

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Wednesday 23rd March 2011 at 7.30 p.m. at the Comrades Club, Wantage

PRESENT:

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| John Briggs [JB] | Chairman |
| Dinah Lintott [DL] | Treasurer |
| Sandra Nicholson [SN] | Secretary/EBU Shareholder |
| Alan Grunwald [AG] | Tournament Secretary |
| Vicky Fleming [VF] | Membership Secretary |
| Brenda Harris [BH] | Publicity Officer/EBU Shareholder |
| Marryat Stevens [MS] | Youth Officer |

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| Michael Allen | Blewbury | Christopher Sheppard | Summertown |
| Robert Gasser | Summertown | Erica Sheppard | Summertown |
| Lyn Morton | Wantage | Richard Sills | Oxford |
| Alan Parker | Wantage | Gillian Weatherley | Wallingford |
| Ian Seward | Frilford Heath | | |

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

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| Stephen Brown [SB] | Chief Tournament Director |
| Geoff Nicholas [GN] | League Secretary |
| Lynne Hayes [LH] | Cups and Honours Boards |
| Ian Angus [IA] | Match Secretary |
| Clive Keep [CK] | County Pairs Organiser |
| Holly Kilpatrick [HK] | Congress Organiser |

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| Esme Alden | Oxford | Peter Sherry | Oxford |
| Alastair Gidman | Summertown | Kathy Talbot | Oxford |
| Chris Kerr | Oxford | | |

2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 9 December 2010

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: BH said she was still awaiting a list of teachers. Those present mentioned the ones they knew i.e. Francis Glassborow and Gillian

Weatherley at Wallingford; Sue Maxwell and Ian Mitchell at Aylesbury Vale; Ina Merriman at Witney; Oxford Bridge Learning which now included Cathy Rowland, Moira Pavelin, Elizabeth Nutten, John Briggs, Chris Kerr and Sandra Nicholson; and individuals such as Krishan Jalie, Esme Alden and Alison Nicolson. There was also a list on the OBA website. AG pointed out that rather than looking at current learners, he felt the new event should be aimed at those who were now playing regularly and so as well as asking teachers about recent students, he suggested BH should be looking at “improvers” sessions run by clubs. **ACTION**: **BH/AG**.

Website: It was felt that the website was now greatly improved and AG was thanked for his efforts in implementing the changes. After discussion, it was agreed that hand records (with analysis of makeable contracts, prepared using the DealmasterPro software recently purchased by the County) would be best uploaded in pdf format rather than html, and that SB should send these files to AG together with the other information that needed to be uploaded, both for regular Tuesday duplicates and for Sunday events. **ACTION**: **SB/AG**.

Congress Organiser: Holly Kilpatrick had agreed to take this on and was now working with LH (the previous organiser) and JB. She was unable to be present but had sent a brief report to say that everything was on schedule, printed brochures were being sent out, and the caterer would be asked to make some improvements this year.

Education Officer: JB was unable to report any progress on this and felt it was a real handicap to the County not to have anyone in the role. He hoped that a volunteer would be found in time for the AGM.

Club Committee representative: Clubs would be asked for nominations for someone to be elected at the AGM. **ACTION**: **SN**.

Duplimating: Since the previous meeting, Kate Gould had taken over the operation of the central County duplimating service and it was now working well, both for the County and for those clubs that used it.

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:

Chairman: The Chairman had again not submitted a formal report due to pressure of time. However, he believed that he had identified an individual who would be prepared to take over the Chairmanship from the AGM onward. **ACTION**: **JB**.

Publicity Officer: BH expressed concern that the Editor of the Newsletter had not consulted over the most recent published list of forthcoming events which had resulted in an incomplete listing. It was agreed that, in future, she would go back to producing separate “flyers” but that these would be circulated mainly in electronic format, via a link to the County website, rather than on paper (although a limited number of paper copies would be made available for the benefit of members without email). To avoid duplication, DB would be asked not to include dates of events in future Newsletters. **ACTION**: **BH/SN/DB**.

