

REPORTS TO THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING 9TH MARCH 2016

Chairman

Whilst I feel I have been very busy on OBA matters over the last three or four months I have little progress to report on several important issues and frequently ask myself whether someone else might make a better fist of it - so if anyone would like to volunteer to take over my role next year or to take on a role as vice chairman please let me know.

Other roles

As always at this time of year we need to be working on recruiting people to carry out roles for the county next year. I will go into the full details of the roles we need to fill at the meeting, but please give some thought as to people it might be worth me approaching in advance. Any help will be appreciated, ranging from secretarial to publicity, TDs to education, social to youth. In particular we potentially need to find replacements for Sandra Claridge as Secretary, David Bygott as Publicity Officer (and newsletter editor?), Rob Dixon as Chief Tournament Director, Mike Fletcher as leader of the Promotions and Youth Team - not to mention Education (see below) and Social where Barbara Jordan continues to organise cafe bridge in Henley for which we are all extremely grateful but might we not do more?

Midlands Counties Working Group

Unfortunately as a result of a misunderstanding about dates I missed their last meeting in January. One of the matters they discussed was the proposed Midlands Regional Improvers Competition. The finals of this will be held on July 3 in three centres, the nearest one to us being at Cheltenham. This event will be aimed at players with less than 5 years experience and less than 5000 master points. There is a suggestion is that clubs might run heats to determine who plays, but we need to see what level of interest we can engender first. We need to find someone to lead on this in Oxfordshire. I should mention that the event was promulgated for the Midlands Region on the recommendation of Yorkshire who have successfully brought together players from a wide area in just such events.

Education

At the last meeting I reported in my role as Education Team Leader that I felt I needed to have a meeting with our Education Officer, Jonathan Price, as I felt there had been a number of misunderstandings between us. It was suggested that such meeting would proceed more successfully with the benefit of the presence of a third party or third parties. Chris Kerr and John Slater agreed to join such a meeting but I have been unsuccessful in bringing a meeting about. In the circumstances I have felt it necessary to ask Jonathan to desist from any Education Officer actions until such a meeting is held. He has recently said that he would be willing to hold such a meeting in April provided it is followed by one on Education action. Given that it will have taken the best part of six months to get to this stage and there will then be only two months to go until the election of a new Education Officer or Chairman (we can clearly not work together) I no longer feel this meeting is worth holding and ask for the MC's support for this decision.

Last year the MC approved a budget of £500 for the Education Team. I can confirm that to date none of this has been spent and in view of the foregoing nor are there any current plans to do so.

North Oxfordshire Bridge Club

Marian Day (NOBC Chair) has met with me several times to explain her understanding of the set-up and financial position of the NOBC. She believes that she would be in a significantly better financial position personally had she run her teaching at Kings Sutton without any involvement from the county. She has sought my help to close down NOBC and to recover money that she believes is held by the club's Treasurer, Jonathan Price. I have written to him for explanation of the financial position but have not received a satisfactory answer.

Marian is concerned that either he or the county may be seeking money back from her. I have reassured her that I do not think this is the case, although we cannot be responsible for dealings between herself and Jonathan (NOBC Treasurer) in their roles as Chairman and Treasurer of the NOBC. However I would like the MC to permit me to write to her formally to say that the county has no financial claims on her and to express our continuing support for the teaching she is doing whether through NOBC or Kings Sutton BC. I also seek confirmation that ownership of the bridge equipment paid for by the county's grant to NOBC may be transferred to Kings Sutton Bridge Club for the purpose of Marian continuing her teaching.

Helping beginners into duplicate

Talking to Abbey Smith and Richard Sills I am becoming more than ever convinced that this is an area which experienced players don't understand as well as they need to if we are to grow our membership. For example Oxford Bridge Learning and Wallingford Bridge Club have taught hundreds of people to play bridge over the past five years but very few of those have gone on to become regular faces at club duplicates. In an effort to help players over the threshold and to overcome any natural fear and trepidation they may feel at attending a first duplicate, I have offered my services to Richard Sills to play with any OBC beginner in their first duplicate. I would be happy to do this elsewhere in the county too and hope there may be others who would be willing to offer to do this. I will report in due course as to how this goes - my first one is shortly after our meeting on March 9.

