

OBA Committee Meeting, Monday 23 Mar 2026 14:30 on Zoom,

Minutes

1. Apologies for absence: Matthew Covill, Kathy Talbot, Denis Talbot

Present: Malcolm Currie, Robert Procter (for first 1.5 hours), Patricia Hones, Joan Bennett, Sandra Nicholson, Stephen Brown, Peter Litchfield, Alan Wilson, Chris Whelan (for Item 3)

2. Matters arising from notes of last meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda / action points from last meeting
 - (i) Grants. Malcolm has written to clubs inviting requests (fairly recently) and we are awaiting responses.
 - (ii) SN Membership of this committee. Who is eligible to be on this committee? Should we be offering clubs the opportunity to be represented?

ACTION: Malcolm to ask clubs if anyone would like to contribute to bridge in Oxfordshire and serve on the committee. If we had 15 offers, then there would be an election to appoint a few

ACTION: SB to add Member Representative to nomination form for AGM

Alan Wilson offered to stand down as County Representative / Shareholder to EBU meetings. He has been doing it for around 20 years. The other two are Joan and Matthew Covill. He may be willing to remain on this committee as a Member Representative. Perhaps invite someone from a 'rising' club, but the person would need to represent the county and should attend the Full Committee meeting.

ACTION: Agreed that Alan would approach Abbey about becoming one of our EBU Shareholders.

- (iii) PL 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.

3. DEI Policy

There was lots of discussion of the issues. The aim is to set out what the law states and more importantly having an insurance policy to avoid a claim against discrimination. It is good to have an accurate policy. Adrian was arguing for there being no need for a policy but he also said people should seek legal advice which argues for a policy. A policy encourages good practice and gives advice on calling out people if the guidance is not being followed. It was decided that this meeting would recommend adoption of the policy at the AGM and at the same time make a few amendments to the constitution that would refer to the policy.

ACTION: Malcolm to review constitution

ACTION: Stephen to add to agenda for AGM.

Robert also said the group looking at DEI also looked at Yorkshire's policy and the EBU policy. Yorkshire were going out and looking at people with different disabilities by going out into the community. This was felt unnecessary and optional. But it was felt that OBA members should be made aware of the policy, especially teachers, directors, committee members. We are also encouraging clubs to do the same, and we can offer financial support to allow bridge to be accessible to all. Chris suggested training: not only for TDs about what is good practice (not who can be a member) but also training as to what the legal requirements are and the definition of disability (which is wide ranging). An A4 sheet for each club noticeboard would be useful.

ACTION. The AGM will be asked to approve the DEI policy.

ACTION. Once approved informing OBA members etc.

Suggested amendment to policy change "not allowing discrimination" to "to not tolerate discrimination".

Chris Whelan was particularly thanked for his help and thanks noted to all the group members: Robert Procter, Adrian Lambe, Patricia, Nick Wedd, Sandra Nicholson, Kathy Talbot.

4. Officers' reports

Chair, nothing to add

Treasurer, Surplus of £3,000 expected..

Q. Should the creditor be removed: Tax on Interest (total £351.00). This will increase surplus by the same amount.

A. Yes, the tax is removed from the list of creditors.

ACTION: Agreed

Q. There is £768.10 in the Junior Fund. Should this be used for the £300.00 grant suggested in item 5 of the agenda and also allocate £7.00 per junior each month from it for entries to the Pairs League.

Views were expressed on the use of the money in the Junior Fund. Alan's view is that the fund should be used for helping juniors play in National events and should be spent. There is more money coming from the EBU budget. Joan's view is that EBED deals with the financial aspects of this and the EBU has not funded EBED to do this due to EBED receiving a large grant. Joan feels that it should be used for Oxfordshire youngsters including Henry Huang, Matthew Lim & Linus Davies.

It was decided to match the award given by EBED to the two OUBC members and transfer £300.00 from this junior fund for two to receive a financial reward at the same time as EBED have an awards event for the other.

For the Pairs League, the definition for Junior is U24 (on 1st Jan) and the £7.00 entry fee for the next year to be covered from the Junior Fund for entrants of this age.

Since there is a surplus of around £3,000 Sandra suggested not increasing fees for competitions. This was agreed and was felt important. It was decided to mandate that the competitions subgroup do not increase entry fees (except for the Congress if necessary, since entrant were from outside the OBA).

AGREED Competitions group be informed that there should be no increase in entry fees in 2026-2027

Secretary Nothing further to add

Promotions Group:

Robert intends stepping down as chair but is willing to stay on the committee, from the beginning of 2026. Suggestion of Tony Hughes to call the next meeting. Pat Barbour could be asked. It would involve 2 or 3 meetings each year. Charlie has moved on. Other attendees are: Jonathan Davis, Peter Finbow, Barbara Jordan and Kathy Talbot.

It requires an enthusiastic person. We need to continue to think on this. Perhaps Tony should be asked to lead one meeting where the main focus is to appoint a new leader.

ACTION: Peter Litchfield to ask him if he is willing to be the replacement leader or lead on meeting.

Thoughts of newsletter? Good. Make it more prominent on the OBA Website.

3/21 non-affiliated clubs have responded ref giving permission to put details of non-affiliated clubs on Oba Website. If approved.

ACTION: Make more prominent link to newsletter (it is already there) and inviting interesting hands, and requests for things from clubs. Letters to the editor and requests for grants

County Selection Committee:

Nothing to add. The committee congratulated the B&C teams for winning their divisions undefeated.

Juniors:

Oxfordshire is not doing as well as its golden era since Covid but numbers are increasing. Numbers at camps are increasing but not enough, but going in the right direction. Holly has people from the past doing well. There is progress with social events e.g. beer & pizza groups (funded by EBED). EBED funded playing cards etc. There is a bridge club F2F at Somerville on Thursday evening. There may be 400 players around 30 colleges, but it is difficult pulling them together. There are 30 in Henry's WhatsApp group. There will be a bigger core to start next year. Fresher's fair is important for September 2026 and will happen.

Competitions Group:

Idea of an event with U30s playing this Over 30s, as a social event. A nice idea, but instead explore....

Menagerie tries to run a play with an expert event with a different club each 6 months. So this may be a good idea instead. And/or, the University club could be invited to be the nominated club for a future event.

Wessex League Main League divisions have been won by 1. Oxford A, 2. Blewbury, 3. Aylesbury Aces 4. Wallingford D.

Daytime league winners not decided yet.

ACTION. SB to contact Denis Talbot and ask for players for the Garden Cities.

5. Matching EBED award of £300 to OUCBA

Agreed, being taken from the Junior Reserve Fund.

6. How OBA can help clubs grow

Malcolm: We were talking to Mary Cousins. Robert responded that we'd heard nothing for a while when the original dates didn't work for all of us (since the meeting Mary has contacted Robert, Kathy and Malcolm offering dates for a meeting in May). We could promote what the EBU does, as well as financial support for teachers and training. The clubs not meeting 8% growth or having more than 8% decrease in number are those clubs not doing teaching. At the same time it is important to try to attract more social players. Alan asked whether the clubs wished to grow. Peter reported that daytime seems to work well (easier bridge / NGS events), whereas evening clubs are finding reduced numbers, but have a higher standard.

7. AOB none.

8. **Date of Future Meetings**, 2.30pm: Monday 15th Jun 2026, Monday 2nd November 2026.

AGM is Thursday 25th June 2026