

FINAL DRAFT

SUSSEX COUNTY CONTRACT BRIDGE ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Management Committee of the SCCBA took place via Zoom at 10.30am on Friday 22 March 2024

Present:

Mr P Clinch (PC)	Chairman
Mr J Hardy (JH)	Hon Treasurer
Mr D Wheeler (DW)	Hon Secretary

and other elected members: Mrs A Galpin (AG), Mr D Galpin (DG), Mrs J Mayall (JM), Mr N Watts (NW) and Mr M Wotton (MW). Also attending were the President Mr M Pool (MP), Mrs H Kent (HK) – Crawley BC) and Mr C McNeil (CM - Eastbourne BC).

AGENDA

1. Apologies

Mrs A Baxter (AB) Ms R Land (Lewes BC) and Mr M Wright (MWr)

2. Minutes of the meeting of 8 Dec 2023

2.1 Accuracy

MC Members were content with the minutes as shown in the final draft.

2.2 Matters Arising

DW reported that:

- Actions from paragraphs 4.2, 8.1, 8.2, 9.1 and 15.had been completed.
- Other actions from the previous meeting would be picked up under the relevant items below.

3. Chairman's Report

PC indicated that his reports would be made under the relevant agenda items below.

4. Treasurer's Report

4.1 Treasurer's Report and Accounts for y/e 31 December 2023

JH had circulated these reports which showed a surplus of £1824 (2022; £1707). UMS income continues to be reasonably healthy at £6580 (2022 £5989). Whilst this is still lower than pre-pandemic (2019 £7470), it represented an encouraging further improvement on that recorded in 2022. Key points from those overall figures were:

- The surplus on congresses and events at £283 was well down on the 2022 total of £853, and well below the total for 2019 of £4,412. The County followed a policy for certain events of having reduced or no entry fees, resulting in a deficit on County events of £195, compared to a deficit in 2022 of £113. One day events were similarly affected, with a deficit of £448, compared to a deficit in 2022 of £74. In both cases, income was well down on pre-pandemic returns. With the continued uncertainty over the popularity of face to face tournaments, a relatively modest increase in income from tournaments is the most that can be expected in 2024. Income from the Autumn Congress, green pointed events and online events contributed a surplus of nearly £1,000 compared to £1,040 in 2022..
- The Junior Bridge Camp was held again in 2023 with an encouraging number of participants. As anticipated, there was a deficit of about £1.800 on the event (2022: deficit of,£3,100) of which the Sussex share was £920 (2022; £1,230. It was agreed that, unlike previous years, this would not be covered by a transfer from funds reserved for youth bridge activities with the balance of these funds remaining at £4,125.
- Overheads totalled £4,643 compared with £5,071 in 2022. The main reason for the decrease relates to reduced expenditure on national events (£600). Overall, overheads remain fairly consistent year on year.
- Donations totalling £925 (£1,700 in 2022), with £1,000 being donated to the county's chosen charity, St James Trust in Seaford, partly funded by other donations of £75. The Management Committee has agreed to increase the level of donations in 2024 to compensate for the absence of donations in 2021 and 2022.
- Total cash/bank balances at 31 December 2023 were £50,484 compared to £48,090 at 31st December 2022. The balance on the general fund increased from £44,025 at the end of 2022 to £45,849 at 31st December 2023.

Going forward, the SCCBA will continue to face numerous challenges, the main one being to ensure that the reduction in our main sources of income is temporary while controlling any increase in our overheads. In addition certain affiliated clubs may require financial assistance to remain viable until the effects of the pandemic are over. However, the SCCBA remains financially sound and has the resources to assist affiliated clubs as required. As approval was given at the EGM in 2018 for an increase in the UMS county charge, from 7p to 8p for 2019/20 or in a subsequent year, the County can quickly arrange for an increase in income to cover such potential increases in expenditure. There is currently no plan to apply this increase.

FINAL DRAFT

4.2 Independent examination of accounts for y/e 31 December 2023

JH reported that personal circumstances had forced the current IE to resign and arrangements had been made to have these accounts endorsed by another IE. This would be a one-off exercise the result of which would as usual be subject to AGM approval. The MC was therefore being asked to approve the accounts subject to completion of that independent examination. The AGM would also be asked to approve delegation of the appointment of a new IE to the MC with the appointment being made as soon as practicable.

