

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 8th December 2011 at 7.30 p.m. at the North Oxford Association,
Summertown

PRESENT:

| | |
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| Robert Procter [RP] | Chairman |
| Dinah Lintott [DL] | Treasurer |
| Sandra Nicholson [SN] | Secretary/EBU Shareholder |
| Vicky Fleming [VF] | Membership Secretary |
| Brenda Harris [BH] | Publicity Officer/EBU Shareholder |
| Geoff Nicholas [GN] | League Secretary |

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| David Bygott | Newsletter Editor | Erica Sheppard | Summertown |
| Peter Litchfield | Abingdon | Peter Finbow | Wallingford |
| Mike Fletcher | Frilford Heath | Francis Glassborow | Wallingford |
| John Fleming | Oxford | Gillian Weatherley | Wallingford |
| Christopher Sheppard | Summertown | Arthur Jones | Wantage |

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

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| Stephen Brown [SB] | Chief Tournament Director |
| Marryat Stevens [MS] | Youth Officer |
| Claire MacDonagh [CM] | Education Officer |
| Krishan Jalie [KJ] | Club Committee Representative |
| Clive Keep [CK] | County Pairs Organiser |
| Holly Kilpatrick [HK] | Congress Organiser 2011 |

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| Gordon Carroll | Abingdon | Kathy Talbot | Oxford |
| Norman Gascoyne | Abingdon | Esme Alden | Oxford |
| Michael Allen | Blewbury | Alastair Gidman | Summertown |
| Ian Seward | Frilford Heath | Robert Gasser | Summertown |
| Richard Sills | Oxford | Colin Jones | Wallingford |
| Peter Sherry | Oxford | | |

2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 21 July 2011

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved and signed.

3. Action points and matters arising from previous Management Committee meetings, not otherwise on the agenda

New intermediate event at County level: It was noted that the Oxford Bridge Club had now started to provide events at this level, but the idea would be taken forward by the **Education/Improvers team**. **ACTION:** team

Competition bylaws: The redraft of “non-contentious” items for publication on the county website had not been completed in time for the new season as hoped. GN noted that there was a new version of the Wessex League rules but it was not yet on the main County site. “Contentious” items (including issues relating to Wessex League such as choice of venue, mentioned in the League Secretary’s report) still needed to come to the Management Committee for further discussion. **ACTION:** **Kathy Talbot/GN/AG**.

Junior players: MS to provide RP with a draft letter to the EBU to ask for more help in setting up an “affiliated” junior bridge club. All agreed that the EBU should be prepared to make a special case to encourage the formation of such clubs. **ACTION:** **MS/RP**

Teaching pages on County website: To be referred to **Education/Improvers and Communications teams**. **ACTION:** teams

Prospectus: VF reported that distribution was now complete and some progress had been made on collecting members’ email addresses, which would reduce costs in the following year.

4. Officers’ reports

A set of reports had been circulated in advance and is available for reference on the County website. The following additional reports and comments were noted:

Secretary: SN reported that Jean Maunder (of Diamond BC) had sent a thank you letter for the prize she had won by replying to the survey.

Chief Tournament Director: RP mentioned that he had received a complaint about the direction of one of the previous year’s events which had apparently stopped a member from entering the recent Swiss Pairs competition. However, the event had run at full capacity. There was a suggestion that it should perhaps have a non-playing director and SB was asked to consider this for the future. **ACTION:** **SB**.

Tournament Secretary: CM expressed concern that the terms “Newcomers” and “non-expert” were not sufficiently well defined to establish who qualified for prizes in these categories. This was referred to the **Competitions team**, with the rider that the new NGS might make a difference when it comes in. **ACTION:** team

Match Secretary: It was noted that there was currently a proposal to reduce the number of dates for matches played in the Midlands League, from 9 to 3. Whilst this would have some advantages, IA recommended on balance that we should vote against it, as reducing the opportunities for different players to participate. The Committee agreed to this. **ACTION:** **IA**

Youth Officer: MS apologised for referring in his report to Joan Rogers rather than Joan Bennett.

Education Officer: It was clarified that the new Thursday evening sessions at the Oxford Bridge Club (and also Monday evenings) were not restricted to OBC members but were open to all, although EBU numbers were required in order to earn master points. It was also noted that Wallingford also have a similar event on Wednesday evenings, as do Aylesbury Vale on Tuesdays.

