbot: Oxfordplus Chris Cooper, ex officio as County Captain.
(No nomination had been received for Colin Jones, who had chaired the committee in 2009/10. As he was not present, it was agreed that he should be contacted to find out whether he wished to remain on the committee. A nomination for him was subsequently received from Wallingford, enabling him to be co-opted.)
- ❖ Auditor: Rob Procter, prop. Sandra Nicholson, sec. Krishan Jalie.

All the above were elected nem con.

6. Presentation of Prizes

The prizes presented by the President were given as follows:

Event	Winners
Ladies' Pairs	Cathy Rowland & Mary-Ann Sheehy
Men's Pairs	Krishan Jalie & Geoff Nicholas
Swiss Pairs	Alan Wilson & Nick Smith
Mixed Pairs	Debbie Roberts & Geoff Nicholas
Flitch	Helen Lawton-Smith & John Slater
County Pairs 1 st	Dinah Lintott & Andrew Lintott
County Pairs 2 nd	Matthew Covill & Mark Rebick
County Pairs 3 rd	Kathy Talbot & Denis Talbot
OBA Simultaneous Pairs 1 st	Lorna Swadling & Alastair Gidman
OBA Simultaneous Pairs 2 nd	Kathy Talbot & Denis Talbot
President's Cup	Mike Robinson, Rob Procter, David Thomas, Richard Haydon, Nathan Piper & Ian Angus
Chester Cup	Mike Brown, Gillian Lonsdale, Clive Keep, John Slater & Nigel Wilkes
Tuesday Teams Ladder	Nick Smith
Tuesday Pairs Ladder	Nick Smith
Tuesday Butler Pairs Ladder	Adrian Lambe & John Clifford
Tuesday Champ	Nick Smith & Alan Wilson
Harwell Cup	Kathy Talbot, Denis Talbot, Geoff Nicholas & Debbie Roberts
Sadler Salver	Krishan Jalie & Geoff Nicholas
Premiership	Nick Smith
Wessex Div 1	Menagerie A
Wessex Div 2	Abingdon A
Wessex Div 3	Summertown A
Wessex Div 4	Witney
Wessex Div 5	University B
Claridge Cup	Andrew Murphy

Previously presented Prizes and Trophies:

Pro/Am	Peter Briggs & Pat Lewis
Oxford Times	Chris Dawe & Alice M. Kaye
Sandra Landy Trophy	Gary Diamond & Russell Tenzer
Beck Cup	Hertfordshire (Ann Flockhart, Vernon Gaskell, Celia Oram & Derek Oram)
Oxford Congress:	
Championship Pairs 2009	Debbie Roberts & Geoff Nicholas
Swiss Teams 2009	Katherine Hodgson, Roy France, Bob Bannister & Andrew Law

7. Items raised and already notified:

a. Approval of county P2P fee and annual subscription rate from 1 April 2011

At the Management Committee meeting held on 10th December 2009, it was agreed that the County P2P charge should be 3p for 2010/2011 and should rise to 6p for 2011/2012, with the annual subscription rate for direct or secondary affiliation to remain at £4 p.a. As required by the EBU, this proposal was brought to the AGM for approval.

The Chairman pointed out that across all counties, 6p was more or less the average: some had no P2P charge at all, others were set at 10p or 11p. The County's intention had originally been to set the OBA charge at a rate that would make it cost neutral when compared with the previous income from annual subscriptions, and our best estimate was that this figure would be 6p. However, because the EBU had erroneously published a figure of 3p in advance we had agreed that we would honour that for the first year, which was likely to result in a loss of income to the OBA of some £1,200. He was aware that some clubs felt that, in the light of the healthy financial position of the OBA, the figure should not be increased after all, but his own view was that after only three months it was still far too early to tell what the impact of P2P would actually be and that, for the time being at least, we could not afford to drop below the figure of 6p.

Francis Glassborow (Wallingford) and Richard Sills (Oxford) both queried the underlying principle of aiming to maintain the same level of income from P2P as from the previous annual subscriptions, and argued that it was more important to look at the overall accounts and ensure we had enough income to meet necessary costs and remain solvent. The Chairman replied that he would take this view to a future Management Committee meeting for discussion, together with the general question on use of funds that had already been raised by the Auditor.

