

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Monday 6th September at 7.30 p.m. at the Oxford Bridge Club

PRESENT:

John Briggs [JB]	Chairman
Sandra Nicholson [SN]	Secretary/EBU Shareholder
Stephen Brown [SB]	Chief Tournament Director
Geoff Nicholas [GN]	League Secretary
Alan Grunwald [AG]	Tournament Secretary
Vicky Fleming [VF]	Membership Secretary (<i>co-opted at this meeting, see (3) below</i>)
Brenda Harris [BH]	Publicity Officer/EBU Shareholder
Marryat Stevens [MS]	Youth Officer
David Bygott [DB]	Newsletter Editor

Esme Alden	Oxford	Chris Kerr	Oxford
John Cecil	Summertown	Peter Owen-Smith	Wantage
Alastair Gidman	Summertown	Richard Sills	Oxford
Lorraine Jones	Wantage	Kathy Talbot	Oxford

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Dinah Lintott [DL]	Treasurer
Lynne Hayes [LH]	Cups and Honours Boards
Ian Angus [IA]	Match Secretary

Kay Chamberlain	Faringdon	David Marsh	Witney
Diane Coe	Witney	Erica Sheppard	Summertown
Colin Jones	Wallingford	Peter Sherry	Oxford
Norman Gascoyne	Wallingford	Andrea Smith	Wallingford

Gillian Weatherley, who had been nominated by Wallingford to attend this meeting in place of their usual representatives, was unable to do so through illness and sent apologies later.

2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 22 July 2010

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved (proposed AG, seconded MS).

3. Action points and matters arising from previous Management Committee meetings

(Numbers, where included, refer to minutes of the previous meeting.)

County Prospectus (4): BH had eventually organised distribution of individually labelled copies of the prospectus via clubs where possible; copies for dual members, and those not listed as belonging to an affiliated club, would need to be posted. SB said he had only just realised that the printers had inexplicably omitted some information on club email and website addresses which had appeared correctly in the proof he had checked. It was agreed that he should contact the printers again to discuss reprinting the remaining copies and/or obtaining a refund. VF would let him know how many copies were still to be sent out. **ACTION: SB/VF.**

Arrangements for awarding Master Points for club heats of County Pairs

It was noted that although SB had included the arrangements for awarding Master Points for heats of the National Pairs in the prospectus, clarification was still needed on the arrangements for heats of the County Pairs. SB and SN were asked to investigate and include the detail in the minutes for distribution, and in the following year's prospectus. Following advice from the EBU, this is:

- Club heats of the County Pairs qualify for Master Point awards at Regional level, i.e. 3x the normal rate. Clubs are responsible for the normal club P2P for these events.
- Ideally, competing pairs and non-competing pairs should be split into two sections, but if this is not practicable, the event should initially be scored as a single event but then subsequently split into two "shadow" events which should be uploaded separately to the EBU website so that the different levels of Master Points applicable to competing and non-competing pairs can be correctly allocated. Detailed guidance on how to do this using Scorebridge can be obtained via Clive Keep.

It was also confirmed that where a club was unable to run two sections, members who belonged to more than one affiliated club could take part in more than one heat, but could still compete only once.

EBU Shareholders (4): JB had still not managed to contact Sue Maxwell, who was not present at the meeting and had not sent apologies. He would try again to find out whether she wished to continue in her role, before the next EBU AGM on 6 October. **ACTION: JB.**

Wessex League (4): GN reported that exactly 40 teams had entered this year and therefore there was no need to restructure the divisions.

Men's/Ladies' Pairs (6a): It was agreed that this event should be given more publicity, including non-expert prizes: £30 for first, and £15 for 2nd if 5 or more pairs eligible (with the main event also to have a top prize of £30). **ACTION: BH.**

4. Officers' reports

A set of reports had been circulated in advance and is available for reference on the County website.

Chairman: The Chairman had not submitted a formal report. He said that he was conscious that changes in his family and work circumstances now meant he had far less time to devote to the OBA than was needed. However, he did not think it would be helpful if he were to resign without an immediate replacement in view. If a suitable person could be identified, he indicated that he would be willing to step down: otherwise, he would continue to act as Chairman, whilst recognising that it would not be possible to make as much progress as he would have liked.

Treasurer: The Treasurer, who was unable to be present, had reported that there was now about £5,700 in the current account, plus £21,759 invested. This represented a shortfall of some £1,200 compared with the position at the same time in 2009. SN explained that this was due to the change to P2P, which would spread subscription income across the year rather than bringing it all in at the start of the year: and that our latest estimate was that, based on a P2P charge of 3p per session, the County's overall income for 2010-2011 would be about £1,000 lower than in 2009-2010.