Club Committee Representative: Krysz Kazmierczak, the EBU Club Liaison Officer, had sent through a note via SN to explain that the new Regional Club Committees had now held their first meetings and that they were intended to act as a channel of communication between affiliated clubs and the EBU Board, about matters of particular relevance to clubs and their members. It was agreed that this activity should become part of the remit of the **Communications team**, who will hopefully be able to offer KJ some support. **ACTION: team/KJ.**

5. Proposals arising from recent membership survey and Open Meeting held on 31 Oct 2011

RP said he hoped that in future it would be possible to delegate many of the issues discussed at that night's meeting to the relevant new team for action, within broad parameters to be agreed by the Management Committee. He anticipated that small teams of perhaps 5 or 6 people would be able to meet more regularly than the full committee and make faster progress with particular projects, whilst also providing support for the existing officers, who would not be expected to act as team leaders but would become members of the relevant team(s). This would also mean more County members could become involved with helping the teams and as a way of becoming less Oxford-centric, he wanted to make them representative of all the regions of the County (to be defined as: North, South, East, West and Central). He believed that each team should have a mixture of long term objectives and short term achievable aims. Within the current year he would like to see each team both decide what needed to be done and take one significant step forward towards making it happen. He also felt that if new activities were to be regional in nature, then it was important for each region to see some benefit for their own area during the year. All present agreed that this was the right way to move forward.

The following people, who had been provisionally recruited by RP as team leaders and members of new teams pending formal approval by the Management Committee, were now confirmed in their new roles:

Education and Improvers – team leader Gillian Weatherley [*who has since stepped down*], members Claire MacDonagh (ex officio), Ian Mitchell, Melinda Jordan, Gaye Kyle, David Watkins and Judy Wesselbaum, with advice from Alison Nicolson

Marketing and Youth – team leader Mike Fletcher, members Marryat Stevens (ex officio), Vicky Fleming, Holly Kilpatrick, others TBA, with advice from Joan Bennett and John Fleming

Communications – team leader Peter Litchfield, members Alan Grunwald, Brenda Harris, David Bygott (all ex officio), others TBA

Selection and County team management – team leader Alan Wilson, members Colin Jones, Ian Angus, Chris Cooper (all ex officio), others TBA

County Night and Competitions – team leader John Slater, members Stephen Brown (ex

officio), Kathy Talbot, others TBA

Social (to represent the interests of both OBA members and non-affiliated players, whilst being careful not to fall foul of EBU rules) – team leader TBA [*later confirmed as Barbara Jordan*], members TBA

Premises and Finance – all currently TBA, although several people had expressed an interest.

It was hoped that the team leaders would now complete the recruitment of their teams and that they would be up and running by January. RP suggested that their first task should be to look again at the detailed survey results for their areas, with a view to setting overall objectives and budget for their team for approval by the Management Committee.

6. OBA management: governance and budgetary planning

The meeting approved the following set of guidelines for the operation of the new teams put forward by RP:

- Each team may operate autonomously within the bounds of team objectives and team budgets which have been approved by the Management Committee
- Team leaders have a responsibility to keep the county chairman, secretary and all other team leaders apprised at all times of strategies and events being planned by their team
- Each team should contain at least one member of the management committee – these members of teams have the responsibility to refer their team's plans to the Management Committee for approval if they are in doubt as to whether the plan is within the approved objectives or budget
- A full report on the meetings and activities of each team should be circulated to members of the Management Committee with the agenda for full Management Committee meetings (replacing officer reports) and any matters requiring Management Committee decision should be highlighted with an appropriate argued recommendation.

RP explained that a small team consisting of himself, SN and possibly one other would take an overview of the objectives and activities of all the teams and co-ordinate any overlap. It was hoped that team objectives could be reviewed and agreed by correspondence and published by the end of January. The teams would propose their own budgets following guidance provided by the survey results; these would be reviewed by himself and DL, and would then be formally put to the Management Committee for approval. The general intention would be that income generated by P2P, the congress, etc should be used to pay for ongoing marketing/promotional activities, and one-off setup costs, whereas other activities should be self-funding.

