

# Oxfordshire Bridge Association

## 70<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at Oxford Bridge Club

### MINUTES

#### Present:

Robert Procter	Chairman
John Williams	Assistant Secretary
Claire McDonagh	Treasurer
Sandra Nicholson	Trophies/Honours Boards
Nick Smith	Chairman of Selectors
David Bygott	Publicity Officer
Nigel Birks	Auditor
Alison Nicolson	Education Officer
Peter Briggs	Membership Secretary
Joan Bennett	Youth Officer
Rob Dixon	Chief Tournament Director

Richard Sills	Oxford
John Fleming	Oxford
Deirdre Jalie	Oxford
Ameena Ahman	Oxford
Liza Furnival	Oxford
Peter Finbow	Wallingford
Mike Bennett	Wallingford
Alexander Bain	Witney
Christopher Whitehouse	Menagerie
David Patterson	Aylesbury
Kate Gould	Wantage
John Glenn	Wantage

#### Apologies for absence:

Sandra Claridge	Secretary & Shareholder	Alan Wilson	Shareholder
Stephen Brown	Website & Communications	Mike Webley	
Keith Sadler		Mike Fletcher	
Pam Donaghy		Clive Keep	
Sandra Millikin		Irene Holland	
Michael Robinson		John Slater	
Michael Allen		Rupert Timpson	
Paul Miller		Marion Sheppard	
Robert Gasser		Colin Jones	
Neil Higginbottom		Matthew Wilkinson	
Mike Slade		Chris Dawe	
Brian Geary			

#### 1. Minutes of the 69<sup>th</sup> (erroneously described in the paperwork as 68<sup>th</sup>) AGM

These were approved unanimously. In answer to a question, RP indicated that it had been found that the constitution did not need amendment to cover the presence or otherwise of a secretary at the AGM.

## **2. Chairman's Report**

This had been circulated in advance and published on the website. RP added comments as follows:

**Volunteers:** the report listed achievements in the year and offered thanks to all who made contributions but it also drew attention to a serious lack of volunteers in key positions, which needed to be addressed urgently.  
**County night:** it was already clear that interest had declined to the point where a game every Tuesday could no longer be justified; the competitions group had given notice to OBC that venue hiring would cease in 6 months time. However, in the meantime, Diana Nettleton had undertaken to review possibilities for a replacement programme and the matter would be considered by the Management Committee as soon as practicable.  
**New players:** RP had personally undertaken to play with newcomers on a regular basis, which had been appreciated: he urged everyone to follow suit, so as to help newcomers across a difficult threshold.

## **3. Treasurer's and Auditor's Reports and Accounts for the year 2015/2016**

The Treasurer's Report had been partially circulated in advance, but a full text was tabled at the meeting, and was now on the website. Claire MacDonagh (CM) added further comments as follows:

**Deficit:** OBA had recorded its first ever overall deficit, which was due to the poor result of last year's county congress and to increased costs elsewhere. The congress had returned to profitability this year, due mainly to the withdrawal of catering facilities. Grants offered to clubs were another contributing factor (though RP pointed out that this was a consequence of deliberate policy). Tuesday night income was seriously down but so were competition entries generally.

Nigel Birks declared that he was happy that the accounts had been properly prepared and offered thanks to CM. Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Peter Briggs (PB), seconded by Liza Furnival (LF) and carried unanimously.

## **4. Other Reports**

### **Secretary**

None had been submitted.

### **Shareholders**

RP commented that the EBU seemed to be still pursuing the notion of bridge as a Sport, although the EBU Board agreed that this was a costly enterprise: David Bygott (DB) offered the opinion that the notion itself was possibly flawed but NB and David Patterson (DP) suggested caution, as we didn't as yet know enough to form a firm opinion.