Action: JH/DW

4.3 Financial projection for 2024

JH had circulated a projection for the year ended 31 Dec 2024. This was based on reasonable assumptions and suggested a surplus similar to that for 2023.

5. Affiliated Club Issues

5.1 Clubs and new locations

CM reported that Eastbourne BC were on course to restart operations on 1 April after completion of modifications to new premises. The latter had been purchased by an EBC member and leased to EBC for 20 years. Free, on-street parking is a major plus for the new site.

PC reported that efforts to find a new site for Avenue BC had not borne fruit thus far. Numbers attending sessions at temporary sites were well down on those at the Avenue site and concerns had been expressed that the club might not survive. However, a well-attended members' meeting last month had established a strong desire to continue efforts to find a new permanent site with good parking and low charges. Professional help was being sought to assist this search.

6. Selectors' Report

NW reported that the SC would be meeting shortly to select the team for the President's Cup. PC added that teams for the Inter-county teams of eight qualifier and the Metropolitan Cup would require further meetings.

7. Tournament Committee Report

7.1 Competitions

PC reported:

- The Sussex Pairs final was won by Alan and James Hobden. They and other leading pairs would go forward as the county's representatives in the EBU Corwen Trophy event in June
- The county teams of eight competition would be held on 23 March. [*Post meeting note – this was won by the Avenue BC team who would go forward to the Regional final of the EBU Garden Cities Trophy to be held in May.*]
- The EBU National Pairs regional semi-final would be held on 24 March. [*Post meeting note – Julian Mitchell and Peter Clinch qualified for the final on 13/14 April with a score just 0.7% off first place.*]
- The David Pavey competition for less experienced players had attracted 20 pairs after concerted marketing by the organiser, Eileen Perrigo.
- Final preparations for the Spring Congress on 20/21 April were in hand.
- Sadly, the Stepping Stone Pairs had been cancelled owing to lack of organiser resource. Discussions were in hand to restore it to the county programme in 2025.

DG reported that the Championship Teams competition had reached the semi-final stage and was on track to finish by early May, in time to identify the county's representatives in the EBU Pachabo Cup on 8/9 June. The Sussex League was now under way and would run through until October/November as in the last two seasons.

AG reported that she had agreed dates with host clubs for all eight sessions of the Invitation Pairs with the first to be held at Crawley BC on 30 April and the last on 22 November at Worthing BC. All sessions were planned to be face-to-face.

MW reported that much technical research had been necessary to resolve problems arising from the scoring of the New Year's Swiss Teams. The results of this work should prevent a recurrence.

MW observed that interest in events for the less experienced seemed to have waned and he wondered whether a move to online might attract more entries. HK indicated that she was keen to keep the East Grinstead Basic Bridge event as face-to-face but perhaps these events might be offered in both formats. MC members agreed that further discussions should be held by the TC in pursuit of a productive way forward.

Action: TC

7.2 Competition Rules

DW had circulated a paper proposing a change to the Competition Rules. MW had identified an inconsistency between the CR and the advice provided on the website. MC members approved the change and DW agreed to provide MW with an amended version of the CR in due course.

Action: DW

7.3 Chief Tournament Director

PC reported that Stephen Kennedy (SK) had agreed to become the county's CTD. A job description was being developed and early work would include adding SK to the MC and/or the TC, arranging for the tournament equipment (laptop, Bridgemates, etc) to be brought up to date and reviewing the sufficiency of the current list of county TDs.

Action: PC/SK

FINAL DRAFT

8. Secretary's Report

8.1 AGM 2024

DW reported that the deadline for submission of members' resolutions had passed and none had been submitted. The deadline for MC applications would pass on 31 March and none had been submitted thus far. All existing MC members' applications for re-election had been confirmed. DW reminded MC members of the need to ensure that a quorum was reached and he requested each MC member to persuade another member outside the MC to attend. PC observed that should he qualify for the final of the National Pairs, he would provide a written report to the AGM in order to allow him to play in the final on 13/14 April. [*Post meeting note – See paragraph 7.1 above.*]

Action: PC/DW

8.2 Gladys Hakki Award

DW had circulated the three nominations to MC members together with the process by which the winner would be selected. Some MC members offered additional facts about those nominated and the background to their choices. All agreed that all nominations were strong and any of them might have been a winner in another year. Following a secret ballot, the nomination in favour of Peter Langston (Patcham BC) was selected as the winner. DW would arrange for all concerned to be notified and for the presentation to be made to the winner.