Francis Glassborow asked about running costs for teams e.g. stationery and travel expenses of members. He felt that teams should be given an “administrative” budget to be spent at their discretion, over and above the funds required to achieve their objectives, and that payment of travel expenses was necessary to ensure that volunteers were not left out of pocket. Consideration of this suggestion was deferred for a future discussion, when

it was hoped that more information would be available about the possible financial implications of such a policy. **ACTION: SN for future agenda.**

It was agreed that there should be a structured system of accounting to be used by teams so that the Treasurer could keep track of delegated funds and that this should be remitted for consideration to the **Premises and Finance team**, when formed.

John Fleming suggested that it would be helpful for the OBA to have an agreed set of overall objectives which would provide a context against which the teams would find it easier to develop their own objectives. RP agreed to work on this. **ACTION: RP**

7. Reports from working groups:

a) Competitions

This item was deferred due to the absence of Kathy Talbot.

b) Website

RP reported that the sub-group looking at the County website (which would now include Peter Litchfield) had met several times and had made good progress, both in defining technical requirements including ease of use, facilities to be offered, and ease of access as required by different people who needed to update different areas; and in developing new ideas for content. Three main possibilities for the underlying system of operating the site were being examined, including Bridgewebs.

c) Membership

VF explained that the membership sub-group had decided there were two separate issues to be considered, one the question of who should be eligible to play in which type of County competition, the other the constitutional definition of OBA membership. They had produced some recommendations on the first issue which would be considered by the **Competitions team**, but felt that on the second question, further work was still needed – possibly in conjunction with the EBU – to produce a practicable definition. **ACTION: team/VF/SN.**

8. County Congress 2012

RP was still searching for a replacement organiser for 2012 [*Peter Finbow has now agreed to take on this role*]. Meanwhile, BH agreed to book an advertisement in the February issue of English Bridge, with charges to be increased by £1 and CM to be given as the contact for taking entries, subject to the latter's agreement. RP/SN/BH/CM would arrange to meet with Holly Kilpatrick to review what needed to be done in the near future. **ACTION: RP/SN/BH/CM**

9. EBU Blue Points scheme

SB had sent through a note explaining that except for the Congress, it appeared that County events, as they stood, would not satisfy the requirements for awarding “Blue Points” (new level of master point awards between black and green, to be introduced in 2013). The **Competitions team** were invited to consider whether any such events should be introduced to the calendar, either by reorganising existing competitions or including new ones. **ACTION: team.**

10. Use of Oxford Bridge Club premises, including honours boards

RP reported that he, SN, DL and SB had met with their opposite numbers at the Oxford Bridge Club earlier that week, to discuss proposed new arrangements for the use by OBA of the OBC premises on County Nights, to take effect from 1 April 2012. Both parties felt that it would be helpful to clarify the terms of their agreement (including a formal notice period) and OBA had accepted that in principle, the financial arrangements should henceforward be based on the concept of a “fair rent” which would be set at a fixed figure, rather than based on the numbers attending as at present. The rent would be for all three rooms on teams nights but on other nights would be for two rooms, with the possibility of overflow into the Mary Good room (at additional cost) if needed on the night. The exact figure was still under discussion but it was hoped to put a recommendation to the committee by email in the near future. DL pointed out that whatever the figure agreed upon, the change of policy would almost certainly mean that the table money on Tuesday evenings would need to increase to £4 (still £1 for students and U25s) and even then, unless attendance could be substantially increased, there would be a reduction in the income derived by the County from Tuesday nights. **ACTION:** **RP/DL/SN/SB**

RP also reported that OBC were changing their honours boards to a smaller format capable of electronic updating, and had asked whether OBA would be prepared to use the same system. There would be a charge of £70 per board for setup but thereafter it would cost only £10 per year per board for updating, which would very significantly reduce the annual cost. The committee agreed to go ahead with the purchase of new boards to be similar to, but not wholly identical with, those chosen by OBC. LH would be asked to liaise with OBC over details of number of boards required, sizes, and wording.

ACTION: **LH**

11. AOB

Norman Gascoyne was congratulated on winning the quiz in the most recent issue of the County newsletter.

It was noted that the Camrose would be taking place in Oxford in early January and clubs would be asked to help publicise the event, which would be an excellent opportunity to watch international players in action.

12. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting was listed as Wednesday 21 March 2012, venue TBA. RP regretted he would not be able to make that date. An alternative would be arranged and circulated.

[New date now identified as: Wednesday 28 March 2012, to be held at Horspath Village Hall.]

ACTION: **RP/SN.**