Chief Tournament Director: JB thanked SB for all his efforts in preparing the Prospectus, which involved a great deal of work. Esme Alden added that we were all very grateful to him for continuing to do so much for the County now he was living so far away. SB said he was willing to go on doing as much as he could for the time being, but would appreciate more volunteers to help with scoring and acting as Assistant TD.

In relation to County ladders, SB pointed out that we actually run four ladders including the Seniors, and that to comply with current EBU regulations we might have to reduce this to two after April 2011. SN suggested that it might still be possible to run extra ladders provided we did not give additional master points for more than two: this was later confirmed by the EBU.

A brief discussion was held on the proposed changes to the Tuesday playoff. It was agreed to run the playoff as part of a Tuesday night, with reduction of carry forward, rather than get rid of it altogether. Rather than use Butler scoring, it should be match-pointed, provided there are at least 6 tables (and if not, it should be cancelled). SB was asked to rethink the carryforward in terms of match points, in such a way that everyone participating could win. It was also requested that full results should be published in future. **ACTION: SB.**

Richard Sills presented a note from the Oxford Bridge Club relating to the use of the premises for Wessex League matches on a Tuesday night, alongside the County duplicate. This generated some discussion but it was eventually agreed to monitor attendance at the County duplicates and ask OBC either to find an alternative venue or rearrange the match dates if necessary. If the duplicate has more than 11 tables, matches should be held in the Mary Good room and tea room to allow the duplicate to use the whole of the main room, rather than be split into two. The captain of the home team should be responsible for locking up at the end of the evening. **ACTION: RS.**

Membership Secretary: JB expressed thanks to VF, who had volunteered to take on the vacant post of Membership Secretary and was unanimously co-opted on to the Committee in this role. VF reported that there were currently 1299 members with primary affiliation to the OBA listed on the EBU spreadsheet, including 128 "direct" members

who had paid an annual subscription as they were not members of affiliated clubs, and 24 paid-up dual members.

Tournament Secretary/Webmaster: see item 5.

EBU Shareholders: SN asked whether the County wished to nominate anyone for any of the posts that were due to be filled at the forthcoming AGM. No names were put forward.

Match Secretary: In the absence of IA, Kathy Talbot reported that all three County teams had lost in the match against Leicestershire held on the previous day (A team 9-11, B team 9-11, C team 5-15).

Publicity Officer and Newsletter: BH asked clubs to do all they could to publicise the forthcoming Men's and Ladies' Pairs and to encourage non-expert pairs to take part (see 2, above).

DB said that he had been given very positive feedback on the Newsletter since he had taken over as Editor. He reported that there had been no fee for the use of the photograph in the last issue. He had been trying to contact clubs to find out how many hard copies they needed for distribution and whilst not all had responded, the general trend from those who had replied was that numbers of hard copies could be reduced because of wider internet access.

Richard Sills mentioned that the BBC had arranged, at very short notice, to do some filming at the Oxford Bridge Club on the following day for inclusion in a TV news feature about keeping mentally alert.

League Secretary: GN reported that 8 teams had entered the Chester Cup, including one with a home base in Newbury. It was agreed that this entry should be accepted with the proviso that when this team plays at "home" it must find a venue within Oxfordshire if requested to do so by its opponents. Rather than split 8 teams into two divisions, at SB's suggestion, it was agreed that with 8 or 9 teams, there should be a draw for each team to play 6 matches, and that the rules should be changed to reflect this. **ACTION: GN**

Youth Officer: MS reported that there were several schools in the area looking for bridge teachers and more volunteers, ideally recently retired grandparents, are urgently needed. In particular the Dragon School would like to revive the club formerly run by Ged Pfeiffer: they still have all the equipment, and may be willing to pay a small fee, which most schools can't afford. MS explained that even unpaid volunteers would probably need a Criminal Records Check, but that the forms were not difficult to complete and took about a month to come through. He added that a group of 12 schools in South Oxfordshire were already running minibridge teaching, using retired teachers, and had recently won a Lottery grant to buy duplimates; he was hoping to help them set up a league. Alison Nicolson, formerly the OBA Education Officer, had designed a training day specifically for those wanting to teach in schools and would run a course for us if enough volunteers could be found. It was agreed that the request for more helpers should be publicised via the website and perhaps the Newsletter, if there was room. **ACTION: All (via clubs) and AG/MS/possibly DB.**

MS also mentioned that the EBU was currently offering one free place per club to go on a short course for those interested in teaching adult learners, and that some additional support might be available for teaching in universities and schools.