Tournament Secretary: AG reported that he had received 9 entries from other counties for the Beck Cup and that two Oxfordshire teams would be competing. A number of entries had already been received for the Congress.

Match Secretary: DL mentioned that the County did not seem to have sent any teams recently to invitation events in other counties. SN to check this with IA. **ACTION**: SN/IA.

Youth Officer: In addition to the item on the agenda (see 9, below), MS was concerned that because junior members were not liable to P2P, they were not considered to be EBU members and so there was no way of contacting the 200-300 junior players in the area. He wondered if it was possible either to give them all free membership of an existing club, or to create an “Oxfordshire Junior Youth Club” to which they could belong. SN volunteered to contact the EBU to investigate this further, and if necessary to raise it at the next shareholders’ meeting. **ACTION**: SN/MS.

County Pairs: Clive Keep was unable to attend the meeting but had sent through an update on the progress of the County Pairs competition. This was running relatively smoothly, but he expressed surprise that several pairs who had played in the semi-finals and had qualified for the final had then contacted him immediately afterwards to say that they would not be able to play on the date of the final. The meeting noted that the heat on County Night had been cancelled because not enough people had wanted to compete in it, and felt that in order to avoid “parachuting”, more effort should be made in future to persuade as many clubs as possible to hold heats, with players encouraged to attend their own club heat. Clubs were now permitted to restrict entry at such heats to their own members and their guests, and it was noted that the wording in the prospectus needed to be changed so that rather than just contacting a club’s secretary to check the date and let them know of their intention to play, it was clear that prospective competitors from other clubs needed to enquire whether the club holding the heat would accept visitors. **ACTION**: CK/SB.

5. Application for affiliation from Blewbury Bridge Club

Blewbury Bridge Club had formally applied to transfer its primary affiliation from Berks & Bucks, to Oxfordshire. Michael Allen explained that Blewbury players participated in many OBA events and would prefer their club to be a full member of the OBA. Berks & Bucks had agreed to the transfer, as had the EBU, provided that OBA were also in favour.

The meeting accepted this application with pleasure and warmly welcomed Blewbury as a full member of the County Association.

6. Seniors competition: proposal for changes to rules

Colin Jones, who was not present, had asked whether it might be possible to change the rules of the seniors competition so that younger players could take part, without being eligible to win. DL said that from a financial point of view she did not feel this was necessary as the event was now covering its costs. It was agreed to defer this item to a future meeting when hopefully someone involved in running the event might be present. In the meanwhile, AG was asked to give the competition more prominence on the County website. **ACTION**: AG.

7. Amendments to OBA Competition Bylaws

The recent problems with the result of the Harwell Cup (when a split tie had needed to be resolved) had highlighted the fact that many parts of the County's Competition Bylaws had not been revised for some years and a thorough overhaul was due. It was felt that the Tournament Committee (consisting of SB, AG and GN) would need some additional help with this. SN would contact club secretaries to enquire if they knew of anyone willing to volunteer to be part of a working group, and at the same time ask them whether they – or their TDs – wished to recommend any changes. **ACTION**: SN.

8. Web page for bridge teaching

It had been suggested that the County website would benefit from a page giving information about teaching and courses available in different parts of the County. AG said that he was willing to look at this but that it would rely on the teachers providing him with the information. **ACTION**: AG.

9. Youth funding/Chiltern Bridge

MS spoke to the proposals outlined in his report. The meeting felt that it was important to provide adequate financial support for his excellent work in developing Youth Bridge within the County, in collaboration (where appropriate) with Chiltern Bridge. After discussion, it was agreed that there should be an ongoing budget of up to £1,500 a year for this activity, which MS would have discretion to use as necessary, provided that expenditure was supported by invoices. In the current year, this would include funding half the cost of the next series of lessons supporting teachers and helpers (£375), and hiring a minibus to take young players to junior events, provided that whoever would be driving it got an assessment of their ability to do so (via the County Council?).