### **County Team**

Nick Smith (NS) commented further on the report submitted in advance by himself, Alan Wilson and John Slater. He drew attention to the fact that Oxfordshire had won the Beck Cup for the first time in many years. It had been a mixed season otherwise, with the county A team finishing only 6<sup>th</sup> in the Dawes League and the B team 4<sup>th</sup> in the Porter, though the C team had won the Markham division yet again, cementing our position as easily the strongest county in depth. In the Tollemache we had occupied our fairly common position of 3<sup>rd</sup> in our qualifying group (with two to qualify). He added that the Selection Committee was losing the services of Rob Dixon, Kathy Talbot and John Slater, which left only himself and John Williams (JW) as elected members and Alan Wilson (AW) as county captain. This was an unfortunate coincidence as all three were from the same club, making it very important that other clubs nominate potential members. It transpired that OBC intended to nominate Matthew Covill at their AGM in two weeks time. (*Secretaries note: since the meeting it has also transpired that Aleks Lishkov and Nigel Birks are also likely to be nominated.*) Answering a query regarding procedure, RP stated that the constitution of the committee was a matter for the Management Committee, according to the OBA constitution, but tradition allowed for nominations from clubs at or after the OBA AGM.

### **Honours Boards**

Sandra Nicholson (SN) that she had enjoyed no success as yet in getting suitable quotations for the work needed to bring these about. However, the website was now fully up to date.

## **Presidents Cup and Chester Cup**

Sandra Claridge's factual report had been circulated in advance.

## **County Congress**

Peter Finbow said that this year's congress had been a great success, numerically and otherwise. A pleasing feature was the large number of junior players participating (Holly Kilpatrick's work in this area was singled out for particular praise).

## **Website**

Stephen Brown's (SB) report had been circulated in advance. RP said that SB had much improved the general appearance of the website, particularly in the presentation of results. He himself had updated the education section. RP added that suggestions for further improvement were always welcome: one such possible improvement being considered by Nigel Wilkes (NW) related to competition entries being made via the website in future.

## **Youth**

Joan Bennett's (JB) report had been circulated in advance. She re-iterated that a junior competition held at OBC last November had attracted no less than 32 entrants from all parts of the county. It was hoped that this might become a permanent addition to the calendar and thanked OBC for providing the premises. 11-year-old Henry Rose has been selected for the under-15 England team at the World Youth Championships in Italy this summer. He was being mentored by Alecks Lishkov. DB suggested that Henry's achievement might be officially recognised: RP said that it had already been noted on the website, but he was happy to write to him with further congratulations.

## **Membership**

PB's report had been circulated in advance and posted on the website. He commented that an actual increase in membership was not reflected in P2P participation. There was evidence that daytime sessions falling outside P2P were a growth area, to the possible detriment of evening sessions.

## **Education**

RP said that he had encouraged Alison Nicolson to take over the role of Education Officer and wished her every success.

## **Social Bridge**

RP said that no report had been lodged but this belied an encouraging amount of activity. He drew attention to an approach from Abbey Smith regarding the possibility of Bridge Festival, to which had responded favourably on the county's behalf.

## **County Newsletter**

DB apologised to the meeting for a lapse in activity due to health issues and to moving house. He was now in a position to move forward again.

## **5. Election of Officers and Appointment of Auditor**

The following were elected or appointed:

Chairman Robert Procter, prop Michael Robinson, sec John Williams

Secretary No nomination

Treasurer Claire McDonagh, prop Robert Procter, sec John Williams

Auditor Nigel Birks, prop Robert Procter, sec Christopher Whitehouse

EBU Shareholders Sandra Nicolson, Sandra Claridge, Alan Wilson, prop Peter Briggs, sec Robert Procter

Chief Tournament Directors Kathy Talbot, John Rowe, prop Dinah Lintott, sec Rob Dixon

Tournament Secretary Nigel Wilkes, prop Kathy Talbot, sec Sandra Claridge

Wessex League Secretary Nigel Wilkes, prop John Slater, sec John Rowe

Presidents and Chester Cup Secretary Sandra Claridge, prop Dinah Lintott, sec Nigel Wilkes

Match Secretary Ian Angus, prop Rob Dixon, sec Nigel Wilkes  
Membership Secretary Peter Briggs, prop Robert Procter, sec David Bygott

Publicity Officer David Bygott (to be succeeded by Peter Owen-Smith?), prop Claire McDonagh, sec Peter Briggs

Education Officer Alison Nicolson, prop Robert Procter, sec John Williams

Youth Officer Joan Bennett, prop Robert Procter, sec David Bygott

Website, communications and internet Stephen Brown, prop Robert Procter, sec John Williams