Education Officer: This post is, unfortunately, still vacant. JB explained that he planned

to organise a meeting of teachers in the County to share knowledge, and to try to find someone willing to be Education Officer. BH commented that it would be worth reviewing the “job description” left by Alison Nicolson, as she felt it was frightening off potential volunteers. **ACTION: JB.**

5. Scoring and Website

JB explained that he had recently received a number of emails (although from a relatively small group of people) expressing unhappiness with a number of issues related to scoring of County events and the County website. In particular, they felt that results from County night should always be available immediately, and that all County information should be kept on a single site. They had suggested that Bridgewebs would be much easier to use and would help resolve these problems. JB was disappointed that they were not able to attend the meeting to present their views in person but nevertheless felt that the issues raised should be discussed.

SB explained that delays in making results available usually occurred when he was not present at an event to do the scoring himself and no one else was able to score using Bridgemates. If they ended up taking the travellers home, often the scores were not done until the following day and then had to be sent to him for uploading. To help resolve this, SB suggested that when he was not present, he would be happy for others to use a different program, such as Scorebridge, if this meant they could use the Bridgemates. Scores would then be available on the night for those taking part. If the resulting file was emailed to him in XML format he could import it into his software, so that he could submit it to the EBU for P2P/master point purposes and also upload it to the website. SB also stated that he would be happy for others to score events in which he was directing provided that he was able to specify the movements to be used, especially for weekend events. JB thanked him for this helpful suggestion and said that he would ask for volunteers to help with the scoring at the next available County night. If enough people came forward it should be possible to set up a rota for scorers and Assistant TDs so that everyone knew in advance when they were due to help. **ACTION: JB/SB**

AG explained that the current website did not have the capacity to host pages with content managed by different administrators, but that the new providers he was looking at would allow this. However, he was reluctant to commit the County to additional costs until the decision had been taken as to whether or not to use Bridgewebs. His own view was that the design of Bridgewebs sites led to them all being very similar, and that a site of our own would allow much more individuality.

SN said that what was needed was equivalent functionality and ease of use to that provided by the Bridgewebs sites. Kathy Talbot explained that Oxford had recently implemented a system of automatically uploading results from Scorebridge to their website, which was not a Bridgewebs site. This had actually been set up by MS, who volunteered to send AG, SB and others a summary of the method he had used. **ACTION: MS**

GN said that he understood the EBU was in the process of developing software for use by

league administrators and he was keen to ensure that any new site should be able to integrate with this when it was available.

AG said that if the meeting was prepared to endorse his view that the County's needs could be met without using Bridgeweb, he would be able to move the site to a new provider by the end of November, using a new design and format: and he anticipated that by the beginning of 2011 it would allow multi-user access for all County information currently kept on other sites, including direct uploading of scores. This was agreed.

ACTION: AG

During the discussion SB noted that he was intending to retire and leave the UK in approximately 5 years' time, so it was important to identify a successor for him in good time. It was suggested that we should consider creating two new roles on the committee, for Chief Scorer (as distinct from Chief TD), and Chief IT Officer. These might initially be combined with other roles but it would be helpful to identify them separately so that they might in future be undertaken by different individuals if the need arose.

6. AOB

Esme Alden said she had heard there was a new Editor of the Oxford Times and wondered whether, as in the past, there could be an official invitation for the Editor and a photographer to present the prizes at the Oxford Times Cup. BH said that the previous Editor had attended in the first year of sponsorship only, but that it would certainly be worth sending an invitation. **ACTION: BH.**

GN said he felt that following the introduction of P2P, clubs and their members were still not clear as to who was automatically an OBA member (and therefore qualified to play in the Wessex League). He asked if it would be acceptable to wait until Christmas before penalising any team that did not appear to be wholly made up of OBA members: this was agreed.

AG asked if he could have direct access to the list of OBA members for purposes of determining their eligibility to play in OBA events. The committee felt this was acceptable and suggested he should contact Michael Clarke at the EBU, who is responsible for distributing membership spreadsheets.

7. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 pm on Thursday 9 December, at the Oxford Bridge Club.

Dates for further meetings in 2010/11 are listed in the Calendar, with a venue outside central Oxford to be arranged for the March meeting.