

## Oxfordshire Bridge Association

### Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting

held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at 7.30 p.m. at Holton Village Hall

#### PRESENT:

Robert Procter [RP]	Chairman
Sandra Nicholson [SN]	Secretary/EBU Shareholder
Peter Briggs [PB]	Membership Secretary
Chris Dawe [CD]	County Pairs Organiser
David Bygott [DB]	Publicity Officer/Newsletter Editor
Hugh Thomson	Wessex League Secretary

Andrew Ashworth	Abingdon	Peter Stevenson	Oxford
Richard Sills	Oxford	Kathy Talbot	Oxford

#### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Claire MacDonagh	Treasurer
Stephen Brown [SB]	Chief Tournament Director
Sandra Claridge [SC]	EBU Shareholder & Presidents/Chester Cup Secretary
Mike Fletcher [MF]	Team Leader, Duplicate Bridge Promotion & Youth Team
Ian Angus	Match Secretary
Jonathan Price	Education Officer

Michael Allen	Blewbury	Robert Gasser	Summertown
John Fleming	Oxford	Lorraine Jones	Summertown
Chris Kerr	Oxford	Peter Owen-Smith	Summertown
Pat Lewis	Oxford	Erica Sheppard	Summertown
Peter Sherry	Oxford	Peter Finbow	Wallingford
Sue Smith	Oxford	Norman Gascoyne	Wallingford
Matthew Wilkinson	Oxford		

#### 2. Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 17 July 2014

Richard Sills pointed out that he had sent his apologies for the previous meeting but these had not been recorded. With this amendment, the minutes were accepted nem.con. as a correct record.

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

##### a. Action Points

Website: A letter had been sent to 1&1 but no response had been received as yet. This, and the provision of documentation on the operation of the new site, to be followed up by AL. In the meanwhile, SB will be asked to update details of the front page of the old website. It was noted, with thanks, that SB was prepared to remain involved with the website after his retirement as

Chief TD, now planned for 15 June 2015; also that posting of results had improved.

Definition of “friendly” bridge events: Still outstanding for the Competitions team to consider, but currently in abeyance, as was the provision of further restricted/regionalised events across the county.

Selection and County Team Management: It was noted that AW has resigned as Team Leader for this team since he felt it was incompatible with his new role as County Captain. A possible replacement was discussed [*John Slater – has since agreed to take it on*]. Nick Smith has agreed to continue as Chair of the Selection Committee.

Officers/volunteering: Since the previous meeting, DB had agreed to combine the role of Publicity Officer with editing the newsletter. We still needed a Youth Officer (would Holly Kilpatrick be prepared to do this?) and a Social Team Leader. In addition, SN confirmed that she was intending to stand down as Secretary at the same time as SB is due to retire, at the next AGM. SN would send DB a note to put in the Newsletter about the Secretary role. Chris Wilson had also said he was no longer willing to be Auditor.

Club affiliation: SN had passed on details of some unaffiliated clubs, supplied by OBC, to the DBP&Y team.

Competitions: Assuming the current version of the brochure was now available online, SN and PB would arrange for electronic notifications to go out, as agreed at the previous meeting [*but in fact, SB later confirmed there was now no brochure on the website as such, just a calendar list of dates, with entry conditions available separately*]. Some amendments to the bylaws for the Wessex League introduced at the beginning of the current season were still not on the main website, but would be included as soon as they had been formally agreed.

Congress: PF was reportedly unwilling to continue as the main organiser for next year. We would also need to consider how to undertake the tasks previously performed by Martin Lee, who has decided to give up his business in early 2015.

County Night: Arrangements were now in place for the next 6 months.

Infrastructure: There was still no progress to report on the Honours Boards; Richard Sills would attempt to set up a meeting with Lynne Hayes. SN was still due to produce “welcome pack” for new MC members/officers. RP would continue email correspondence with clubs asking for ideas on how to achieve some of the OBA’s aims with their help, possibly with financial support (see also item 6, below).

#### **b. Other matters arising**

CD queried whether there should be some form of county affiliation for teachers. It was explained that members of the EBU Teachers’ Association were already listed by county on the main EBU website and there was also a separate listing on the County website.

### **4. Reports received in advance of meeting**

Chairman: RP pointed out that it might seem that little progress was being made against some of our stated objectives, OBA was nevertheless seen at the Chairmen’s Working Group as one of the counties that was doing more than most, with particular reference to our successful Café Bridge and Youth Bridge programmes.

Treasurer: The Treasurer’s proposal to set up a longer-term deposit account was discussed and it was agreed that provided the notice term was no longer than 90 days, she should be allowed to use her discretion to put up to £30K into such an account.

EBU Shareholders: RP added that there was a debate currently being held over which was the better forum for certain issues, between the Shareholders and the County Chairmen’s meeting.

**Competitions:** CD said that the response from clubs to his initial communication about the County Pairs had been poor and he would have welcomed more co-operation. However, all heats would be completed by the end of November. PB volunteered to check eligibility of the qualifiers (i.e. to confirm their primary allegiance was to Oxfordshire).

The Presidents/Chester cup competitions were under way but it was noted that SC would be away for several weeks at the end of the year: SN would ask her whether any results completed during this period should be notified elsewhere.

