

OBA Committee Meeting, Monday 3 Nov 2025 14:30 on Zoom,

Minutes

1. Apologies for absence: Kathy Talbot, Denis Talbot

Present: Malcolm Currie, Robert Procter (for first half), Patricia Hones, Joan Bennett, Sandra Nicholson, Stephen Brown, Peter Litchfield (for second half), Matthew Covill (for the first half)

2.
 - i. Approval of minutes of last meeting: Minutes were approved.
 - ii. Matters arising from notes of last meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda / action points from last meeting: none.

3. Officers' reports

Chair, nothing to add

Treasurer, Secretary Surplus of £2,500 expected. £31,000 added back to savings

OBA would like to offer grants. We should invite clubs to ask for grants.

Promotions Group:

Robert presented 8 points that came out of the recent PEST meeting, giving thanks to various people and groups and explaining the role of Mary Cousins, the intention of asking for funds to have a complete set of equipment to take around to clubs and trying to support teachers. The Social Bridge event on 23rd November was promoted and progress with DEI (Diversity, Equality and Inclusion). Robert intends stepping down as chair but is willing to stay on the committee, from the beginning of 2026.

County Selection Committee:

Just started the season, so nothing much to report at present. C team has a good start, B team in the middle but the A Team has had a poor start. Tollemache qualifier is next weekend. There is a 9High team playing this Sunday, the first one of the season.

Juniors:

The Junior Camp was last weekend and it was national rather than regional. The Oxford University (OU) bridge club has restarted again, finding 12 players about 10 colleges. Joan is trying to resurrect the OU Bridge Club. She visited the Somerville Freshers Fair and has identified 12 players from about 10 different colleges, who had not previously been in touch with each other. There is an online teams event coming up. Joan is running a Junior Directing Club Training. But not having much luck with the schools. It would be good for OU to rejoin the Wessex League in 2026-2027.

Joan would like to ask for some funds for the Oxford University Bridge Club. The treasurer noted that there is funding ring fenced for Juniors from fund raising events in previous years.

Competitions Group:

The group has been updating by-laws / regulations. There was a discussion about a proposal from one club to have the Wessex League F2F rather than online, but the players are currently overwhelmingly in favour of playing on RealBridge. Looked and discussed the surpluses / deficits. And confirmed dates up to the Congress in August 2026. There was an additional F2F event (Harwell Cup) and three club F2F

Blue Pointed events in 2026) and there is a new F2F Teams of 4 league starting in Jan / Feb 2026. The Mercian League. It can be entered by a club or individuals and non-members and default is to play in the evening. In houses or clubs with tea/coffee/biscuits.

4. Tax liability for interest

ACTION SB: Send to John Briggs to give a view as auditor.

5. Shareholders and how they represent the views of the committee.

Joan reported when she took it on that she wished to vote for the proposed chair but for other items she would try to reflect the view of the committee. Sandra (a previous shareholder) explained that whilst it was possible for the committee to mandate its shareholders to vote in a certain way at the shareholders' meetings, in practice they were normally left free to vote however they felt was most appropriate. The agenda should be out 3 weeks in advance of the meeting. Matthew has taken over from Charlie as a shareholder. The third shareholder is Alan Wilson.

6. How OBA can help clubs grow

ACTION MC to write to clubs ref applying for grants. SB to find what was sent last time.

The event is on 23rd November.

Upcoming events are advertised on a map of the UK (enjoybridge.co.uk). It has got a very large number of hits. We should add our events to it. **ACTION (ALL)** Contact of U3A clubs is important. SN asked whether we could organise a similar event F2F in Oxford as well. We could find people willing to partner others and offer tea and cakes. An organizer needed. Encouraging non-affiliated clubs to become affiliated may be the key. There are lots of materials on the EBU website. There seems to be some growth in West Oxfordshire.

Arising out of the Chairs Meeting: Grants to clubs and links to promoting bridge, subsidising teaching courses for beginners, helping clubs grow, improve facilities. Helping sub -8% clubs and those who are dwindling due to natural wastage. help for sub-8% clubs, the EBU is promoting this via Mary Cousins and Yorkshire CBA, e.g. the Member Gets Member Drive. The bigger clubs are OK since they have more resources. The smaller clubs do not. Also smaller clubs do not have premises to offer teaching in but teaching can take place in homes.

OBA could offer funding to clubs with teaching programmes to encourage students ready to play at a club, but who live some distance away from the club doing the teaching, to go to other clubs in the area nearer their homes. It was noted that OBC have 100 people attending courses and they have been supported with a teaching screen.

7. AOB

SN Membership of this committee. Who is eligible to be on this committee? Should we be offering clubs the opportunity to be represented. Malcolm to ask clubs if anyone would like to contribute to bridge in Oxfordshire and serve on the committee.

PH Concern: there are not many pairs entering County Competitions. Can we make more use of leaflets. JSON files could be used to advertise OBA events in RealBridge before play commences. This might be something to send to clubs as well as asking them to advertise OBA events on their websites.

8. **Date of Future Meetings**, 2.30pm: Mon 3rd November 2025, Monday 23rd Mar 2026, Monday 15th Jun 2026, Monday 2nd November 2026.

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