

Somerset Contract Bridge Association  
Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
held on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at Woolavington Village Hall

1. A period of silence took place to remember the following deceased members:

Bob Baker – Nailsea  
John Smithson – Nailsea  
Bert Ginnever – Yeovil  
Mary Jarman – Minehead  
Pat Bedwell – Minehead  
Jean Hughes – Minehead  
Kate Noble – Wells  
Simon Loveday - Wells

2. Apologies for Absence.

Ken & Ann Bawdon, Jean Howard, Richard Feetenby, Tony Russ, Rhoda Tyley, Jacky Moody, David Porter, Michael Whittaker, Ceri Pierce and Mike Smith

3. 2016 AGM Minutes

The minutes of the 2016 AGM were approved (Proposed by Katrina Foote and seconded by Sheena Lanham).

4. Matters Arising from the 2016 minutes

There were no matters arising.

5. Chairperson's Annual Report: please see attached

### **Chairperson's Address at the 2017 AGM**

**Welcome and** Thank you for being here today to attend your county association's AGM. I am pleased that you have all turned out today, and I extend a warm welcome to you all.

In this address I will be reviewing last year with particular reference to

- (a) The SCBA's financial position
- (b) County Representative Competitions and SCBA Competitions
- (c) The Work of the SCBA Committee
- (d) Your Committee in the coming year

### **SCBA's Financial Position**

#### **Reserves and Financial Policy**

As you will see from the accounts circulated at this meeting, we had a surplus of £1872 this year, slightly up on last year. Reserves also went up to around £28,000. This is good news, and was largely generated by the Andrew Robson event, the Next Steps weekend, and the West of England Congress. The Committee consider that this level of reserves is sufficient, and does not need to increase further.

As expected, the surplus of £1,403 generated from the West of England Congress was considerably

lower than last year. This was largely because we did not have the use of the Winter Gardens in 2016, and could not accommodate as many tables in the Weston College premises. We are moving back to the Winter Gardens next year, so hopefully the surplus will increase on the 2016 amount.

We are also planning another Robson event for December 2017, which will bring in revenue.

As a consequence of these factors, the SCBA committee are not recommending any changes to the funding. We will continue the policy of a nil membership fee, and the cost of one day County events will stay at £12. The 2p County Pay to Play component will also remain unchanged. We will continue to run an education programme that is largely free or low cost to members, and we will maintain all our assets in good working order.

## **The County Representative Teams and County Events**

### **1. County Representative Teams**

Our three Western League teams, competing in divisions A B & C of the competition, had mixed success. The A team won their division, and qualified for the National Inter County League finals in Coventry in July. Well done to them, and good luck for the final. The B and C teams both finished 7th out of 8 in their divisions.

We also entered a team for the Tollemache qualifier held in December 2016, the blue riband event for counties. Our team finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in their group, and qualified for the final. This was a tremendous achievement, and this has not happened since the 1980's, since the days before Somerset CBA was split into two parts, and Avon CBA was created. They didn't have as much success in the final, but the opposition was stiffer there.

The County did not send any pairs to the Corwen Trophy this year. Pairs are chosen on the basis of their performance in the County Championship pairs, but unfortunately the pairs in the qualification positions were unable to attend. The winners of our County Knockout event were sent to play in the Pachabo Cup, and came 23rd out of 29 teams nationally.

Wells City Bridge Club won the County Teams of Eight competition, and subsequently went forward to the Regional Final of the Garden Cities championship, representing Somerset. Unfortunately, they failed to qualify for the National Final.

### **2. County Events**

As far as entries to County events in total are concerned, we had a mixed year, with overall numbers disappointing. Participation in county events is still at a very low level compared to years gone by, and the trend seems to be downwards. Entries to the Michael Coda cup which is played at clubs, and which is usually a popular event, were down this year, as well. Somerset has over 500 members with an EBU NGS ranking, this figure in itself also being about 100 down from last year, but only a small minority of them played in the county events in the 2016/17 season, and a lot of those only entered the odd event or two. If we could discover how to tap this reservoir of players, and persuade them to take part in County events, then we might be able to return the competitions to their former glory. So far, we have not found a way to do this. However, on a good note, the restricted inter-club teams and pairs were reinstated this year, and attracted a reasonable entry. These events allow the less experienced players to be selected by their clubs, and to earn points for the club trophy.

The County League is one of our very successful events. It is a club representative event, and has 3 divisions with relegation and promotion. Last season we had a total of 29 teams taking part. It was great to see this number of teams entering an event.

The County Teams of Four, also known as the County Knockout Teams, is one of our premier events, and is suffering with a loss of participation. A draw is made at the beginning of the season,

and starting with this year, matches will be played privately only after the first round. The first round will be played at Woolavington on Friday 13th October, and losers in both the first and the second round will be eligible for a plate competition, with matches also played privately.

Details for competitions in 2017/18 are already available on the website, and the booklet will be available soon, so don't forget to get your entries in early.

## **The Work of the SCBA Committee and Sub-Committees**

A team of unpaid volunteers undertake the annual work of our Association, and we have a lot of people to thank for everything the SCBA does.

### **1. Thanks for the County Committee Work in 2016/17**

In my third and final year as the Chairman, I have been fortunate to be supported by a hard-working county committee, who freely give up a lot of their time to provide a comprehensive programme of events, and to ensure the affairs of the county are run efficiently. So, on behalf of the Association's members, I would like to thank all of your Committee members for their work throughout 2016/17.

I would also like to thank Andy Ridgers for his work with the computer and the bridgemates, Graham Heal for his work in getting the trophies engraved, and Alan Atkinson for his work in dealing boards and producing hand records.