Best wishes

Robert

Competitions Committee

1. The county pairs new format attracted 28 pairs. One semi-final was abandoned and the final reduced from 20 to 14 pairs. The actual event was a success with a higher standard than in previous semi-finals.
2. The Wessex league is progressing well. Butlers are routinely being collected from Division 1 to help with county selection as was promised.
3. The Seniors competition has stabilised at about 7 or 8 tables each month. Jan had to be cancelled owing to problems with the venue. Overall this is satisfactorily stable. This lines up with the views of some clubs that daytime bridge is increasing at the expense of evenings.
4. The Swiss pairs attracted 13.5 tables. Entry for the Swiss teams is well down but there may be a late trickle (actually a deluge would be better). It is likely to go ahead as there is a question of beck cup representation. The beck Cup invitations have gone out and numbers are OK.
5. County night numbers are falling again. This will be kept under review.
6. Interest in new county competitions is not high. At the time of writing no club has expressed an interest in the handicapped club pairs competition. The Wallingford 5th Friday multiple teams will start in April and needs advertising.
7. The President's cup final will be fought between the Robinson and Webley teams. The start of the Chester cup has been deferred until the summer with an entry date of April 1st.
8. The new arrangements for catering at events are going well.
9. Forthcoming problems include the Directorial team, OBC moves, board dealing and changing the rules for the ladders and the premiership in the light of the modified competitions schedule.
10. The committee will meet in June to plan next year.

Claire MacDonagh/John Slater

Duplicate Bridge Promotion & Youth Team

Junior Bridge Clubs

The arrangements for the Junior Bridge Clubs has changed. The club in Oxford continues to operate every Sunday afternoon in term time as before. In the South instead of the weekly meeting at Roke senior players meet with Alison Nicolson, and the younger group meet with Joan Bennett. Please refer to our bridge4schools web site for up to date information.

11 year old Henry Rose has been selected to play for the Under 15 England team in the Youth Bridge World Championships to be held in Italy in August. Henry started bridge at the Dragon School when he was 8 years old and has been attending the Oxford Junior Bridge Club regularly since it started; in fact, he was their first pupil. George Anstis is training with the Under 20 squad.

Six juniors played in the Abingdon Swiss Pairs on Sunday 31st January. They were George Anstis, George Cooper, Jamie Muller, Henry Rose, Lizzy van der Veen and William Wauchope. Jamie Muller, playing with his granny came second from 44 pairs.

Junior Congresses

The first Open Junior Winter Congress took place on November 22nd at The Oxford Bridge Club, and our thanks are due to the OBC for providing their premises. Refer to our website for full details.

The 4th OBA Junior Annual Congress took place at Roke on February 21st 2016.

Learn Bridge in a Weekend

This event was run by EBED's Ned Paul at Roke on January 9th & 10th, and was underwritten by the OBA. It was offered free to under 19s, and school teachers on the condition that they set up bridge clubs in their schools. There was no way of predicting support and costs, and £400 was agreed as a contingency at the November meeting. It was attended by 16 people between the ages of 8 and 80, and all considered it a success. Some of the participants paid an entry fee, and the outturn was an approximate deficit of £9.

A follow up is planned for April 9th/10th with sections for beginners, and improvers. It will be open to all.

Financial Support

Financial support for Kings Sutton Bridge Club to purchase a Duplimate was recommended.

Unaffiliated Clubs

No further work with unaffiliated clubs is planned until volunteer(s) are recruited.

I am planning to step down from the Promotion and Youth Team and will not be re-elected at the AGM.

Mike Fletcher

DBP&Y Team

16/02/16

Membership Secretary

Membership at the start of February 2016 was a total of 1536

Made up from

Pay to play	1336
of whom 20 are juniors	
Direct	116
of whom 94 are juniors	
Teachers	23
Bridge for all	66
Anonymous	7

Peter Briggs

Membership Secretary

OBA Congress Committee

The congress committee has made various decisions and proceeds with planning the congress.

1. General

- 1.1 Catering. It was decided that food would not be included in the price of the congress. People will bring their own or can order a lunch from Hampers, paying them directly.
- 1.2 Tea and coffee will be available **for purchase** during the event. There may be some element of subsidy needed depending on sales.
- 1.3 A number of free entries will be offered to inexperienced players, through the OBA clubs.
- 1.4 Prizes will be adapted from the EBU scale to offer a wider award- e.g. wine prizes in the teams for the best win in each round.