Selection Committee Peter Litchfield had been nominated by John Slater and seconded by Rob Dixon but the meeting inadvertently failed to vote on his appointment: *(Secretary's note: RP advises that his name will be submitted to the Management Committee together with other nominations received from clubs.)*

Trophies and Honours Boards Sandra Nicholson

## **6. Expanding Bridge in Oxfordshire**

RS led a discussion, the starting point for which was a proposal by OBC regarding the county's financial commitment to expanding bridge activity in the county. He said that OBA had assets of £40,000 and needed a debate as to how best to spend it. He pointed out that now everyone contributes financially to the county via P2P so it was the county's duty to use its funds for the good of all players. At present there was a major shortfall in funds allocated to promotion of the game. The top tournament players had their needs well catered for: perhaps their activities should be funded out of congress receipts, with P2P income devoted to bridge development. He added that membership needed to grow by 10% per annum, just to cover natural wastage. He then mentioned a number of possible initiatives – spread of teaching materials via the website, access/appeals to non-affiliated clubs, better provision of duplimate machines for young players, funded by the county, a targeted approach to retirees, a targeted increase in numbers of trained teachers, encouragement of daytime bridge (implying an increased demand for TDs)

RP said in response that OBA was firmly committed to bridge expansion, already provided significant funding and was willing to provide more. However, a clear vision was needed, and a balanced approach translated into a coherent plan of action. RS asked whether the meeting was prepared to accept the principle that P2P should be allocated entirely to bridge development? DB, supported by others, said that such a unilateral disposition of funding was not appropriate. A fundamentally balanced approach was essential. Diana Nettleton said that most members didn't know enough about this aspect of affairs currently and that further careful discussion was needed. RS considered that the answer might be to convene a dedicated working group for bridge development. RP said that the Management Committee had the capacity, the funds and the will to take it on board but would hope for volunteer support in this.

## **7. Presentation of prizes and trophies**

Prizes and trophies were presented to the winners. A schedule is attached to these minutes.

**Before the meeting closed at 9.15 pm Diana Nettleton proposed a vote of thanks and appreciation for Robert's dedication and hard work on behalf of OBA. This was warmly applauded.**

## OBA Prize & Trophy Winners 2015/16

Event	Players
Swiss Pairs	Liza Furnival & Peter Finbow
Men's Pairs	Nick Smith & Alan Wilson
Ladies' Pairs	Brenda MacDonagh and Claire MacDonagh
Mixed Pairs	Liza Furnival & Nigel Birks
County Pairs 1 <sup>st</sup>	Nick Smith & Alan Wilson
County Pairs 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Gillian Lonsdale & Clive Keep
County Pairs 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Brian Geary & David Patterson
Swiss Teams	(not held)
President's Cup	Michael Robinson, Robert Procter, Nick Smith & Alan Wilson
Chester Cup 2016	To be presented in 2017
Tuesday Teams	Mary-Ann Sheehy & Christopher Whitehouse
Tuesday Swiss Pairs May-Jul	John Slater & Alan Wilson
Tuesday Swiss Pairs Aug-Nov	James Anderson & Rob Dixon
Tuesday Pairs Ladder	Diana Nettleton
Seniors Pairs	Clive Keep & Mike Webley
Premiership	Nick Smith
Wessex Div 1	Menagerie A
Wessex Div 2	Wallingford B
Wessex Div 3	Abingdon B
Wessex Div 4	Witney
Wessex Div 5	Central Yarnton

**Trophies and Prizes for the following events are presented on the day of the tournament**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Players</b>
Pro/Am	(not held)
Beck Cup	Oxfordshire (Kathy & Denis Talbot, Dinah & Andrew Lintott)
Sandra Landy Trophy 2015	Ruth Kim & Howard Arnes
Sandra Landy Trophy 2016	Carol McKinnon & Richard Cross
Oxford Congress June 2015 Championship Pairs	Sarah O'Connor & Mike Bell
Oxford Congress June 2016 Championship Pairs	Sarah O'Connor & Mike Bell
Oxford Congress June 2015 Swiss Teams	Chris Smart, Michael Lunn, Joan Peel & Geoffrey Peel
Oxford Congress June 2016 Swiss Teams	Paula Hopkinson, David Patterson, Hugh Thomson, Mike Webley