

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Thursday 21st July 2011 at 7.30 p.m. at the Oxford Bridge Club

PRESENT:

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
Marryat Stevens [MS]	Youth Officer
Claire MacDonagh	Education Officer
Holly Kilpatrick [HK]	Congress Organiser
Ian Angus [IA]	Match Secretary
Alan Wilson [AW]	EBU Shareholder

Clive Keep	Abingdon/ County Pairs Organiser	Kathy Talbot	Oxford
Ian Seward	Frilford Heath	Peter Finbow	Wallingford
Christopher Sheppard	Summertown	Francis Glassborow	Wallingford
Erica Sheppard	Summertown	Colin Jones	Wallingford/ Chair of Selection Committee
John Fleming	Oxford	Gillian Weatherley	Wallingford
Peter Sherry	Oxford		

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Stephen Brown [SB]	Chief Tournament Director
Geoff Nicholas [GN]	League Secretary
Alan Grunwald [AG]	Internet Officer

Esme Alden	Oxford	Chris Kerr	Oxford
Gordon Carroll	Abingdon	Peter Litchfield	Abingdon
Norman Gascoyne	Wallingford	Richard Sills	Oxford
Robert Gasser	Summertown		

2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 23 March 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: Now that we have an Education Officer in post, Claire MacDonagh agreed to take over responsibility for organising this, with help from BH and SB. Consideration would be given to providing free refreshments for the first event.

ACTION: CM/BH/SB.

Club Committee representative: Krishan Jalie had agreed to take on this role.

Wessex League rules, Chester Cup, Tuesday Playoff: All these issues would now be referred to the group looking at changes to the competition bylaws (see item 7 below).

Publicity for competition dates in the County newsletter: It was agreed that we needed more co-ordination between the website, newsletter, flyers and prospectus. RP would speak to DB and BH about this. **ACTION: RP/DB/H/AG.**

Invitation events: IA reported that very few invitations to attend events in other counties had been received.

Junior players: RP offered to write to the EBU asking for more help in setting up an “affiliated” junior bridge club. **ACTION: RP/MS**

Seniors competition: It was reported that attendance had gone down over the summer. Colin Jones felt that if the rules could be changed to allow younger members to play, without being eligible to win the salver, this would draw in a few more players and help the finances of the competition. It was agreed that this should be put into effect and publicised via the website. **ACTION: CJ/AG, RP for prospectus, KT for bylaws**

4. Officers’ reports

As this meeting was so close to the AGM, no written reports had been requested in advance. The following verbal reports were made at the meeting:

Chairman: The new Chairman said that since the AGM, he had arranged meetings with the officers in order to familiarise himself with their roles and issues, which he had found very valuable. He indicated that he was actively trying to resolve a problem between two officers who were finding it difficult to work together. In discussions with the officers, he had noted the following:

- He had asked DL to prepare budgets by area of responsibility so that in future officers could monitor expenditure and report on variances;
- In SB’s absence over the summer, RP himself had taken over responsibility for the completion of the current year’s prospectus, and BH had organised a rota of directors for Tuesday evenings. SB was also looking for more volunteers to help with directing Sunday events.
- AG was working on finding a better way of publishing County results on the website, and had agreed to take part in a small sub-committee which would be asked to define what we wanted from the website, in both technical and non-technical terms. He had stepped down as Tournament Secretary and CM had volunteered to take over this role pro tem., to be ratified at the next AGM if she was happy to continue.
- GN was working on the update to the competition bylaws in conjunction with Kathy Talbot, and hoping to resolve issues relating to dual membership in time for the new competition season.
- VF had asked if club representatives could encourage members to send their email addresses to the EBU, as we currently had email addresses for only about 880 of our 1350 members.
- MS was looking for more teachers to go into schools.

RP also reported that John Slater had attended on his behalf the most recent EBU County Chairmen’s meeting, which had provided valuable insights into how other counties dealt with issues of common concern such as education; and that he had had an informal meeting with

Richard Sills, secretary of the Oxford Bridge Club, to discuss various matters including the need for a formal agreement on the OBA's use of their premises.

In addition, he was hoping to visit and play at all the OBA affiliated clubs. He wanted to encourage more clubs to participate in County activities and more feeling of ownership amongst OBA-affiliated clubs and members: whilst the County and clubs should have different roles, it was important that they should work together, and that everyone should share the same set of overall objectives. He was beginning to have some thoughts on what the County's "vision" should be, but still felt that we needed to conduct a survey of members' views.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Alan Wilson, Kathy Talbot, Gillian Weatherley, Andrew Speyer and Peter Finbow would form a sub-committee to organise and run such a survey, with additional advice and comment from John Fleming (who had recently carried out a survey using "Survey Monkey" for Oxford Bridge Club) and Frances Glassborow. Club representatives were asked to help promote the survey in their clubs and encourage volunteers to help. Results would be communicated at an "away" evening to which all members would be invited. **ACTION: RP and volunteers**

Treasurer: DL reported that, whilst the Congress accounts were still not completely finalised, the estimated profit appeared to be in the region of £1760 which was very similar to the previous year. She had analysed the various events run by the County and was able to say that apart from the Congress, the only one which generated additional income was the Wessex League. The others mainly made small losses apart from the County Pairs, which was quite expensive owing to the policy of charging only for the semifinals and final. Overall the County was still just in profit on the current year. She felt that it would be useful to establish clear guidelines on how County funds should be used, and cited the example of Berks & Bucks, which had a written philosophy on the use of income from different sources that was published on their website.