2. Marketing

- 2.1 The flier is now on the OBA website with link from the EBU. We have reduced the number of advertisements in the EBU quarterly and replaced this with a printed flier blitz of surrounding counties and EBU events in the period March to May. We will assess the success of this strategy after the event.

3. Budget

- 3.1 The mid case (roughly as last year), poor response case (about 1/3rd fewer) and very successful case (roughly 1/3rd more) budgets are shown on the attached schedule.
- 3.2 It should be noted that even the poor response case results in a higher surplus than last year.
- 3.3 We are aware that pricing, marketing or external factors could impact on the overall outcome. We believe that the decisions taken have been logical and will review the outcomes carefully.

Mike Robinson

March2016

Event	Points	Day 1	Day 2	Both Days	Tea/ Coff inc.?	Meal inc.?	Meal Price	Price 2 days with 2 meals	Food available
Felixstowe	Green	22	22	40	N	N	5	50	£5 picnic
Malvern	Green	24	24	48	N	N	10	68	
Kent	Blue	16	16	28	?	N	11	50	2 course buffet
Essex/ Herts	Green	23	23	46	Y	N	5	56	£5 picnic
Middlesex	Green	25	25	50	Y	N	5	60	Sandwiches
Oxford 2015	Green			56		Y		56	

Malvern
meals
Tables 61
Tables 56
117
Players days 468
182
38.89%

Website Co-ordinator

The website has taken on a better look in the past few months with regular pictures, links to more competitions, the EBU main website and EBED teachers / TD website. I have tried to give details of winners of events and highlight those playing for the County in Dawes League and Pachabo. I have now set up a link to a BridgeWebs website for results of all competitions that allows many more features of analysis and display of results and automatic uploading from EBUscore. Rob Dixon has also set up a DropBox for linking up scoring so that those on the scoring team and myself can access results remotely. As always I welcome comments or suggestions for improvement from clubs or members of the OBA and will try to act on them to give a better service to our members.

The issues to address in the coming months are:

1. More congratulations to OBA members who have success in EBU events (anyone who hears are encouraged to email me information and even a picture)
2. Setting up a system to regularly back up the site (I have asked Aleks for information on how this should be done)
3. Hand Duplication Team: The hand copies being regularly sent to myself or Rob Dixon or to the DropBox to ensure they are displayed. When generated more analysis is possible if the contracts and expected tricks are added to the deal file by the dealing program.
4. The Education Team: updating the Education Section
5. Competition Team: giving information on any OBA weekdays events being planned besides the two Tuesday night sessions (an action point from a previous meeting)
6. DBP&Y team: Publication on the website of details of non-affiliated clubs, and publicity of their events to be addressed when further volunteers join the team
7. Selection & County Team Management: Details of who is eligible to play for the County, how players are selected and new pairs invited to play, to be published on the website

Stephen Brown

Website Coordinator

Chief Tournament Director

We have moved over to scoring on EBUscore seamlessly, and I have managed to make a robust set-up that is backed up online and accessible by scorers from home. I have given some scorer training to Peter Litchfield and John Rowe is now qualified as a county director, but otherwise there has been no interest for new directors or scorers which will become problematic if no one steps forward."

Also, we are now using Bridgewebs for the results section of the website which has made the whole process of scoring and uploading much better. We have come to the end of our free trial, and Stephen has paid for the subscription to keep using the service, so could we perhaps put in AOB to approve reimbursing Stephen for this. Anyone who disagrees is invited to join the scoring team to assist with uploading the results a different way(!)

Rob Dixon

February 2016

Holly Kilpatrick

It was a great day for the OJBC, Dragon School and High School pupils at the Loughborough Schools Challenge yesterday!

22 teams entered from prestigious schools all over the country: Eton, Westminster, Haberdasher's Askes, Oundle, Nottingham and Loughborough Grammar Schools and x 2 England Under 15 teams, which included Henry Rose. The Dragon School team comprising Max and Thomas Potter, William Wauchope and Freddie Yu came 4th in the Schools Cup and got a special mention at the prize giving for being so young! Henry Rose's Under 15 team came second in the whole event, just pipped by the other Under 15's. Two girls from Oxford High School, Kitty and Emma, came second in the Mini-Bridge Competition where there was a spectacular turnout this year.

