

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Wednesday 28th March 2012 at 7.30 p.m. at Horspath Village Hall

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 |
| Claire MacDonagh [CM] | Education Officer |
| Ian Angus [IA] | Match Secretary |
| Marryat Stevens [MS] | Youth Officer |
| Alan Wilson [AW] | EBU Shareholder/Team Leader, County Team |
| Peter Litchfield [PL] | Team Leader, Communications Team |
| Barbara Jordan [BJ] | Team Leader, Social Team |
| Mike Fletcher [MF] | Team Leader, Youth & Marketing Team |

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Ian Seward | Frilford Heath | Robert Gasser | Summertown |
| Esme Alden | Oxford | Colin Jones | Wallingford |
| Richard Sills | Oxford | | |
| Kathy Talbot | 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 |
| John Slater [JS] | Team Leader, County Night and Competitions Team |

| | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Michael Allen | Blewbury |
| Peter Sherry | Oxford |
| Gillian Weatherley | Wallingford |
| John Fleming | Oxford |
| Arthur Jones | Wantage |
| Erica Sheppard | Summertown |

The Newsletter Editor, David Bygott, attended the meeting briefly to report that he had represented OBA at the very successful local schools Minibridge competition held on 25th March, where he had taken photographs and presented a prize. He apologised that he was unable to stay any longer.

2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 8 December 2011

It was noted that Alan Wilson's name should be added to the list of apologies received. With this amendment, 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

Method of publishing reminders of competition dates: Still to be followed up. **ACTION:** **Competitions and Communications teams**

Competition bylaws: Kathy Talbot said that the redraft of "non-contentious" items was almost complete and should be ready for submission to the Competitions team for review/approval and then for publication on the county website very soon. It was noted that these should include the recommendations from the group looking at membership and eligibility to play in County competitions, which had been agreed by the Management Committee at its previous meeting. "Contentious" items (including various issues relating to Wessex League) should also go to the Competitions team for comment and should be circulated by email before going to the AGM. **ACTION:** **Kathy Talbot/working group/AG.**

Junior players: MS explained that he was not pursuing the question raised at the previous meeting since the need for a junior club was not currently evident.

New team structure: RP noted that Gillian Weatherley had now withdrawn from the leadership of the Education team so he would look after it himself for the time being, with thanks to Gillian for the work she had done in setting up the team. He had suggested that PL could perhaps take it on, in which case Communications could be merged with Premises and Finance as an "Infrastructure" team led by himself, SN and DL. He also welcomed BJ as leader of the Social team. More help was still needed and we would be advertising this on the website and via clubs.

Since the previous meeting RP had prepared and circulated a first draft of a statement of overall objectives. The next step, after discussion of the aims and objectives of the individual teams (see below), would be to redraft the agreed objectives of all the teams into a similar style and format, so that the whole document could be published on the County website as a "development plan for Oxfordshire bridge", as requested at the last AGM. This would be done by RP and SN, perhaps with input from John Fleming.

ACTION: **RP/SN/Team leaders/AG**

Governance: DL had received a number of replies from officers and committee members, mostly saying they would not want to claim expenses for attending committee meetings, although it was recognised that some of the teams may need to be reimbursed for travel. MS explained that Joan Bennett has done a lot of travelling around schools and had claimed expenses for this at 30p/mile, amounting to about £500, of which Oxfordshire had already paid half from his budget.

It was agreed that the mileage rate to be paid for travel within the County, where appropriate, should be designated as a "contribution to fuel costs" and set at 20p/mile for the future. Teams should include an allowance in their budgets, where needed, for discretionary use. The cost of travel to meetings outside the County, e.g. to EBU

Shareholders meetings, would continue to be reimbursed via the Treasurer. **ACTION:**

Team leaders

Midlands League: IA reported that the OBA's views had been conveyed to the organisers but that nothing had yet been agreed and there would now be no change at least until the season after next.

Website: RP reported that the working group was still looking at four possible platforms, including the existing one and Bridgewebs. None of them met all the predefined criteria so the plan was to choose the best one by the end of May and then get the new site up and running by September. It was noted that the ability to upload results was essential.

ACTION: RP and website group

County Congress: Peter Finbow [PF] had taken over from Holly Kilpatrick as organiser of the main Congress and BJ will be organising a one-day Social Congress on the same weekend, sharing facilities. PF and BJ would undertake remaining tasks, requesting help where needed. **ACTION: PF/BJ**

4. Officers' reports (Chairman, Secretary, EBU Shareholders)

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: RP stressed that he wanted future Management Committee meetings to be strategic and not go into too much detail. Wherever possible issues should be dealt with by the individual Team Leaders unless they specifically wanted feedback from the main committee. He recognised that implementing the necessary changes would be a long process but felt that a lot of progress had already been made.

He noted that there had been a request for all data from the recent membership survey to be published on the website. After discussion, the committee felt that what was currently published was adequate for most purposes and that any additional queries should be directed to AW, who had done the analysis and still held the complete data.

The committee voted formally, and unanimously, to accept the request from the newly formed Abbey Smith Bridge Club (which is physically located in Buckinghamshire) to affiliate to OBA, subject to the agreement of the EBU. **ACTION: SN to advise EBU.**

5. Team reports, recommendations and items for discussion

Communications: No aims and objectives had yet been proposed. It was agreed that there was a need to improve communication with clubs and their members, possibly including use of a new email group, but remembering that personal contact was also important.

