

OBA Officers' Reports for Management Committee meeting on 10th December 2009

Chairman (John Briggs)

The period since our last meeting in September has been very active. I will comment on several matters by way of background to our meeting.

OBA Shareholder Representation on EBU Board

Peter Baxter is moving to Yorkshire and wishes to relinquish his position as shareholder. We thank him for his contribution. His departure creates a vacancy for the third representative. I propose that Sandra Nicholson, our secretary, be co-opted to this post until our next AGM when we will hold an election, should more than three committee members wish to serve in this capacity. If anyone has any views on Sandra's co-option, please contact me ahead of the meeting.

Club Affiliation

I have not circulated Sally Bugden's response to me regarding club affiliation as it was sent in a personal capacity. For your information, it was brief and indicated that the EBU Board had no further comment, other than that contained in the letter to the Chairman of Menagerie that was circulated prior to our last meeting.

The position of the Menagerie Club within OBA has not been included on this meeting's agenda for two reasons. Firstly a number of committee members are unable to attend our meeting because of a conflicting Wessex League match (between Oxford and Menagerie). Secondly, I understand that the position of clubs such as Menagerie that are established primarily to participate in teams events is still under consideration by the EBU and it would be sensible to await the results of discussions at a national level before considering the matter locally.

I do think that it will be appropriate for the next management committee meeting to consider the place that the Menagerie club will play within the County set up post April 2010, notably its eligibility to participate in the Wessex League in 2010/2011.

The position of the University Club has been clarified somewhat (duplicate requirements restricted to term time) but the position of Highworth has not been advanced, although I hope to report further at the meeting in this regard.

Committee positions

Nick Smith resigned as Match Secretary and I hope to announce his replacement at the meeting. Malcolm Simpson has retired as the author of the County newsletter and David Bygott has agreed to take on this role. We should thank both Nick and Malcolm for their significant contributions. A short statement of how David hopes to tackle the newsletter is attached separately [see *additional items, no. 3*].

Oxford Times Cup 2009

This competition was due to take place in November. This year the entry criteria were refined to try to promote a 'genuine novice' contest. There were relatively few entries, a number of which were of questionable compliance with the entry criteria. It was judged prudent to postpone the competition to spring next year when I hope that we can effectively mobilise the County's bridge teachers to promote the competition to a larger group of bridge learners.

Working Groups

I received a rather limited response to my request at the last meeting for volunteers to get involved in working groups in the following areas:

- Executive committee
- Implementation of the report of the electronic working group
- County website
- County newsletter

There has been progress in a number of areas and I suggest that we firm up on membership at the meeting.

I look forward to our discussions.

Treasurer (Dinah Lintott)

1. Balance in Current and Savings Accounts

Account	Balance 01/8/2009	Balance 01/12/2009
Cash in hand	£0.00	£87.00
Lloyds Current Account	£6,908.92	£3,728.53
Standard Life Savings Account	£17,943.14	£21,358.09
Total	£24,852.06	£25,173.62

I am attaching a copy of last year's accounts [see *additional items, no. 1*] which shows that the County runs at a profit. We had a successful Congress in the summer, and have reduced our costs by no longer paying expenses other than entry fees for the Tollemache, Pachabo, Corwen and Garden Cities events. However, with the coming of P2P, if the membership fee is fixed at 3p, we stand to lose some £1000 of income.

2. Expenses Policy

As a general expenses policy, I would like to continue the position of only paying entry fees and not expenses for representative events, except for students. However where food is included in the entry fee, as with some invitation events, participants should not be expected to pay that part of the fee back to the county.

Secretary (Sandra Nicholson)

1. Club data: The EBU has provided a report showing that of 21 clubs currently registered as being affiliated to Oxfordshire, 16 have agreed to remain affiliated under P2P and one has not (the Henley-on-Thames Wednesday Club). Buckingham will not decide until its AGM in January. The remaining 3 are those referred to in the next paragraph. Between them, the affiliated clubs have indicated that they will have just over 1400 members, although we believe that the extent of duplication included in these figures is likely to be considerable.

2. Club affiliation from April 2010: As agreed at the previous meeting, an email vote was held on the question of whether the Chairman should send a letter to the EBU, on behalf of the County, to support three clubs currently affiliated to the County (Menagerie, Highworth, and University) who apparently would not be able to remain affiliated after the introduction of "Pay to Play" in April 2010, because they do not hold at least 26 duplicate sessions a year. The vote was 13 in favour and 15 against. The Chairman subsequently sent a similar letter on his own behalf, making it clear that this did not represent the views of the Committee.

3. EBU Minutes: The EBU has sent out Board Minutes of 17th September 2009, AGM Minutes of 7th October 2009 and Tournament Committee Minutes of 22nd October 2009. The first two are currently available on the EBU website and the third will be shortly.

4. Club representatives: Colin Jones has been nominated as a temporary Management Committee representative for Wallingford, whilst Ron Quainton is unable to attend due to illness. Kay Chamberlain has been nominated as the Management Committee representative for Faringdon. Ian Raynes has been replaced by Murray Cook as the nominated Management Committee representative for Aylesbury Aces.