Our OJBC team of Theo Rich, Richmond Yeung, Zane Soonawalla and Jacob Potter were lying in 8th place after three matches and managed to smash Eton before the supper break! When Jacob and Zane sat down to their first match, their opponents asked me if they were in the right room!!! I replied politely that they were! There was the usual scrum at the end so I didn't manage to find out the final positions of the OJBC and High School teams but at half time, both were well above the middle.

I will let you all know when there are photos and a write up on the EBU website but meanwhile, here are some of mine!

Holly Kilpatrick

March 2016

Report to the OBA Management Committee on the EBU Best Practice Document

We recommend that aspects of the Best Practice for County Associations document be adopted. The document will be edited and adapted for use by Oxfordshire and will be available on the website. We would give ourselves the date of August 1st 2016, by which time the document and principles within will be ready for adoption.

However, there are a few aspects that we are not well placed to adopt and will need further discussion. These are largely a result of our existing constitution.

Highlights

We should be active in recruiting **volunteers** for the future: keep a list of possible future committee members and officers and other helpers.

With this in mind, we should prepare role descriptions for each officer.

Transparency: we should continue to put minutes on the website. Performance indicator: maintain timely publication (within two weeks of the meeting).

Regular publication of County newsletter. Performance indicator: maintain records of dates of publication.

Also publicise criteria for county selection and update where necessary.

Communication: regular and documented contact of committee members/officers with individual clubs. Performance indicator: regularity, outcomes.

Contact unaffiliated clubs. Performance indicator: document regularity and feedback.

Encourage **newcomers** to get involved in the organization of the county association.

Monitor interest in **new events** through an ideas page on the website and otherwise.

The OBA should give help to clubs with **education**, without actively offering a teaching programme. Performance indicator: monitor numbers of clubs with education programmes and monitor number of learners.

Continue with youth education which is enjoying success. Performance indicator: numbers of players; successes.

Emphasise BBB. Reminders at all levels. Performance indicator: numbers of incidents?

We should send shareholder representatives not delegates

Performance indicators

We should measure, with an aim to improving:

Membership numbers and NGS bands

Club involvement

Income

Playing strength (though increase in NGS though low level NGS is probably good)

Numbers of future volunteers

Competition entries by NGS grade

Progress of projects

Annual satisfaction survey

Canvass ideas

Teaching: numbers of classes and participants

Succession planning

John Slater and Kathy Talbot

Expanding the game in Oxfordshire

Context

OBC is entering into a renewed effort to increase the number of active bridge players by the provision of education courses for beginners. In examining the support available up the chain, the county seems to be in a position to help **ALL** clubs and bridge teachers. A summary and brief analysis of the OBA annual accounts from 2008-2015 is attached as Appendix A.

Analysis of the OBA context suggests that:

- OBA have surplus funds beyond their operational needs
- The affiliated member-session-plays number has diminished recently (see attached OBA financial summary) in spite of the addition of three new affiliated clubs (Menagerie, Central Yarnton and Abbey Smith Club)
- The OBA website information about education could be strengthened and made more complete (see <http://www.oxfordshirebridge.co.uk/index.php/education>) especially when compared with some other counties such as Sussex http://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoi/bw.cgi?club=sussex&pid=display_people4 , Berks and Bucks http://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoi/bw.cgi?club=bbcba&pid=display_page16 and Yorkshire <http://learnbridgeyorkshire.co.uk/>.
- The OBA website could add unaffiliated clubs as an audience to be addressed by the website (for a comparison with other counties, see Berks and Bucks at http://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoi/bw.cgi?club=bbcba&pid=docs_Non-Affiliated%20Clubs.htm) Hants and IOW at http://www.bridgewebs.com/cgi-bin/bwoi/bw.cgi?club=hiwcba&pid=display_ctyclubs (look at the lower end of this page) and Merseyside & Cheshire at <http://www.bridgewebs.com/merseysidecheshire/page44.html>.

Data from Oxford Bridge Club suggests that the average span of club membership is about 10 years implying a need to find new members each year amounting to approximately 10% of the total membership. Mapping this analysis to the county level would suggest that the county needs to find in the region of 140-150 new players each year to prosper.

