

Minutes of committee meeting of Somerset Contract Bridge Association

on the 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023 in Wells

**In attendance:**

Michael Letts (Chair)

Colin Simcox (via Zoom)

John Cockram

Sheree Pavey

Andrew Ridgers

Simon Brooke

Frank Coltman

Michael Wigmore

Alan Evans

**Apologies**

Ceri Pierce and Richard Feetenby

**Minutes of last meeting**

Michael referred to the last minutes. No matters arising.

**AGM Minutes**

These were now complete and Sheree agreed to email these to Alan E to upload these to the SCBA website.

Michael L welcomed Michael Wigmore and Alan Evans to the committee.

**Allocation of committee members' responsibilities**

All the members present gave a brief summary of their current roles.

Frank C was in charge of the WOE Congress, assisting John with the tournament programme, dealing boards and a county director.

John C was tournament organiser; he along with Frank had prepared the latest tournament programme. John liaised with the venue and caterers, directors and supporters

There followed a discussion on the most effective method of publicising events, the database available, and just how up to date and accurate this information was. The first tournament due to take place was the NGS<9; John described the format which was very broadly approved.

John C pointed out the definitive drop in attendees to County events and how we can turn this around. Michael L suggested that he would make contact with some of the best players and ascertain why they were no longer attending.

Michael W had just joined and currently had no role.

Alan Evans was new to the committee; he specialised in anything IT related and had agreed to work with on the website.

Colin S was chief tournament director. He outlined the real difficulty in getting directors to direct at county events and so far there were just three: Frank C, Tony R and himself. He was also responsible for advice on law and regulations to all the county clubs. The committee discussed various options and one was having a playing director or even a pair of playing directors. The committee agreed that in return the director could be offered free entry and tea.

Colin took the opportunity to give notice that a new blue book was due on the 1<sup>st</sup> August.

Andy R was responsible for keeping track of county Trophies. He was also chair of selectors for the Western league and the Tollemache. There had prior to covid been a small committee but lately Andy had undertaken the selection for the Western league role alone. He wanted to resurrect a committee for selection on the A, B, and C teams. He was also available to clubs in a technological advisory role, e.g. scoring.

Sheree took minutes for both committee meetings and the AGM. Was also in contact (but not exclusively) with Chairs of the clubs, circulating information regarding important tournaments or events, e.g. Andrew Robson

Simon B has largely been organising the Andrew Robson visit.

### **Competitions**

The first tournament was the NGS<9 event on the 23<sup>rd</sup> July (already discussed).

The Paul Jones event was due on the 20<sup>th</sup> August. Unfortunately a tea will not be available and participants must be advised to bring their own. No TD had been secured and it was suggested that this be one of those events where playing directors could be used.

The County league was efficiently being run by Bob Warrender.

The mixed teams were due to run on the 23 September (a Saturday), again no TD arranged.

12<sup>th</sup> November was the date for Swiss teams.

There was a need for people to register earlier on the website.

Frank C felt that a reasonable incentive for players to attend County events was offering half price to newcomers. Whether this should be for all or just Somerset affiliated and how would it be policed. It was felt that anything to get players back or to start playing in County events should be carefully considered. There was a definite drop in numbers and revenue since covid.

Frank also discussed the additional work to be taken into consideration at events, setting up, cleaning up, maintenance of equipment and stationery supplies, which is currently ad hoc.

### **Newsletter**

Paul B had agreed to continue sending this out but needed content. It was agreed that much of what was discussed today could go in and certainly promotion of the under 9 tournament with a seminar and tea and the Paul Jones game – the lack of catering should be highlighted. The idea of an “analysis of interesting hands” might be a good feature and possibly Ceri would do this.

### **Online**

The Somerset online game only took place on a Monday. It was acknowledged the tremendous success of online games but the real danger they could hinder the return of face to face. Somerset would continue on a Monday and a handful of club games continued to enjoy a sizable participation.

The County Teams played online.

### **National Event Funding**

There was a rumour of discontent with funds being spent on national events, e.g. Tollemache; in 2019 the committee agreed to pay some limited expenses, e.g. hotel and travel. The costs were significantly lower in recent years as played online. Michael felt it very important to have representation at the big national events.

### **Congress**

Entries are coming in. Last year there were 38 tables. The congress has done quite well when compared to other counties. Frank C reiterated the need to publicise whenever the opportunity arises. Mention should certainly go in the next newsletter.

### **County League**

Bob W had this in hand and had circulated an email last week.

### **Andrew Robson**

Simon is away prior to Andrew Robson’s next visit due the 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March again at Crispin Hall, Street and asked if Sheree could take over initial registrations. Sheree agreed. The Hall was booked from 4.00pm so the hall would have to be vacated earlier, which meant an earlier than usual start. The ticket price was again £27.50. John C agreed to speak to Cathy to organise a lunch as the hall could not provide this year.

Simon also mentioned a training weekend at Bruton organised by Caroline M, who had raised the possibility of Andrew R teaching.

### **Treasurer’s Report**

Richard was unable to attend the meeting. Figures from the AGM were referred to briefly but a fuller picture would be provided at next committee meeting.

### **Any other business**

Andy raised the point regarding entry to events, whether to raise or fix. RF had suggested an increase. Simon B did think the fees should remain the same. Again it was concluded anything that could keep and increase players' attendance was welcome. Currently to play was £6.00 and tea £6.00 (subsidised by SCBA by 50p). Michael W suggested it better to drop the subsidy on tea and keep entry fee at £6.00. This was approved by the committee.

Andy also reminded the committee of the development fund of £5,000. Yeovil Phoenix club so far had been the only significant takers and benefitted enormously from it. £3,500 remained in the fund. Andy, Ceri and Richard were the panel that considered applications.

There was still money available to clubs in the teaching fund.

Michael L referred to his suggestion that he visit each of the clubs, which on reflection seemed a very large undertaking, but he would consider visiting clubs and sought suggestions. Wilton and Coxley were the first two.

Andy referred to the time a County liaison officer was a committee member role and Michael W was suggested as a suitable candidate to assist Michael L in liaising with clubs.

*Minutes prepared by Sheree Pavey*

*29 June 2023*