In response to a query from PL, RP said he believed that attendances at County Night for the 6 month period beginning in May this year were higher overall than the previous year, but there seemed to have been a drop in recent weeks. DB expressed disappointment with the size of the entries for the Men's and Ladies' Pairs and CD said he was also concerned about the entry for the County Swiss Pairs on 30<sup>th</sup> November, which at the time had only 5 tables [*although the eventual turnout was considerably higher*]. It was noted that this was the same weekend as the Middlesex Congress (and the Porthcawl Congress in Wales), and HT said it was important to avoid such clashes wherever possible.

**Membership:** PB said that other neighbouring counties such as Gloucestershire and Berks & Bucks no longer charged for dual membership and he wondered whether it was still appropriate for OBA to do so. It was agreed that that Competitions team should take a decision on this after checking what other County associations do.

**Education:** RP explained the background to the "Northern Towns Project" which was essentially an effort to bring together the currently non-affiliated club of Kings Sutton, along with Banbury and Bicester, in the formation of a new group for beginners and social players which it was hoped would become an affiliated club. JP had been working closely on this with Marian Day, who was also planning to run lessons for beginners in the north of the county. After some discussion it was agreed that this group, and any other eligible club in the county needing financial support to help with the purchase of new equipment (eligible being defined as either an existing affiliated club, or one which would (re)affiliate if such support were available), should be given the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to £500 per club, giving details of their proposed use for the money and the benefit it would provide. The Duplicate Bridge Promotion and Youth team would be asked to administer this scheme, up to a maximum total budget of £5000.

It appeared that JP, on his own initiative, had already approached the EBU to register not only the new "Northern Towns" club (to be known as "North Oxfordshire Bridge Club"), but also another club based in Yarnton ("Central Yarnton Bridge Club") which had grown out of the "sub club" project and with which DB was involved. Whilst these were exciting developments, and JP's enthusiasm was warmly welcomed, the committee was nevertheless concerned that he had not obtained formal approval before going ahead with the registration, and might have committed the OBA to an unknown amount of expenditure. RP would write to him to explain this, making it clear that he was not authorised to commit OBA funds on development of new clubs without express approval, and asking for full details of what had been done and spent so far in this regard.

Meanwhile, the committee agreed that OBA should follow the example of some other counties in providing assistance to affiliated clubs taking advantage of the EBU's "BOGOF" offer to send two or more members on TD and/or teacher training courses. This would take the form of reimbursing the cost of the paid-for place, so that clubs could effectively send two people on an EBU course completely free of charge. Applications for reimbursement would be dealt with via the Competitions or Education teams as appropriate. RP and SN would contact affiliated clubs to let them know of this decision, and the equipment grant scheme described above, separately from the circulation of the Minutes.

It was also felt that there was a need for training of club scorers, which was not currently being provided by the EBU. The Competitions team were asked to consider nominating a "scoring

guru” who could provide such training, although it was noted that this person would first need to become fully familiar with the new Jeff Smith software (available free of charge), as well as with Scorebridge.

**Youth:** Holly Kilpatrick was unable to be present but was thanked for her detailed report on the activities of the new Junior Youth Club in North Oxford, which the committee agreed was to be applauded. It was hoped that the number of members would grow from the current small core of regulars and in this connection, Holly had asked that any committee member who was on Facebook should “like” the Oxford Junior Bridge page. DB commented that whilst he was aware that immense efforts had been made to promote the new club, he had several ideas for a more imaginative approach, which he felt might be more attractive to the junior age group.

The idea of using the next Henley Café Bridge to raise funds to help young players attend the Loughborough Junior Weekend was supported, although clearly Barbara and Peter Jordan would need to be consulted. It was also suggested that even if this did not go ahead, the event could be used to help publicise our Junior Bridge activities.

## **5. Other reports and recommendations**

**Social:** RP said that he had not yet been able to identify a successor to Barbara Jordan as leader for this team, but felt that this might be an area where the County’s objectives could be met via activities organised by clubs – see item 6, below.

## **6. Volunteers, objectives and grants**

RP said that he had received only two responses so far to his message on this topic. One had been a brief reply from Summertown, which was in favour of the provision of grants, especially for organising local awareness days. The other was a more lengthy response from John Fleming, who had submitted a paper he had already presented to the OBC committee (which had not formally taken a view about it). This suggested various ways in which grants could be used to good effect, but made the point that all of them needed volunteers willing to organise activities.

Owing to lack of time, it was agreed that this item should be carried forward to the top of the agenda for the next meeting. In the meanwhile RP would attempt to generate more input by email.

The proposal for assisting with costs of EBU training for TDs and teachers, and the suggestion for organising training for scorers, could be counted as new initiatives under this heading.

## **7. Any other business**

Richard Sills said that he regretted that there had been a clash of bookings at OBC the previous day between a club event and a Midlands League match. He emphasised the need for formal communication of any changes in previously advised dates for events booked by OBA at the OBC premises.

David Bygott referred to the recent sad loss of Malcolm Simpson, a well known Oxfordshire player who had been the previous editor of the OBA newsletter. It was agreed that this should be kept as the subject of a local news item rather than a submission to the new EBU online “obituaries” column.

## **8. Date and venue of next meeting**

As previously agreed, the next meeting would take place on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015. KT was asked to book the hall at Horspath.