It was also agreed that MS should continue to investigate setting up a regular OBA-branded junior club on Sundays, perhaps in collaboration with Berks & Bucks, but would need to find out more about the risks and liabilities of such an activity before proceeding. He was asked to contact the EBU about this and if possible, to bring a further report to the AGM. **ACTION**: MS.

10. Use of OBA funds

JB explained that at the 2010 AGM, the auditor had advised the Association that it should think about possible uses for its reserves, which was why clubs had been invited to submit proposals for funding. Three responses had been received: from Wallingford and OBC – both asking for help with buildings-related projects - and Summertown, which was intending to purchase Bridgemates. Copies of these had been circulated with the notice of the meeting. Francis Glassborow had also circulated some comments to committee members and club representatives, which had prompted a further response from OBC.

Alan Parker said that members at Wantage felt strongly that OBA funds should not simply be given to clubs for individual projects, but that interest-free loans with agreed payback times might be appropriate. He accepted that the case for helping with alterations at OBC was somewhat different since the premises were currently used extensively for OBA events.

VF said that she felt it was important that any distribution should be carried out fairly and noted that some clubs had already bought Bridgemates without financial assistance from OBA. It was mentioned that Wantage had actually applied for such assistance in 2008 but had been turned down.

DL pointed out that if the OBC premises became unavailable for a period due to extensive building works, the County would need to retain sufficient funds to hire alternative accommodation. As for Wallingford, no definite proposal had yet been made, but if it were possible for them to accommodate more OBA events in future then this might encourage the County to feel that it should offer some support.

JB noted that compared with the potential cost of building work, the amount available in the County's reserves was relatively modest and was unlikely to make a significant difference to the feasibility of the projects described by Wallingford and OBC. He felt that not enough information was yet available to make a sensible decision and suggested that the question should be reconsidered at the forthcoming AGM, when there might be a clearer view from the membership about the desirability of adjusting the amount held in the reserves.

ACTION: SN (for AGM agenda)

11. Preparation for AGM on Monday 13th June

JB commented that it would be helpful if more members were willing to become involved in running the Association. SN would contact the current officers to ask if they were willing to continue and if so, to send in nomination forms; and would ask clubs to notify her of any agenda items. It was agreed that the meeting would once again be followed by free bridge and refreshments, but that the space used at the OBC premises would be limited to the conservatory and middle room, as the front room would be in use by OBL. To avoid this in future, AGMs from next year onwards would be held on Tuesdays, as already agreed. **ACTION: SN**

12. Use of OBC premises – update

Richard Sills confirmed that no decision had been taken as yet on the available options, which were: to simply make necessary repairs; to reorganise the existing space; to extend the building; or to move. The club had commissioned an architect to prepare a feasibility study which would be presented to the OBC AGM in May.

13. AOB

(i) OBA Honours Boards. As part of the current redecoration of the OBC premises, the County Honours Boards had been temporarily taken down. Richard Sills reported that the House Officer of OBC had asked whether they really needed to go back on the walls, as she felt they made the rooms seem very dark. After discussion he was asked to reply that this request was viewed with “some dismay”.

(ii) Distribution of County Prospectus. VF said that having now been in the role of Membership Secretary for almost a year, she would like to offer to take over complete responsibility for arranging the distribution of the next County Prospectus. She wanted to look at the possibilities for electronic distribution, possibly by putting the complete document on the County website and then sending out a link via club secretaries (although the notice of the AGM would still need to be directly emailed or posted). Paper copies of the prospectus would still be sent out to those without email and a limited amount of non-individually addressed paper copies could be made available for those members who have email but prefer a paper booklet. The meeting welcomed VF’s offer to take over the responsibility for distribution and agreed that investigation of electronic options should be pursued. **ACTION: VF.**

14. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 21st July 2011 at 7.30 p.m., venue TBA.