5. Correspondence re P2P: Diamond Bridge Club has written formally to express concern that the documentation supplied by the EBU indicated that the Oxfordshire P2P fee would be 3p, whereas the minutes of our previous meeting suggested it would be 6p. Blewbury, which does not currently have Oxfordshire as its primary county of affiliation, has asked to be kept informed of the results of our discussions.

Chief Tournament Director (Stephen Brown)

TO FOLLOW

Membership Secretary (Maxine Henry)

We currently have 745 paid up members, plus 37 dual members.

Tournament Secretary (Alan Grunwald)

Four events were scheduled between the last management committee meeting and this one:

- Ladies' and Men's pairs, November 8th. There were 9 pairs in each of these events, compared with 8 and 13 respectively in 2008.
- Oxford Times pairs, November 22nd. By the Wednesday before the event, there were 6 pairs entered. A check on the entries showed that 3 of these pairs did not meet the qualification rules and a decision was taken to postpone the event until the spring.
- Swiss pairs, December 7th. At the time of writing (Nov 26), 22 pairs have entered.

I have contacted all the county clubs for whom I have email contact details asking for a contact to liaise with novice players. I have had replies only from Aylesbury, Oxford and Thame.

The Comrades' Club in Wantage is available for the Management Committee meeting on Wednesday 24 March 2010.

Webmaster (Alan Grunwald)

Web site provision comprises two elements - 1) The domain name www.oxfordshirebridge.co.uk, and 2) hosting the web site.

Providing the domain involves making the name known throughout the Internet, so that when anyone types the name into a browser, their request can be sent for a reply to the appropriate computer.

Providing hosting involves supplying the computer and software to make that reply.

When I took over the web site from Richard Lonsdale about a year ago, he transferred responsibility for the domain to me. We both forgot about the hosting until Richard received a reminder that we needed to renew. Subsequent enquiries have shown that the providers do not have the facility to transfer hosting responsibility from Richard to me. I have suggested that Richard renew the hosting for a further year and that we should review our needs with a view to not renewing with this provider in December 2010.

Richard has indicated his willingness to go along with this, and I am trying to gain agreement from John and Dinah so that we can go ahead before the agreement lapses on December 9. I would welcome guidance from the committee as to a way ahead - do we continue to offer an independent web site or follow many other county associations down the BridgeWebs route? I wholeheartedly recommend continuing to run an independent site.

EBU Shareholders (report provided by Brenda Harris/Sandra Nicholson)

At the AGM held on 7 October 2009, there was further discussion of the proposed introduction of Universal Membership/Pay to Play. Returns received by the EBU showed that to date, 60% of currently affiliated clubs had signed up to the scheme, representing 40,000 members (at present there are 23,000). Although it was hoped that the eventual figure would be higher than 60%, this was enough to be confident that the scheme was financially viable at the proposed P2P figure of 29p. The shareholders approved the necessary changes in the EBU Bye-Laws to put the scheme into effect, as planned, from April 2010.

Sally Bugden was re-elected as Chairman, and there was no change in the other officers. Jeremy Dhondy (who chairs the Laws and Ethics Committee) was elected to the Board of Directors, replacing Peter Stocken. One of our Shareholders, Peter Baxter, who had acted as

NPC to the team that had recently won the Seniors World Championship in Sao Paulo, successfully stood for election to the Selection Committee.

Sandra Nicholson, attending the meeting as proxy for Peter, took the opportunity to clarify the EBU's position on P2P fees for regular weekly County duplicate nights. It was confirmed that the original documentation sent out indicated that such events would not be subject to P2P and the EBU would honour this commitment: however, if Counties wished for some reason to include them in P2P, they could opt to do so.

Club TDs may wish to note that the EBU is preparing a "Tangerine Book" which will be a greatly simplified version of the Orange Book, suitable for use at club events, explaining what conventions are permitted at different levels and in particular, summarising the rules on alerting and announcing. It will not be printed but will be available for downloading from the EBU website early next year.

The next Shareholders' Meeting will be on 9th March 2010.

Publicity Officer (Brenda Harris)

Following Malcolm Simpson's resignation as editor of the Newsletter, publicised in his last issue (December) and in Oxon column in English Bridge (Dec issue), a request for a new editor was included in both these publications.

Dec issue newsletters have been dispatched to all affiliated clubs.

Match Secretary (vacant)

Nick Smith resigned as Match Secretary on 6 October so has not submitted a formal report. He has confirmed our Tollemache entry, county match venues, etc., and has sent the Porter Trophy to Derbyshire.

President's/Chester/Wessex League Secretary (Geoff Nicholas)

Wessex League...running smoothly.

Presidents Cup...semi-finals reached. Will need to extend play-by-date for one of these but do not anticipate this will cause later problems.

Chester Cup...usual issue of some captains being very slow to arrange matches. I intend fining teams this year...all captains have been put on notice twice already this season! .Rules state that matches should have been arranged by Christmas, i.e. over three months after the draw was notified.