The proposal was voted on by a show of hands and agreed nem.con., with two abstentions.

b. Proposed amendments to the Wessex League by-laws

The introduction of P2P and Universal Membership has meant that some clubs which have played in the Wessex League for many years, but do not hold regular duplicate events, are no longer eligible to be affiliated to the EBU/OBA. After considerable discussion the Management Committee meeting held on 24th March 2010 agreed that the Wessex League by-laws should be amended to allow these clubs to continue to participate in the League, subject to certain conditions, including a review of the situation within the next three years: and that the amended by-laws should be put to the AGM for endorsement.

The Chairman thanked Geoff Nicholas for his leading role in preparing this proposal and stressed that the County was keen to see the Wessex League continue to thrive. He was aware that this was a contentious issue and could see both sides of the argument, but felt that overall it would be to the detriment of the League if it lost

some of its most successful teams, even though, under EBU rules, they could no longer be eligible to represent the County in the Garden Cities competition. The Management Committee had also spent a long time looking at the pros and cons and in the end had agreed this was the best way forward.

Francis Glassborow (Wallingford) said that he was strongly opposed to the proposal and that his club believed this was not the correct solution. He supported the new EBU definition of a bridge club as a group of people who play bridge together on a regular basis, and felt that the Wessex League should remain as a competition between such clubs. A lot of people in the County had been unhappy for some time with the participation of one group who do not meet this definition of a club. He appealed to the group in question to form a club open to anyone to join – perhaps by holding regular teams events.

Nick Smith, speaking on behalf of Menagerie (no longer affiliated), said that the question had been discussed at the club's recent AGM and that plans were in fact being made to start up a regular monthly or fortnightly teams event starting in September. In the meanwhile, the members felt that they were a genuine bridge club and would support the proposed amendments to the Wessex League rules.

Rob Procter added that when Menagerie was first formed they had tried to set up regular teams evenings but had not had enough support to run them. He was pleased to see that the County now regularly ran both teams and Butler scored evenings.

Alan Grunwald pointed out that although only one group was being discussed in any detail, in fact four teams from three different groups would be affected by this proposal. Kathy Talbot added that it would be important to ensure that the review included in the proposal was undertaken within the three-year period.

The President commented that whilst some members appeared to believe they were being asked to rubber-stamp the proposal, the fact that a vote was being held at a meeting open to all OBA members demonstrated that it was a democratic process.

He called for a separate vote on the amendment to paragraph 8(ii) of the regulations, which embodied the proposal to allow non-affiliated groups and clubs to continue to participate in the League. This was carried by 21 votes to 2. The remaining amendments were then approved nem.con., although Denis Talbot asked the Management Committee to look again at the very narrow window of opportunity should any play-offs be required.

c. Revised County Constitution

The 2009 AGM had approved a revised version of the County Constitution, but it later transpired that this did not fully meet the requirements of the EBU. Further amendments had been discussed in detail with the relevant EBU Board Member and the Secretary stated that since circulating the Agenda, she had been informed that the new version would definitely be acceptable to the EBU provided it was formally approved by the current AGM.

Francis Glassborow (Wallingford) queried the requirement for clubs to elect rather than appoint representatives to the Management Committee (para 6.3). He believed

this was an imposition and that clubs should be allowed to decide their own mechanisms for nominating their representatives. In any case, as there was never any contest for the available places, he believed the process was effectively one of appointment rather than election. The Chairman replied that he had some sympathy with this view, but that the EBU had made it very clear that the inclusion of formal elections to the Management Committee was a requirement before approval could be given to the new Constitution. The President added that all organisations imposed some rules on their members, and that he felt it was important to make the process of choosing representatives as transparent as possible.

Alan Wilson asked whether the ratio of one representative to every 30 members was still appropriate now that P2P had greatly increased the number of OBA members at each club. Stephen Brown suggested that perhaps there could be a cap on the number for each individual club, or a change to one to every 50 members.

Francis Glassborow commented that he felt the Management Committee needed to consider what constituted “membership” of a bridge club. There was a lot of duplication, and some clubs such as Wallingford had a very open policy on accepting new members, whereas others were more restrictive. Arthur Jones (Wantage) suggested that it might be better to ask members to nominate a primary club of allegiance, and then count only those numbers.

The Chairman said that he did not want to see the committee become unwieldy, and suggested that the ratio, and the method of counting numbers, should be reviewed the following year to see how it had worked in practice.

A formal vote was taken and the new Constitution was approved nem.con., with one abstention.

Finally, the President thanked all those present for attending, and also thanked all the officers and members of the Management Committee for their work during the year.