County Night and Competitions: The team's proposed aims and objectives were agreed, with the inclusion of the word "duplicate" so that the relevant phrase would read "to include Oxfordshire duplicate bridge players". As JS had not been able to attend the meeting, members were asked to send any comments on the detail of his report directly to him.

The committee felt that changes should be gradual, with the emphasis on widening the base. The team should also be responsible for: the bylaws, bridgemates, honours boards.

County Team Management: The team's proposed aims and objectives were agreed. The committee suggested that it would be helpful if additional members could be co-opted from outside the Selection Committee.

It was reported that, with one match left to play in the current season, the A team needed to score only 4 points out of 20 to win the Dawes League for the first time ever. The B and C teams (which had won their respective leagues in the past) would finish in respectable middle positions.

Education and Improvers: The team's proposed aims and objectives were agreed. SN reminded the committee that in line with our constitution, we must be clear that the ultimate aim is to teach people to play duplicate bridge.

RP noted that he was trying to organise a teacher training course and it was agreed that if possible, this should be held in the north of the County, in the Bicester area.

Frilford Heath were planning to hold another Andrew Robson seminar next year and would welcome all OBA members. BH said that she would also try to book him again at a more central location, possibly at a weekend.

Marketing and Youth: The team's proposed aims and objectives were agreed, as was the change of name to "Youth and Duplicate Bridge Promotion". The Youth Bridge initiative continued to be very successful, with Oxfordshire players coming first and second at the Loughborough Youth Congress. It was noted that MF would prefer not to be responsible for the general promotion of "bridge awareness", although he had kindly agreed to take on the organisation of this year's Oxford Open Doors event. RP said that it was important to have an aim of this nature and that we could negotiate later where it would fall.

Premises and Finance: The discussions with OBC were debated. The proposed general terms for a new agreement were acceptable and it was agreed that the new rental rates should take effect from 1 April 2012 (with a rolling 6 month notice period), to be accompanied by a rise in the table money on County Night to £4. A detailed written agreement would be drawn up with OBC. **ACTION: RP/DL with OBC.**

Social: As the team had yet to be formed, the proposed aims and objectives were still provisional, but as such were agreed. "Social" bridge was defined as bridge (primarily, but not exclusively, duplicate) played for enjoyment rather than competitively, therefore not just for newcomers and less experienced players. The focus would be on looking for ways to benefit those OBA members who were not EBU members before the advent of P2P. More helpers were needed and BJ had prepared a letter asking for help which would go out, not just to bridge clubs (affiliated and otherwise) but to other organisations that might be interested such as golf clubs. **ACTION: BJ.**

6. Criteria for OBA membership and other proposed amendments to County Constitution

SN referred to the draft amended Constitution, copies of which had been circulated prior to the meeting. Although the current version had been revised as recently as June 2010, it had not taken into account the changes arising as a result of the introduction of P2P and therefore needed a further update, particularly in respect of the section on membership and subscriptions. The opportunity had also been taken to introduce several other changes. Some of these were simply to reflect current practice (e.g. the introduction of

the new teams), while others had been included at the request of the EBU, whose final approval was required for any amendments to County constitutions, as well as the approval of the membership via an AGM.

VF explained that there had been a working group looking at criteria for OBA membership and that this had recommended, for a number of reasons, that we should follow the model EBU county constitution, which had resulted in the proposed new criteria set out in para 4.2. She emphasised, however, that being a member with primary affiliation to the County under this arrangement would not automatically carry the right to take part in all OBA competitions, nor to represent Oxfordshire in inter-county events and leagues: this would need to be addressed and stated as part of the Competition Bylaws (para 4.14). As now, dual membership would still exist and would require payment of an annual subscription; direct membership (either primary, or dual) would still be available for those not belonging to any EBU-affiliated club; and junior and Bridge for All members would not need to pay a subscription charge. For those whose primary county of affiliation is not Oxfordshire, playing on County Night would require either dual membership, or payment of the additional visitors' charge. However, the Wessex League would be treated as a competition for affiliated clubs so that members of clubs affiliated to OBA would not require dual membership to play in it.

The meeting accepted all the proposed amendments, with a minor amendment to the spelling of "bylaws" in 4.14. **ACTION: SN to confirm approval from EBU, then put new version to AGM for ratification; Competitions group to address issues of eligibility to play in county competitions, and for the County team, ASAP.**

7. Preparation for AGM (Tuesday 12 June)

SN reminded officers that nomination forms were required if they were willing to stand again, and that these should be sent to her. There would be at least two vacancies to be filled since Claire MacDonagh and Krishan Jalie had indicated that they would like to stand down from the roles of Education Officer and Regional Club Committee Representative. In addition, Stephen Brown had said that if anyone else was willing to replace him as Chief Tournament Director he would be happy to help them take over. RP would arrange for something to go on the website, and go out via clubs, to look for volunteers to fill these posts. **ACTION: RP/SN**

8. AOB

RP asked all the teams to think about the budgets required to achieve their objectives over the coming year, and discuss them with himself and DL. **ACTION: Team leaders.**

9. Date and venue of next meeting

The next meeting was listed as Thursday 19 July 2012. It was agreed that, with the new teams now taking care of their own areas, it would only be necessary for the committee to meet so soon after the AGM if any significant new issues were raised that needed immediate attention; otherwise the meeting would be cancelled. SN would let everyone know immediately after the AGM. **ACTION: SN.**