

SEAFORD BRIDGE CLUB

BridgeMate Sub-Committee Meeting – Wednesday April 12th, 2017

Present: John Gillespie, Tony Thorpe, Hugh Creamer

1. Meeting Objectives

- (a) To examine the logistical issues of availability and storage of BridgeMate equipment, i.e. lap top, table top terminals.
- (b) To consider the financial issues related to the purchase of BridgeMate.
- (c) To consider, provided that the issues raised in (a) and (b) above can be resolved, a timetable for the introduction of BridgeMate at the Seaford Bridge Club.

2. Logistical Issues.

The principle issues identified were storage; ensuring that equipment was available in the right place (either the Over 60s Club or Waves) at the right time (Friday evening or Tuesday lunchtime); and meeting safety requirements.

The only secure storage currently available is in the Bridge Club cupboard at the Over 60s Club. At the time of this meeting the storage was identified as inadequate however subsequently Hugh Creamer has reached agreement with the Over 60s Club for the release of some kitchen cupboard space to enable the Bridge Club refreshments to be transferred from the Bridge Club cupboard to the kitchen. This has released sufficient storage to securely store the BridgeMate equipment.

The issue of timely availability of equipment is more complex; more likely to fail and thus more likely to undermine the successful introduction of BridgeMate. It is therefore vital that the systems introduced are foolproof. If the equipment is stored in the Over 60s then it must be delivered timely to Waves on Tuesday lunchtime. After the Tuesday afternoon session it must also be returned to its secure storage in the Over 60s. Additionally, even if it is in the right place at the right time, procedures must be in place to ensure that the equipment is 'live' and ready for use in time for both the Waves and Over 60s sessions.

There is also the issue of transmitting the results at the end of the session. BridgeMate makes the results available as soon as the final result is entered into the last terminal in use at a session. Players will therefore be able to see their result, should they wish to, at the end of the session. However for the results to be uploaded the Club website requires a WiFi facility at the playing site. One currently exists at Waves – although it has yet to be tested. No such facility exists at the Over 60s but the Bridge Club has been advised that the Over 60s is considering introducing WiFi. Until a facility is available and has been tested at both locations the Scorer (or Technical Director) will need to take the BridgeMate lap top home to upload the results and then ensure that the lap top is either returned to the Over 60s secure storage or passed on to the

scheduled Scorer at the next playing session. There is much scope here for things to go wrong. To ensure that the Club always gets it right will require new procedures, a redefinition of the Scorer role and a Scorers schedule.

With regard to equipment safety the Club will almost certainly be required by both Waves and the Over 60s Club to have any equipment plugged into the mains supply safety checked and labelled as such.

3. Financial Issues

The meeting agreed to approach the Club Treasurer for an opinion on whether the Club was in a position to purchase BridgeMate and if it wasn't what would need to change in order to make the purchase possible.

Subsequent to the meeting the Treasurer emailed all Club Committee members (Hugh Basden-Smith's email of 13.4.17 refers) advising as follows:

- forecast of funds available to the Club at 31.12.17 is £2300. Current estimate of BridgeMate purchase is £2674 indicating a shortfall of £374. This does not take into account a minimum balance that the Club should hold at all times
- an increase in table money of 50p to £1.50 would, based on current playing numbers, generate an additional annual income of about £1800 thus making BridgeMate viable. The soonest this increase could be implemented is July 2017 assuming the June committee meeting agreed the proposal.

In summary the Club would be in a position to introduce Bridge Mate in early 2018.

4. Implementation Timetable

The logistical issues raised in 2 above are, with care, resolvable. The financial issues in 3 can also be resolved. Therefore, should the Seaford Bridge Club committee agree to take the matter forward, then a possible implementation schedule would be as follows:

- (a) June Committee agree to take the BridgeMate proposal forward and in doing so agree to a 50p table money increase from 1.7.17.
- (b) A June Club Newsletter advises the membership of the table money increase and its purpose.
- (c) A proposal, supported by the Committee, is put to the February 2018 Club AGM to purchase BridgeMate
- (d) After careful testing of equipment and 'education' of the membership BridgeMate is introduced at all playing sessions at a date to be agreed in 2018.

5. Footnote

Since the meeting of the BridgeMate sub-committee on April 12th and since this report was prepared an email has been sent by Scorebridge (who provide our bridge scoring software) to all of the Seaford Bridge Club scorers.

The email advises of an alternative to BridgeMate called ArcScorer. This system uses tablets rather than terminals, a lap top but additionally requires a router to provide WiFi. I have not yet looked at this in detail but immediate concerns are that:

- tablets are more likely to be targeted by thieves as they have an alternative use unlike BridgeMate terminals
- the tablets have to be regularly charged (charge time around 80 minutes) unlike the BridgeMate terminals which are battery powered with a battery life of c. 5 years
- data is entered into the tablets using styluses which can be easily mislaid
- BridgeMate is tried and tested hardware and software

The website for this system is www.arcstorer.com

John Gillespie
May 2017