What could/should be done?

- OBA could encourage what teaching that does take place by providing accurate and up to date contacts or pointers for all education sources in the county on the OBA website
- OBA could provide funding support for Bridge for All teaching activities in the county whether by affiliated clubs, individual teachers or elsewhere
- OBA could provide a single enquiry point for beginners on the OBA website that would route enquiries to any of the providers in the county
- OBA could provide information about ALL opportunities to play in the county including as many unaffiliated sessions, social sessions, no-fear sessions, charity events etc. as the organisers are willing to have promoted. Thus any OBA website visitor could become well informed about all available opportunities to play in the county.
- OBA could publish, in volume, a postcard or A5 format flyer that points to the above single enquiry point. These could be widely distributed at all the sessions/events referenced on the OBA website. (Specimen printing costs would be in the region of £250 for 20,000 items). If suitable skills and resources can be identified, further marketing to other target segments could follow.

What funding could clubs in the county specifically ask for?

- OBA to reimburse the costs of EBUTA training courses for any teacher who cannot be funded by club free places – to be paid at the point that their first students purchase Bridge for All textbooks. [Each affiliated club is currently entitled to one free place every two years]
- OBA to reimburse the cost of EBUTA membership for any teacher who in the same membership period teaches at least one term of a Bridge for All course
- OBA to fund the club or teacher with an amount of, say, £10 per student (approximating ~50% of the cost of a Bridge for All textbook) in all cases where the student buys a Bridge for All textbook, registers for an EBU number, and where the teacher is EBUTA registered and teaches the students in the county.

What might such funding support cost?

First let's look at the plausible maximum possible cost:

- 6 teacher courses (that cannot be funded by the free allocation to clubs) @£105 per year ~£600
- 20 teachers @£17 per year ~£400
- 150 students @£10 per year for the year-1 course ~£1500
- 50 students @£10 per year for the year-2 course ~£500
- Total ~£3000 per year

Given the current context more realistic numbers might be:

- 2 teacher courses (that cannot be funded by the free allocation to clubs) @£105 per year ~£210
- 10 teachers @£17 per year ~£170
- 50 students @£10 per year for the year-1 course ~£500
- 20 students @£10 per year for the year-2 course ~£200
- Total ~£1080 per year

Summary

This would be money well spent for the long term benefit of the game in Oxfordshire. It would be the clubs and teachers that invest in Education that would primary benefit but the downstream effect would benefit all clubs. We would also urge the county to continue strong support for Junior Bridge in the county.

The administrative load on the county to deliver on this proposal would be small and principally comprise paying a small number of invoices sent by clubs/teachers each year.

Could the OBA county funds afford this strategic investment? Yes!

As a matter of principle, Oxfordshire clubs might view that the whole amount of the P2P funds collected in the county should support the development of bridge in the county and one way or another be ploughed back into investments for the future that will benefit the game in the county.

John Fleming

OBC

25th Feb 2016

Appendix A

Data Extracted from OBA Annual Accounts

Year	Balance at start	Receipts	Payments	Net Profit	Balance at YE	Deferred income	P2P Precept	M'ship income	Player Sessions	Change
					18213.66					
2008-2009	18213.66	24900.10	21306.51	3593.59	21807.25		-	2605.00		
2009-2010	21807.25	22719.65	18926.58	3793.07	25600.32		-	2909.00		
2010-2011	25600.32	25840.00	22808.21	3031.79	28632.11		0.03	1436.00	47867	
2011-2012	28632.11	24219.00	22213.00	2006.00	30638.11	5274.00	0.06	2954.00	49233	2.9%
2012-2013	30638.11	27313.00	23579.00	3734.00	34372.11	5230.00	0.06	3145.00	52417	6.5%
2013-2014	34372.11	25160.00	21793.00	3367.00	37739.11	3343.00	0.06	3074.00	51233	-2.3%
2014-2015	37739.11	24889.00	22513.00	2376.00	40115.11	3601.00	0.06	2985.00	49750	-2.9%

Summary

Over the 7 year period from 2008-2015

Cumulative profits by OBA	21901.45
Amount paid in by club members in P2P or membership subs	19108.00
Investments in Junior Bridge and in Education	6662.00