

Oxfordshire Bridge Association

Minutes of The Management Committee Meeting

Monday 20th November 2017 at Horspath Hub

In attendance

Robert Procter	Chair
Alan Wilson	EBU Shareholder
Michael Robinson	Menagerie
Mike Bennett	Wallingford
Pat Lewis	Oxford
Annabel Wade	Social Team leader
John Fleming	Oxford CIO
Richard Sills	Oxford
John Rowe	Joint TD/ Wantage
Matt Wilkinson	Oxford CIO
Paul Miller	Abbey Smith BC
David Bygott	Central Yarnton

Agenda Item	Content and <i>Decisions</i>
1	Apologies for absence:- Nigel Birks, Sandra Nicholson, Lawrence Haines, Robert Gasser, Lisa Furnival, Chris Kerr, Colin Wells, Denis Talbot, Kathy Talbot, Sandra Claridge, Peter Litchfield, Ken Langdon, Joan Bennett, Alison Nicolson
2	Minutes Subject to two minor typos, (in 6 ‘wase” should read “was” and in 10 “OBC” should read “OBA”) the minutes of the meeting of 20 th July were confirmed.
3	Matters Arising <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Novices SIMS event – still planned but no action yet - Sandra Nicholson and Vicky Fleming to progress.b) Trophies – Highest value item £1,500, most a good deal less. Only one has ever been lost. There is one spare trophy. Insurance cost may be disproportionate to likelihood of loss and amount. SN & NB recommend self-insurance. Resolved to self-insure for the futurec) OBA questions to the EBU. These were focussed on seeking more consideration for social players by the EBU.

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4	<p>Finance</p> <p>No-one at the meeting could explain the increase in membership income and county night deficit compared with the un-examined accounts presented to the AGM, nor were the reasons that the Henley creditor remained outstanding from the previous year known. Explanations of these items are needed and the outstanding creditor should be paid. The meeting felt that someone should have been present to speak to the finance papers.</p> <p><i>Resolved that the 2016/17 examined accounts be approved.</i> <i>Resolved that the charity creditor should be paid.</i></p> <p><i>Resolved that the 2017/18 budget be approved</i></p> <p>The draft reserves policy was considered. The £10 per member level was considered to be too random and the meeting suggested an optimum level would be the equivalent of 12 months expenditure. It was noted that the congress particularly calls for substantial commitments to be entered into before any income is certain and that should a disaster befall so that it had to be cancelled, there would be a loss.</p> <p>The meeting did not necessarily agree to the setting of deficit budgets as a policy in times of high reserves but felt that expenditure should always show good value. If it did, then a deficit budget would be acceptable. Expenditure on the association's objectives was favoured over reducing the P2P precept as a means of reducing surplus reserves, whilst in the event that reserves fell below the minimum level every effort should be made to restore them to the minimum level. The meeting was reluctant to put any timescale on reducing or increasing reserves to such minimum level.</p> <p>The chairman said that in many cases the limiting factor was not money but the availability of volunteers to implement programmes.</p> <p><i>Resolved that the Treasurer should work with Nigel Birks and Chris Kerr to produce an amended Reserves Policy wording for the next meeting.</i> <i>Resolved that the committee should encourage expenditure proposals in future which give good value in achieving the association's objectives. In such circumstances, the setting of a deficit budget is acceptable.</i></p>
5	<p>Child Protection Policy</p> <p>A revised policy has been prepared following Alison Nicolson's communications with the NSPCC, the EBU and the police. The EBU will be providing further advice as to how to change county and club constitutions to facilitate the removal of unwelcome members. Meanwhile in the event that someone believed to be on the VISOR (formerly the Sex Offenders Register) turns up to play the police should be advised as he/she may be in breach of their Community Order.</p> <p>a) <i>Resolved that the CPP policy was approved as drafted</i> b) <i>Resolved that Alison Nicholson be appointed Child Protection Officer if she is willing to serve in this capacity.</i> c) <i>Resolved that the CPO should be asked to consider giving the required Child Safeguarding training at a club chairs' meeting. RP agreed to contact club chairs with a view to setting up such a meeting early in 2018</i> d) <i>Resolved to pass on to clubs the advice on dealing with unwanted players.</i></p>

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6	<p>Chairman's Report</p> <p>The chairman's report was considered. This established support for his view that the association needed to serve all its members and not just those at the top competitive level and to look beyond the association's membership to what the county could do to encourage other bridge players to join. JF circulated a chart showing that 65% of OBA members have 2,000 or fewer master points.</p>
7	<p>Competitions Team</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Noted (with pleasure) that JR would take over the competitions role next year. All would like to see the men's and ladies' pairs held for the current season. b. JR was asked to encourage the Competitions Team to provide more competitive opportunities for less able players through handicap and stratified events. c. The Competitions Team should also take responsibility for training directors and scorers including updating them on the new laws. d. The chairman advised that we had reached the end of the free cards supplied by Richardsons and were now taking advantage of a special offer from the EBU. However Christopher Whitehouse (CW) has advised that the cost of providing duplimated boards needed to rise by £1 per set to cover the increased cost of maintaining an acceptable card standard. <p><i>Resolved that JR and DB would liaise to find a date for the Mens' and Ladies' Pairs event in the New Year in Yarnton.</i></p> <p><i>Resolved that CW adjust his duplimating prices upwards by £1 per set of boards.</i></p>
8	<p>Youth & Social</p> <p>Holly Kilpatrick had provided a report on the Oxford Junior Bridge Club at Summertown on Sundays in term time which is going well and accumulating surplus funds. Anthony Harris is liaising with PL to open a bank account with Lloyds for these funds in the county's name.</p> <p><i>Resolved that signatories for this new account should be Holly Kilpatrick, Peter Sherry and Anthony Harris with two signatures required for items over £50.</i></p> <p>In addition to AW's Social Team Report RP explained that Oxfordshire has three juniors in the national junior squads which have qualified for the world finals in China next August. [These are: Henry Rose (Under 16), Siyu Ren and Ewa Wiczorec (Women's Under 26)] The Social Team plans to run events next year to raise money to support the national junior teams and will be targeting non-members as much as members.</p>