Action: DW/PC

8.3 EBU Membership Subscriptions 2024/25

DW had circulated a paper for information reflecting a comparatively positive view of the evolution of county charges against EBU charges.

9. EBU Matters

9.1 EBU County Chairmen's meeting 7 Feb 2024

DW had circulated a note of the matters arising at this Zoom meeting (attended by DW whilst PC was on holiday) for information.

9.2 Festival of Bridge – It's a Big Deal

DW reported that the Officers had advised the EBU that Sussex had created a Festival working group (the Officers) with PC as our Festival Manager. The FWG planned to open a dialogue with affiliated clubs to encourage their participation. The EBU are keen to make the week a grass-roots driven celebration and had created a dedicated website with much information to support the development of local plans. HK reported that Crawley BC's committee had already met to discuss their ideas for local events, including a bridge-themed pub crawl. DW had circulated some ideas for county participation which the FWG would refine before contacting clubs. The FWG would keep the MC informed as plans evolved. PC observed that there would probably be scope for publicity through articles in local newspapers. MW suggested that if the county held an extra charity sims event, the proceeds from each participating club could be collected locally and donated directly to CRUK thereby reducing the effort required centrally. MC members agreed. DW agreed to draft an email to club contacts for FWG consideration.

Action: DW

10. Membership Secretary's Report

AB had reported that the current membership total was 2645, just 3 less the total reported to the previous meeting. The email address list now totalled 2422 an increase of 34 and coverage of 91.5%.

11. Webmaster and Master Point Secretary's Report

MW reported that recent weeks had been 'business as usual' with changes to the website. He congratulated AG and DG for their win in the Charity Sims and added that in processing the results he had developed a method of converting from BBO to XML which would reduce the effort required for future events.

12. Conduct and Discipline

JM indicated that there was nothing to report on this occasion.

13. Youth Bridge

13.1 JBC

DW reported that, after six very successful years and under considerable pressure from competing priorities, William Bourne had decided to retire from his role as project leader. The Officers are of the view that it is highly unlikely we would be able to find a suitable successor from within the Sussex domain and, following discussions amongst the wider youth bridge community, it has been decided that the responsibility for delivering the autumn JBC should be transferred to Surrey CBA. Tony Cherritt will be the new project leader. The Officers recommended that SCCBA continue to sponsor this JBC in line with the sponsorship previously given by Surrey and Kent. MC members agreed.

13.2 Bridge in Schools

DW reported that the Officers had discussed the possibility of creating an exemplar partnership between a bridge teacher, a school teacher and a local bridge club, with the teachers establishing an after-school bridge club for in-term teaching and playing and the bridge club providing dedicated playing sessions to maintain continuity as students progressed through their academic career. The Officers had identified a possible candidate for the bridge teacher to take this forward and discussions would follow as soon as practicable.

Action: PC

14. Education

DW reported that EBED are delivering bridge teacher training at Horsham BC at the end of April and several Sussex members were expected to attend.

FINAL DRAFT

15. Charities Co-ordinator's Report

DW reported that donations totalling £1117.50 had been received from the sims week and, in light of the lack of donations in 2021 and 2022, the Officers recommended that a total donation of £2100 should be made, giving £700 to each of the three charities chosen. MC members agreed. DW and JH would make arrangements for the donations to be made.

Action: DW/JH

16. Equipment and Trophy Co-ordinator's Report

MWr had indicated that there was nothing to report on this occasion.

17. Next Meeting

Via Zoom at 10.30am on Friday 28 June 2024.

18. Any Other Business

JM reported that following the loss made by the NYST event she had been considering ways in which costs might be reduced in future, including a different venue. CM commented that a majority of Eastbourne members were relatively inexperienced and not currently interested in teams events. HK observed that the relatively high number of boards involved (48) could be off-putting to those used to playing 24, 27 or 28. Ease of parking was also a factor. JM agreed to consider matters further and report back.

Action JM

The meeting closed at 12.17pm.