### **2. West of England Congress**

The revenue that is generated from a successful West of England Congress is important for the finances of the SCBA, and benefits us all. The Congress continues to be one of the most successful county run congresses in the country. It is a very large undertaking and once again last year we were full up on the final day with 66 tables in play in the Swiss Team's event. I would like to thank Ann Bawdon for her excellent administration. I would also like to thank David Porter for his chairmanship of the event, and all other SCBA members who supported David and Ann during the Congress weekend itself. Ann resigned at the 2016 AGM, and Tony Russ will take her place this year. He has a hard act to follow, but I am sure he will be up to the challenge.

### **3. County Events Programme**

Outside of the West of England Congress, we have a large programme of county sponsored events. Running such a programme takes a lot of organisation, administrative support and event management. I would like to thank all the Committee members involved with the county programme for a large amount of work behind the scenes. I would also like to thank all members outside of the Committee who are involved with directing and scoring, as well as those who assisted with transportation of pre-dealt hands to and from the events.

Woolavington continues to be the venue for the majority of our county events. In addition, we store tables, bidding boxes, table cloths and stationery at the venue. This minimises the work needed in moving equipment around the county, and has also provided a central Somerset location. With an ageing membership, the benefits of a central location are substantial.

Starting with the 2017/18 season, we will be making a change to the way the cups are presented. In future, each cup will be presented at the end of the event, and will be kept by the holders for one year, until the event runs again. The winners will be responsible for getting the cup engraved, and will be able to present a bill to the Treasurer, for reimbursement. This will lighten the load on the Committee, and will mean that the cup is with the current holders, rather than spending most of its time with last year's winners, as is the case at the present.

#### 4. The Selection Sub Committee

The county selection sub-committee is re-elected every 2 years, and this process is taking place at present. Tony Russ was the Chairman, and he was ably assisted by Colin Juneman, Sheila Coda, and Stewart Upton. Our thanks are due to them for all their work in selecting teams for the Western League, the Tollemache, and other representative events. Special thanks are due to Tony, as he has recently resigned from this role, after carrying out this role for many years. Colin Juneman has volunteered to replace him as Chairman of Selectors.

#### 5. The County Website

The County website is well used, and easy to navigate. Almost all competition entries now come in via the website, and it is always up to date with news and competition results. Our thanks go to Eric Cummings and Tony Russ for their hard work in this area.

#### 6. Education Events

Jean Howard has run a comprehensive programme of education events for players of all abilities, and we hope to have a similar programme next season. A Bridge Café event was held in Street, and it attracted excellent numbers. An education seminar run by Andy Robson in September was a sell-out, and a weekend seminar run by Caroline Macpherson was well supported and enjoyed by all. These events all provide income for SCBA. In addition, a County Directors course took place in January, and another one might be run this year if there is sufficient demand.

Next year, in addition, there will be a drive to encourage more social players to embrace club bridge, and work on a strategy to develop fast track learning, on line learning, and assisted play.

#### 7. The County's Nominated Charity

I am delighted that 196 pairs, 392 people played in our Michael Coda Simultaneous event in February, and that £1,461 was raised for this year's county nominated charity, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

I would like to thank Colin Juneman for preparing the commentary, and Alan Atkinson for preparing the hands.

### **Changes to Your Committee**

This year, six members of last year's Committee are seeking election again, two have decided to stand down, and we have two new nominations. Tony Russ is nominated to step up from Vice Chairperson to Chairperson, Richard Feetenby to continue as Treasurer, Daphne Greatorex as Secretary, Sheila Coda as Membership Secretary, Jean Howard as a committee member with special responsibility for Education and myself as Vice Chairperson. We are all seeking re-election. In a later agenda item, I hope that you will vote us back in for another year. Caroline MacPherson and Eric Cummings have decided to retire after serving for several years. Many thanks are due to both of them for their hard work on our behalf. Eric will continue to administer the website. Frank Coltman has been nominated as our new Tournament Secretary, and Ceri Pierce has been nominated as a new committee member.

As you can see, we have a full complement of officers, but still have vacancies for ordinary committee members. If you would like to get involved, please speak to me later.

I was elected as your new chairperson three years ago, and have thoroughly enjoyed my time in office. I am standing down as Chairperson, but hope to continue as Vice Chairperson. Thank you for your support over the three years.

6. Treasurer's Report: please see attached  
This was tabled  
Accounts were accepted by the meeting.
7. Tournament Secretary's Report: please see attached
8. Election of Officers and other Executive Committee Members  
The following were proposed and seconded:

9.  
Tony Russ – Chairperson  
Gina Howard – Vice-Chairperson  
Richard Feetenby - Treasurer  
Sheila Coda – Membership Secretary  
Frank Coltman - Tournament Organiser  
Daphne Greatorex – General Secretary  
Jean Howard – Committee  
Ceri Pierce – Committee

The above were all duly elected 'en bloc' for a further term

10. Any Special Resolutions:  
Proposed change to the constitution: “AGM must not be held before the 1<sup>st</sup> June” to read  
“... not before 1<sup>st</sup> May”  
Reason: to give more flexibility in choice of dates because of the number of EBU events and Congresses run in June.  
Change proposed by Sheena Lanham, seconded by Alan Atkinson. Unanimous vote by members. Change to Constitution to be made.
11. Any Other Business
  - 11.1 Use of microphone at competition events. A microphone is available for use at Woolavington, and the matter will be raised with the Tournament organiser.
  - 11,2 A register of county clubs and which electronic scoring systems they use was suggested.  
This matter will be discussed at the next Committee meeting
  - 11.3 Plan to recruit new players to Bridge. This will be covered in the plans of the Committee over the following months

The meeting was closed at 13.30pm and was followed by the presentation of prizes

A Swiss Teams event then took place, the winners were a team consisting of Cyndi Harris, Rachel Pantling, Michael Toft and Ray Walder