Membership Secretary: VF reported that the EBU was now collecting, and remitting to us, £4 per person for those who joined the EBU and OBA as direct members. She felt that, to avoid confusion, it would be helpful to have our agreed OBA membership criteria available on the County website before the start of the Wessex League season.

Publicity Officer: BH noted that there had been an excellent attendance at the AGM this year (46 members) and also felt that there had been a good response to the introduction of non-expert prizes in the Ladies' and Men's Pairs competitions.

Match Secretary: IA reported that the format of the Midlands League was under discussion and that when more details were available, a formal proposal would be put to the Management Committee, the Selection Committee and the members of the County squad for consideration. The intention was to reduce the overall number of matches.

League Secretary: GN had sent a note to say that he was currently working on masterpoint allocations from the previous season's matches, that all licence fees owing to the EBU had now been paid and that for this season, he was hoping to work with Michael Clarke on the development of the EBU's new league administration software.

Education Officer: CM pointed out that many club websites had no information about teaching and said she was hoping to remedy this in future.

5. Report on 2011 OAB Congress and arrangements for organisation of Congress in 2012/2013

HK reported that the Congress had gone very well in terms of organisation. The arrangement with Martin Lee had worked very well, but we would need to make sure next year that he had help unloading his van. The caterers had been actively managed and had generally provided a good service. Financially, as already noted by the Treasurer, the event had made a similar profit to the

previous year. Demand was strong and it had been full well in advance of the date, with long waiting lists for both days.

Several suggestions were made for future improvements, including the possibility of either using a larger venue in 2013, or running the event across two venues in order to accommodate more players.

6. Draft AGM minutes, and action points arising from AGM

Peter Finbow asked for the draft to be changed to show that he had represented Wallingford not Oxford Bridge Club. No other amendments to the draft AGM minutes were proposed.

Website: It was agreed to set up a sub-committee to look at possible changes to the County website and attempt to define what was required, in both IT and non-IT terms. RP, MS, AW and Francis Glassborow agreed to participate. RP asked for any other volunteers to take part in this group, and any particular views on the subject, to be sent directly to him. **ACTION:** **RP/MS/AW/FG**

Selection Committee: Colin Jones, Joe Clacey and Nick Smith had all been duly nominated by their clubs since the AGM and their appointment to the Selection Committee was therefore ratified.

7. Amendments to OBA Competition Bylaws

Following discussion of the need for amendments to the Competition Bylaws at the previous meeting, Kathy Talbot [KT] had agreed to chair a working party to include those most closely involved. A number of suggestions had been exchanged by email and it had emerged that possible changes could be clearly divided into two groups: those considered to be contentious, which required detailed discussion, and those which were considered to be non-contentious.

Non-contentious items were those which either reflected changes to individual competitions that had already been agreed by the committee (for example, the introduction of non-expert prizes in some competitions) or were clearly non-controversial, such as the inclusion of the County Pairs organiser in the Competitions Sub-Committee. It was agreed that KT would review and redraft the existing Bylaws to include all of these and that if this could be done in time, they would be adopted for the new season starting in September.

Four contentious areas had been identified:

- Should we continue to exclude players from certain County competitions if Oxfordshire is not their county of primary allegiance? And if so, should this be implemented consistently across all County competitions?
- Proposed changes to the Wessex League rules to tighten up some of the regulations e.g. on suitability of venues, reducing flexibility for individual to play in more than one team for the same club, clarifying conventions allowed in lower divisions; and to introduce greater penalties for breaking any rule
- How far in advance of any competition the entries should be closed in order to encourage entries whilst not making life impossible for the Tournament Secretary, caterer and TD
- Rules for ladders in 2012 will need to be reviewed in order to ensure they comply with EBU licensing arrangements.

Clive Keep added that he would like to suggest some changes to the organisation of the County Pairs which, whilst not necessarily controversial, he felt should be discussed before being adopted.

The above items would be brought to a future Management Committee meeting for further discussion and if necessary, voting. In the meanwhile, all clubs are invited to send any views direct to KT. **ACTION: KT**

8. Prospectus

RP reported that he was making final changes to the draft and the prospectus would soon be ready to go out to club secretaries etc. for final checking, after which it would be sent to the printers. Distribution would be carried out by VF. As many members as possible this year would be sent an electronic link rather than a hard copy, although paper copies would also be available on request. **ACTION: VF/RP/AG**

9. Bridge “stall” at Oxford Open Doors, 11 Sept 2011

SN reported that the OBA had been offered the opportunity to run a bridge “awareness day” as part of the Oxford Open Doors weekend on 11 September. There would be a table of players throughout the day to attract interest, with additional volunteers on hand to teach Minibridge and distribute leaflets and information about bridge clubs and teaching in Oxfordshire. It was agreed to allow a budget of up to £250 for this event.

10. Any other business

Peter Sherry reported that Oxford Bridge Club would be applying for planning permission to extend and alter its premises, and that this might result in some disruption to the OBA from April 2012. He invited the OBA to nominate a representative to liaise with the club in connection with this. RP said he would invite SB to take on this role. **ACTION: RP to contact SB**

11. Date and venue of next meeting

It was agreed that the meeting scheduled for September 5th would be cancelled and that any urgent business could be dealt with, if necessary, at a short meeting to follow the “away” evening, which was provisionally set for Monday 31st October. **ACTION: RP/SN**