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9	<p>Governance Working Group</p> <p>A report from the working group was discussed.</p> <p>The format of the OBA MC was discussed and all felt that the meetings were poorly attended but could be unwieldy if fully attended.</p> <p>JF had researched recent meetings and found that only six clubs had attended any of these - DB said that Central Yarnton BC should also have been included which made it seven. The role of club reps as representatives of their members as individuals was not well understood and they did not feed back to the members, though some fed back to their committees.</p> <p>The OBC paper concerning the purpose of the OBA and its objectives was discussed. AW pointed out that the association belongs to its members and not its clubs. RP said that there was a good match between the OBC's proposed list and the detailed team objectives listed on the county website, even if these were not fully reflected in the constitution. It was agreed that the objectives need to be borne in mind when framing governance recommendations.</p> <p>RS said that the club chairs' conferences had been attended by representatives of at least half the county's clubs.</p> <p>DB suggested splitting the county into four geographical regions for allocating representation.</p> <p>The meeting did not agree that having more meetings a year would improve the MC club representation position, but did agree with the idea of limiting MC membership, probably to officers or even to just some officers, and using the club chairs' conference as the means of taking clubs' views into account in the county's management.</p> <p>RS pointed out that the current OBA constitution is not modelled on the latest EBU recommendations for county constitutions.</p> <p>MB was doubtful of the value of having a county club liaison officer and the role of president was not discussed.</p> <p>Resolved that RP should feed these thoughts back to the working group and invite them to put forward proposals for the constitutional changes to be made at the 2018 AGM at the March Management Committee meeting.</p>

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10	<p>Festival Report and Accounts</p> <p>The financial outcome was noted. The feedback forms had been analysed by LH and he had reported that they were generally positive as were the two reports from Chris Close and Ian Van Maanen saved on the county website.</p> <p>The chairman was congratulated on his efforts. There was some concern that the huge amount of time input by helpers could reduce their capacity to take on other roles for the county.</p> <p>The objectives of the festival had not been clear. The chairman said that if repeated, it should simply be a fun way for people (from anywhere) to enjoy bridge and not directed at growing the OBA membership, although this could, of course, happen.</p> <p>It was felt that, while it was very acceptable to lose around £1,000 in year one, the OBA should not underwrite this level of loss again. The chairman said that he would like to go ahead with another festival and would personally underwrite the financial position.</p> <p>Resolved that a 2018 festival go ahead but with OBA not shouldering any financial loss.</p>
11	<p>Communication Report</p> <p>The chairman read out a draft report from LH which would be added to the meeting reports.</p> <p>Comments on the OBA website had been prepared by OBC and a sheet of anonymous negative comments was circulated. There was some discussion about Bridgewebs, however it was clear that the current webmaster is not prepared to continue in the role if a switch to this platform is insisted upon.</p> <p>It was established that no-one was volunteering to take over the website role, in which case there seemed little point in discussing the matter further.</p> <p>In this and many other matters, the difficulty of getting any help for the county was noted</p> <p>Resolved that our objectives should refer to “bridge” rather than “duplicate bridge”. Resolved to review the website issues if a suitable person would take it on. Resolved to widen the range of people able to update the website and provide training.</p>
12	<p>Education and Promotion</p> <p>The chairman reported the 2016/17 grants consisted of-</p> <p>£900 Aylesbury Aces £1,000 Wantage £717 Oxford</p> <p>It was noted that grants would not be given to activities which already show a positive financial return and a part of the claim submitted by Oxford BC in 2017/18 had been rejected for this reason. So far theirs was the only claim received in this financial year.</p> <p>Resolved to encourage all clubs to consider grant application.</p>

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13	Membership Resolved to ask all clubs to ask players who play in the county to register as OBA members.
14	Review of Vacancies Time had run out to discuss this issue, although there had been a good deal of discussion under earlier agenda items on the subject of the shortage of volunteers.
15	Date and Venue of next meeting Wednesday March 14 th . Probably at Horspath Hub (to be confirmed).
16	Any Other Business <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MB said that the Wessex League divisions had too few teams in and suggested 4 divisions with c.10 teams in each. The chairman said the league organiser has the authority to make such a change but would be well advised to establish the opinions of all clubs before doing so. 2. AW said that he would like the Governance working group to consider selection committee make up and processes. The chairman would pass this on. 3. MR updated on the 2018 congress and said that this year a separate event for the Sandra Landy trophy would be held at the congress on the Sunday. He felt that the Festival had given us a good set of e.mail addresses for marketing. It was commented that some beginners like the opportunity to play against the better players; MR agreed to feed this back to the congress committee. 4. MR said that it was extremely dysfunctional to be agreeing the budget in November. This task should take place before the year starts. Agreed. Resolved <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chairman to speak to Nigel Wilkes re Wessex League. 2. Chairman to ask Governance group to consider selection. 3. MR to discuss Sandra Landy Trophy with the Congress committee 4. Budget 2018/19 to be agreed before the start of the year I.E. AT NEXT MEETING.